
1.0 Introduction

This Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) was prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines. The City of Elk Grove is the lead agency for the environmental review of the proposed General Plan Amendment (proposed project) evaluated herein and has the principal responsibility for approving the project. This Draft SEIR (DSEIR) 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, has prepared this Supplemental EIR to provide the public and responsible trustee agencies with information about the potential environmental effects of the proposed General Plan Amendment (GPA or 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 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 proposed General Plan Amendment, the City has determined that the proposed plan is a "project" within the definition of CEQA.

1.2 KNOWN RESPONSIBLE AND TRUSTEE AGENCIES

For the purpose of CEQA, 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, such as future development that may result from the project. The following agencies are identified as potential Responsible Agencies:

- Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District
- County Sanitation District-1

1.3 TYPE OF DOCUMENT

The CEQA Guidelines identify several types of EIRs, each applicable to different project circumstances. This EIR has been prepared as a Supplemental EIR pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15162 and 15163. The lead agency may choose to prepare a supplement to an EIR under the CEQA Guidelines (Sections 15162 and 15163) rather than a subsequent EIR if:

Either:

- 1) *Substantial changes are proposed in the project which will require major revisions of the previous EIR due to involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified effects; or*
- 2) *Substantial changes occur with respect to the circumstances under which the project is undertaken which will require major revisions of the previous EIR due to the involvement*

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of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects; or

- 3) *New information of substantial importance, which was not known and could not have been known with the exercise of reasonable diligence at the time the previous EIR was certified as complete, including when the project will have one or more significant effects not discussed in the previous EIR;*

And:

- 1) *Only minor additions or changes would be necessary to make the previous EIR adequately apply to the project in the changed situation; and*
- 2) *The supplement to the EIR need contain only the information necessary to make the previous EIR adequate for the project as revised.*

The previous EIR for the Elk Grove General Plan analyzed environmental effects based on implementation of the Elk Grove General Plan and land use map. This DSEIR will be used to evaluate the potentially significant impacts resulting from the proposed General Plan Amendment in light of the environmental analysis provided in the Elk Grove General Plan EIR (State Clearinghouse Number 2002062082.)

1.4 INTENDED USES OF THE EIR

This DSEIR is intended to evaluate the environmental impacts of the project to the greatest extent possible. This DSEIR should be used as the primary environmental document to evaluate all subsequent planning and permitting actions associated with the project as well as subsequent actions that would be required, as described in Section 3.0 (Project Description).

1.5 RELATIONSHIP TO THE CITY OF ELK GROVE GENERAL PLAN AND PREVIOUS ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The City adopted its General Plan on November 19, 2003, pursuant to Government Code Section 65300. The General Plan acts as the official policy statement of the City and guides public and private development within the City in a manner that maximizes the social and economic benefits for all citizens. In addition, the General Plan also provides policy direction that guides land use development within the City, as well as provides protection for existing natural resources.

Previous environmental review for the project sites was included in the Elk Grove General Plan EIR (State Clearinghouse Number 2002062082.) The EIR analyzed the project sites based on the adopted General Plan land use designations. On November 19, 2003, the City Council approved Resolution 2003-216 certifying the Elk Grove General Plan Final EIR and adopting the associated Findings of Fact regarding environmental effects. A Statement of Overriding Considerations was adopted for the following impacts that were identified as significant and unavoidable:

- Loss of important farmland
- Agriculture/urban interface conflicts
- Cumulative conversion of important farmland and agriculture/urban interface conflicts

- Cumulative conflicts with land use plans or study areas outside the City limits
- Unacceptable levels of service on area roadways during the A.M. and P.M. peak hours
- Unacceptable level of service on State Route 99 northbound and southbound between Eschinger Road and Grant Line Road during the A.M. and P.M. peak hours
- Unacceptable levels of service on area roadways during the A.M. And P.M. peak hours under cumulative conditions
- Temporary noise increases that would exceed the City's noise standards
- Increased traffic noise levels in excess of the City's noise standards
- Cumulative impacts to regional noise attenuation levels
- Increased air quality emissions related to construction activities
- Increased air pollution emissions from operational activities of land uses within the City
- Contribution to cumulative regional air quality impacts
- Increased demand for water supply to the City
- Cumulative increased demand for water supply services
- Direct and indirect impacts on special-status wildlife species and their associated habitats
- Cumulative impacts related to the loss of special-status plant and wildlife species and their associated habitat
- Cumulative wastewater impacts related serving the Urban Study Areas
- Alteration of scenic resources
- Cumulative contribution to the conversion of the region's rural landscape to residential, commercial, and other land uses resulting in alteration of visual conditions

This DSEIR analyzes the potential significant environmental impacts resulting from the proposed project amendment to the adopted General Plan land use designations in light of the analysis provided in the original General Plan EIR. See Section 3.0 for a complete discussion of adopted and proposed land use designations for the sites included in the project.

