

1 INTRODUCTION

This document has been prepared under Sacramento Local Agency Formation Commission's (Sacramento LAFCo) direction, as lead agency, in accordance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 21000-21177) and the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations [CCR], Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, Sections 15000-15387) ("State CEQA Guidelines"). This document contains responses to comments received on the draft environmental impact report (DEIR or Draft EIR) for the proposed amendment to the City of Elk Grove's sphere of influence (SOI) to include the 480-acre Bilby Ridge area (Sphere of Influence Amendment [SOIA]), as well as revisions to the DEIR in response to comments. The Final EIR for the project consists of the DEIR and this document (response to comments document). For convenience, this document is referred to as the Final EIR or FEIR. All references to the FEIR are intended to include the DEIR, responses to comments, and all supporting documentation.

1.1 PURPOSE AND INTENDED USES OF THIS FEIR

CEQA requires a lead agency that has prepared a DEIR to consult with and obtain comments from responsible and trustee agencies that have jurisdiction by law with respect to the project, as well as from other interested parties including the public, and to provide an opportunity to comment on the DEIR. The FEIR is the mechanism for responding to these comments. This FEIR has been prepared to respond to comments received on the DEIR; to present corrections, revisions, and other clarifications and amplifications to the DEIR made in response to these comments and because of the minor modifications to the project design; and to provide a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for the project. The FEIR will be used to support the Sacramento LAFCo's decision regarding whether to approve, approve with modifications, or deny the project. Sacramento LAFCo has sole authority to consider local agency reorganizations, including requests to amend an existing SOI under the Cortese-Knox Hertzberg Act. No other governmental approvals would be required as part of this action.

Under CEQA, 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 (PRC Section 21070). The California Department of Fish and Wildlife is a trustee agency with jurisdiction over fish and wildlife and their habitats that may be affected by this project.

1.2 PROJECT LOCATION

The Bilby Ridge SOIA consists of approximately 480 acres and is in the unincorporated area of Sacramento County, just south of the City of Elk Grove (City). The City's existing jurisdictional boundaries are adjacent to the project site's western, northern, and eastern boundaries. Roadway access to the project site is provided by Willard Parkway, Bilby Road, Bruceville Road, and Kammerer Road.

Most of the Bilby Ridge site is currently in agricultural production (e.g., row crops, irrigated and non-irrigated pasture land). Two of the seven project site parcels are currently under Williamson Act contracts. There are currently 10, single-family residences on the site as well as several accessory structures. The Sacramento County General Plan land use designation for the site is Agricultural Cropland, which designates lands most suitable for intensive agricultural activities, including row crops, tree crops, irrigated grains, and dairies. The project site is located within the County's Urban Services Boundary. Sacramento County's General Plan Land Use Element specifically designates the Urban Services Boundary as the ultimate boundary of the urban area of the County.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

Sacramento LAFCo has identified the following project objectives for the project:

- ▲ amend the SOI boundary beyond the existing Elk Grove city limits to accommodate orderly and sustainable growth compatible with the Sacramento LAFCo, City of Elk Grove and Sacramento County growth goals and policies, including promoting a sustainable jobs to housing ratio;
- ▲ implement the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 consistent with public service conditions present or reasonably foreseeable in the proposed Bilby Ridge SOIA area;
- ▲ establish a logical boundary within which future and annexation requests to the City of Elk Grove may be considered; and
- ▲ establish an expanded SOI for the City of Elk Grove that will facilitate the protection of important environmental, cultural, and agricultural resources.

1.4 SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The Bilby Ridge SOIA would allow the City of Elk Grove and other service providers to plan for future urbanization of the approximately 480-acre site as an area planned for potential urban growth. However, approval of the SOIA would not authorize changes in land use or governance by the City unless the project site is annexed to the City. Annexation of the project site to the City is not an action under consideration for this project. Rather, LAFCo is requested to consider whether the Bilby Ridge site should be included in the SOI for the City as a logical expansion of potential urban growth for the City. If the SOIA were approved, land use activities within the project site would remain under the jurisdiction of Sacramento County until annexation is approved by LAFCo at some future time.

The reader is referred to DEIR Chapter 2, "Project Description," for a detailed description of the project.

1.5 MAJOR CONCLUSIONS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Under CEQA, a significant effect on the environment is defined as a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project. The DEIR evaluated impacts to environmental resources that could result from implementation of the Bilby Ridge SOIA and discusses mitigation measures that could be implemented by Sacramento LAFCo to reduce potential adverse impacts to a level that is considered less than significant. The impacts and mitigation measures are identified DEIR Chapter 3, "Environmental Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures," and are summarized in DEIR Table ES-1 at the end of this chapter. DEIR Chapter 4, "Cumulative Impacts," provides a discussion of cumulative impacts.

