

3.2.6 Public Hearing Responses

This page intentionally left blank.



IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF PLACER
BEFORE THE PLANNING COMMISSION

In re the Matter of Village
at Squaw Valley Specific
Plan, Draft Environmental
Impact Report,

_____ /

REPORTER'S TRANSCRIPT

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

Thursday, June 25, 2015

10:05 a.m.

Reported by:

Dani D. McClure, CSR No. 9761

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

Thursday, June 25, 2015

--oOo--

CHAIRMAN DENIO: Village at Squaw Valley Specific Plan, Draft Environmental Impact Report, public review and comment.

Now, I know there's a lot of people that want to comment on this. I can't stress enough, is what we're talking about is the public review and comment on the environmental document, not if it's a good project, bad project, whatever. So if you start getting off track, I'll probably tell you, okay, that's nothing to do with the environmental document.

And also there will only be three minutes for everybody to speak, so make sure it's concise and complete, and if you're getting up just to reaffirm what the person in front of you said, that's all you have to say because, you know, I don't want to hear the same thing 30 times today. I think all of us are astute enough to hear what you say the first time.

So with that, I'm going to have Alex Fisch go ahead and get started.

MR. FISCH: Great. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good morning members of the commission, everyone in attendance. I'm Alex Fisch with the Placer County Planning Services Division. And as the chairman stated,

GOLD COUNTRY REPORTING
101 Orange Street, Suite A, Auburn, CA 95603
(800) 482-9120 (530) 885-5470

2

1 the purpose of this morning's hearing is to take public
2 comments on the completeness and accuracy of the Draft
3 EIR analysis that the county has prepared for the
4 Village at Squaw Valley Specific Plan project.

5 I'll just go over real briefly some of the
6 background on the project, a little short presentation
7 on the project description, and then we'll get into the
8 significant findings of the analysis and brief.

9 We are presently in the 60-day public review
10 period that runs between May 18th and July 17th. Just a
11 reminder to everyone, we are only receiving comments at
12 this hearing. All of your comments will be responded to
13 in the Final EIR. You're certainly welcome to also
14 submit comments in writing, which is preferable. I do
15 have the county's environmental consultant on hand
16 today, Ascent Environmental, Sean Bechta and Gary Jakobs
17 are here. They're taking notes on comments. We also
18 have a court reporter here taking stenographic notes of
19 the hearing.

20 And last thing to remind everyone is if you
21 could also please keep your comments specific to the
22 impact analyses, the Draft EIR, that will help us move
23 things along today. We're not discussing the merits of
24 the project. We will do that at later hearings also
25 before the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors.

GOLD COUNTRY REPORTING
101 Orange Street, Suite A, Auburn, CA 95603
(800) 482-9120 (530) 885-5470

1 So up here I have just a brief listing of the
2 notification process that we followed for this EIR. I
3 won't go over it in detail. But in short, we did post
4 notice in four newspapers. We also did a county press
5 release. Notified all the persons that commented on the
6 Notice of Preparation or that let us know after that
7 point that they would like to receive notice of the
8 Draft EIR.

9 So project location I think everyone is
10 familiar with, is the community of Olympic Valley, also
11 known as Squaw Valley, about nine miles south of
12 Truckee, seven miles north of Tahoe City.

13 This is the main project area here, this
14 85-acre portion at the west end of the valley about
15 1.7 miles or so in from State Route 89. About a third
16 of a mile in from State Route 89 is this portion of the
17 plan area, about an 8.8-acre piece referred to as the
18 east parcel.

19 The plan area consists of a total of just under
20 94 acres. The development lots would primarily be
21 located out here in the parking lots that are existing.
22 There is some development in areas that is previously
23 undisturbed, but the majority of the disturbance would
24 be already disturbed areas.

25 Some of the major surrounding land uses that

GOLD COUNTRY REPORTING
101 Orange Street, Suite A, Auburn, CA 95603
(800) 482-9120 (530) 885-5470

4

1 this project nests in with include the existing
2 Intrawest Village. We have Squaw Valley Lodge over
3 here. Red Wolf timeshares. We do have the -- I should
4 point this out for the commission, by the way. We have
5 two screens today. The Far East Maintenance Center is
6 the resort facilities for the resort operations down
7 here. This is the Olympic Village Inn and the Olympic
8 Village Lodge up here, which is within the project area.

