



COUNTY OF PLACER
Community Development Resource Agency

**ENVIRONMENTAL
COORDINATION
SERVICES**

DATE: September 25, 2008

TO: Interested Parties

SUBJECT: Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report for the Proposed Rancho Del Oro Estates Project

REVIEW PERIOD: September 25, 2008 to October 24, 2008

Placer County is the lead agency for the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed Rancho Del Oro Estates project (proposed project) in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Section 15050. The purpose of the Notice of Preparation (NOP) is to provide responsible agencies and interested persons with sufficient information in order to make meaningful responses as to the scope and content of the EIR. Your timely comments will ensure an appropriate level of environmental review for the project.

Project Description: The proposed project would include the subdivision of the approximately 119-acre site into 89 single-family lots and nine common area lots. In addition, the proposed project would include the construction of internal roadways with two access points onto Olive Ranch Road, and infrastructure to connect to water delivery and sanitary sewer systems. The existing zoning designation is RS-AG-B100-PD-0.83 (Residential Single-Family, Combining Agricultural, Combining Minimum Building Site of 100,000 square feet, Combining Planned Development). The applicant is requesting a rezone that would remove the Agriculture, Building Site, and Planned Residential Development combining districts, and would add the Density Limitation combining district to the existing RS zone district.

In addition, the project includes paving a portion of a 20-foot wide emergency response route off-site along the existing private Shadow Oaks Lane, which may also require the construction of off-site emergency vehicle access gates.

Project Location: The proposed project is located on 119.4 acres north of Olive Ranch Road, 0.25 miles east of Cavitt-Stallman Road, in Granite Bay, Placer County (See Figure 1, Regional Location). The proposed project site is identified as Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) 046-090-012.

For more information regarding the project, please contact E.J. Ivaldi, Supervising Planner, at (530) 745-3147.

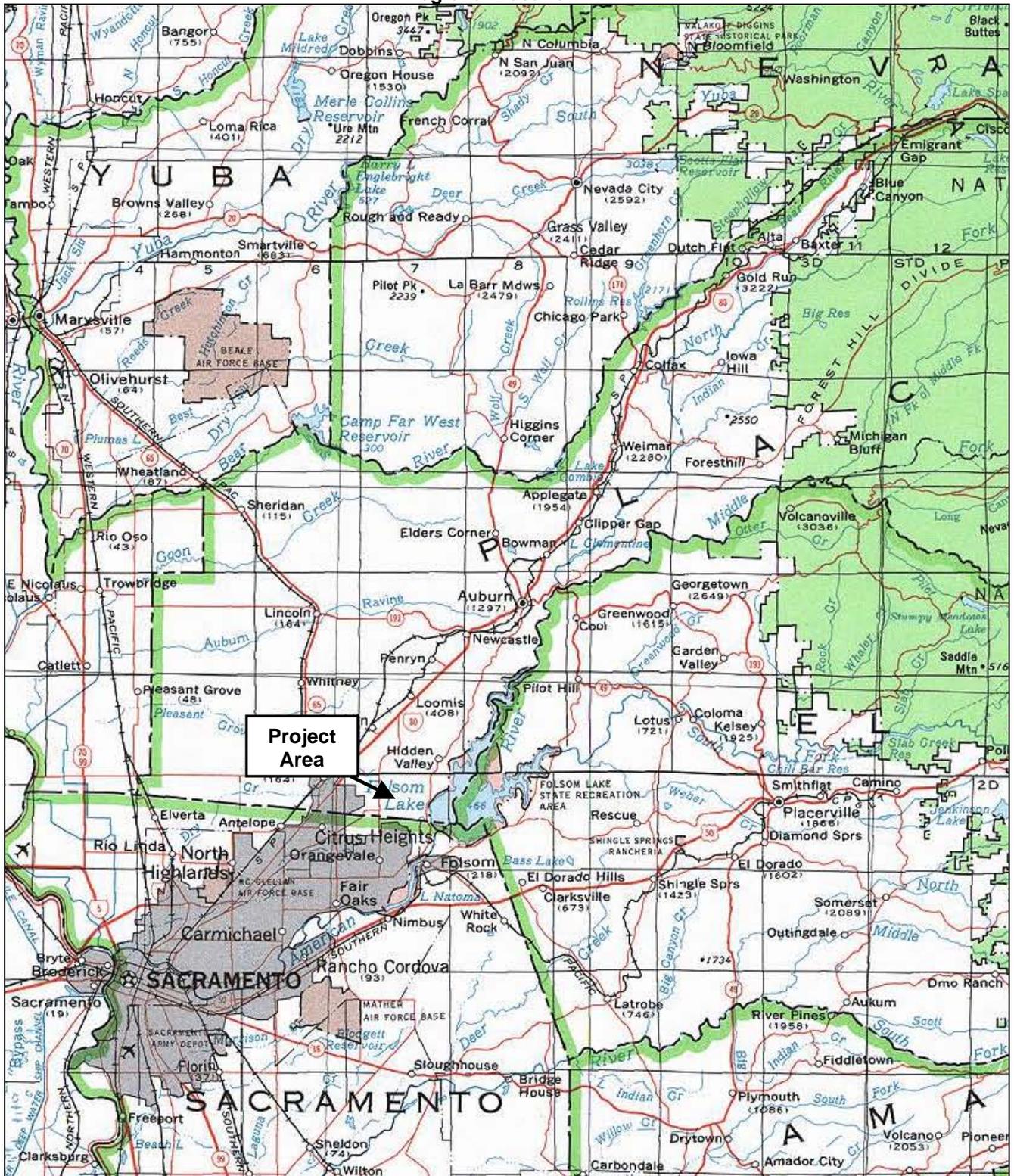
A copy of the NOP is available for review at the Granite Bay Library, Placer County Community Development Resource Agency, and the Placer County website:

