

CHAPTER 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) has been prepared to evaluate the environmental impacts associated with implementation of the proposed Rocklin Commons Project. The Rocklin Commons Project (proposed project) includes the construction of a regional shopping center on approximately 39.13 acres at the northwest quadrant of Interstate-80 (I-80) and Sierra College Boulevard. The project site is proximate to Granite Drive on the north and west, and adjacent to Sierra College Boulevard on the east, and I-80 on the south. A variety of retail uses are proposed for the center, including major tenants, grocery stores, smaller retail tenants, and restaurants. Preliminary plans call for approximately 17 buildings totaling a maximum of 415,000 square feet with approximately 1,828 parking stalls. Signage is proposed in multiple locations adjacent to I-80, Granite Drive and Sierra College Boulevard.

1.1 PURPOSE AND INTENDED USES OF THIS DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

This Draft EIR was prepared in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970 (Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations Section 15000 et seq.). An EIR is a full disclosure, public information document in which significant impacts are identified, potentially feasible mitigation measures are recommended, and alternatives to the project that can substantially lessen or avoid significant environmental effects are discussed.

An EIR is used in the planning and decision-making process by the lead agency and responsible and trustee agencies. The lead agency is the public agency with primary responsibility over the proposed project.

The purpose of an EIR is not to recommend either approval or denial of a project. CEQA requires decision makers to balance the benefits of a project against its unavoidable significant environmental effects in deciding whether to carry out a project. The lead agency will consider the Draft EIR, comments received on the Draft EIR, and response to those comments before making a decision. If significant environmental effects are identified, the lead agency must adopt "Findings" indicating whether feasible mitigation measures or alternatives exist that can avoid or reduce those significant effects. If the significant environmental impacts are identified as significant and unavoidable because there are no feasible mitigation measures or alternatives that render such impacts less than significant, the lead agency may still approve the project if it determines that the social, economic, or other benefits outweigh the unavoidable significant impacts. The lead agency would then be required to prepare a "Statement of Overriding Considerations" that discusses the specific reasons for approving the project, based on information in the EIR and other information in the record.

1.2 TYPE OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

Except as noted below, the Rocklin Commons EIR is a Project EIR, pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15161. A Project EIR is the most common type of EIR, examining the environmental impacts of a specific development project, in this case one involving primarily a local planning decision. In accordance with the State CEQA Guidelines, a Project EIR must examine all phases of the project, including construction and operation.

1.3 SCOPE OF THIS DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

The issues evaluated in this Draft EIR are those anticipated with implementation of the proposed project, as determined from the Initial Study for the Project, comments received on the Notice of Preparation (NOP), which included a copy of the Initial Study, and an understanding of the project characteristics. The resource areas for which issues are evaluated in this Draft EIR are as follows:

- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Energy
- Global Climate Change
- Hydrology/Water Quality
- Economic and Urban Decay
- Noise
- Transportation and Circulation
- Utilities – Sewer and Wastewater Treatment Facilities and Water Supply

1.4 EFFECTS FOUND NOT TO BE SIGNIFICANT

Under the CEQA statutes and the State CEQA Guidelines, a lead agency may limit an EIR's discussion of environmental effects when they are not considered potentially significant (Public Resources Code Section 21002.1(e); State CEQA Guidelines Sections 15128 and 15143). Information used to determine which impacts would be potentially significant was derived from a review of applicable planning and CEQA documentation, field work, a review of the project, feedback from ongoing public and agency consultation, the preparation of a detailed Initial Study, and comments received on the Notice of Preparation (NOP) (Appendix A), which included the Initial Study. Following the issuance of the NOP, comments were received and reviewed to determine the final scope for the Draft EIR. As a result of the review of the Initial Study, existing information, and the scoping process, effects on the following resources were found not to be significant, and therefore, are not included in the detailed analysis of potential project impacts:

- Aesthetics
- Agricultural Resources

- Cultural Resources
- Geology, Soils, and Seismic Hazards
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Land Use (other than Economic and Urban Decay)
- Mineral Resources
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Utilities (other than Sewer and Wastewater Treatment Facilities and Water Supply)