1.6 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 DSEIR were established through review of environmental documentation developed for the project, environmental documentation for nearby projects, and public agency responses to the Notice of Preparation.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Supplemental 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 DSEIR and the review and certification process.

Section 2.0 - Executive Summary

This section summarizes the characteristics of the proposed project and provides a concise summary matrix of the project's environmental impacts and associated mitigation measures.

Section 3.0 - Project Description

This section provides a detailed description of the proposed project, including intended objectives, background information, and physical and technical characteristics.

Section 4.0 - Environmental Setting, Impacts and Mitigation measures

Section 4.0 contains an analysis of environmental topic areas as identified below. Each section contains a description of the existing setting of the Elk Grove General Plan, identifies project-related impacts, and recommends mitigation measures. Since this is a DSEIR, it will only address environmental issues that may result in new potentially significant effects as required in CEQA Guidelines sections 15162 and 15163 and will not readdress issues that were adequately evaluated in the previous EIR.

The following major environmental topics are addressed in this section:

- Land Use
- Population, Housing, and Employment
- Transportation and Circulation
- Noise
- Air Quality
- Public Services and Utilities
- Visual Resources

The Notice of Preparation (NOP) and Initial Study for the General Plan Amendment Supplemental EIR identified that the project would not result in any new significant impacts to Agricultural Resources, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Geology / Soils, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology/Water Quality, Mineral Resources, and Recreation to the area or that the previous environmental analyses provided in the Elk Grove General Plan EIR (State Clearinghouse Number 2002062082) have already adequately addressed the impacts. Therefore, these issue areas will not be addressed further in this DSEIR.

Section 5.0 - Cumulative Impacts Summary

This section discusses the cumulative impacts associated with the proposed project. As required by CEQA Section 15130, an EIR shall discuss cumulative impacts of a project when the project's effect is cumulatively considerable.

Alternatives to the Project

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6 requires that an EIR describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, which could feasibly attain the basic objectives of the project and avoid and/or lessen the environmental effects of the project. This section discusses alternatives to the proposed project and provides a comparative analysis between the General Plan Amendment project and several alternatives.

Section 7.0 - 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 8.0 - 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 the EIR, as well as technical material prepared to support the analysis.

1.7 ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

The review and certification process for the EIR will involve the following general procedural steps:

NOTICE OF PREPARATION AND INITIAL STUDY

In accordance with Section 15082 of the CEQA Guidelines, the City prepared a Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a DSEIR for the project on March 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. A scoping meeting was held on April 8, 2004, to receive additional comments. Concerns raised in response to the NOP were considered during preparation of the Draft DSEIR. The NOP and responses by interested parties are presented in **Appendix 1.0**. Also, an Initial Study for the project was prepared and released for public review along with the NOP. Its conclusions supported preparation of a DSEIR for the project. The Initial Study is also included in **Appendix 1.0**. The NOP focused the environmental analysis of the DSEIR to impacts that would occur from the project beyond those addressed in the General Plan EIR.

DRAFT SUPPLEMENTAL EIR

This document constitutes the Draft Supplemental EIR (DSEIR). The DSEIR 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 DSEIR, the City will file the Notice of Completion (NOC) with the Governor's Office of Planning and Research to begin the public review period (Public Resources Code, Section 21161).

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PUBLIC NOTICE/PUBLIC REVIEW

Concurrent with the NOC, the County will provide public notice of the availability of the Draft DSEIR 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 or longer than sixty (60) days. The review period in this case is forty-five (45) days. Public comment on the Draft DSEIR will be accepted both in written form and orally at public hearings. Although no public hearings to accept comments on the DSEIR are required by CEQA, the City expects to hold a public comment meeting during the forty-five (45) day review period prior to EIR certification. Notice of the time and location of the hearing will be published prior to the hearing. All comments or questions regarding the DSEIR should be addressed to:

Taro Echiburu
City of Elk Grove
Development Services, Planning
8400 Laguna Palms Way
Elk Grove, CA 95758

RESPONSE TO COMMENTS/FINAL DSEIR

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

CERTIFICATION OF THE SEIR/PROJECT CONSIDERATION

The City will review and consider the Final SEIR. If the City finds that the Final SEIR is "adequate and complete", the City will certify the Final SEIR. Upon review and consideration of the Final SEIR, the City of 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, may also 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 reporting and mitigation monitoring program to describe measures that have been adopted or made a condition of project approval 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 SEIR, however it will be presented to City Council for adoption.

1.8 SCOPE OF THE DSEIR

Pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines, the scope of this DSEIR includes specific issues and concerns identified as potentially significant physical effects on the environment. Based on both the Initial Study and the NOP comments, this DSEIR addresses the following topics in depth:

Environmental issue areas identified for study in this DSEIR include:

- Land Use
- Population, Employment, and Housing
- Transportation and Circulation
- Noise
- Air Quality
- Public Services and Utilities-Wastewater
- Visual Resources

The complete text of the NOP is contained in **Appendix 1.0**.

The City of Elk Grove determined that the preparation of a DSEIR was appropriate due to potentially significant environmental impacts that could be caused by implementing the proposed General Plan Amendment. This DSEIR evaluates the existing environmental resources in the vicinity of the project area, analyzes potential impacts on those resources due to the proposed project, and identifies mitigation measures that could avoid or reduce the magnitude of those impacts. This DSEIR provides a general review of the environmental effects of development of the City based on proposed land use designations and estimated public service demands. This DSEIR will be used to evaluate the environmental effects resulting from the proposed project on land use and population in the vicinity of the project, and its environmental effects on traffic, noise, air quality, biological resources, public services and utilities, and visual resources.

1.9 COMMENTS RECEIVED ON THE NOTICE OF PREPARATION

The City received several comment letters on the Notice of Preparation for the General Plan Amendment DSEIR. A copy of each letter is provided in **Appendix 1.0** of this DSEIR.

The following summarizes the concerns identified for the project through the NOP and scoping process. Concerns are identified in *italics*; the regular text following each concern identifies how the concern is addressed.

- *Evaluation of all sites proposed for General Plan Amendment in one environmental document. It was suggested that the project should be broken into seven separate environmental documents addressing each separate land use request.* On November 19, 2003, the Elk Grove City Council directed staff to initiate a City-initiated general plan amendment process for Alternative Land Use Request (as described in the Elk Grove General Plan Draft EIR) sites 4, 5, 24, 40 and 41. Site A (see Section 3.0, Project Description) and sites 21 and 29 were subsequently added by the City for consideration as part of the City-initiated General Plan Amendment project. Consideration of all these sites in one EIR is required by CEQA. Specifically, State CEQA Guidelines Section 15378 defines that a project must consist of the whole action. Segmenting consideration of the General Plan Amendment project into separate environmental documents would conflict with the requirements of CEQA.
- *Land use conflicts associated with adjoining land uses and the proposed residential densities associated with Sites 21 and 29.* Land use conflicts are addressed in Section 4.1 (Land Use) of this document.
- *Biological resources impacts (wildlife such as giant garter snake, raptors, frogs, mammals, and wetland resources) associated with Sites 21 and 29.* The Elk Grove

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General Plan EIR (State Clearinghouse No. 2002062082) addressed impacts to biological resources including impacts to sensitive habitats and locally important resources (wetlands, riparian habitat, native and some non-native trees) as well as impacts to special-status plant and animal species and their associated habitats from buildout of the City (see Section 4.10 Biological Resources in the Elk Grove General Plan Draft EIR). This impact analysis included consideration of the development of sites 21 and 29 at the Rural Residential designation density (2-acre lot minimum), which would contribute to the anticipated significant and unavoidable impact to special-status species and associated habitats (as acknowledged in the adopted Elk Grove General Plan Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations [Resolution 2003-216]). As noted in the NOP, the proposed increase in density for sites 21 and 29 would not result in any new habitat disturbance than what was considered in the General Plan EIR. Lot sizes ranging from approximately 7,000 square feet to 2 acres in size would result in similar habitat fragmentation and loss (given grading activities, urban landscape, fencing, etc.) as originally addressed in the Elk Grove General Plan EIR. Thus, no new biological resource impacts beyond what was addressed in the Elk Grove General Plan EIR are expected.

- ***Drainage, flooding and water quality impacts.*** As noted in the Notice of Preparation (Initial Study page 18), the proposed land use designation changes would not result in new impacts related to alteration of drainage patterns or increased runoff that was not considered in the Elk Grove General Plan EIR. Specifically, General Plan policies CAQ-17 through 24 and associated action items would mitigate potential drainage impacts. General Plan Policy CAQ-15 specifically prohibits development within the 100-year floodplain. The proposed land use designation changes would not create any new impacts concerning the violation of any water quality standards or the degradation of water quality from the impacts previously addressed in the Elk Grove General Plan EIR because the proposed land use changes would result in the same pollutant potential. Compliance with General Plan policies CAQ-5, CAQ-12, CAQ-17, CAQ-19, and CAQ-21, which provide water quality protection, would minimize these impacts to a less than significant level.
- ***Visual and lighting impacts to Laguna Creek and the rural setting associated with Sites 21 and 29.*** This concern is addressed in Section 4.7 (Visual Resources) of this document.
- ***Land use and planning impacts.*** This concern is addressed in Section 4.1 (Land Use) of this document.
- ***Potentially significant impact for mandatory findings of significance, Item a (Initial Study).*** Potentially significant environmental impacts associated with the project are discussed in Sections 4.1 through 4.7, 5.0, and 7.0 of this document.
- ***Air quality impacts associated with the proposed changes in land use designations.*** This concern is addressed in Section 4.5 (Air Quality) of this document.
- ***Noise impacts associated with the proposed changes in land use designations.*** This concern is addressed in Section 4.4 (Noise) of this document.
- ***Traffic impacts associated with the proposed changes in land use designations.*** This concern is addressed in Section 4.3 (Transportation and Circulation) of this document.
- ***Water supply and well impacts associated with Sites 21 and 29.*** As noted in the Notice of Preparation (Initial Study page 18), the proposed project would not create new impacts related to the depletion of groundwater supplies and the interference with groundwater

recharge that were not previously addressed in the Elk Grove General Plan EIR. Land use density changes resulting from the proposed project, specifically referring to sites 21 and 29, would increase the demand for water which, in turn, could result in an impact to groundwater resources. However, as stated in the Elk Grove General Plan EIR (pages 4.8-46 and 4.8-47), the Zone 40 Master Plan was developed based on the land use densities for the Sacramento County General Plan, which allows for low density uses in this area; the Master Plan indicates that there is sufficient water supplies available for these designations. In addition, future projects will be required to comply with General Plan Policy PF-6, which enforces the protection of groundwater resources.

- ***Soil erosion and contamination impacts associated with Sites 21 and 29.*** As noted in the Notice of Preparation (Initial Study page 14), the proposed project would not create greater impacts to soil erosion or unstable soils than what was previously addressed in the Elk Grove General Plan EIR because the extent of ground disturbance would be the same. In addition, future projects will be required to comply with General Plan policies CAQ-5 and SA-26, which require appropriate design and soil analyses to minimize impacts related to soil erosion and unstable soils. Regarding soil contamination, the Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment prepared by Ramcon Engineering & Environmental Contracting for the proposed Sheldon Lakes project notes some potential contamination issues with the site associated with observed soil conditions and the presence of 55-gallon drums, existing structure conditions and an electric transformer. Potential impacts associated with known and unknown contamination were addressed in the Elk Grove General Plan EIR and Action SA-8-Action 4 would address and mitigate these contamination issues.
- ***Trail issues associated with Sites 21 and 29.*** With the Elk Grove General Plan, the City adopted the City Trails Map that identifies proposed multi-use trails through sites 21 and 29. Any proposed development of these sites would be required to be consistent with the General Plan Trails Map, irrelevant of residential density.
- ***Public school impacts associated with Sites 21 and 29.*** As noted in the Notice of Preparation (Initial Study page 25), sites #21 and #29 are proposed to change from Rural Residential to Low Density Residential, which would generate additional students. These changes would not cause a physical impact on the environment associated with public school services beyond that, which was previously discussed in the Elk Grove General Plan EIR. Specifically, the environmental effects of constructing additional school facilities in the City were considered in Sections 4.1 through 4.13 of the Elk Grove General Plan EIR. In addition, California Government Code Sections 65995(h) and 65996(b) note that payment of Elk Grove Unified School District school impact fees provide full and complete school facilities mitigation, which future development on sites 21 and 29 would be required to pay.
- ***Quality of life impacts associated with Sites 21 and 29.*** This Draft SEIR does evaluate the physical environmental effects of the proposed change in land use designation from Rural Residential to Low Density Residential in technical areas that could be associated with "quality of life" concerns (e.g., air quality, noise, traffic and visual resources). However, state CEQA Guidelines Section 15131(a) specifically notes that economic and social effects of a project are not to be treated as significant effects on the environment.
- ***Consideration of different land use designations to Sites 21 and 29.*** Two comment letters suggested that sites 21 and 29 be considered with a mix of Estate Residential (0.6 to 4.0 dwelling units per acre) and Rural Residential. This modification of land uses for sites 21 and 29 is evaluated in Section 6.0 (Alternatives) of this document.