<http://www.placer.ca.gov/Departments/CommunityDevelopment/EnvCoordSvcs/EnvDocs.aspx>

Scoping Meeting: The Lead Agency will hold a public Scoping Meeting to receive oral comments on Wednesday, **October 15, 2008** at 10am in the Planning Commission Hearing Room, located at 3091 County Center Drive, Dewitt Center, Auburn.

NOP Comment Period: Written comments should be submitted at the earliest possible date, but not later than 5:00 pm on **October 24, 2008** to: Environmental Coordination Services, Community Development Resource Agency, 3091 County Center Drive, Suite 190, Auburn, CA 95603. (530) 745-3132, Fax: (530) 745-3003, cdraecs@placer.ca.gov.

Figure 1
Regional Location



1.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1.1 Project Location

The project site is located in the community of Granite Bay and consists of one parcel located on the north side of Olive Ranch Road, 0.25 miles east of Cavitt-Stallman Road. The project site is bounded on the north by Miners Ravine, on the east and west by single-family residential properties, and on the south, across Olive Ranch Road, by single-family residential properties (See Figure 2, Project Location).

1.2 Project Setting

Site Characteristics

The proposed project site is currently 119.4 acres of undeveloped land used for cattle grazing and is characterized by varying topography, with rolling hills along the western, southern, and eastern edges and a relatively flat area located in the central portion of the site. The topography of the site is moderately sloped with elevations ranging between 245 feet and 300 feet above mean sea level. Vegetation consists of a dense growth of trees along the western, southern, and eastern edges of the property with a moderate growth of grass throughout the entire project site. The project site is composed of mixed oak woodland and annual grassland, and contains waters of the U.S. and associated riparian habitats. Annual grassland is found mainly in the central portion of the site, but is also interspersed within the oak woodland vegetation throughout the remainder of the site. The densest portion of oak woodland is found in the eastern and southeastern portions of the site. Miner's Ravine traverses the northerly boundary of the project site. Potential jurisdictional waters of the U.S. on-site include the following: depressional seasonal wetland, depressional seasonal marsh, riparian wetland, riverine perennial marsh, riverine seasonal wetland, ephemeral drainage, perennial drainage, and a pond.