9 Over at the east parcel, as I said, we're about
10 a mile and a half east of the main plan area, a third of
11 a mile in from State Route 89. Major surrounding land
12 uses include residents on the north and west sides of
13 the east parcel. We have Squaw Creek coming along the
14 back side here. This is Squaw Valley Road running
15 through this portion of the plan area. Squaw Valley
16 Public Service District Offices, Tavern Inn condominiums
17 over here.

18 This is the most recent illustrative concept
19 plan for the project. As you can see, the project is
20 divided into two main plan areas within the main
21 village, and that is the Village Commercial Core, this
22 area here, and that is the higher density portion of the
23 plan area. Lodging units are supposed to include
24 approximately 517 units, about 880 bedrooms, and
25 220,000 square feet of total commercial uses including

GOLD COUNTRY REPORTING
101 Orange Street, Suite A, Auburn, CA 95603
(800) 482-9120 (530) 885-5470

1 the 90,000 square foot Mountain Adventure Center.

2 We also have the Village Commercial
3 Neighborhood portion over here in the northeastern part
4 of the plan area. That's a lower intensity portion of
5 the plan area. It would also include condominium,
6 hotels, timeshare units, and fractional ownership
7 residential cabins up here on the hillside.

8 The plan, part of its overall arching concept
9 is to link the overall main village area with an open
10 space pedestrian network. You can see elements of that
11 linking through here. There is a Class 1 trail that
12 goes through the plan area here along the north side of
13 Squaw Creek. There are also several pedestrian pathways
14 through the village areas. There's a continuation of
15 Class 1 trail along the north side of Squaw Creek over
16 here in the Village Commercial neighborhood as well, and
17 there would be several connections to the existing
18 recreational trail network in the resort area and
19 surrounding area and the hillsides, the mountains that
20 would also be enhanced with the project.

21 I shouldn't forget to mention the east parcel
22 land uses would include off-site intercept parking for
23 employees. There's about 540 parking spaces there, and
24 one level of surface parking and one level of structured
25 parking above. There would also be a 5,000 square foot

GOLD COUNTRY REPORTING
101 Orange Street, Suite A, Auburn, CA 95603
(800) 482-9120 (530) 885-5470

6

1 retail market, 15,000 square foot shipping and receiving
2 facility, and employee housing for up to 300 employees.
3 Notably, the plan area also includes retention of 3100
4 day skier parking spaces through all phases of
5 development.

6 This is just a close up of the east parcel.
7 One of the marquis elements, so to speak, of
8 the plan area is the proposed restoration of Squaw
9 Creek. This creek is severely impacted by the creation
10 of this, what's referred to as the Trapezoidal Channel
11 that was constructed in preparation for 1960's winter
12 Olympics.

13 And in short, what's happened is the energy
14 that is created from this straight sheet of stream has a
15 number of deleterious adverse impacts downstream for
16 sediment transport and loading and overall water
17 quality. We have some similar issues over here with the
18 Olympic channel on the east side of the plan area. And
19 with restoration of the creek we would have the
20 restoration of more natural stream hydrology and
21 morphology, sediment deposition and transport
22 conditions.

23 I should mention also that part of the
24 improvement plan for the restoration of Squaw Creek is
25 to implement a linear park along the creek corridor. I

GOLD COUNTRY REPORTING
101 Orange Street, Suite A, Auburn, CA 95603
(800) 482-9120 (530) 885-5470

1 would mention included with that is a public trailhead
2 staging area with flush restrooms and parking over here
3 for Granite Chief and Shirley Canyon trailheads. There
4 would be another flush restrooms and parking for the
5 other Shirley Canyon trailhead location.

6 This slide just gives you an orientation
7 showing -- the black boundary, by the way, is the
8 outline of the plan area. You can pick that out from
9 the surrounding land uses. And you'll notice that under
10 the existing Squaw Valley General Plan Land Use
11 Ordinance the preponderance of the plan area is Village
12 Commercial. It encompasses about 53 acres of the plan
13 area. We also have about 2.7 acres of heavy commercial.
14 In total there's around 10 acres of high density
15 residential and 25 bedrooms per acre and 10 bedroom per
16 acre capacities. And the balance of the plan area is
17 then made up of forest recreation and conservation
18 preserve, and that totals about 20 acres.

