

1.0 INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

This Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) has been prepared in conformance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970 (as amended) to evaluate the environmental impacts associated with the development of a university campus and adjoining mixed-use community defined in the Regional University Specific Plan (RUSP). The project applicant is seeking approval of the following discretionary actions: Specific Plan; amendment to the Placer County General Plan land use diagram; Placer County General Plan policy amendments; Dry Creek/West Placer Community Plan policy amendments; rezoning; large lot tentative map; development agreement; right-of-way acquisitions; and final large-lot subdivision map. Placer County is the lead agency under CEQA for the preparation of this EIR.

CEQA requires the preparation of an EIR when there is substantial evidence that a project could have a significant effect on the environment. The purpose of an EIR is to provide decision makers, public agencies, and the general public with an objective and informational document that fully discloses the potential environmental effects of the proposed project. The term "proposed project," as used in this EIR, refers to the development of the university campus and adjoining community defined in the RUSP, as well as improvements outside of the RUSP area needed to serve the project area. The EIR process is specifically designed to describe the objective evaluation of potentially significant direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of the proposed project; to identify alternatives that reduce or eliminate the project's significant effects; and to identify feasible measures that mitigate significant effects of the project. In addition, CEQA requires that an EIR identify those adverse impacts determined to remain significant after mitigation.

Background

In accordance with CEQA regulations, a Notice of Preparation (NOP) was released on March 4, 2005, with a comment period from March 4, 2005 to April 4, 2005. The NOP was circulated under the title De La Salle University and Community Specific Plan, but the Christian Brothers (De la Salle representatives) have since withdrawn from the project, and the project has been renamed the Regional University Specific Plan. Although a specific university has not been identified for the project, all the previous assumptions regarding development on the university portion of the project site remain the same. The NOP was distributed to responsible agencies, interested parties and organizations, as well as private organizations and individuals that have stated an interest in the project. The purpose of the NOP was to provide notification that an EIR for the project was being prepared and to solicit guidance on the scope and content of the document. A scoping meeting was held on March 24, 2005. A copy of the NOP is included in Appendix A, and the responses to the NOP are included in Appendix B of this DEIR in accordance with CEQA.

Since circulation of the NOP, an approximately 21-acre kindergarten through eighth grade school site has been added to the project boundaries, for a total of approximately 1,157.5 acres within the RUSP boundaries. The effects of development of this school site are also included in the analysis of this Draft EIR.

The DEIR is being circulated for public review and comment for a period of 45 days. During this period, comments on the DEIR's accuracy and completeness may be submitted to the lead agency

from the general public, as well as from organizations and agencies. The 45-day public review period will be from **December 10, 2007** through **January 24, 2008**.

A public hearing will be held on the DEIR for this project during the 45-day public review period. Upon completion of the public review period, a Final EIR (FEIR) will be prepared that will include both written and oral comments on the DEIR received during the public review period and responses to those comments. The FEIR will address any revisions to the DEIR made in response to public comments. The DEIR and FEIR will comprise the EIR for the proposed project.

Before the lead agency can approve the project, the agency must certify that the EIR has been completed in compliance with CEQA, that the decision-making body has reviewed and considered the information in the EIR, and that the EIR reflects the independent judgment of the lead agency.

In the event that the County Board of Supervisors approves the proposed Regional University Specific Plan, written findings of fact will be prepared and adopted in which the Board identifies all significant effects and adopts mitigation measures. In the findings of fact, the Board may, if it so chooses, reject mitigation measures and/or alternatives, and provide a written explanation of its reasons for doing so. (See Pub. Resources Code, Section 21081, subd. (a); CEQA Guidelines, Section 15091, subd. (a).) If the Board chooses to approve a project that would result in a significant unavoidable impact, it must adopt a statement of overriding considerations, which must explain the benefits of the project that, on balance, have caused the Board to choose to accept a significant adverse environmental impact.

LEAD AGENCY

Placer County is the lead agency for preparation of the Regional University Specific Plan environmental analysis. In conformance with sections 15050 and 15367 of the State CEQA Guidelines, Placer County has been designated the "lead agency" which is defined as the "public agency which has the principal responsibility for carrying out or disapproving a project."

Required Discretionary Actions

Placer County would be required to certify that the EIR adequately identifies the significant environmental effects of the proposed project, pursuant to CEQA, the State CEQA Guidelines, and the Placer County CEQA Guidelines. The project applicant is seeking approval of the following County entitlements, approvals, actions, and/or permits:

- Specific Plan
- Amendment to the Placer County General Plan Land Use Diagram
- Placer County General Plan Policy Amendments
- Rezoning (from F-B-X to SLP-RUSP)
- Development Agreement
- Public Facilities Financing Plan
- Right-of-Way Acquisitions
- Dry Creek/ West Placer Community Plan policy amendments

- Creation of one or more new zones of benefit within existing county service area(s), creation of one or more community facilities districts

Lead Agency Contact

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Other Agency Approvals

In addition to the approvals identified above that must be obtained from the County, the following approvals and/or permits may be required from other agencies, including various “responsible agencies” as defined by CEQA. This EIR has been designed to provide information to these agencies to assist them in the permitting processes for the proposed project. Technically, no federal agency can be a “responsible agency” within the meaning of CEQA, as federal agencies are beyond the reach of state law, which does impose various duties on responsible agencies. Even so, various federal agencies, discussed below, may use the analysis in this document in order to assist with the preparation of their own analyses required by federal law.