Surrounding Land Uses

Low-density residential development surrounds the proposed project site on the east and west, Olive Ranch Road and high-density residential development exist to the south, and Miners Ravine is located to the north of the site.

1.3 Project Elements

The Placer County General Plan (GP) and Granite Bay Community Plan currently designate the project site as Rural Low Density Residential (0.9 to 2.3 acres per unit). The existing Placer County zoning district for the project site is RS-AG-B100-PD 0.83 (Single-Family Residential, minimum lot size of 100,000 square feet, combining Agriculture, combining Planned Development). The applicant is requesting a rezone that would remove the Agriculture, Building Site, and Planned Residential Development combining districts, and would add the Density Limitation combining district to the existing RS zone district, in order to create 89 single-family lots.

The proposed project, which is surrounded by existing or approved residential development, is an infill project that seeks to preserve natural resources while allowing for development of the project site. The proposed project includes the development of 89 residential single-family lots and nine common area lots, lots "A" through "I," on a total of 119.4 acres (See Figure 3, Vesting Tentative Map). All residential lots would be at least 42,000 square feet, or roughly one acre, in size, which would result in a project that would be compatible with surrounding development while providing for open space and avoidance of natural resources.

Figure 2
Project Location



On-site infrastructure for the project would consist of subdivision roads and water, sewer, and storm drainage improvements. In addition, the project would include the following off-site improvements: 1) widening of Olive Ranch Road to County standards, including curb, gutter, and meandering sidewalk; 2) two school bus turnouts; and 3) possibly connecting homes on Lawrence Drive to the proposed project's sewer line, abandoning an existing sewer lift station that currently serves those homes. The project would be gated, with a main access and secondary access off Olive Ranch Road. The gated entries will include low-level lighting. A 30-foot-wide common area lot that will parallel Olive Ranch Road will include a decorative soundwall and project landscaping.

In addition, the project includes paving a portion of a 20-foot wide emergency response route off-site along the existing private Shadow Oaks Lane which may also require the construction of off-site emergency vehicle access gates.

Grading and Drainage

Two main swales are located on the project site – Swale A and Swale B. Currently, Swale A crosses Olive Ranch Road in three 24-inch CSP culverts, entering the project site in the southwest corner and exiting along the west property line. Approximately 32.5 on-site acres drain into Swale A. Swale B enters the project site along the east property line, approximately 650 feet north of Olive Ranch Road. A smaller swale, Swale C, joins with Swale B prior to discharging into Miners Ravine along the north property line. Miners Ravine traverses the northern property line and is a major tributary of the Dry Creek watershed, which is the main drainage in south Placer County. Swale A contains protected wetlands and will remain in the swale's natural condition, other than Road B crossing the swale after completion of the project. The Road B crossing would consist of a multi-barrel, bottomless arch type structure. The area above the Road B crossing and between Road B and Olive Ranch Road would be used for on-site stormwater detention. Swale B would be underground in a galvanized steel, spiral-ribbed, arch pipe or similar structure, and conveyed through the project site. This pipe would be the main drain for the project site.

2.0 PROBABLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS AND SCOPE OF THE EIR

The EIR prepared for the Rancho Del Oro Estates project will provide analysis of the impacts pertaining to the resource areas identified below. Although detailed analysis has not been conducted at this time, preliminary analysis of the proposed project has identified impacts likely to result from the project. The proposed EIR will incorporate by reference the Placer County General Plan and the Granite Bay Community Plan, as well as the corresponding Environmental Impact Reports. In addition to these County documents, project-specific technical studies prepared (or being prepared) by various technical consultants will be utilized. The following paragraphs discuss the results of preliminary impact identification and anticipated analyses that will be included in the EIR:

Aesthetics. The Aesthetics chapter of the EIR will summarize the existing regional and project area aesthetics and visual setting in relation to the proposed project. The chapter will describe project-specific aesthetics issues regarding development of the proposed project, such as scenic vistas, waterways or bodies of water, trees, historic buildings, scenic highways, existing visual character or quality of the site and surrounding areas, as well as light and glare. This chapter of the EIR will include an analysis of the existing setting, identification of the thresholds of significance, identification of impacts, and the development of mitigation measures and monitoring strategies.

