

INTRODUCTION

This introduction is included to provide the reader with a general overview of: 1) the purpose of an EIR; 2) a description of the environmental review process conducted for this project to date; 3) the lead, responsible, and trustee agencies for the project; and 4) the general format of this EIR.

PURPOSE AND LEGAL AUTHORITY

The proposed project, referred to as the Lent Ranch Marketplace, involves the development of approximately 3.1 million square feet of building space consisting of a regional shopping mall, community commercial uses, neighborhood commercial uses, office and entertainment uses, and visitor commercial uses, and approximately 280 multi-family residential units on an approximately 294.8-acre site. The project site is located in the southern portion of the newly formed City of Elk Grove, Sacramento County, California (see **Figure 3.0-2** in **EIR Section 3.0, Project Description**). Specifically, West Stockton Boulevard and State Route 99 (SR 99) form the eastern boundary of the project site, and Kammerer Road is located generally along the southern boundary.

The Lent Ranch Marketplace project was previously examined by the County of Sacramento in May 1999 within a document titled: *Lent Ranch General Plan Amendment, Rezone, and Transportation System Management Plan Draft EIR, SCH No. 97122002*. At the time of the preparation of the Draft EIR, the County was the lead agency and decision-making body for this project. With the recent incorporation of the City of Elk Grove, the City is now the lead agency and decision-making body for this project. This EIR represents the City's independent judgment as to the environmental impacts of the proposed project.

This EIR has been prepared in accordance with all applicable sections of the *Guidelines* for the implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (amended January 2000). It identifies and discusses potential project-specific and cumulative environmental impacts, which may occur should this proposed project be implemented. The intent of this, or any EIR, is to: (1) serve as an informational document that informs public agency decision-makers and the general public of the potential environmental impacts of a project; (2) identify possible ways to minimize or avoid any potential significant impacts either through mitigation or the adoption of reasonable and feasible alternatives; and (3) disclose required agency approvals to the public.

The principal use of an EIR is to provide input and information to the comprehensive planning analysis. Given the important role of the EIR in this planning and decision-making process, it is important that the information presented in the EIR be factual, adequate, and complete. The standards for adequacy of an EIR, defined in Section 15151 of the CEQA *Guidelines*, are as follows:

“An EIR should be prepared with a sufficient degree of analysis to provide decision-makers with information which enables them to make a decision which intelligently takes account of environmental consequences. An evaluation of the environmental effects of a proposed project need not be exhaustive, but the sufficiency of an EIR is to be reviewed in light of what is reasonably feasible. Disagreement among experts does not make an EIR inadequate, but the EIR should summarize the main points of disagreement among the experts. The courts have looked not for perfection but for adequacy, completeness, and a good faith effort at full disclosure.”

This EIR is intended for use by the City of Elk Grove and other public agencies in determining whether to issue the discretionary approvals and entitlements associated with the development of the proposed project, which are identified in **Section 3.0** of this EIR. In addition, this EIR is intended for use by the City of Elk Grove in the consideration of subsequent discretionary approvals which may be necessary over the development timeframe of the proposed project. At the time an application for a subsequent discretionary approval is submitted, the City of Elk Grove will evaluate whether the potential environmental effects of that approval are adequately analyzed by this EIR. In the event that a subsequent discretionary approval would result in environmental effects not analyzed in this EIR, additional environmental review documentation would be prepared in accordance with the requirements of CEQA.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The City of Elk Grove prepared an Initial Study for the Lent Ranch project and determined that an EIR should be prepared for this project. As a result, a Notice of Preparation (NOP) was prepared and circulated with the Initial Study between August 28, 2000 and September 27, 2000 for the required 30-day review period. The purpose of the NOP and the Initial Study was to solicit early comments from public agencies with expertise in subjects that will be discussed in the Draft EIR, as well as comments from concerned organizations and individuals. The NOP, Initial Study, and written responses to the NOP are contained in **Appendix 1.0** of this EIR.