19 This is the proposed plan for the specific plan
20 zoning designations. The two designations, Village
21 Commercial Core and Village Commercial Neighborhood, are
22 most similar to the Village Commercial zoning that the
23 county already has. It has similar densities and
24 allowances. And the main difference is, I guess, under
25 the existing plan, the existing Squaw Valley General

GOLD COUNTRY REPORTING
101 Orange Street, Suite A, Auburn, CA 95603
(800) 482-9120 (530) 885-5470

8

1 Plan versus the proposed plan, is that the existing
2 surface parking lots out here on the south side of Squaw
3 Creek would be specifically designated for development
4 of day skier parking including that structured parking
5 facility I noted. There would be some additional
6 creation of village forest recreation and conservation
7 preserves both over in the far western portion of the
8 plan area and along the Squaw Creek corridor. In total
9 there's about an additional 14 acres of forest
10 recreation and conservation preserve zoning created
11 through the project if it were approved.

12 That said, moving on to the main course. This
13 is just a brief rundown of the impacts analyzed in this
14 EIR, and the short description of this is that we
15 analyzed everything. The only item that was not
16 analyzed in the EIR is agricultural resources because
17 there are none within the plan area, and so that was
18 scoped out. But, otherwise, the environmental analysis
19 made a complete analysis of every potential impact area
20 for all other resource areas.

21 What I'm going to do is first go through the
22 major findings of the EIR, kind of focusing on the five
23 resource areas that had significant -- findings of
24 significant and unavoidable impacts even with
25 application of feasible mitigation measures. In there I

GOLD COUNTRY REPORTING
101 Orange Street, Suite A, Auburn, CA 95603
(800) 482-9120 (530) 885-5470

9

1 probably will include mention here there of some other
2 related impacts that were mitigated to a less than
3 significant level. I'll be sure to point that out. And
4 then we'll just go through the balance of the resource
5 areas and very brief and kind of give you a taste of the
6 impact findings and conclusions and the mitigations that
7 the county is proposing.

8 So the first area of significant and
9 unavoidable impacts is related to cultural resources.
10 As I think everyone knows, the project area is the site
11 of the 1960 winter Olympics, which was first in the
12 United States in 28 years. It was also the first live
13 broadcast Olympics. And the consequence of that is that
14 it helped foment the rise to a large degree of North
15 American and particularly west North American ski
16 culture.

17 There were several buildings that were
18 constructed in preparation for the Olympics. Several of
19 those survive today. There's a total of five within the
20 plan area, all of which would be removed, three of them
21 due to modifications to their architecture, relocation,
22 and other issues do not maintain their historic
23 integrity and therefore they're not eligible for listing
24 in the National Register of Historic Places or the
25 California register. Those are the media center

GOLD COUNTRY REPORTING
101 Orange Street, Suite A, Auburn, CA 95603
(800) 482-9120 (530) 885-5470

10

1 building, the reception building and the clock tower
2 building.

3 However, there were two buildings that did
4 retain historic significance in all four areas of the
5 Historic Association of Period Architecture, Association
6 with Important Events and People. That was the Nevada
7 Spectators Center, which is located in the main parking
8 area out near Far East Road as you first enter the
9 resort, and then also the Olympic Valley Lodge, which
10 was the athletes center, and that's in the far
11 northwestern portion of the plan area.

12 The mitigations for removal of these resources
13 is to basically architecturally catalog the buildings.
14 You would have an architectural historian prepare a
15 written report, also prepare plans, do video cataloging,
16 photographic cataloging and selecting which important
17 architectural features and other resources can be
18 salvaged out of these buildings and later used for
19 interpretive displays.

20 Nonetheless, because this resource would no
21 longer exist, the finding is it would be a significant
22 and unavoidable impact because this is a scarce resource
23 and there would be less of it.

24 Notably, the area in general of Olympic Valley
25 is also somewhat sensitive for cultural resources

GOLD COUNTRY REPORTING
101 Orange Street, Suite A, Auburn, CA 95603
(800) 482-9120 (530) 885-5470

11

1 related to the Wa She Shu or Washoe people. They had
2 summertime habitations and hunting grounds in the area.
3 We were able to find less than significant impacts for
4 that resource area through application of mitigations
5 including things like conduction of preconstruction
6 surveys, having on site Native American monitors and
7 archaeological resource monitors during project creating
8 ground disturbing activities and also requiring stoppage
9 of work in the event of an accidental discovery.

10 On the subject of visual resources we also had
11 a number of significant and unavoidable impact findings.
12 Those impacts were generally could be characterized as
13 being applicable to the permanent residents of the
14 valley and/or the long-term seasonal residents who may
15 go back and forth between a couple of homes and spend a
16 lot of time in the valley.