Air Quality. The Air Quality chapter will utilize the traffic data provided in the traffic study to obtain vehicle trip generation data for use in running the URBEMIS2007 Air Quality model. The air quality impact analysis will include a quantitative assessment of short-term (i.e., construction) and long-term (i.e., operational) increases of criteria air pollutant emissions of primary concern (i.e., ROG, NO_x, and PM₁₀). The project's cumulative contribution to regional air quality will be discussed, based in part on the modeling conducted at the project level. In addition, the EIR will address the project's contribution to global climate change by quantifying increases in greenhouse gas emissions (i.e., carbon dioxide and methane) attributable to the proposed project. GHG emissions will be quantified using the URBEMIS2007 computer model. The significance of air quality impacts will be determined in comparison to significance thresholds recommended by the Placer County Air Pollution Control District (PCAPCD). Mitigation measures

recommended by the PCAPCD will be incorporated to reduce any significant air quality impacts and anticipated reductions in emissions associated with proposed mitigation measures will be quantified.

Biological Resources. The Biological Resources chapter of the EIR will summarize the setting and describe the potential effects to plant communities, trees (oak woodlands), wildlife, and wetlands including adverse effects on rare, endangered, candidate, sensitive, and special-status species for the project site. This chapter of the EIR will include an analysis of the existing setting, identification of the thresholds of significance, identification of impacts, and the development of mitigation measures and monitoring strategies. The appropriate agencies such as the U.S. Department of Fish and Game, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the NOAA Fisheries (formerly the National Marine Fisheries Service), and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will be consulted. The biological and botanical information (e.g., arborist report) prepared to date for the project site will be utilized in order to prepare the Biological Resources chapter of the EIR.

Cultural Resources. The Cultural Resources chapter of the EIR will summarize the setting and briefly describe the potential construction-related effects to on-site historical, archaeological, and paleontological resources. As noted in the Initial Study prepared for the project, the Archaeological Inventory Survey prepared for the project site determined that three prehistoric sites exist on-site which are considered potentially significant per CEQA and potentially eligible for consideration in the National Register of Historic Places. The applicant proposes to protect these resources by locating them within an open space parcel. The chapter will assess the project's potential to adversely impact these resources and determine what mitigation measures can be implemented, if necessary, to reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level. Generally, this chapter of the EIR will include an analysis of the existing setting, identification of the thresholds of significance, identification of impacts, and the development of mitigation measures and monitoring strategies. It should be noted that the Placer County would perform Senate Bill (SB) 18 Tribal Consultation, which is required for the project.

Geology and Soils. The Geology and Soils chapter of the EIR will summarize the setting and describe the potential effects from earthquakes, landslides, liquefaction, expansive soils, and soil erosion, as well as identify any unique geological features within the project site. This chapter will include an analysis of the existing setting, identification of the thresholds of significance, identification of impacts, and the development of mitigation measures and monitoring strategies. The chapter will primarily be based on the Revised Geotechnical Engineering Study prepared for the project site.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials. The Hazards and Hazardous Materials chapter of the EIR will summarize the setting and describe any potential of existing or possible hazardous materials on-site or as a result of the proposed project. This chapter will be primarily based on a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment and a Phase II Abandoned Mine Lands Assessment/Preliminary Endangerment Assessment prepared for the project site. In addition, this chapter of the EIR will include an analysis of the existing setting, identification of the thresholds of significance, identification of impacts, and the development of mitigation measures and monitoring strategies.

