

1.0

INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Draft Environmental Impact Report (“DEIR”; “Draft EIR”) was prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Cal. Pub. Resources Code Sections 21000, et seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines (14 Cal. Code Regs., Section 15000, et seq.). The County of Placer (“Placer County”; “County”) is the lead agency for the environmental review of the proposed Amazing Facts Ministry project (“Project”; “proposed Project”) evaluated herein and has the principal responsibility for approving the Project. This DEIR assesses the expected environmental impacts resulting from adoption of the proposed Project and associated impacts from subsequent development under the Project.

This section summarizes the purpose of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and describes the environmental procedures that are to be followed according to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). It also discusses the intended uses of the EIR; describes the EIR’s scope and organization, contact person, and impact terminology; and provides definitions of commonly used terms and acronyms utilized throughout this EIR.

1.1 TYPE AND PURPOSE OF THE EIR

The Placer County Community Development Resource Agency, acting as the lead agency, has prepared this DEIR to provide the public, trustee agencies, and responsible agencies with information about the potential environmental effects of the proposed Project. As described in CEQA Guidelines Section 15121(a), an EIR is a public informational document that assesses potential environmental effects of a proposed project and 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 adverse 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 Project, the County has determined that the proposed Project is a “project” within the definition of CEQA.

Section 15206(b) of the State CEQA Guidelines lists the types of projects that are considered to be of statewide, regional, or areawide significance. Criteria includes general plan amendments, development projects of over 500 housing units, commercial developments employing over 1,000 people, projects requiring cancellation of a Williamson Act contract, projects that would substantially affect sensitive wildlife habitats, and projects that would interfere with attainment of regional water quality standards. If a project meets the criteria listed, the EIR is required to be distributed to applicable state agencies through the State Clearinghouse and to the metropolitan area council of governments in whose jurisdiction the project site is located. The proposed Project does not meet any of the criteria listed in Section 15206(b) and is therefore not considered to be of statewide, regional, or areawide significance.

The State CEQA Guidelines identify several types of EIRs, each applicable to different project circumstances. This EIR has been prepared as a Project EIR pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15161.

The most common type of EIR examines the environmental impacts of a specific development project. This type of EIR should focus primarily on the changes in the environment that would result from the development of the project. The EIR shall examine all phases of the project including planning, construction, and operation.

By preparing a Project EIR, the County intends to allow the entire Project, if approved by the County Board of Supervisors, to proceed without additional CEQA compliance, absent the kinds of changed circumstances or project modifications that trigger the preparation of a subsequent EIR, supplemental EIR, or addendum (see State CEQA Guidelines, Sections 15162–15164).

This Draft EIR utilizes technical information provided by the project applicant (Amazing Facts Ministry), the Placer County General Plan and Zoning Code, the Placer County General Plan Background Report, the Granite Bay Community Plan, and information gathered from federal, state, and local agencies, as well as any other data supported by the State CEQA Guidelines (see Section 15148 [Citation] and 15150 [Incorporation by Reference]). By utilizing these provisions of the State CEQA Guidelines, the County, in preparing this Draft EIR, has been able to make maximum feasible and appropriate use of this technical information.

Intended Uses of the EIR

This Draft EIR is intended to evaluate the environmental impacts of the Project to the greatest extent possible. This DEIR, prepared in accordance with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126, should be used as the primary environmental document to evaluate all planning and permitting actions associated with the Project. These actions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Approval of a minor use permit;
- Approval of a variance for a sound wall taller than 3 feet within the front setback;
- Approval of tentative and final maps;
- Improvement plans for grading, drainage, and utilities;
- Building permits;
- Section 401 and 404 permits;
- City of Rocklin approvals for improvements to frontage on Sierra College Boulevard;
- South Placer Municipal Utility District for approval of conveyance of wastewater through its collection system;
- Annexation into Sewer Maintenance District No. 2; and
- Adoption of a mitigation monitoring and reporting program, if the Project is approved.