17 The major findings were that because of, you
18 know, this alpine resort community setting which
19 includes numerous scenic attributes and in general terms
20 can be described overall as a scenic environment with
21 the backdrop of the mountain slopes and the peaks. Also
22 Squaw Meadow and Squaw Creek and the golf course figure
23 prominently in those visual resource attributes.

24 The alteration of the setting has a high
25 potential to result in impacts which are generally

GOLD COUNTRY REPORTING
101 Orange Street, Suite A, Auburn, CA 95603
(800) 482-9120 (530) 885-5470

12

1 experienced as an individual viewer's reaction to the
2 changed visual environment.

3 And so some of the major findings were that due
4 to the length of time that the project would build out,
5 theoretically over 25 years, the ongoing construction
6 activities, including partially constructed buildings
7 that would nonetheless be screened during the
8 construction, material stockpiles, heavy construction
9 equipment, those elements would detract significantly
10 from the scenic attributes at the west end of the valley
11 even with mitigation. So those permanent residents and
12 those long-term seasonal residents would be affected by
13 these changes that the project would bring.

14 Also of note, Squaw Valley Road is a scenic
15 roadway in the Placer County General Plan. We had a
16 finding that the project would have an effect on the
17 scenic roadway through the period of construction.

18 Notably, because some of the views in the lower
19 slopes of the mountain as a consequence of the project
20 would be obstructed and the project would result in a
21 continuation of long-term development trend in a highly
22 scenic area, the impact would be significant for those
23 residents as I mentioned, though it would be less than
24 significant for visitors who would only experience it on
25 a temporary basis and would not have the same type of

GOLD COUNTRY REPORTING
101 Orange Street, Suite A, Auburn, CA 95603
(800) 482-9120 (530) 885-5470

13

1 reaction to the changed environment.

2 Some of the mitigations that we have for visual
3 resources include a requirement for compliance with the
4 design guidelines which ensure unified architectural
5 theme is implemented throughout the plan area,
6 compliance with the master lighting plan which would
7 ensure minimum nighttime lighting levels, installation
8 of temporary screening during project construction, as I
9 mentioned, and also installation of landscape screening
10 for project operations.

11 Move on to transportation and circulation. I
12 will draw your attention briefly to this diagram. This
13 just shows the roadway study area within Olympic Valley.
14 I will point out, however, that the study area also
15 included the Highway 89 corridor from Truckee to the
16 project area, then down to Tahoe City and included some
17 small segments of State Route 28 where State Route 28
18 and Highway 89 intersect.

19 Because the study area is a resort setting, its
20 traffic patterns are described somewhat differently than
21 typical traffic that you would experience in other urban
22 areas where you typically have Monday through Friday
23 a.m. and p.m. peak conditions that are based on travel
24 conditions as people go to and come back from work and
25 do other errands.

GOLD COUNTRY REPORTING
101 Orange Street, Suite A, Auburn, CA 95603
(800) 482-9120 (530) 885-5470

14

1 Because this is a resort area, the area
2 experiences seasonal peaks. It also includes peak days,
3 and then, of course, peak hours on those peak days. And
4 so that's what this EIR analysis has analyzed, is those
5 representative peak usage periods of the peak season,
6 peak day, peak hour. They are based on guest arrival
7 and departure patterns as the representative study
8 condition. We had a winter analysis which was based on
9 a representative Saturday morning peak and also a Sunday
10 afternoon peak, and that would be when the most resort
11 guests and day skiers would be arriving and departing
12 from the resort area.

13 There was also a summer analysis, and that
14 analysis was based on a Friday afternoon peak, because
15 the summer condition has a little bit different usage
16 patterns. A Friday afternoon in August, which is the
17 busiest representative summer condition.

18 Roadway intersections that were studied within
19 the Olympic Valley area included -- make sure I get this
20 right -- we've got Squaw Valley Road at Village East
21 Road, which is right here. We've got Squaw Valley Road
22 at Far East Road and Christy Hill Road, which is right
23 here. Squaw Valley Road at Wayne Road. And also Squaw
24 Valley Road at Squaw Creek Road.

25 Those roadway segments throughout the Olympic

GOLD COUNTRY REPORTING
101 Orange Street, Suite A, Auburn, CA 95603
(800) 482-9120 (530) 885-5470

15

1 Valley area and within the plan area were analyzed as
2 well as the intersections, and the finding was that the
3 segments and intersections would degrade with the
4 addition of project generated traffic.

