

# 1 INTRODUCTION

This Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) has been prepared to evaluate the environmental impacts associated with implementation of the proposed Elk Grove Transfer Station Project. The Elk Grove Transfer Station Project (proposed project) includes the construction of a solid waste transfer station facility within the southern portion of the City. The proposed project would be located on approximately 20 acres of land designed to accept, process, load and ship (via truck) municipal solid waste, green waste, recyclable/reusable materials, household hazardous waste, and special wastes (tires, appliances, electronic waste, and construction/demolition debris). Two primary sites are being considered for the proposed project including a group of nine parcels located near the southern terminus of Iron Rock Way (west of the Union Pacific rail line, north of Grant Line Road and east of State Route 99 [SR 99]) and a single parcel located directly southeast of Grant Line Road, northeast of Survey Road and west of the Union Pacific rail line. The site and the facility would be owned and managed by the City and operated under contract with a private company or companies.

## 1.1 PURPOSE AND INTENDED USES OF THIS DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

This Draft EIR was prepared in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970 (Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations Section 15000 et seq.). An EIR is a full disclosure, public information document in which the significant environmental impacts of a project are evaluated, feasible measures to mitigate significant impacts are identified, and alternatives to the project that can reduce or avoid significant environmental effects are discussed.

An EIR is an informational document used in the planning and decision-making process by the lead agency and responsible and trustee agencies. The lead agency is the public agency with primary responsibility over the proposed project. In accordance with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15051(b)(1), “the lead agency will normally be the agency with general governmental powers, such as a city or county, rather than an agency with a single or limited purpose.” The lead agency for the proposed project is the City of Elk Grove (City).

The purpose of an EIR is not to recommend either approval or denial of a project. CEQA requires decision-makers to balance the benefits of a project against its unavoidable environmental effects in deciding whether to carry out a project. The lead agency will consider the Draft EIR, comments received on the Draft EIR, and responses to those comments before making a decision. If significant environmental effects are identified, the lead agency must adopt “Findings” indicating whether feasible mitigation measures or alternatives exist that can avoid or reduce those effects. If the significant environmental impacts are identified as significant and unavoidable, the lead agency may still approve the project if it determines that the social, economic, or other benefits outweigh the unavoidable impacts. The lead agency would then be required to prepare a “Statement of Overriding Considerations” that discusses the specific reasons for approving the project, based on information in the EIR and other information in the record.

## 1.2 TYPE OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

The Elk Grove Transfer Station EIR is a Project EIR, pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15161. A Project EIR is an informational document designed to provide the basis for the local planning and decision-making process. A Project EIR is the most common type of EIR, examining the environmental impacts of a specific development. This type of EIR focuses on the changes in the environment that would result from the construction, development and ultimate operation of a project.

## 1.3 SCOPE OF THIS DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

The issues evaluated in this Draft EIR are those anticipated to be affected with implementation of the proposed project, as determined from comments received on the Notice of Preparation and an understanding of the project characteristics. The resource areas for which issues are evaluated in this Draft EIR are as follows:

- ▶ Land Use
- ▶ Traffic
- ▶ Air Quality
- ▶ Noise
- ▶ Public Utilities and Services
- ▶ Aesthetics
- ▶ Hydrology and Water Quality
- ▶ Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- ▶ Biological Resources
- ▶ Cultural Resources
- ▶ Climate Change

## 1.4 EFFECTS FOUND NOT TO BE SIGNIFICANT

Under the CEQA statutes and the State CEQA Guidelines, a lead agency may limit an EIR's discussion of environmental effects when they are not considered potentially significant (Public Resources Code Section 21002.1(e); State CEQA Guidelines Sections 15128 and 15143). Information used to determine which impacts would be potentially significant was derived from a review of applicable planning and CEQA documentation, field work, a review of the project, feedback from ongoing public and agency consultation, and comments received on the Notice of Preparation (Appendix A). Following the issuance of the Notice of Preparation, comments were received and reviewed to determine the final scope of the Draft EIR. As a result of the review of existing information and the scoping process, effects on the following resources were found not to be significant, and therefore, are not included in the detailed analysis of potential project impacts:

### 1.4.1 AGRICULTURE

The proposed project would be located on land zoned for industrial usage. Neither of the two potential project sites includes agricultural uses. The development of the proposed project on either of these sites would not remove agricultural resources.

### 1.4.2 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

No known faults are located in or adjacent to the potential project sites and the Sacramento region is not subject to risks associated with seiches, tsunamis, or volcanic hazards. The potential project sites are relatively flat and are not subject to landslides or mudflows associated with areas of steep slopes. The potential project sites are not located in areas subject to subsidence and no unique geologic or physical features exist on either of the project sites. No known unstable earth conditions are associated with the potential project sites and no changes in the local geologic conditions would occur with project implementation. Prior to final facility design, a site-specific geotechnical study must be prepared (as required by the Uniform Building Code) to determine the appropriate design features and construction measures necessary to comply with the Uniform Building Code requirements.

