

This Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines. The purpose of this section is to educate the reader regarding the intent, format, and content of this EIR so that it can be more useful. This Draft EIR assesses the expected environmental impacts resulting from adoption of the proposed project and associated impacts from subsequent development under the project.

### 1.1 PURPOSE OF THE EIR

The City of Elk Grove (City), acting as the lead agency and having the principal responsibility for approving the Elk Grove Boulevard/SR 99 Interchange Modification project, has prepared this EIR to provide the public and trustee and responsible agencies with information about the potential environmental effects of the proposed project. As described in the CEQA Guidelines Section 15121(a), an EIR is a public informational document that assesses potential environmental effects of the proposed project, as well as identifies mitigation measures and alternatives to the proposed project that could reduce or avoid its adverse environmental impacts. Public agencies are charged with the duty to consider and minimize environmental impacts of proposed development where feasible, and have an obligation to balance a variety of public objectives, including economic, environmental, and social factors.

CEQA requires the preparation of an environmental impact report prior to approving any project which may have a significant effect on the environment. For the purposes of CEQA, the term "project" refers to the whole of an action which has the potential for resulting in a direct physical change or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment (CEQA Guidelines Section 15378[a]). With respect to the Elk Grove Boulevard/SR 99 Interchange Modification, the City has determined that the proposed project is a "project" within the definition of CEQA.

### 1.2 TRUSTEE AND POTENTIAL RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES

For the purposes of CEQA, a "trustee" agency is a state agency having jurisdiction by law over natural resources affected by a project that are held in trust for the people of the State of California (CEQA Guidelines Section 15386). The only known trustee agency for this project is the California Department of Fish and Game.

The term "responsible agency" includes all public agencies other than the lead agency that have discretionary approval power over the project or an aspect of the project (CEQA Guidelines Section 15381). The following agencies are identified as potential responsible agencies:

- *State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB)*: A National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit must be obtained for the prevention of sediments and other discharge to surface waters, using best management practices for erosion control. This would be coordinated with the Regional Water Quality Control Board.
- *California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Central Valley Region (CVRWQCB)*: Will issue NPDES permits (Clean Water Act Section 402) and Water Quality Certification and/or waiver (Clean Water Act Section 401). CVRWQCB will also approve of the required Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). These activities would be coordinated with the SWRCB.
- *California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)*: Discretionary approval authority and the responsibility to consider the environmental effects of the project pursuant to CEQA for state right-of-way. As part of the approval and findings process, Caltrans would issue encroachment permits for any work within Caltrans' right-of-way.

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- *Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (SMAQMD)*: Responsible for overseeing compliance with district and state air quality laws and regulations pertaining to the construction and operational emissions generated by the project. Reviews CEQA documents and recommends air quality mitigation measures.

Although not subject to California law, and thus outside the definitions of “responsible agency” or “trustee agency,” the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) will also be called upon to grant approvals – under federal law – necessary to the development of the project area. These agencies have no duties under CEQA, but rather are governed by a variety of federal statutes, such as the Clean Water Act, which governs the dredging and filling of waters of the United States (e.g., some wetlands), and the Endangered Species Act, which requires USACE to consult with USFWS as part of the review process for any wetland or fill permits that may be required.

### 1.3 ORGANIZATION AND SCOPE

Sections 15122 through 15132 of the CEQA Guidelines identify the content requirements for Draft and Final EIRs. An EIR must include a description of the environmental setting, an environmental impact analysis, mitigation measures, alternatives, significant irreversible environmental changes, growth-inducing impacts, and cumulative impacts. The environmental issues addressed in this Draft EIR were established through review of environmental documentation developed for the project, environmental documentation for nearby projects, preparation of an initial study, and public agency responses to the Notice of Preparation (NOP).

This EIR is organized in the following manner:

#### SECTION 1.0 – INTRODUCTION

Section 1.0 provides an introduction and overview describing the intended use of the Draft EIR and the review and certification process.

#### SECTION 2.0 – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This section summarizes the purpose and scope of the EIR, characteristics of the proposed project, areas of controversy, and alternatives to the proposed project. The summary also provides a concise summary matrix of the project’s environmental impacts and associated mitigation measures.

#### SECTION 3.0 – PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This section provides a brief history of the project, its location and setting, identifies objectives of the project, and provides a detailed description of the project’s characteristics. This section also identifies agencies that are expected to use the EIR in their decision-making as well as regulatory requirements, permits, and approvals needed in association with the project.

#### SECTION 4.0 – ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING, IMPACTS, AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Section 4.0 contains an analysis of the environmental topic areas as identified below. This section contains a description of the existing setting of the project site, identifies project-related impacts, and recommends mitigation measures.

The following major environmental topic is addressed in this section:

- Traffic and Circulation

- Visual Resources, Light and Glare
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Noise
- Hydrology and water Quality
- Transportation and Circulation

The Initial Study for the Elk Grove Boulevard/SR 99 Interchange Modification project identified that the project would not result in any new significant impacts relative to agricultural resources, land use, mineral resources, public services, recreation, or utilities. Therefore, these issue areas will not be discussed further in this EIR. The Initial Study, located in **Appendix A**, contains full discussions on each of these issues and support for their exclusion in the EIR.

### SECTION 5.0 – LONG-TERM IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROJECT

This section contains discussions and analysis of various topical issues mandated by CEQA. These include significant environmental effects that cannot be avoided if the project is implemented, significant irreversible environmental changes, and growth-inducing impacts.