Topics evaluated in this Draft EIR have been identified based upon the Initial Study, responses to the NOP, and review by City staff. In addition, the City decided to take into consideration the topics

analyzed in the County's Draft EIR. The City determined through this initial review process that impacts related to the following topics are potentially significant and require assessment in this Draft EIR:

- Agricultural Resources
- Transportation and Circulation
- Air Quality
- Noise
- Hazards
- Public Services and Utilities (Police, Fire, Schools, Parks and Recreation, Water, Wastewater and Solid Waste)
- Hydrology and Water Quality (drainage)
- Biological Resources
- Geology and Geotechnical Hazards
- Cultural Resources
- Visual Quality
- Land Use/Population, Employment and Housing
- Economic and Social Effects
- Growth Inducement

Based on the results of the Initial Study, the City determined that impacts related to Mineral Resources would not be significant. Therefore, the topic of Mineral Resources is not addressed in this EIR. Certain subtopics were not addressed in the EIR because the City determined that impacts would not be significant. These subtopics include projects that:

- Have a substantial effect on a scenic vista;
- Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature;
- Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving landslides;
- Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water;
- For a project within the vicinity of a private air strip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the area;
- Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands;
- Inundation by a seiche, tsunami, or mudflow;
- Physically divide an established community;
- For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels;
- For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels;

- Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere;
- Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere; and
- Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risk.

The assessment of environmental impacts in this document relies in part on the existing regulatory framework. On July 1, 2000, the City Council of the City of Elk Grove adopted Ordinance 2000-1 adopting all Sacramento County ordinances including the Zoning Ordinance and the Sacramento County General Plan. Therefore, this EIR assumes that all Sacramento County ordinances and the County General Plan apply to all lands in the City of Elk Grove, including the Lent Ranch Marketplace project site.

EIR REVIEW PROCESS

This EIR will be circulated for a 45-day public review period. During this public review period, written comments concerning the adequacy of the document may be submitted by any interested person and/or affected agency, to the City of Elk Grove, Planning & Community Development, 8949 Elk Grove Boulevard, Elk Grove, CA 95624, Attention: Patrick Angell. In addition, a public hearing will be held on the adequacy of the EIR and public testimony will be accepted.

Following the public review period, all comments will be responded to in writing, and incorporated into a Final EIR. At least 10 days prior to a hearing to certify the Final EIR, responses to comments on the Draft EIR provided by responsible agencies will be sent to those agencies. The Final EIR will then be submitted to the City Council, which will determine whether to certify that the EIR reflects the City's independent judgement and has been properly prepared in accordance with CEQA.

REPORT FORMAT

As stated, a principal objective of CEQA is that the environmental review process be a public one. In meeting this objective, the EIR must inform members of the general public, decision-makers, and technically oriented reviewers of the physical impacts associated with a proposed project. To this end, specific features have been incorporated into this EIR to make it more understandable for non-technically-oriented reviewers, yet provide the technical input necessary for agency personnel.

A description of the organization of this EIR and the content of each section is provided below to assist the reader in using this EIR as a source of information about the proposed project. Sections of the Draft EIR following this introduction are organized as follows.

Section 2.0, Executive Summary, includes a general description of the environmental setting, project description and alternatives to the proposed project. Environmental impacts and mitigation measures are summarized in a tabular form.

Section 3.0, Project Description, presents a detailed description of the proposed project as required by the CEQA Guidelines. Topics addressed in this section include the project objectives and the characteristics of the project.

Section 4.0, Existing Conditions, Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures, contains analysis of each of the environmental topics addressed in this EIR. Each topic is addressed in separate subsections as follows: environmental setting; project impacts; cumulative impacts; mitigation measures; and residual impacts after mitigation.

Emphasis in this Draft EIR will be afforded to direct impacts associated with project construction and maintenance. Secondary impacts will be identified and reviewed to a point where impacts are considered speculative.

Section 5.0, Unavoidable Significant Impacts, summarizes the significant impacts associated with the project that cannot be mitigated to a less-than-significant level.

Section 6.0, Alternatives, provides an analysis of alternatives to the proposed project. As required by the CEQA Guidelines, a discussion of the reasons for selection of alternatives analyzed is provided with a comparative analysis of each alternative with the project.

Section 7.0, Significant Irreversible Environmental Changes, discusses issues which would involve long-term environmental changes should the project be implemented.

Section 8.0, Growth Inducement, discusses the ways in which the proposed project could foster economic or population growth in the area.

Section 9.0, Effects Found Not To Be Significant, discusses those effects identified as not significant during the NOP process and preparation of the Initial Study.

Section 10.0, List of EIR Preparers and Organizations and Persons Consulted, provides a list of persons involved in the preparation of this EIR, and provides a list of all organizations and persons consulted during preparation of the Draft EIR.

Section 11.0, References, provides a list of all documents utilized in the preparation of this EIR.

Appendices to this EIR include the NOP and Initial Study, and written responses, as well as other technical data used during preparation of the Draft EIR.