Project construction would require grading and compaction of site soils, which would result in minor changes to the site topography and surface relief features. Over-covering of the site soils would occur to the extent necessary to construct the buildings, driveways, and parking lots at the facility. Temporary increases in soil erosion from wind and water may be experienced during construction activities. After construction, however, the building

foundations, covered parking areas, and driveways constructed at the potential project sites would serve to stabilize the soils that they cover and would effectively reduce erosion of all types. For a detailed discussion of the proposed project's construction erosion impacts and applicable mitigation measures, please see the discussion of Hydrology and Water Quality included in Chapter 4 of this Draft EIR.

### **1.4.3 ENERGY**

The proposed project would improve the efficiency of the City of Elk Grove's waste disposal operations by reducing the number of miles that businesses and residents would have to haul their waste and recyclables. Currently, the majority of the municipal solid waste generated by the residents and businesses in Elk Grove is transported by franchised haulers, commercial haulers and private self-haul vehicles to the Elder Creek Transfer Station, which is privately-owned and operated by Allied Waste and is located at 8642 Elder Creek Road in the City of Sacramento. From Elk Grove's city center, it is approximately an 18-mile round trip to the Elder Creek Transfer Station. Residents of Elk Grove are allowed one self-haul trip each year to this facility. The proposed project sites are approximately 4 miles round trip from Elk Grove's city center.

Residents are also allowed to self-haul household hazardous wastes to two separate household hazardous waste collection facilities, one owned by the City of Sacramento and the other owned by the County of Sacramento. From Elk Grove's city center, it is approximately a 20-mile round trip to the City of Sacramento Recycling and Transfer Station located at 8491 Fruitridge Road and it is approximately a 40-mile round trip to the Sacramento County North Area Recovery Facility located at 4450 Roseville Road. The County of Sacramento also owns the Kiefer Landfill at 12701 Kiefer Boulevard (at Grant Line Road) in Sloughhouse. The County operates a limited collection facility at the landfill that only accepts antifreeze, batteries, oil and latex-based paint. From Elk Grove's city center, the round trip drive distance to the Keifer landfill is approximately 36 miles. Curbside-collected recyclable materials in the City of Elk Grove are shipped more than 100 miles to a sorting facility in San Jose.

Although operation of the proposed facility would consume energy, the increased waste disposal efficiencies achieved by reducing the number of vehicle miles traveled by franchised haulers, commercial haulers and private self-haul vehicles would substantially offset this increased energy consumption. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in significant impacts associated with the increased demand for energy.

### **1.4.4 POPULATION AND HOUSING**

The proposed project does not provide any new housing nor does it remove any existing housing or create any population increase. Therefore, the proposed project would not affect the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population in the surrounding area or the region.

### **1.4.5 RECREATION**

The potential project sites do not include any recreational facilities and the proposed project would not generate a demand for recreational facilities or services because it would not increase the number of residents or visitors within the City.

## **1.5 AGENCY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **1.5.1 LEAD AGENCY**

The City of Elk Grove is the lead agency for the proposed project. As such, the City has the principal responsibility for approving and carrying out the project and for ensuring that the requirements of CEQA have been met.

## 1.5.2 TRUSTEE AND RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES

A trustee agency is a State agency that has jurisdiction by law over natural resources that are held in trust for the people of the State of California. The California Department of Fish and Game has jurisdiction over biological resources potentially affected by the project as a trustee agency.

Responsible agencies are public agencies, other than the lead agency, that are anticipated to have discretionary approval responsibility for reviewing, carrying out, or approving elements of a project. Responsible agencies should participate in the lead agency's CEQA process, review the lead agency's CEQA document, and use the document when making a decision on project elements. Several agencies may have responsibility for or jurisdiction over elements of the proposed project. These agencies may include the following:

### FEDERAL AGENCIES

- ▶ U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Clean Water Act - Section 404–Nationwide Permit)
- ▶ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Endangered Species Act–Section 7 Consultation)

### STATE AGENCIES

- ▶ Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Clean Water Act–Section 401 Certification, construction activity stormwater permit and National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit)
- ▶ California Integrated Waste Management Board (Solid Waste Facilities Permit)

### LOCAL AGENCIES

- ▶ Sacramento County Department of Environmental Management as the Local Enforcement Agency (Solid Waste Facilities Permit)

## 1.5.3 PUBLIC REVIEW PROCESS

Consistent with the requirements of CEQA, a good faith effort has been made during the preparation of this Draft EIR to contact affected agencies, organizations, and individuals who may have an interest in the project. This effort included the circulation of a Notice of Preparation to a project-specific mailing list and to the Governor's Office of Planning and Research for a 30-day comment period that commenced on July 18, 2008. The Notice of Preparation is a notice sent by the lead agency to notify responsible agencies, trustee agencies, and potentially affected federal, state, and local agencies that the lead agency plans to prepare a Draft EIR and solicits guidance regarding the scope and content of the Draft EIR. The City of Elk Grove also held a scoping meeting on August 14, 2008 to receive comments on the Notice of Preparation. The comments received on the Notice of Preparation are included in Appendix A.

