
1 Introduction and Scope of the EIR

1.1 Purpose and Intended Use of this EIR

The County of El Dorado (County) as the lead agency has prepared this Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) to inform the general public, the local community, responsible agencies, trustee agencies, and other interested public agencies, including local Native American tribes, and the County's decision-making bodies (County Planning Commission and/or Board of Supervisors) regarding the potential significant environmental effects resulting from implementation of the Creekside Village Specific Plan project (proposed project or CVSP), as well as feasible measures to mitigate those significant effects and alternatives to the proposed project. This Draft EIR was prepared in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (California Public Resources Code [PRC], Section 21000 et seq.), and the CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR 15000 et seq.).

As described in CEQA Guidelines Section 15121(a), an EIR is an informational document that assesses potential environmental impacts of a proposed project, as well as identifies feasible mitigation measures and alternatives to a proposed project that could reduce or avoid adverse environmental impacts. As the CEQA lead agency for this project, the County is required to consider the information in the EIR along with any other available information in deciding whether to approve the requested project entitlements. The basic requirements for an EIR include providing information that establishes the environmental setting (or project baseline), and identifying environmental impacts, mitigation measures, project alternatives, growth inducing impacts, and cumulative impacts. In a practical sense, an EIR functions as a method of fact-finding, allowing an applicant, the public, other public agencies, and agency staff an opportunity to collectively review and evaluate baseline conditions and project impacts through a process of full disclosure. Additionally, this EIR provides the primary source of environmental information for the lead agency to consider when exercising any permitting or approval authority directly related to implementation of this project. It is not the intent of an EIR to recommend either approval or denial of a project.

1.2 Project Background and Overview

The project site is located within an unincorporated area of the County in the community of El Dorado Hills, located in the western foothills. The project site is located on the west side of Latrobe Road, south of Investment Boulevard, directly adjacent to the southern boundary of the El Dorado Hills Business Park, with access to U.S. Highway 50 approximately 3 miles to the north. The project site consists of Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) 117-010-032 and a portion of APN 117-720-012. The project site was previously part of the El Dorado Hills Business Park Association and in 2018 the site was approved to be de-annexed from the El Dorado Hills Business Park Owners Association. The site is undeveloped and has historically been used for grazing. The parcel is currently zoned by the County for Research & Development with a Design Review overlay. The project site is also designated in the 2004 El Dorado County General Plan for Research & Development.

The project applicant proposes to develop approximately 208 acres of land with a mix of residential, parks, neighborhood commercial, and open space land uses. There would be an option for converting the neighborhood commercial component to park uses if not adopted as part of the CVSP and an option to develop a mix of age-restricted (55 years of age and older) residential units and conventional homes. The County is processing the

application for the CVSP and associated approvals including a General Plan amendment, rezone, development agreement, and tentative maps which must be approved before development can occur.

1.3 EIR Process

Notice of Preparation

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15082, a Notice of Preparation (NOP) was circulated for public and agency review from November 6, 2020, to December 7, 2020 (included as Appendix A). The purpose of the NOP is to provide notification that an EIR for the proposed project is being prepared and to solicit guidance on the scope and content of the document.

The County received a total of 22 written comment letters during the initial scoping period from the general public as well as comment letters from local, state, and federal agencies. Verbal comments were also received during a scoping meeting held on November 19, 2020. However, the project application was placed on hold from October 2021 through July 2023 and minor updates were made to the project description. Therefore, the County held a second scoping meeting on September 26, 2023, and additional comments on the revised project were accepted through October 12, 2023. Two additional comment letters were received as well as several verbal comments at the second scoping meeting held on September 26, 2023. A summary of the comments received on the NOP and at the scoping meetings is included in the Executive Summary, as well as in the introduction of each technical section in Chapter 3. The NOP and all letters and scoping comments received in response to the NOP and the two scoping meetings are included in Appendix A.