5 However, through the implementation of a fairly
6 robust traffic management plan that would trip under
7 certain peak conditions where peak usages are predicted
8 to exceed a certain average daily vehicle load, traffic
9 management would be implemented. It would include
10 things that are already in effect but in a more robust
11 fashion of three laning, having traffic personnel at
12 specified intersections to help manage the flow of
13 traffic, and some other things like that.

14 The finding is that with the implementation of
15 traffic management, all of the intersections and roadway
16 segments within Olympic Valley would operate at
17 acceptable levels, with the exception of one
18 intersection, which is Squaw Valley Road and Village
19 East Road right here in the plan area. Hard to see
20 here. I'll point it out. And so that was the lone
21 significant and unavoidable impact finding for that
22 portion of the traffic study.

23 We also found that project operation would
24 result in potentially adverse impacts to Caltrans
25 facilities. Some of the intersection segments that were

GOLD COUNTRY REPORTING
101 Orange Street, Suite A, Auburn, CA 95603
(800) 482-9120 (530) 885-5470

16

1 studied that are of note are the State Route 89 Alpine
2 Meadows Road intersection. Currently that's operating
3 at unacceptable levels and would continue that condition
4 under the project.

5 However, the county and Caltrans have been
6 working together to have a signal improvement and bridge
7 widening project at that location. That project has
8 been approved, it's been contracted, and my
9 understanding is that it would go to construction
10 hopefully this construction season. And so once that is
11 constructed, that significant and unavoidable impact
12 would not exist. But in the near term, while we're
13 working through this EIR process, the finding is it
14 would be significant and unavoidable.

15 We also have impacts at State Route 89 and
16 Squaw Valley Road related to a left-turn lane, and the
17 mitigation would be to work with Caltrans to adjust the
18 signal timing and lengthen the turn pocket. However,
19 the county cannot compel Caltrans, which is an outside
20 agency, to do anything, and so, again, the finding is
21 that if this was unfeasible and couldn't be implemented,
22 it would result in a significant and unavoidable impact.
23 We, nonetheless, would require the applicant to pursue
24 those mitigations in the hopes that signal timing
25 modification and lengthening of that turn pocket could

1 be addressed.

2 Lastly, the finding on State Route 89 between
3 West River Street and Deerfield Avenue is that during
4 the Friday p.m. peak hour there would be an exacerbating
5 condition of an already unacceptable level of service.

6 Presently Caltrans, while they do have a
7 concept four-laning plan that they have in their
8 document library, it's not an approved planning document
9 and there's no approved funding program that the project
10 could contribute to to help offset that impact. So,
11 again, that's a significant and unavoidable impact.

12 Notably, and I think I already kind of touched
13 on this as I went over these issues, it's important to
14 note that what the results of the analysis characterize
15 are conditions that are representative of peak hour
16 conditions during peak season and on a peak day, and
17 these are not daily operational conditions. They would
18 be discreet impacts. They would occur on a limited
19 basis. They're predicted to occur approximately up to
20 20 times per year, full project build out, and while the
21 project would result in a substantial overall increase
22 to daily traffic on roadways within the study area,
23 traffic on a daily basis would operate at acceptable
24 levels of normal operation.

25 Moving on to noise. Similarly, because

GOLD COUNTRY REPORTING
101 Orange Street, Suite A, Auburn, CA 95603
(800) 482-9120 (530) 885-5470

18

1 construction and traffic drive both of these impact
2 issues, the period over which the project would build
3 out was a major factor in the findings of the EIR
4 analysis.

5 And in short, that was that the effects of
6 ongoing construction noise over potentially a 25-year
7 period, where you may have theoretically 12 to 15 years
8 of construction, you could theoretically have all 25,
9 most likely not, is that though that is exempted under
10 the county ordinance as a temporary impact, under a CEQA
11 analysis we have a little bit different standard, and we
12 have to determine is that, nonetheless, significant to
13 people who would be affected by that.

14 And that was the finding, is that because of
15 the long-term nature of this and the number of persons
16 who would be exposed as various parts of the plan build
17 out, different areas are under different phases of
18 construction, there would be significant and unavoidable
19 impacts related to construction noise.

20 I should mention that those impacts,
21 nonetheless, they do include all of these impacts,
22 include mitigations. For example, with construction
23 noise, mitigations require locating staging areas away
24 from sensitive land uses to the maximum extent
25 practical, requiring best available control technology