In some instances, the Initial Study concluded that categories of impacts would be less than significant due to the existence of General Plan policies and existing City requirements, found in ordinances and elsewhere. These policies and requirements will require compliance with certain rules and principles, even in the absence of formal mitigation measures tailored to the proposed project. The Initial Study appropriately assumed compliance with these requirements because they are mandatory in character, and the applicant will have to satisfy them if the City Council approves the proposed project. Where the Initial Study relied on project-specific mitigation measures to determine that a category of impact was less than significant (e.g., cultural resources), the applicant has agreed to the mitigation measures in question, which have become, in effect, a part of the Project Description and need not be repeated in the text of this Draft EIR. These measures will, however, appear in the Mitigation and Monitoring Plan for the Project.

1.5 AGENCY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1.5.1 Lead Agency

The City of Rocklin (City) is the lead agency for the proposed project. As such, the City has the principal responsibility for approving and carrying out the project and for ensuring that the requirements of CEQA have been met.

1.5.2 Trustee and Responsible Agencies

A trustee agency is a State agency that has jurisdiction by law over natural resources that are held in trust for the people of the State of California. Here, the proposed project will affect resources regulated or otherwise of interest to only one recognized trustee agency, the California Department of Fish and Game.

Responsible agencies are public agencies subject to California law, other than the lead agency, that are anticipated to have discretionary approval responsibility for reviewing, carrying out, or approving elements of the project. Under CEQA, responsible agencies should participate in the lead agency's environmental review process, review the lead agency's CEQA document, and use the document

when making a decision on project elements. Federal agencies cannot qualify as responsible agencies, which have certain duties under CEQA, because federal agencies are beyond the reach of California law except where Congress has expressly or impliedly consent to such regulation. Certain federal agencies, however, may nevertheless be interested in the proposed project and this Draft EIR, as they have some role in permitting the development of the project site. Several agencies may have responsibility for or jurisdiction over elements of the proposed project. These agencies may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1.5.3 Federal Agencies

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Clean Water Act – Section 404 – Nationwide Permit)
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Endangered Species Act – Section 7 Consultation)

1.5.4 State Agencies

- Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Clean Water Act – Section 401 Certification, construction activity stormwater permit and National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit)
- Caltrans (Encroachment Permit)

1.5.5 Local Agencies

- Town of Loomis (encroachment permit or similar approval as may be required for off-site water line extensions or road improvements to be constructed)
- South Placer Municipal Utility District (approval of sewer facility extensions)
- Placer County Water Agency (facilities agreement)

1.5.6 Public Review Process

Consistent with the requirements of CEQA, a good faith effort has been made during the preparation of this Draft EIR to contact affected agencies, organizations, and individuals who may have an interest in the project. This effort included the circulation of an NOP to a project-specific mailing list and to the Governor's Office of Planning and Research for a 30-day comment period that commenced on August 29, 2008. The NOP is a notice sent by the lead agency to notify responsible agencies, trustee agencies, potentially affected federal, state, and local agencies, the general public, and other interested parties that the lead agency plans to prepare a Draft EIR and solicits guidance regarding the scope and content of the Draft EIR. The City of Rocklin also held a scoping meeting on September 24, 2008 to receive comments on the project. The comments received on the NOP are included in Appendix A (No members of the public attended the scoping meeting).

This Draft EIR has been circulated to federal, State, and local agencies, and to interested organizations and individuals who may wish to review and comment on the report. During the review period, written comments should be directed to the City at the following address:

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Rocklin, CA 95677
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1.6 TERMINOLOGY USED IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

To assist in the understanding of the report, the following definitions, as found in Article 20 of the State CEQA Guidelines, are provided:

- “Project” means the whole of an action, which has the potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment directly or ultimately.
- “Significant effect on the environment” means a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance. An economic or social change by itself shall not be considered a significant effect on the environment. A social or economic change related to a physical change may be considered in determining whether the physical change is significant.
- “Environment” means the physical conditions that exist within the area which will be affected by a proposed project including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historical or aesthetic significance. The area involved shall be the area in which significant effects would occur either directly or indirectly as a result of the project. The “environment” includes both natural and man-made conditions.
- “Effects” and “impacts” as used in this document are synonymous. Effects analyzed under CEQA must be related to a physical change. Effects include:
 - Direct or primary effects that are caused by the project and occur at the same time and place, and
 - Indirect or secondary effects that are caused by the project and are later in time or farther removed in distance, but are still reasonably foreseeable. Indirect or secondary effects may include growth-inducing effects and other effects related to changes in the pattern of land use, population density, or growth rate, and related effects on air and water and other natural systems, including ecosystems.
- “Mitigation” includes:
 - Avoiding the impact altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action;
 - Minimizing impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation;

- Rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the impacted environment;
- Reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action; or
- Compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.
- “Cumulative impacts” refers to two or more individual effects that, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts:
 - The individual effects may be changes resulting from a single project or a number of separate projects.
 - The cumulative impact from several projects is the change in the environment that results from the incremental impact of the project when added to other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time.
- This Draft EIR uses a variety of terms to describe the level of significance of adverse impacts identified during the course of the environmental analysis. These terms are defined below:
 - A “less-than-significant impact” is an impact that is adverse but that does not exceed the defined standards of significance. Less-than-significant impacts do not require mitigation.
 - A “potentially significant impact” is an impact for which there is not enough information to make a finding of less-than-significant impact; however, for the purpose of this Draft EIR, the impact is considered significant. A potentially significant impact is equivalent to a significant impact and requires the identification of potentially feasible mitigation measures or alternatives.
 - A “significant impact” is an impact that exceeds the defined standards of significance and would or could cause a substantial adverse change in the environment. Mitigation measures are recommended to eliminate the impact or reduce it to a less-than-significant level.
 - A “significant and unavoidable impact” is an impact that exceeds the defined standards of significance and that cannot be eliminated or reduced to a less-than-significant level through the implementation of feasible mitigation measures.

1.7 ORGANIZATION OF THIS ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

This Draft is organized into chapters, as identified and briefly described below. Chapters are further divided into sections (e.g., Section 4.1, Air Quality).

Chapter 1, Introduction. Chapter 1 describes the purpose and organization of the Draft EIR, context, and terminology used in the Draft EIR.

Chapter 2, Executive Summary. This section summarizes the project description, alternatives to the project, significant environmental impacts that would result from the project, and mitigation measures proposed to reduce or eliminate impacts.

Chapter 3, Project Descriptions. Chapter 3 describes the project location, background, project characteristics, and project objectives.

Chapter 4, Environmental Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures. For each environmental issue area, this chapter describes the existing environmental setting, discusses the environmental impacts associated with the proposed project, and identifies mitigation for the impacts.

Chapter 5, Economic and Urban Decay. This chapter describes the analysis of Economic and Urban Decay resulting from implementation of the proposed project.

Chapter 6 & 7, Cumulative and Growth-Inducing Impacts. This chapter evaluates the extent to which the project would contribute to cumulative impacts in the region or other defined geographic area or induce economic or population growth in the City. This section also includes a discussion of global climate change and estimates of the project's greenhouse gas emissions.

Chapter 8, Alternatives. This chapter describes the alternatives to the project that are being considered to mitigate the project's environmental impacts while meeting most of the project's objectives. This chapter also describes alternatives previously considered and rejected.

Chapter 9, Irreversible Environmental Changes. This chapter discusses irreversible environmental changes as they relate to implementation of the proposed project.

Chapter 10, Unavoidable Adverse Impacts. This chapter discusses unavoidable adverse impacts related to the implementation of the proposed project.

Chapter 11, References. This chapter sets forth a comprehensive listing of all sources of information used in the preparation of the Draft EIR, including agencies or individuals consulted during preparation of the Draft EIR.

Chapter 12, Report Preparation. This chapter identifies the Draft EIR authors and consultants who provided analysis in support of the Draft EIR's conclusions.

Appendices. Appendices contain various technical reports, letters, and official publications that have been summarized or otherwise used for preparation of the Draft EIR.