Known Responsible and Trustee Agencies

“Responsible agency” means a public agency that proposes to carry out or approve a project for which a lead agency is preparing or has prepared an EIR or Negative Declaration. For the purpose of CEQA, the term “responsible agency” includes all California public agencies other than the

lead agency that have discretionary approval power over the project or an aspect of the project. The following agencies are identified as potential responsible agencies:

- Placer County Water Agency (PCWA)
- Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (CVRWQCB)
- California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG)
- Placer County Air Pollution Control District (PCAPCD)
- South Placer Municipal Utility District
- Placer County Parks and Grounds Division
- City of Rocklin

“Trustee agency” means a state agency having jurisdiction by law over natural resources affected by a project, which are held in trust for the people of the State of California. The only known possible trustee agency is the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG).

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 for the development of the project area. These agencies have no duties under CEQA but rather are governed by a variety of federal statutory schemes, 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 the USFWS as part of the review process for any wetland or fill permits that may be required.

1.2 ORGANIZATION AND SCOPE OF THE DRAFT EIR AND EFFECTS FOUND NOT TO BE SIGNIFICANT

Sections 15122 through 15132 of the State CEQA Guidelines identify the content requirements for Draft and Final EIRs. An EIR must include a brief summary of the proposed actions and its consequences, a description of the project, 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 environmental documentation of existing projects located in the vicinity and private and public agency responses to the Notice of Preparation/Initial Study (NOP/IS).

This Draft EIR is organized in the following manner:

Introduction – Provides an introduction and overview describing the purpose, type, and intended use of the EIR. This section also identifies responsible agencies and describes the organization of the EIR and the review and certification process, as well as includes a summary of comments received on the NOP.

Executive Summary (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15123) – Includes a summary of the characteristics of the proposed Project, known areas of controversy, and issues to be resolved, and provides a concise summary matrix of the Project’s environmental impacts, proposed mitigation

measures, and identification of alternatives that reduce or avoid at least one environmental effect of the proposed Project.

Project Description – Provides a detailed description of the proposed Project, including intended objectives, background information, and physical and technical characteristics.

Technical Chapters – Contain an analysis of environmental topic areas as identified below. Each subsection contains a description of the existing setting of the project area, identifies project-related impacts, and recommends mitigation measures.

This section also includes an introduction to the environmental analysis that describes the general assumptions used to evaluate project-specific and cumulative environmental impacts. Specific analyses are provided in each environmental issue area section:

- Land Use and Agriculture
- Population, Housing, and Employment
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Visual Resources
- Traffic and Circulation
- Air Quality
- Noise
- Geology, Soils, and Seismicity
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Public Services and Utilities
- Hazardous Materials and Hazards
- Climate Change

Other CEQA Sections

Alternatives to the Project – State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6 requires that an EIR describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the Project which could feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the Project while avoiding and/or lessening any of the significant environmental effects of the Project. This alternatives analysis provides a comparative analysis between the Project and the selected alternatives.

Growth-Inducing Implications of the Project – Contains discussions and analysis of various topical issues mandated by State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2. These issues include significant environmental effects that cannot be avoided if the Project is implemented and growth-inducing impacts.

Cumulative Impacts – Discusses the cumulative impacts associated with the proposed Project and includes mitigation measures. As required by State CEQA Guidelines Section 15130, the EIR discusses cumulative impacts when the Project’s incremental effect is cumulatively considerable.

Report Preparers – Lists all authors and agencies that assisted in the preparation of the EIR by name, title, and company or agency affiliation.

References and Persons Consulted – Lists all sources of information cited throughout this Draft EIR.

Appendices – Includes all notices and correspondence pertinent to the EIR, as well as technical materials prepared and used to support the analysis.

1.3 DEFINITION OF BASELINE

In accordance with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15125(a), “an EIR must include a description of the physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of the project, as they exist at the time the notice of preparation is published, or if no notice of preparation is published, at the time environmental analysis is commenced, from both a local and regional perspective. This environmental setting will normally constitute the baseline physical conditions by which a lead agency determines whether an impact is significant...” (California Code of Regulations, Section 15125). The baseline conditions for the Project, therefore, are the existing conditions within the boundaries of the Project site at the time that the environmental review for the Project was initiated and the Notice of Preparation (NOP) was released (February 5, 2009). The majority of the Project technical studies were conducted by the Project applicant, starting in 2007, with the environmental analysis commencing in June 2008. Since then, the Project applicant has eliminated the previously proposed Phase III, thereby reducing the overall square footage of the Project and resulting in updates to certain technical studies in 2010 and 2011. Please see **Appendix 1.0-11** for correspondence related to the reduction in Project square footage.