Hydrology and Water Quality. The Hydrology and Water Quality chapter of the EIR will summarize setting information and identify potential impacts on irrigation drainage, stormwater drainage, flooding, groundwater, seepage, and water quality. Consideration will include on-site and off-site infrastructure facilities. As indicated in the Initial Study prepared for the proposed project, a portion of the project grading and fill activities are within the 100-year floodplain of Miner's Ravine, which flows in a westerly direction near or along the project site's northern property line. The property is within the Dry Creek Watershed Flood Control Plan area. For this chapter, the Preliminary Drainage Report prepared for the project will be utilized. In addition, the appropriate service providers will be contacted to obtain information pertinent to the proposed project analysis. The chapter will also include an analysis of the existing setting, identification of the thresholds of significance, identification of impacts, and the development of mitigation measures and monitoring strategies.

Land Use and Planning. The Land Use and Planning chapter of the EIR will evaluate the consistency of the proposed project with Placer County's adopted plans and policies. The Placer County General Plan, the Granite Bay Community Plan, the Placer County Zoning Ordinance, as well as other appropriate

documents, will be reviewed to address consistency issues, especially as related to proposed fill within the 100-year flood plain and creek setback policies. The Land Use and Planning chapter will further assess the compatibility of the proposed project with the surrounding land uses, both existing and proposed. The chapter will identify land use impacts and will discuss any inconsistencies or incompatibilities with adopted plans and policies created by the approval of the proposed project. The impacts will be measured against the thresholds of significance and appropriate mitigation measures and monitoring strategies will be identified which are consistent with the policies of Placer County.

Mineral Resources. The Mineral Resources chapter of the EIR will describe the setting and summarize the potential impacts to mineral resources that could result from implementation of the proposed project. This chapter will include an analysis of the setting, identification of thresholds of significance, identification of impacts, and the development of mitigation measures and monitoring strategies. The chapter will primarily be based on the Phase I Environmental Site Assessment that has been prepared for the project site.

Noise. The Noise chapter of the EIR will include an analysis of the existing setting, identification of thresholds of significance, identification of impacts, and the development of mitigation measures and monitoring strategies. The chapter will be based on an acoustical assessment being prepared for the project site by a technical consultant. The noise study will include quantitative information for buildout of the project site. In addition, the noise study will include an analysis of existing, existing plus project, future, and future plus project traffic noise levels using the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA RD77-108) traffic noise prediction model. Potential impacts upon nearby sensitive receptors from construction noise will also be assessed. Exterior noise levels will be compared to the exterior noise level criteria contained within the Placer County General Plan Noise Element, and to existing noise levels. Appropriate and practical recommendations for noise control, which are aimed at reducing any identified potential noise impacts to a level of insignificance, will be included in the noise study and subsequently incorporated into the Noise chapter of the EIR.

Public Services and Utilities. The Public Services and Utilities chapter of the EIR will summarize setting information and identify potential new demand for services on water supply, sewage systems, solid waste disposal, roads, law enforcement, fire protection, schools, libraries, and parks and recreation. The County and other appropriate agencies will be consulted early in the process in order to address public services and utilities and obtain the most recent information. The sewer section of the analysis will be based upon the Preliminary Sewer Master Plan/Capacity Study prepared for the project by the project engineer. In addition, this chapter will include an analysis of the existing setting, identification of the thresholds of significance, identification of impacts, and the development of mitigation measures and monitoring strategies.

Transportation and Circulation. The Transportation and Circulation chapter of the EIR will be based on a traffic impact analysis prepared by a technical consultant. Evaluation of project impacts to transportation and circulation will be based on the standards and policies of Placer County and the State of California. The traffic study will quantify the existing and future traffic impacts associated with development of the overall project for vehicular, pedestrian, and transit related impacts, along with mitigation measures required to mitigate impacts to an acceptable traffic operation and safety level.