- **Section 404 Permit** (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Environmental Protection Agency)

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) regulates the placement of fill or dredged materials in waters of the United States, which include stream courses and jurisdictional wetlands. The Corps regulates these activities under the authority of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has authority to comment on and veto Corps decisions. The Corps would regulate development in the RUSP that affects jurisdictional wetlands. To comply with the Section 404 Permit requirements, the project applicant would be required to prepare both a wetland delineation and a wetland mitigation plan based on the wetland delineation verified by the Corps. The Corps would conduct its own NEPA analysis depending upon the total number of acres disturbed.

- **Federal Endangered Species Act Section 7 Consultation** (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)

As part of the 404 permit process, the Corps would initiate consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to determine whether any federally listed species could be adversely affected and to identify measures to avoid or lessen adverse impacts on listed species. If it is determined that take of any federally listed species cannot be avoided, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service shall prepare and submit a Biological Opinion to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in support of the Clean Water Act Section 404 permit process prior to any activities that require a Clean Water Act permit.

- **Water Quality Certification** (State Water Resources Control Board)

Construction has the potential to directly or indirectly affect “waters and wetlands of the United States.” Water or wetlands disturbance could result in a discharge to Curry Creek. The project applicant would be responsible for obtaining a water quality certification issued

pursuant to Section 401 of the federal Clean Water Act, or a waiver thereof, by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB).

- **Construction Storm Water Discharge Permit** (State Water Resources Control Board)

Construction would involve clearing, grading, and excavation activities that would result in the disturbance of one acre or more of land. As such, the project applicant would be required to obtain a SWRCB General Construction permit for stormwater discharge from construction sites. The permit process would include development of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and identification of Best Management Practices (BMPs) to control pollutants in stormwater discharges both during construction and after construction is completed.
- **National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit Modification** (Regional Water Quality Control Board)

Expansion of treatment capacity of the PGWWTP beyond that planned for the Wastewater Master Plan EIR would require modification to the PGWWTP's NPDES permit to accommodate additional effluent discharges to Pleasant Grove Creek. Such modification would require approval by the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board. If any modifications to the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit are required, the WWTP operator would address modifying the allowable discharge amounts. Additional environmental review may be required as part of the approval process.
- **Streambed Alteration Agreements** (California Department of Fish and Game)

Construction would require the project applicant obtain a Section 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement(s) from the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) to evaluate the potential for impacts to aquatic habitat. CDFG has jurisdiction over construction activities affecting streambeds and banks within the 100-year floodplain. A 1602 Agreement between the applicant and CDFG addresses methods to avoid or minimize aquatic or wetland losses in accordance with CDFG policies.
- **Hazardous Materials Environmental Oversight**

Any environmental problems relating to hazardous materials detected on the project site may require oversight by the appropriate governmental agency (e.g., Department of Toxic Substances Control, Placer County Division of Environmental Health Services). It would be the responsibility of the project applicant to contact the appropriate agency in the event any potential hazardous materials are identified before or during project construction.
- **Permit to Operate** (Placer County Air Pollution Control District)

Commercial, office and industrial operations would require a permit to operate from the Placer County Air Pollution Control District. It would be the responsibility of the project applicant to obtain any required permits from the air district prior to project operation.
- **School District Boundary Changes** (County Committee on School District Reorganization - County Office of Education)

The school district boundary changes are not LAFCO actions.

- **Formation of a New County Service Area (LAFCO)**

The County may require the formation of a new county service area to provide services to the RUSP, in addition to the creation of new zones of benefit within existing county service areas. LAFCO would use this EIR for their approval of the creation of a new county service area.

- **Reorganization (Annexations/Detachments) for Roadways (LAFCO)**

A portion of Watt Avenue may require annexation into the City of Roseville. If any roadway annexations are required, LAFCO would use this EIR for their review and approval. It is anticipated at this time that the entire road would be within the County; however, if the County and City of Roseville determine that it would be appropriate to annex the road to the City, this document could be used to make findings for the annexation.

- **Recycled Water Provider Agreement (City of Roseville)**

The project includes the use of recycled water for landscape irrigation, so a recycled water provider agreement would need to be obtained from the City of Roseville in order to use recycled water for landscape irrigation.

