

This Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) was prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and CEQA Guidelines (Section 15132). The City of Elk Grove is the Lead Agency for the environmental review of the proposed Sterling Meadows (Project) and has the principal responsibility for approving the Project. This FEIR assesses the expected environmental impacts resulting from approval of the Sterling Meadows project and associated impacts from subsequent development under the project, as well as responds to comments received on the DEIR.

### 1.1 BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE EIR

#### OVERVIEW OF CEQA REQUIREMENTS FOR PREPARATION OF AN EIR

The City of Elk Grove (City), acting as the Lead Agency, has prepared this FEIR to provide the public and responsible trustee agencies with information about the potential environmental effects of the proposed Sterling Meadows 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 obligated 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]). The City has determined that the proposed Sterling Meadows project is a "project" within the definition of CEQA.

#### CEQA REQUIREMENTS FOR A FEIR

CEQA required findings, and any statement of overriding considerations, would be made after the City has considered the FEIR and would be included in the public record. Likewise, the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) would be adopted at the same time as the findings and also included in the public record.

Section 15132 of the State CEQA Guidelines states:

*"The final EIR shall consist of:*

- (a) The DEIR or a revision of the draft.*
- (b) Comments and recommendations received on the DEIR either verbatim or in summary.*
- (c) A list of persons, organizations, and public agencies commenting on the DEIR.*
- (d) The responses of the Lead Agency to significant environmental points raised in the review and consultation process.*
- (e) Any other information added by the Lead Agency."*

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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### BACKGROUND OF ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS OF THE PROJECT

The following is an overview of the environmental review process for the Sterling Meadows project that has led to the preparation of this FEIR:

#### **Notice of Preparation and Initial Study**

In accordance with Section 15082 of the CEQA Guidelines, the City prepared a Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an EIR for the project on November 23, 2004. The City was identified as the Lead Agency for the proposed project. This notice was circulated to the public, local, state, and federal agencies, and other interested parties to solicit comments on the proposed project. Concerns raised in response to the NOP were considered during preparation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR). The NOP and responses by interested parties are presented in **Appendix 1.0** of the DEIR. Also, an Initial Study for the project was prepared and released for public review along with the NOP. Its conclusions supported preparation of an EIR for the project. The Initial Study is also included in **Appendix 1.0** of the DEIR.

#### **Notice of Availability and DEIR**

The Notice of Availability for the DEIR was published on April 22, 2005. The DEIR was released for public and agency review on April 25, 2005 with the review period ending June 9, 2005. The public was provided with an opportunity to comment on the DEIR during the June 19, 2005 Planning Commission meeting; no comments were made at this meeting. The DEIR 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.

#### **FEIR**

The City received 13 individual comment letters from agencies, interest groups and the public regarding the DEIR. This document responds to the written comments received as required by CEQA. This document also contains minor edits to the DEIR and the final mitigation monitoring and reporting program for the project. This document and the DEIR constitute the FEIR.

#### **Certification of the FEIR/Project Consideration**

The City of Elk Grove will review and consider the FEIR. The Planning Commission will consider the FEIR and the proposed project and make a recommendation to the City Council regarding certification of the EIR and project approval. If the City Council finds that the FEIR is "adequate and complete", the City may certify the FEIR at a public hearing. However, a public hearing is not required by CEQA. The rule of adequacy generally holds that the EIR can be certified if: 1) it shows a good faith effort at full disclosure of environmental information; and 2) provides sufficient analysis to allow decisions to be made regarding the project in contemplation of its environmental consequences.

Upon review and consideration of the FEIR, the City 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. Public Resources Code Section 21081.6 also requires lead agencies to adopt a mitigation monitoring and reporting program (MMRP) to describe measures that have been adopted or made a condition of project approval that mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment. The final mitigation monitoring and reporting program for the project is provided in this document.

**1.2 TYPE OF DOCUMENT**

The CEQA Guidelines identify several types of EIRs, each applicable to different project circumstances. This EIR has been prepared as a Project EIR pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15161. A Project EIR focuses primarily on the changes in the environment that would result from the development project during planning, construction and operation.

**1.3 INTENDED USES OF THE EIR**

This EIR has been prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The EIR is intended to evaluate the environmental impacts of the project to the greatest extent possible. In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15126, this EIR should be used as the primary environmental document to evaluate all subsequent planning and permitting actions associated with the Sterling Meadows project. Subsequent actions that may be associated with the project are identified in Section 3.0 (Project Description) of the DEIR.

**1.4 ORGANIZATION AND SCOPE OF THE FEIR**

This document is organized in the following manner:

**SECTION 1.0—INTRODUCTION**

Section 1.0 provides an overview of the EIR process to date and what the FEIR is required to contain.

**SECTION 2.0—EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Section 2.0 contains the executive summary of the FEIR.

**SECTION 3.0—PROJECT MODIFICATIONS**

Section 3.0 provides a description of project modifications with a comparative impact analysis comparing the project as publicly circulated under the DEIR with the proposed project modifications.

**SECTION 4.0—COMMENTS AND RESPONSES TO COMMENTS ON THE DEIR**

Section 4.0 provides a list of commenters, copies of written comments (coded for reference) and the responses to those written comments. This section also includes a summary of the Water Supply Assessment prepared by Sacramento County Water Agency for the project and information from a traffic impact study prepared by Fehr & Peers for the project. Neither of these documents identifies an increase in the severity of any environmental impacts or new information or conditions that would result in new significant impacts.

**SECTION 5.0—ERRATA**

Section 5.0 consists of minor text changes made to the DEIR as a result of comments on the DEIR.

**APPENDICES**

Appendix A –URBEMIS 2002 Output

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

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Appendix B – Transportation Impact Study

Appendix C – Water Supply Assessment

Appendix D – U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Correspondence