Draft EIR and Public Review

This Draft EIR is circulated for public review and comment for a period of 60 days. The beginning and end dates of the comment period are identified in the Notice of Availability for this Draft EIR. Written comments may be sent to:

Cameron Welch, Senior Planner
County of El Dorado Development Services Division
2850 Fairlane Court
Placerville, California 95667
Email: creeksidevillagesp@edcgov.us

The public can review the Draft EIR and supporting documents at 2850 Fairlane Court, Placerville, CA 95667 or on the County's website at: <https://www.eldoradocounty.ca.gov/Land-Use/Planning-Services>

Final EIR and EIR Certification

Upon completion of the Draft EIR public review period, a Final EIR will be prepared that will include written comments on the Draft EIR received during the public review period and the County's responses to those comments. The Final EIR will also include the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) prepared in accordance with Section 21081.6 of the PRC. The Final EIR will address any revisions to the Draft EIR made in response to agency or public comments. The Draft EIR and Final EIR together will comprise the EIR for the proposed project. Before the County can approve the project, it must first certify that the EIR has been completed in compliance with CEQA, that the County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors has reviewed and considered the information in the EIR, and that the EIR reflects the independent judgment of the County. The

Board of Supervisors is also required to adopt Findings of Fact and a Statement of Overriding Considerations (for any significant and unavoidable impacts) explaining the decision to balance the benefits of the project against unavoidable environmental impacts if it approves the proposed project (see also PRC Section 21081).

Type of EIR and EIR Adequacy

This EIR is a “Project EIR,” pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15161. A Project EIR examines the environmental impacts of a specific project. This type of EIR focuses on the changes in the environment that would result from implementation of the project, including construction and operation.

The level of detail contained throughout this EIR is consistent with Section 15151 of the CEQA Guidelines, which states the following:

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

1.4 Scope of the Draft EIR

Based on the scope of the proposed project as described in the NOP and comments received from the public and public agencies (see Appendix A), the following issues were determined to be potentially significant and are therefore addressed in Chapter 3, Environmental Analysis, of this document:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Geology, Soils and Paleontology
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning/Population and Housing
- Noise
- Public Services and Recreation
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Public Utilities
- Wildfire

Other environmental issue areas: agricultural resources and forest land, mineral resources, and hazards/hazardous materials are not evaluated in Chapter 3. As described in the Executive Summary, the proposed project would not adversely affect these issue areas.

This EIR will also address the cumulative environmental effects of the project in combination with other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects in the area. This will serve to satisfy CEQA’s requirements that a project’s potential cumulative impacts be analyzed in an EIR. It should be noted that the intent of CEQA is not to evaluate the impacts of the cumulative projects on the project, but instead to evaluate the potential for the project to have a considerable contribution to a cumulative impact when evaluated in conjunction with other cumulative projects.

In compliance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6, this EIR also describes and evaluates the comparative merits of a reasonable range of alternatives to the proposed project, including the required No Project Alternative, and also identifies the environmentally superior alternative. This EIR also describes alternatives that were considered but rejected by the lead agency as infeasible and explains the reasons why.

1.5 Organization of the Draft EIR

Executive Summary— Summarizes the elements of the project and the environmental impacts that could result from implementation of the proposed project and provides a table which lists impacts, describes proposed mitigation measures, and indicates the level of significance of impacts both before and after mitigation.

Chapter 1, Introduction and Scope of the EIR— Provides an introduction and overview of the EIR process and describes the intended use of the EIR and the review process.

Chapter 2, Project Description— Provides a detailed description of the proposed project, including its location, background information, project history, project objectives, and technical characteristics.

Chapter 3, Environmental Analysis— Describes the baseline environmental setting and provides an assessment of potential project impacts for each technical issue area presented.

Chapter 4, Other CEQA Considerations— Provides information required by CEQA regarding impacts that would result from the proposed project, including a summary of cumulative impacts, secondary impacts including potential impacts resulting from growth inducement, and significant irreversible changes to the environment.

Chapter 5, Alternatives— Describes and compares the project alternatives to the proposed project.

Chapter 6, List of Preparers— Lists report authors who provided technical assistance in the preparation and review of the EIR.

Appendices— Includes various documents and data that support the analysis presented in the Draft EIR.