- **Service Area Boundary Amendment (South Placer Wastewater Authority)**

The operations agreement among the Participants of the South Placer Wastewater Authority (SPWA) will need to be modified to allow wastewater from the RUSP to be treated by a SPWA regional WWTP. Specifically, the Service Area Boundary would need to be approved by the SPWA Board and the Participants. The SPWA service area boundary amendment is not a LAFCO action.

- **Public Water System Wells (Placer County Water Agency, California Department of Health Services, and Placer County Division of Environmental Health Services)**

The project includes the use of groundwater wells for water supply. The Placer County Division of Environmental Health Services would be responsible for issuing well construction permits for the public water system wells. The California Department of Health Services (DHS) is responsible for implementing the federal Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974 and its updates, as well as California statutes and regulations related to drinking water. As part of their efforts, the DHS inspects and provides regulatory oversight for public water systems within California. For any new water system, a Domestic Water Permit issued by DHS will be required.

- **Road Improvements Outside of Placer County's Jurisdiction (Sutter County, Sacramento County, City of Roseville)**

Placer County will cooperate with other jurisdictions in an effort to acquire funding for various road improvements. (See Chapter 6.12 ("Transportation and Circulation"), and especially Mitigation Measure 6.12-1.)

USE OF THIS EIR

This EIR is a "Project EIR," pursuant to section 15161 of the CEQA Guidelines, for all project components, including off-site infrastructure. 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. Because the design of the proposed stadium would be dependent on the athletic programs of the university, there is currently not sufficient detail to provide project-level analysis for the stadium. Therefore, the stadium is addressed at a programmatic level in this document, pursuant to section 15168 of the CEQA Guidelines. Once the specific design has been generated, if it is determined that the stadium is not within the scope of this Draft EIR, the stadium would be analyzed in an appropriate environmental document at a project level.

How to Use this Report

This report includes seven principal parts: Project Description, Summary of Impacts and Mitigation Measures, Land Use and Planning, Demographics, Environmental Analysis (Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures), Alternatives, and CEQA Considerations.

The **Project Description** (Chapter 2) describes the location of the project, the project background, existing conditions on the project site, and the nature and location of specific elements of the proposed project that are proposed for construction.

The **Summary of Impacts and Mitigation Measures** (Chapter 3) presents an overview of the results and conclusions of the environmental evaluation. This section identifies impacts of the proposed project and available mitigation measures.

Land Use and Planning (Chapter 4) addresses the land use and planning implications of the project and discusses consistency with land use policies.

Demographics (Chapter 5) describes the existing population, employment, and housing levels in Placer County and the Sacramento metropolitan region, and evaluates population, employment, and housing changes caused by the proposed project that have the potential to cause physical environmental effects.

The **Environmental Analysis** (Chapter 6) includes a topic-by-topic analysis of impacts that would or could result from implementation of the proposed project or alternatives. Topics discussed are those identified in the Initial Study Checklist as requiring further analysis (see Appendix A). The analysis is organized in 13 topical sections. Each section is organized into two major subsections: Setting (existing conditions), and Impacts and Mitigation Measures, including cumulative impacts and mitigation measures.

Alternatives (Chapter 7) includes a description of the project alternatives. An EIR is required by CEQA to provide adequate information for decision makers to make a reasonable choice between alternatives based on the environmental aspects of the proposed project and alternatives. As demonstrated in Table 7-2 et seq., this chapter provides a quantitative comparison of the impacts of the alternatives compared to those of the proposed project. This chapter also identifies the environmentally superior alternative.

CEQA Considerations (Chapter 8) discusses issues required by CEQA: unavoidable adverse impacts, irreversible environmental changes, growth inducement, and a summary of cumulative impacts.

The **References** (Chapter 9) used throughout the DEIR are included in this chapter.

Report Preparation (Chapter 10) includes a list of preparers of the DEIR.

The **Appendices** contain a number of reference items providing support and documentation of the analyses performed for this report.

Scope of this EIR

Placer County, as lead agency, identified in the Initial Study for this EIR potentially significant impacts that could result from implementation of the proposed project. Based on the Initial Study (see Appendix A), the County determined that this EIR address the following technical issues:

- Aesthetics
- Agricultural Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology, Soils, and Seismicity
- Hazardous Materials and Public Safety
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Noise
- Public Services
- Public Utilities
- Transportation and Circulation
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Global Climate Change
- Water Supply

Demographics itself is not a technical issue; however, the information in that chapter is used as a basis for analysis of project and cumulative impacts in the technical issues listed above. Land use and planning is not considered a technical issue, but is addressed in Chapter 4.

Issues identified as being less than significant in the Initial Study and, therefore, not discussed in this EIR include:

- Potential impacts on scenic vistas
- Potential impacts on historic structures
- Potential impacts due to the use of septic systems
- Potential impacts due to exposure of people or structures to a significant risk from seiche, tsunami, or mudflow
- Loss of availability of mineral resources
- Impacts associated with the displacement of substantial numbers of people

For a complete discussion of technical issues focused out of this EIR, please see the Initial Study in Appendix A.