This Draft EIR is being circulated to federal, State, and local agencies, and to interested organizations and individuals who may wish to review and comment on the report. During the 45-day public review period, written comments should be sent to the City at the following address:

Mr. Taro Echiburú  
City of Elk Grove  
8401 Laguna Palms Way  
Elk Grove, CA 95758

## 1.6 TERMINOLOGY USED IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

To assist in the understanding of this report, the following descriptions, as found in Article 20 of the State CEQA Guidelines, are provided:

- ▶ “Project” means the whole of an action, which has the potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment directly or ultimately.
- ▶ “Significant effect on the environment” means a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance. An economic or social change by itself shall not be considered a significant effect on the environment. A social or economic change related to a physical change may be considered in determining whether the physical change is significant.
- ▶ “Environment” means the physical conditions that exist within the area which will be affected by a proposed project including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historical or aesthetic significance. The area involved shall be the area in which significant effects would occur either directly or indirectly as a result of the project. The “environment” includes both natural and man-made conditions.
- ▶ “Effects” and “impacts” as used in this document are synonymous. Effects analyzed under CEQA must be related to a physical change. Effects include:
  - direct or primary effects that are caused by the project and occur at the same time and place, and
  - indirect or secondary effects that are caused by the project and are later in time or farther removed in distance, but are still reasonably foreseeable. Indirect or secondary effects may include growth-inducing effects and other effects related to induced changes in the pattern of land use, population density, or growth rate, and related effects on air and water and other natural systems, including ecosystems.
- ▶ “Mitigation” includes:
  - avoiding the impact altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action;
  - minimizing impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation;
  - rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the impacted environment;
  - reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action; or
  - compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.
- ▶ “Cumulative impacts” refers to two or more individual effects that, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts:
  - The individual effects may be changes resulting from a single project or a number of separate projects.
  - The cumulative impact from several projects is the change in the environment that results from the incremental impact of the project when added to other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time.

This Draft EIR uses a variety of terms to describe the level of significance of adverse impacts identified during the course of the environmental analysis. These terms are defined below.

- ▶ A “less-than-significant impact” is an impact that is adverse but that does not exceed the defined standards of significance. Less-than-significant impacts do not require mitigation.
- ▶ A “potentially significant impact” is an impact for which there is not enough information to make a finding of less-than-significant impact; however, for the purpose of this Draft EIR, the impact is considered significant. A potentially significant impact is equivalent to a significant impact and requires the identification of feasible mitigation measures or alternatives.
- ▶ A “significant impact” is an impact that exceeds the defined standards of significance and would or could cause a substantial adverse change in the environment. Mitigation measures are recommended to eliminate the impact or reduce it to a less-than-significant level.
- ▶ A “significant and unavoidable impact” is an impact that exceeds the defined standards of significance and that cannot be eliminated or reduced to a less-than-significant level through the implementation of mitigation measures.

## **1.7 ORGANIZATION OF THIS ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT**

This Draft EIR is organized into chapters, as identified and briefly described below. Chapters are further divided into sections (e.g., Section 4.1, Land Use).

Chapter 1, Introduction. Chapter 1 describes the purpose and organization of the Draft EIR, context, and terminology used in the Draft EIR.

Chapter 2, Executive Summary. This chapter summarizes the project description, alternatives to the project, significant environmental impacts that would result from the project, and mitigation measures proposed to reduce or eliminate those impacts.

Chapter 3, Project Description. Chapter 3 describes the project location, background, project characteristics, and project objectives.

Chapter 4, Environmental Setting, Environmental Impacts, and Mitigation Measures. For each environmental issue area, this chapter describes the existing environmental setting, discusses the environmental impacts associated with the proposed project, and identifies mitigation for the impacts.

Chapter 5, Cumulative and Growth-Inducing Impacts. This chapter evaluates the extent to which the project would contribute to cumulative impacts in the region or induce economic or population growth in the City. This section also includes a discussion of global climate change.

Chapter 6, Alternatives. This chapter describes the alternatives to the project that are being considered to mitigate the project’s environmental impacts while meeting most of the project’s objectives.

Chapter 7, Report Preparation. This chapter identifies the Draft EIR authors and consultants who provided analysis in support of the Draft EIR’s conclusions.

Chapter 8, References. This chapter sets forth a comprehensive listing of all sources of information used in the preparation of the Draft EIR, including agencies or individuals consulted during preparation of the Draft EIR.

Appendices. Appendices contain various technical reports, letters, and official publications that have been summarized or otherwise used for preparation of the Draft EIR.