Implementation of the project would result in significant and unavoidable impacts in the following resource areas:

- ▲ Aesthetics (DEIR Section 3.1);
- ▲ Agricultural Resources (DEIR Section 3.2);
- ▲ Air Quality (DEIR Section 3.3);
- ▲ Biological Resources (DEIR Section 3.4);
- ▲ Energy (DEIR Section 3.6);
- ▲ Greenhouse Gases (DEIR Section 3.7);
- ▲ Land Use (DEIR Section 3.9);

- ▲ Noise and Vibration (DEIR Section 3.10);
- ▲ Population and Housing (DEIR Section 3.11);
- ▲ Public Services and Recreation (DEIR Section 3.12);
- ▲ Traffic, Transportation, and Circulation (DEIR Section 3.13); and
- ▲ Utilities (DEIR Section 3.14).

1.6 SUMMARY OF PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

Pursuant to Section 15126.6(c) of the State CEQA Guidelines, the DEIR includes a reasonable range of alternatives to the project that meet most of the objectives of the project and avoid or substantially lessen the identified likely environmental impacts. The following summary describes the alternatives to the project that are evaluated in the DEIR. For further discussion, refer to DEIR Chapter 6, “Project Alternatives.”

The DEIR provides an analysis of the comparative impacts anticipated from three alternatives to the project:

- ▲ **Alternative 1: No Project** – This alternative would consist of not approving the Bilby Ridge SOIA and the SOIA area would remain under the jurisdiction of Sacramento County with no changes to current agricultural land use designation and zoning.
- ▲ **Alternative 2: Reduced Sphere of Influence** – This alternative would reduce the SOIA area from 480 acres to 240 acres.
- ▲ **Alternative 3: Off-Site Alternative** – This alternative would involve the establishment of the SOIA area adjacent to the proposed Elk Grove Multi Sport Complex that is proposed for annexation south of Grant Line Road.

As discussed in DEIR Chapter 6, “Project Alternatives,” the Reduced Sphere of Influence Alternative is considered the environmentally superior alternative because it reduces several impacts associated with the project and would generally meet the stated project objectives. However, the Reduced Sphere of Influence Alternative may result in an irregular jurisdictional boundaries if the Kammerer Road extension is completed in the future.

1.7 CEQA PUBLIC REVIEW PROCESS

On December 14, 2017, the DEIR was released for a 60-day public review and comment period that ended on February 12, 2018. The DEIR was submitted to the State Clearinghouse; posted on Sacramento LAFCo’s website (<http://www.saclafco.org/Pages/default.aspx>); posted with the Sacramento County Clerk Recorder; and made available at Sacramento LAFCo’s offices.

Because of these notification efforts, written comments were received from agencies, organizations, and individuals on the content of the DEIR. Chapter 2, “Responses to Comments,” identifies these commenting parties, their respective comments, and responses to these comments. None of the comments received, or the responses provided, constitute “significant new information” by CEQA standards (State CEQA Guidelines CCR Section 15088.5).

1.8 ORGANIZATION OF THIS FEIR

This FEIR is organized as follows:

Chapter 1, Introduction: This chapter describes the purpose of the FEIR, summarizes the project and the major conclusions of the DEIR, provides an overview of the CEQA public review process, and describes the content of the FEIR.

Chapter 2, Responses to Comments: This chapter contains a list of all parties who submitted comments on the DEIR during the public review period, copies of the comment letters received, and responses to the comments.

Chapter 3, Revisions to the DEIR: This chapter presents revisions to the DEIR text made in response to comments, or to amplify, clarify or make minor modifications or corrections. Changes in the text are signified by ~~strikeouts~~ where text is removed and by double underline where text is added.

Chapter 4, Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program: This chapter presents the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) for the proposed ordinance, in accordance with CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines (PRC Section 21081.6 and State CEQA Guidelines Sections 15091[d] and 15097), which require public agencies “to adopt a reporting and monitoring program for changes to the project which it has adopted or made a condition of project approval to mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment.”

Chapter 5, List of Preparers: This chapter identifies the lead agency contacts as well as the preparers of this FEIR.

Chapter 6, References: This chapter identifies the organizations and persons consulted during preparation of this FEIR and the documents used as sources for the analysis.