1.4 PROJECT SETTING

The proposed Project is located in Placer County, California, and is a single parcel identified by two assessor’s parcel numbers; APN 046-050-006 and APN 046-050-008 of 69.1 acres and 5.1 acres, respectively, totaling 74.2 acres. The proposed Project consists of development of a parking lot and three buildings for an Amazing Facts Ministry house of worship on approximately 17 acres within the northern portion of the Project site, fronting onto Sierra College Boulevard between Nightwatch Drive and Ridge Park Drive. Amazing Facts Ministry is a multifaceted, Christian media ministry which includes television, radio, internet, publishing, and the Amazing Facts Evangelism Ministry Training Center.

The Property is located within the Granite Bay Community Plan and is designated Rural Estate (RE) 4.6-acre to 20-acre minimum. Existing zoning for the Property is described as F-B-X 20-acre minimum (Farm, combining a minimum building site size of 20 acres). This zoning designation includes a house of worship as an allowed use with the approval of a minor use permit (MUP).

1.5 PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

The proposed Project has various components that would be constructed in two phases. A summary of the proposed development is provided in **Table 1-1** below. The reader is also referred to Chapter 3.0, Project Description, for a full description of the proposed project.

Phase I of the proposed Project would include a 106,800-square-foot (sf) multi-use building consisting of an auditorium/gymnasium, ministry offices, Sabbath school classrooms, a fireside chapel, an audio/visual production suite, and kitchen facilities. The auditorium/gymnasium would have removable chairs and an upper level of fixed stadium seating to temporarily accommodate approximately 1,300 people. The auditorium/gymnasium would be utilized for Saturday worship service until the completion of Phase II. An Evangelism Ministry Training Center is also included in the first phase and will host 40–50 adult students for four months twice a year (February–May and August–November). The ministry offices would house approximately 97 employees. Sabbath school classrooms would be utilized on Saturday mornings for infants through adults, and the fireside chapel would be utilized for small community gatherings such as seminars, funerals, and weddings. The audio/visual production suite would be used to record and edit ministry services. Phase I would also include a separate ±11,220 sf resource center building to support the ministry in housing materials such as compact discs, tapes, and periodicals.

Phase II would consist of a ±90,000 sf multi-use building which will replace the Phase I multi-use building's function as the main sanctuary for this ministry and serve as the permanent worship facility with seating for 2,000 people, primarily for Saturday worship services.

**TABLE 1-1
PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT SUMMARY**

| Project Phase | Components | Total Square Footage | Capacity (seats) | Parking | Employees |
|---------------|----------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Phase I | Multi-Use Facility | 106,800 | 1,300 | 625 | 97 |
| | Resource Center | 11,220 | | | |
| Phase II | Permanent Worship Facility | 90,000 | 2,000 | 275 | 0 |
| TOTAL | | 208,020 | 2,000¹ | 900 | 97 |

Notes:

1 – The Phase II worship facility would replace the temporary worship facility within the Phase I multi-use facility; therefore, no additional capacity would be added with Phase II.

In addition, the proposed Project would include construction of ±900 off-street parking spaces, landscaping along frontage areas, and an entry feature in the northwest corner of the Project site. A series of retaining walls would be constructed to accommodate the lower-level parking areas, and a sound wall is proposed along the western property line. The Project will also include modifications to the existing spillway to the pond located on the south-central portion of the Property so as to increase available detention volume as a means of maintaining pre-development peak drainage flows.

1.6 ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

Notice of Preparation and Initial Study

In accordance with Section 15082 of the State CEQA Guidelines, the County prepared a Notice of Preparation/Initial Study (NOP/IS) for the Project on February 5, 2009. In accordance with the

CEQA Guidelines, the County was identified as the lead agency for the proposed Project. The NOP/IS was circulated to the public, local, state, and federal agencies, and other interested parties to solicit comments on the proposed Project. The issues and concerns identified in responses to the NOP/IS document are addressed in this Draft EIR. The NOP/IS comments are presented in **Appendices 1.0-3 through 1.0-10**.