The chapter will also include standards of significance and methods of analysis, and will describe the impacts associated with traffic and propose mitigation to reduce the level of impacts. The Transportation and Circulation chapter will summarize the existing and planned regional and local transportation network, as well as existing and future traffic conditions. The chapter will identify traffic loads and capacity of street systems including level of service (LOS) standards for critical street segments and intersections. In addition, a detailed site circulation and access review will be conducted to determine the adequacy of the proposed site plan in accordance with generally accepted traffic engineering standards. Emergency access, transit, pedestrian, and bicycle facilities will also be discussed and analyzed to ensure adequacy of the proposed facilities based on existing Placer County plans.

Cumulative Impacts. In accordance with Section 15130 of the CEQA Guidelines, an analysis of cumulative impacts associated with the proposed project will be undertaken and discussed. In addition, pursuant to Section 21100(B)(5) of the CEQA Guidelines, the analysis will address the potential for growth-inducing impacts related to the proposed project, focusing on whether a removal of any impediments to growth would occur. Furthermore, the Air Quality chapter will include a Regulatory Context section that will contain an analysis of impacts related to global climate change (GCC), including a detailed description of what is currently known about GCC. This section will go on to describe the current regulatory context related to GCC (e.g., Assembly Bill 32). Following the Regulatory Context section will be the Impacts and Mitigation Measures section, which will include quantitative data showing the proposed project's contribution to the generation of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions during the operational phase of the project. The GCC section will quantify the project's GHG emissions using the URBEMIS2007 outputs for mobile uses and published emissions factors for stationary uses.

Alternatives. In accordance with Section 15126.6(a) of the CEQA Guidelines, at least three project alternatives, including the No Project Alternative, will be analyzed. Alternatives will be devised based on the project design, public input, and potential impacts identified for the proposed project during the preparation of the Draft EIR.

The alternatives analysis will “describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, which would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project, and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives.” The alternatives will be analyzed at a level of detail less than that of the proposed project; however, the analyses will include sufficient detail to allow a comparison of the impacts. This will include quantitative analysis for specific issue areas (traffic, noise, air quality) for each alternative and the inclusion of conceptual site plans for each alternative as well as a table that will compare the features and the impacts of each alternative. The discussion will also identify and analyze the “environmentally superior alternative.”

3.0 PROJECT APPROVALS

At a minimum, the following approvals and permits will be required prior to construction of the proposed project. As part of evaluation of the project, a drainage analysis will be prepared to determine if the proposed fill within the 100-year floodplain of Miner's Ravine is a significant impact requiring an amendment to the Granite Bay Community Plan. The responsible agencies and types of permits are listed in Table 1. All other regulatory guidance will be discussed in the applicable resources chapters of the EIR.

Required Permit	Responsible Agency
Rezone	Placer County
Tentative Subdivision Map	Placer County
Section 404 Permit	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Section 401 Water Quality Certification	Regional Water Quality Control Board – Central Valley Region
Section 402, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit Compliance	Regional Water Quality Control Board - Central Valley Region

Approvals Issued by Placer County

- *Rezone* – The proposed project would require County approval of a change in zoning designations from RS-AG-B100-PD-0.83 to RS-DL-0.83.
- *Tentative Subdivision Map* – The County must review and approve the proposed Tentative Subdivision Map.

Approvals Issued by Other Agencies

Section 404 Permit – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) regulates the placement of fill or dredged materials that affect waters of the United States, which include streams and wetlands. The USACE regulates these activities under the authority granted by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Due to the numerous project constraints the drainages and isolated depressional wetlands will need to be filled to allow for a more efficient detention/retention storm water system. A total of approximately 2.5 acres of wetlands will be filled; therefore, the project will be required to obtain a Section 404 permit to impact jurisdictional waters found on the project site.

Section 401 Water Quality Certification – In association with the Section 404 permit issued by the USACE, the project must apply for and obtain a State Water Quality Certification from the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) in compliance with Section 401 of the Clean Water Act.

Section 402 National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit Compliance – Any project that disturbs more than 10,000 square feet of land is required to obtain a permit for stormwater discharge under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program administered by the RWQCB. The proposed project would be required to obtain coverage under the program for construction phase and post-construction phase stormwater discharge and would be required to develop a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP).