

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

This Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) has been prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for Placer County, which is acting as lead agency for the preparation of environmental documentation for the Placer Retirement Residence (proposed project).

CEQA requires public agencies to evaluate the potential adverse environmental impacts of their projects. Under CEQA, the purpose of an EIR is to disclose to the public and the decision makers, in this case, the Placer County Board of Supervisors, the significant impacts of the project and to identify feasible mitigation measures that would avoid or reduce the severity of the impacts. The EIR also considers alternatives to the project that would meet most of the basic objectives of the project as well as reduce or avoid one or more of the significant impacts identified as part of this review. This Draft EIR (SCH # 2017102049) has been prepared in conformance with CEQA (Public Resources Code [PRC] section 21000, et seq.) and the CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulation, tit. 14, ch. 3, section 15000, et seq. (“CEQA Guidelines”)) to disclose the environmental impacts associated with the Placer Retirement Residence. This Draft EIR evaluates the direct, indirect and cumulative project impacts of construction and operation of the proposed project at a project-level of review under CEQA. (See CEQA Guidelines section 15161.)

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires all public agencies to consider the environmental consequences of projects for which they have discretionary authority. The public agency with the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving a project is the “lead agency.” CEQA requires the lead agency to prepare an EIR if there is substantial evidence, in light of the whole record, that a project may have a significant effect on the environment. A significant effect is defined in CEQA as a substantial, or potentially substantial, and adverse physical change in the environment. The County is the lead agency for the proposed project.

According to § 15121 of the State CEQA Guidelines, an EIR is an informational document that is written to inform public agency decision-makers and the public of the significant environmental effects of a proposed project. The purpose of an EIR is to:

- Analyze the environmental effects of a proposed project;
- Indicate mitigation measures to avoid or minimize the potentially significant environmental effects of the project; and,

- Identify alternatives to the project that would avoid or substantially lessen the significant effects.

It is not the purpose of an EIR to recommend either approval or denial of a project. Rather, the purpose of an EIR is to provide relevant information that will assist decision-makers in their decision to approve or deny the project. The lead agency may choose to approve a project that would result in significant environmental effects that cannot be mitigated. If this occurs, the lead agency is required to prepare a “Statement of Overriding Considerations,” pursuant to § 15093 of the CEQA Guidelines.

1.1.1 NOTICE OF PREPARATION

A Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the EIR was prepared and issued on October 17, 2017 and the 30-day comment period extended from October 17, 2017 to November 15, 2017. The NOP was circulated to local, state, and federal agencies and other interested parties, consistent with the requirements of CEQA. A public scoping meeting was held at the Placer County Planning Commission Hearing Room on November 7, 2017. In the process of preparing the NOP, the County completed an Initial Study and Environmental Checklist based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines to assess the potential impacts of the proposed project. Based on the analysis in the Initial Study, the NOP indicated the following environmental topics would be addressed in this project level EIR:

1. Aesthetics
2. Air Quality
3. Biological Resources
4. Geology and Soils
5. Greenhouse Gas Emissions
6. Hydrology/Water Quality/Flooding
7. Land Use and Planning
8. Noise
9. Public Services
10. Transportation and Traffic
11. Energy Conservation
12. Cumulative Impacts
13. Alternatives

Consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15128, impacts that were determined to be potentially significant are evaluated in Chapter 4, Setting, Potential Impacts, and Mitigation Measures. Environmental impacts found to be less than significant during the Initial Study/NOP Process were: Agriculture and Forestry Resources, Cultural and Tribal Resources, Mineral Resources, Paleontological Resources, Population and Housing, and Recreation, and Utilities. The County concluded that the proposed project would have less than significant impact with regard to these topics. In the case of Agricultural Resources, Cultural and Tribal Resources, and Recreation, mitigation measures were identified that would reduce potential impacts to less than significant. These mitigation measures can be found at the end of Table S-1 in the Summary Chapter.

Applicable agencies and interested members of the public had up to 30 days to respond to the NOP regarding the contents of the Draft EIR. The NOP, Initial Study, and comment letters received during the NOP circulation period are provided in Appendix A.

Comments Received on the Notice of Preparation

During the NOP public review period, Placer County received nine (9) comment letters. A copy of each letter is provided in Appendix A of this EIR. In addition, verbal comments were received at the public scoping meeting held on November 7, 2017. The comment letters were authored by the following representatives of State and local agencies, as well as other interested parties:

Public Agencies

City of Roseville – Mark Morse;
Native American Heritage Commission – Sharaya Souza.

Groups

Defend Granite Bay
Granite Bay Community Association

Individuals

Marianna Bekhet
Cheryl Berkema
Robert Coibion
Jeff Keith
Phillip and Susan Meserve

The following list, categorized by issue, summarizes the concerns brought forth in the comment letters:

Issue Area:	Concerns Related To:
Aesthetics (EIR Chapter 4.1)	Visual impacts associated with height, bulk and scale of building; nighttime lighting impacts
Air Quality (EIR Chapter 4.2)	Project impacts on air quality
Biological Resources (EIR Chapter 4.3)	Wetland impacts, impacts on birds and wildlife; impacts on the creek
Cultural and Tribal Resources (Initial Study, Section V; Appendix A)	Impacts on cultural, historical, or tribal resources
Hazards and Hazardous Materials (Initial Study, Section VIII; Appendix A)	Agricultural pesticides in the soils
Hydrology and Water Quality (EIR Chapter 4.6)	Drainage concerns and water quality impacts
Land Use (EIR Chapter 4.7)	Land use compatibility, consistency with Granite Bay Community Plan, building height, consistency with zoning, disrupt an established single-family residential community, population growth; impacts on rural nature of community
Noise (EIR Chapter 4.8)	Noise from emergency vehicles responding to project
Public Services (EIR Chapter 4.9)	Emergency responsiveness to Granite Bay residents, impacts on public safety, impacts on South Placer Fire District response times
Transportation and Traffic (EIR Chapter 4.10)	Trip generation, traffic congestion, safe ingress, and egress; parking capacity
Energy (EIR Chapter 4.11)	Use of solar and rain catchments for irrigation, electrical extension utilities

All of these issues are addressed in the relevant chapters identified in the first column.

Project Changes Since Publication of the NOP

Since the NOP was published, minor changes were made to the Option 1: Full Frontage Roadway Improvements design to include offsite improvements to the west of the project site. The project design was updated to reflect the full roadway improvement requirements of Old Auburn Road in the Granite Bay Community Plan. However, such changes did not significantly affect the overall scope or intensity of the overall proposed residential care home development.

1.1.2 DRAFT EIR

This document constitutes the project-level Draft EIR. It contains a description of the project, description of the environmental setting (existing conditions), identification of project impacts and mitigation measures for impacts found to be significant or potentially significant, and an analysis of project alternatives. This project-level EIR addresses all environmental topics required by CEQA including CEQA-related issues that were raised in the NOP comments.

Significance criteria vary for each environmental issue analyzed in this EIR and are defined at the beginning of each impact analysis chapter. Impacts are categorized as follows:

- Significant and Unavoidable (significant impact that cannot be mitigated to a less than significant level with specified mitigation measures);
- Less than Significant with Mitigation (significant impact that is mitigated to a less-than-significant level with implementation of specified mitigation measures); and,
- Less than Significant (impact not significant or not significant with implementation of existing regulations or recommended conditions of approval).

Significance is the basis for determining whether or not mitigation, if feasible, is required for a potential impact. The ultimate determination as to whether the mitigation proposed in an EIR is “feasible” within the meaning of CEQA is made by agency decision-makers.

1.1.3 PUBLIC REVIEW

The information in this report is subject to review by the County of Placer, responsible and interested agencies, as well as the public for a period of 45 days. The EIR and all materials described as references in the topical chapters of the EIR are available for public review at the following locations: Granite Bay Branch Library; Placer County Community Development Resource Agency front counter; and at the following link on the County’s website:

<http://www.placer.ca.gov/departments/communitydevelopment/envcoordsvcs/eir>

Publication of this Draft EIR marks the beginning of the public review period, during which written comments should be sent to the County of Placer at the following address:

Shirlee Herrington, Environmental Coordination Services
County of Placer
Community Development Resource Agency
3091 County Center Drive, Suite 190
Auburn, CA 95603
OR
cdraecs@placer.ca.gov

During the 45-day review period, persons are encouraged to comment on the contents of the Draft EIR, either during a Planning Commission public hearing or in writing to the County of Placer Community Development Resource Agency.

1.1.4 FINAL EIR CERTIFICATION AND ACTION ON THE PROJECT

Following the close of the 45-day review period written and oral comments received on the Draft EIR will be responded to in writing in a Comments and Responses document. The Comments and Responses document, together with the Draft EIR, will constitute the Final EIR. After preparation of the Final EIR, the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will hold public hearings on the Final EIR to consider EIR certification and to consider approval of the project's requested entitlements.

The decision-making bodies of the County of Placer are required to consider the information in the Final EIR, along with any other relevant information, in making their decisions about the proposed project. Although the EIR does not determine the ultimate decision that will be made regarding approval and implementation of the proposed project, CEQA requires the lead agency to consider the information in the EIR, and, if they choose to approve the project, to make findings regarding each significant effect identified in the EIR.

Under CEQA, a lead agency's decision-making process includes more than one step. The first step is to consider whether to "certify" the Final EIR for a proposed project. Notably, "certification" does not, by itself, indicate that decision-makers are intending to approve the project. Rather, although certification is a necessary precondition to project approval, it is possible for a decision-making body to certify a Final EIR and then deny a project.

Certification of a Final EIR is a three-part finding: first, that the "Final EIR has been completed in compliance with CEQA"; second that the "Final EIR was presented to the decision-making body of the lead agency and that the decision-making body reviewed and considered the information

contained in the Final EIR”; and third, that the “Final EIR reflects the lead agency’s independent judgment and analysis.” (CEQA Guidelines Section 15090)

After certifying a Final EIR, lead agency decision-makers are in a position to approve a project, if they so choose. In doing so, as described in CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines, they will be subject to the statutory duty to avoid or substantially lessen significant environmental effects, *where feasible*. This duty is effectuated through the adoption of statutorily-mandated findings adopted as part of the actions approving the project. These findings must address how agency decision-makers have dealt with each of the significant effects of a proposed project. Possible findings are: (1) that the agency has adopted mitigation measures or alternatives to avoid or substantially lessen the significant effects; (2) that the effects can be, or have been, mitigated by other public agencies, which should adopt, or have adopted, measures to address the effects; or (3) that proposed mitigation measures or alternatives are infeasible. Even after imposing all feasible means of avoiding or substantially lessening such effects, however, a public agency may still approve a project with unmitigated significant effects, provided that the agency decision-makers issue a “Statement of Overriding Considerations” that identifies what decision-makers believe to be the project’s economic, social, technological, legal, and other benefits, including any regional or statewide benefits, that render the unmitigated effects “acceptable.”

1.1.5 MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING

In January 1989, California enacted Assembly Bill (AB) 3180, which requires lead agencies to “adopt a reporting and mitigation monitoring program for the changes to the project which it has adopted or made a condition of project approval in order to mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment.” Accordingly, Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21081.6 requires that agencies adopt a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) for any project for which it had made findings pursuant to PRC Section 21081, and the MMRP will be prepared as part of the Final EIR. The MMRP will provide a list of all proposed project mitigation measures, define the parties responsible for implementation and review/approval, and identify the timing for implementation of each control measure. Any measures adopted by the County as conditions for approval to mitigate environmental impacts of the project will be included in the MMRP to verify compliance. The MMRP must be adopted as part of the action adopting the Findings described in Section 1.2.4 above.

1.2 EIR ORGANIZATION

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15120(c), this EIR contains the information and analysis required by Sections 15122 through 15131. The Draft EIR has been organized into the following chapters:

Chapter 1, Introduction. The introduction describes the purpose of the EIR, the CEQA review and certification process, and organization of the EIR.

Chapter 2, Summary. This chapter summarizes the project description, significant environmental impacts that would result from project implementation, and mitigation measures proposed as part of the project, or recommended by the EIR to reduce or eliminate impacts.

Chapter 3, Project Description. This chapter describes the project location and project objectives, as well as providing a detailed description of the proposed project.

Chapter 4, Environmental Setting, Potential Impacts, and Mitigation Measures. Each technical chapter addressing a specific environmental issue begins with an introduction describing the purpose of the chapter. The introduction is followed by a description of the project's existing environmental setting as the setting pertains to that particular issue. The setting description is followed by the regulatory context and the impacts and mitigation measures discussion, which contains the standards of significance, followed by the method of analysis. The impact and mitigation measures discussion include impact statements prefaced by a number in bold-faced type (for both project-level and cumulative analyses). An explanation of each impact and an analysis of the impact's significance follow each impact statement. All mitigation measures pertinent to each individual impact follow directly after the impact statement.

Chapter 5, Other CEQA Considerations. This chapter discusses several issues required by CEQA, including significant unavoidable impacts, and growth-inducing impacts.

Chapter 6, Alternatives. This chapter evaluates a range of reasonable alternatives to the proposed project that could reduce or avoid one or more significant effects of the proposed project.

Chapter 7, Lead Agency and Consultants. This chapter identifies the lead agency and includes a list of EIR preparers, technical consultants and their responsibilities.

Appendices. The appendices provide relevant reference material and data that support discussions in the EIR.

1.3 INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

As permitted in Section 15150 of the CEQA Guidelines, an EIR may reference all or portions of another document that is a matter of public record or is generally available to the public. Information from the documents that have been incorporated by reference has been briefly

summarized in the appropriate chapters of this EIR, along with a description of how the public may obtain and review these documents.

These documents include:

- Granite Bay Community Plan, 2012 (available online):

<https://www.placer.ca.gov/departments/communitydevelopment/planning/documentlibrary/commpplans/granitebaycp>

The document incorporated by reference are available for review during counter hours from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, at the Placer County Community Development Resource Agency front counter at 3091 County Center Drive, Suite 190, Auburn, CA 95603.

This Page Intentionally Left Blank