### SECTION 6.0 – REPORT PREPARERS

This section lists all authors and agencies that assisted in the preparation of the report by name, title, and company or agency affiliation.

### APPENDICES

This section includes all notices and other procedural documents pertinent to this EIR, as well as technical material upon which this analysis relied.

## 1.4 ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

### NOTICE OF PREPARATION AND INITIAL STUDY

In accordance with Section 15082 of the CEQA Guidelines, the City prepared a Draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (Draft IS/MND) for the proposed Elk Grove Boulevard/SR 99 Interchange Modification project, which was released for circulation and public comment from April 18, 2007, through May 18, 2007. During the 30-day review period, City staff discovered that the project's impacts related to traffic and circulation were potentially significant, thus triggering preparation of an EIR instead of an MND. The NOP focused the environmental analysis of the Draft EIR to impacts that were identified as potentially significant in the Initial Study. The NOP was circulated to the public and local, state, and federal agencies, as well as other interested parties from July 11 through August 11, 2008, to solicit comments on the proposed project. The City was identified as the lead agency for the proposed project. Concerns raised in response to the NOP were considered during preparation of the Draft EIR. The NOP, Initial Study, and responses by interested parties are presented in their entirety in **Appendix A**.

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### DRAFT EIR

This document constitutes the Draft EIR. The Draft EIR contains a description of the project, description of the environmental setting, identification of project impacts, and mitigation measures for impacts found to be significant, as well as an analysis of project alternatives. Upon completion of the Draft EIR, the City will file the Notice of Completion (NOC) with the State Clearinghouse to begin the public review period (Public Resources Code, Section 21161).

### PUBLIC NOTICE/PUBLIC REVIEW

Concurrent with filing of the NOC, the City will provide public notice of the availability of the Draft EIR for public review and invite comment from the general public, agencies, organizations, and other interested parties. The public review and comment period should be no less than thirty (30) days nor longer than sixty (60) days. The review period in this case is forty-five (45) days. Public comment on the Draft EIR will be accepted in written form. No public hearing to accept comments on the Draft EIR is required by CEQA, and the City does not expect to hold a public meeting during the 45-day review period to accept verbal comments on the adequacy and completeness of the Draft EIR prior to consideration of the project and certification of the EIR. All written comments or questions regarding the Draft EIR should be addressed to:

James McLaughlin  
City of Elk Grove  
Development Services, Planning  
8401 Laguna Palms Way  
Elk Grove, CA 95758

### RESPONSE TO COMMENTS/FINAL EIR

Following the public review period, a Final EIR will be prepared. The Final EIR will respond to written comments received during the public review period and to oral comments made at any public hearing.

### CERTIFICATION OF THE EIR/PROJECT CONSIDERATION

The City will review and consider the Final EIR. If the City finds that the Final EIR is "adequate and complete," the City will certify the Final EIR. Upon review and consideration of the Final EIR, the Elk Grove City Council may take action to approve, revise, or reject the project. A decision to approve the project would be accompanied by written findings in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15091 and Section 15093. A Mitigation Monitoring Program, as described below, will be adopted for mitigation measures that have been incorporated into or imposed upon the project to reduce or avoid significant effects on the environment. This Mitigation Monitoring Program will be designed to ensure that these measures are carried out during project implementation.

### MITIGATION MONITORING

CEQA Section 21081.6(a) requires lead agencies to adopt a mitigation monitoring program to include all mitigation measures that have been adopted in order to mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment. The specific "reporting or monitoring" program required by CEQA is not required to be included in the EIR; however it will be presented to the Elk Grove City Council for adoption.

## 1.5 SCOPE OF THE DRAFT EIR

Pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines, the scope of this Draft EIR includes specific issues and concerns identified as potentially significant physical effects on the environment. Based on the City's internal review of the Initial Study/MND, this Draft EIR addresses the following topics in depth:

- Visual Resources, Light and Glare
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Noise
- Hydrology and water Quality
- Transportation and Circulation

The complete text of the NOP for the project is contained in **Appendix A**.

The City of Elk Grove determined that the preparation of a Draft EIR was appropriate due to potentially significant environmental impacts that could be caused by implementation of the proposed Elk Grove Boulevard/SR 99 Interchange Modification project. This Draft EIR is focused on existing traffic conditions in the vicinity of the project area, analyzes potential impacts on traffic and circulation due to the proposed project, and identifies mitigation measures that could avoid or reduce the magnitude of those impacts.

## 1.6 SUMMARY OF COMMENTS RECEIVED ON THE INITIAL STUDY

The City received one comment letter on the Initial Study for the Elk Grove Boulevard/SR 99 Interchange Modification project Draft IS/MND, circulated for review from 4/18/07 to 5/18/07. A copy of this letter is provided in **Appendix A** of this Draft EIR.

The following summarizes the concerns identified for the project during the public comment period of the Initial Study.

- State of California Department of Water Resources. The location of the proposed project may encroach on a State Adopted Plan of Flood Control, which would require appropriate permits from the Reclamation Board prior to construction activities.

## 1.7 SUMMARY OF COMMENTS RECEIVED ON THE NOP FOR THE EIR

The City received one comment letter on the Notice of Preparation for the Elk Grove Boulevard/SR 99 Interchange Modification project Draft EIR. A copy of this letter is provided in **Appendix A** of this Draft EIR.

The following summarizes the concerns identified for the project during the public comment period of the Initial Study.

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- Sacramento Area Sewer District. Existing 8-inch and 39-inch diameter sewer lines installed at the interchange may need relocation depending on the extent of project activities. However, the project will not significantly impact sewer district facilities.