

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 Final SEIR assesses the expected environmental impacts resulting from adoption of the proposed project and associated impacts from subsequent development under the project. The City of Elk Grove will consider the Draft SEIR, this Response to Comments on the Draft SEIR, and all components of the Final SEIR in its capacity as Lead Agency before it approves, denies, or recommends changes to the proposed project.

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 SEIR to provide the public and responsible and trustee agencies with information about the potential environmental effects of the proposed project. As set forth in the provisions of CEQA and implementing regulations, public agencies are charged with the duty to consider the environmental impacts of proposed development and to minimize these impacts where feasible while carrying out an obligation to balance a variety of public objectives, including economic, environmental, and social factors.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15121(a) states that an EIR is an informational document for decision-makers and the general public that analyzes the significant environmental effects of a project, identifies possible ways to minimize significant effects, and describes reasonable alternatives to the project that could reduce or avoid its adverse environmental impacts. Public agencies with discretionary authority are required to consider the information in the EIR, along with any other relevant information, in making decisions on the project.

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 City-initiated General Plan Amendment, the City has determined that the proposed plan is a "project" within the definition of CEQA.

CEQA REQUIREMENTS FOR A FINAL EIR

CEQA required findings, and any statement of overriding considerations, would be made after the City has considered the Final SEIR 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 Draft EIR or a revision of the draft.

(b) Comments and recommendations received on the Draft SEIR either verbatim or in summary.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

(c) *A list of persons, organizations, and public agencies commenting on the Draft SEIR.*

(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."*

BACKGROUND OF ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS OF THE PROJECT

The following is an overview of the environmental review process for the General Plan Amendment that has led to the preparation of this SEIR:

Notice of Preparation and Initial Study

In accordance with Section 15082 of the CEQA Guidelines, the City of Elk Grove prepared a Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an SEIR in March 2004. The City of Elk Grove was identified as the lead agency for the proposed project. This notice was circulated to the public, local, state, and other-initiated agencies, and other interested parties to solicit comments on the proposed project. The March 2004 NOP is presented in Appendix 1.0 of the Draft SEIR. Concerns raised in response to the NOP were considered during preparation of the Draft SEIR and are also presented in Appendix 1.0 of the Draft SEIR.

Notice of Availability and Draft SEIR

The Notice of Availability for the Draft SEIR (DSEIR) was published on October 13, 2004. The Draft SEIR (DSEIR) was released for public and agency review on October 13, 2004 with the review period ending on November 26, 2004. Public comments on the DSEIR were received at the November 18, 2004 Planning Commission meeting. The DSEIR contains a description of the project, description of the environmental setting, and identification of project impacts, as well as an analysis of project alternatives.

Final SEIR

Following the close of the public review period, the City received 11 individual comment letters from agencies, interest groups and the public and also received verbal comments at the November 18, 2004 Planning Commission meeting regarding the Draft SEIR. This document responds to the written comments received as required by CEQA. This document also contains minor edits to the Draft SEIR, which are included in Section 4.0 (Revisions to the Draft SEIR). This document constitutes the FSEIR.

Certification of the Final SEIR/Project Consideration

The City of Elk Grove (City) will review and consider the FSEIR. If the City finds that the FSEIR is "adequate and complete", the City may certify the FSEIR, at a public hearing. The rule of adequacy generally holds that the SEIR 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 Final SEIR, 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.

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 Supplemental EIR pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15162 and 15163. This type of analysis focuses primarily on the subsequent changes in the environment that would occur as a result of a General Plan Amendment. The Draft SEIR and this Final SEIR 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).

1.3 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 and to be used to modify, approve, or deny approval of the proposed project based on the analysis in the EIR. This EIR should be used as the primary environmental document to evaluate all subsequent planning and permitting actions associated with the project. Subsequent actions that may be associated with the project are identified in Section 3.0 (Project Description) of the Draft SEIR.

1.4 ORGANIZATION AND SCOPE OF THE FINAL SEIR

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 Final SEIR is required to contain.

SECTION 2.0—EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Section 2.0 contains the executive summary of the Final SEIR.

SECTION 3.0—COMMENTS AND RESPONSES TO COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT SEIR

Section 3.0 provides a list of commentors, copies of written comments (coded for reference) and the responses to those written comments made on the Draft SEIR.

SECTION 4.0—REVISIONS TO THE DRAFT SEIR

Section 4.0 consists of the revisions to the Draft SEIR that are a result of responses to comments, as well as minor staff edits that do not change the intent or content of the analysis or mitigation measures.