The Initial Study completed for the proposed Project concluded that the preparation of an EIR would be required for the Project. The County also held a scoping meeting for the Project on March 3, 2009. Concerns and comments received during the scoping meeting were considered during preparation of the Draft EIR. The County received letters from the following federal, state, and local agencies, and other interested parties:

| Agency/Name | Date |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Native American Heritage Commission | February 10, 2009 |
| Placer County Sheriff | February 20, 2009 |
| Granite Bay Community Association | February 28, 2009 |
| Placer County Water Agency | March 3, 2009 |
| City of Rocklin | March 5, 2009 |
| South Placer Waste Authority | March 6, 2009 |
| Town of Loomis | March 19, 2009 |
| James and Geri Lee | May 6, 2009 |

The following summarizes the major concerns in these letters.

- **Potential Light and Glare Impacts** – The letter from the City of Rocklin requests that the EIR address light and glare impacts from the Project onto nearby residences. These issues are addressed in Section 8.0, Visual Resources.
- **Traffic and Transportation Impacts** – The letter from the Town of Loomis requests that certain traffic and transportation issues be considered during the preparation of the Draft EIR. These issues include the provision of traffic fees, cumulative traffic analysis, future road widening, and how the Project will affect traffic on I-80 and Sierra College Boulevard and throughout the Town of Loomis. These issues are addressed in Section 9.0, Traffic and Circulation.
- **Potential Impacts to Wastewater** – The letter from the South Placer Wastewater Authority recommends that the EIR discuss and provide adequate mitigation for various concerns related to wastewater. Such issues include potentially upsizing trunk sewers that collect wastewater flows and the identification of issues relating to the construction and installation of wastewater facilities. These issues are addressed in Section 13.0, Hydrology and Water Quality, and Section 14.0, Public Services and Utilities.
- **Aesthetic and Air Quality Impacts** – The letter from the Granite Bay Community Association recommends that the EIR discuss the Project visibility from the community and vehicle-related air quality issues. These issues are addressed in Section 8.0, Visual Resources, and Section 10.0, Air Quality, respectively.

- **Transportation and Water** – The letter from James and Geri Lee addresses operational traffic hazards, parking issues, parking lot noise, sediment runoff, habitat issues, adequate water flow, water pollution, and flooding. These issues are addressed in Section 6.0, Biological Resources, Section 9.0, Traffic and Circulation, Section 11.0, Noise, Section 12.0, Geology, Soils, and Seismicity, and Section 13.0, Hydrology and Water Quality.
- **Cultural Resources** – The letter from the Native American Heritage Commission recommends various steps to take in the archeological investigation associated with the proposed Project. These issues are addressed in Section 7.0, Cultural Resources.
- **Law Enforcement** – The letter from the Placer County Sheriff recommends that the applicant work closely with law enforcement during all stages of the proposed development and design features that discourage criminal activity. Law enforcement impacts are discussed in Section 14.0, Public Services and Utilities.
- **Potential Impacts to Water** – The letter from the Placer County Water Agency recommends that the EIR discuss and provide adequate mitigation for various concerns related to water. These issues are addressed in Section 13.0, Hydrology and Water Quality, and Section 14.0, Public Services and Utilities.

Draft EIR

This document constitutes the Draft EIR (DEIR). 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, and identification of growth-inducing impacts and cumulative impacts. Upon completion of the DEIR, the County will file a Notice of Completion (NOC) with the State Office of Planning and Research to begin the public review period (Public Resources Code, Section 21161).

Public Notice/Public Review

Concurrent with the NOC, the County will provide public notice of the availability of the DEIR for public review and invite comment from the general public, agencies, organizations, and other interested parties. Consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15105, the review period for this DEIR will be forty-five (45) days. Public comment on the Draft EIR will be accepted both in written form and orally at public hearings. All comments or questions regarding the DEIR should be addressed to:

Environmental Coordination Services
Placer County Community Development Resource Agency
3091 County Center Drive, Suite 190
Auburn, CA 95603
(530) 745-3132
fax (530) 745-3080
cdraecs@placer.ca.gov

Response to Comments/Final EIR

Following the public review period, a Final EIR (FEIR) will be prepared. The Final EIR will respond to all significant environmental issues raised in written and oral comments received during the public review period and to comments made at any public hearing.

Certification of the EIR/Project Consideration

Upon review and certification of the FEIR, the County Board of Supervisors 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 (Findings) and, if applicable, Section 15093 (Statement of Overriding Considerations). A Statement of Overriding Considerations requires the decision-making agency to balance, as applicable, the economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits of a proposed project against its unavoidable environmental risks when determining whether to approve a project. A mitigation monitoring and reporting program (MMRP), as described below, would 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. The MMRP will be designed to ensure that these measures are carried out during all phases of the project's implementation.

Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program

Public Resources Code Section 21081.6(a) requires lead agencies, at the time of project approval, to adopt an MMRP 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 EIR; however, it will be presented to County decision-makers for adoption. Throughout the EIR, however, mitigation measures have been clearly identified and presented in language that will facilitate establishment of a monitoring and reporting program. Any mitigation measures adopted by the Board of Supervisors as conditions for approval of the project will be included in the MMRP to ensure and verify compliance.

1.7 DEFINITION OF COMMONLY USED TERMS

Identified below are common terms used throughout this document. A complete list of acronyms and abbreviations is also provided.

CEQA Terminology

Cumulatively Considerable Impact: Cumulatively considerable means that the incremental effects of an individual project are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.

Less Than Cumulatively Considerable Impact: A less than cumulatively considerable impact results when the incremental effects of an individual project would not contribute significantly to a cumulative impact.

Less Than Significant Impact: A less than significant impact would cause no substantial change in the environment and no mitigation would be required.

No Impact: No adverse change to the environment would occur.

Potentially Significant Impact: A potentially significant impact is one that may or may not occur and where a definite determination cannot be made. Feasible mitigation measures and/or project alternatives are identified to avoid or reduce the project's effects on the environment to a less than significant level.

Significant Impact: A significant impact would cause (or would potentially cause) a substantial adverse change in the physical conditions of the environment. Significant impacts are identified by the evaluation of project effects using specified standards of significance. Mitigation measures and/or project alternatives are identified to reduce project effects on the environment.

Significant Unavoidable Impact: A significant and unavoidable impact would result in a substantial change in the environment that cannot be avoided or mitigated to a less than significant level if the project is implemented.

Standards of Significance: A set of criteria used by the lead agency to determine at what level or “threshold” an impact would be considered significant. Significance criteria used in this EIR include the State CEQA Guidelines; factual or scientific information; regulatory performance standards of local, state, and federal agencies; and County goals, objectives, and policies.

General Terminology

County: County of Placer

Applicant: Any person or other legal entity who applies to the County to develop or improve any portion of the real property within the project site. The term “applicant” shall include all successors in interest.

Project Site/Property: The real property described by the Project application is a single parcel identified by two assessor’s parcel numbers: APN 046-050-006, comprising 69.1 acres, and APN 046-050-008, comprising 5.1 acres. The total Project site is approximately 74.2 acres and is bordered by Sierra College Boulevard on the north between Nightwatch Drive and Ridge Park Drive and on the south by property at the end of Oak Hill Lane off Cavitt Stallman Road in Granite Bay.

Project Area/Vicinity: The Project area or Project vicinity, as used herein, is the nearby or adjacent area surrounding the Project site in which significant effects would occur either directly or indirectly as a result of the Project.

Proposed Project: The house of worship buildings and ancillary improvements proposed to be developed by the applicant. This proposed Project, as defined in the application, would occupy approximately 17 acres in the northwest corner of the Project site. The proposed Project would also include the previously described improvements to the spillway located on the south-central portion of the Property.

Internal Citations (e.g., DOF, 2008; Placer County, 2009a): Internal citations are provided throughout this document and correspond to the references provided in Section 20.0. The first part of each citation refers to the author or agency that published the resource, while the second part refers to the year of publication. If a letter is present after the year, there are multiple resources with the same author/agency and year of publication.