

1.0 INTRODUCTION

ENPLAN, on behalf of Shasta County, has prepared this Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Panorama Planned Development Project. Shasta County (as lead agency) is providing the Draft EIR to the public, as well as responsible and trustee agencies, to present information about the proposed Panorama Planned Development Project and its potential environmental effects, and to solicit comments from the public and agencies regarding the environmental effects of the project. This Draft EIR was prepared in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970 (as amended through Public Resources Code §21000 et seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations §15000 et seq.).

1.1 PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

An EIR is a full disclosure, public information document in which the potentially significant adverse environmental impacts of a proposed project are identified and evaluated, and feasible mitigation measures are recommended. Alternatives to the project that could avoid or substantially reduce the significant adverse environmental effects of the project are also identified. The EIR is used in the planning and decision-making process by the lead agency, as well as responsible and trustee agencies. The lead agency is the public agency with primary responsibility over the proposed project. In accordance with State CEQA Guidelines §15051(b)(1), “the lead agency will normally be the agency with general governmental powers, such as a city or county, rather than an agency with a single or limited purpose.” As noted above, the lead agency for the proposed project is Shasta County.

Other public agency stakeholders (e.g., responsible and trustee agencies) also rely on the EIR when considering their approval of the project. A responsible agency is any public agency, other than the Lead Agency, that has discretionary approval over the project (State CEQA Guidelines §15381). A trustee agency is any state agency having jurisdiction by law over natural resources affected by a project (e.g., Department of Fish and Game) (State CEQA Guidelines §15386). One of the purposes of an EIR is to identify and assess all of the potentially significant adverse environmental impacts of a proposed project, including those that may be within the jurisdiction of responsible and trustee agencies, and all feasible mitigation measures or project alternatives that avoid or substantially reduce the significant impacts of the project.

The purpose of an EIR is not to recommend either approval or denial of a project as a policy matter. Rather, CEQA requires decision-makers to exercise their independent judgment in considering all of the potentially significant adverse environmental effects of a proposed project and balancing those effects against the potential benefits of the project.

1.2 CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT PROCESS

As provided in Section 15126.2 of the State CEQA Guidelines, an EIR must identify and focus on the significant adverse environmental effects of the proposed project. To assist in the identification of potentially significant impacts resulting from project implementation, Shasta County circulated a *Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an Environmental Impact Report (2008)* and an *Environmental Initial Study (2007)* for the Panorama Planned Development Project to responsible and trustee agencies and the public. These documents were released on February 21, 2008, for a 30-day review period, which concluded on March 21, 2008. These documents, as well as comment letters received on the NOP, are included in the CD containing all appendices (Appendices Compact Disc) included with this report. In addition, Shasta County hosted a public scoping session on February 27, 2008, at the North Cottonwood School, to solicit additional comments from the public and reviewing agencies.

Determining whether the potential effects of a project are significant requires consideration of the existing “baseline” environment, against which the potential effects of the project are compared. Pursuant to §15126.2 of the State CEQA Guidelines, “An EIR must include a description of the physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of the project, as they exist at the time the Notice of Preparation is published...” This environmental setting will normally constitute the baseline physical conditions by which a lead agency determines whether an impact is significant.

This Draft EIR is being circulated to local, state, and federal agencies, and to interested organizations and individuals who may wish to review and comment on the report. This Draft EIR is being circulated for a 45-day public review period, during which time written comments should be sent to the Shasta County Department of Resource Management, at the following address:

Kent Hector, Senior Planner
Shasta County Department of Resource Management
1855 Placer Street, Suite 103
Redding, California 96001

Paper copies of the DEIR and appendices are available for review at the Shasta County Department of Resource Management, Shasta County Library: Anderson Branch, and Cottonwood Community Library. The DEIR and appendices are also available online on the Shasta County Department of Resource Management website at <http://www.co.shasta.ca.us/Departments/Resourcemgmt/drm/index.htm>. Copies of the DEIR and appendices may be requested through a local copying center, at the cost of the individual requesting the documents.

Written responses to comments regarding the project’s potential adverse effects to the physical environment will be prepared and included in the Final EIR. Together, the Draft EIR, the responses to comments, and any changes to the Draft EIR will constitute the Final EIR, which will be considered for approval by Shasta County at a public

hearing. Additional comments regarding the environmental effects of the project will be accepted at the public hearing.

If environmental impacts are identified as significant and unavoidable, the lead agency may nevertheless approve the project if it makes written findings supported by substantial evidence that the social, economic, or other benefits of the project outweigh the significant and unavoidable adverse environmental effects. Along with certification of the EIR and preparation of "Findings," Shasta County would 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 any other substantial evidence in the record), adopt a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP), and file a Notice of Determination with the State Clearinghouse.

1.3 EIR ORGANIZATION

This EIR is organized into chapters, as identified and briefly described below. Chapters are further divided into sections (e.g., Section 4.8, Land Use).

Chapter 1: Introduction

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

Chapter 2: Summary

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

Chapter 3: Project Description

Chapter 3 provides a description of the proposed project, including the precise location and boundaries of the project area, the proposed development plan, the project objectives and background, the general technical, economic, and environmental characteristics of the project, a statement of the intended uses of the EIR, and an explanation of the need for the project. (See State CEQA Guidelines, §15124). This chapter also describes the proposed construction of the project, its operation, and the applicable regulatory requirements.

Chapter 4: Environmental Analysis

For each environmental issue, such as Land Use, Chapter 4 contains a discussion of the existing baseline conditions, the thresholds above which an impact is considered significant, the significant adverse environmental impacts of the proposed project, feasible mitigation measures, and the anticipated levels of significance after mitigation. Issues evaluated in these sections consist of those originally identified for review in the *Notice of Preparation* (NOP), plus additional issues raised during the scoping session. A copy of the NOP and comment letters received are included on a compact disc containing all appendices (Appendices Compact Disc) included with this report.

INTRODUCTION

Each of Sections 4.1 through 4.17 of this Draft EIR is organized into the following major subsections. A statement describing the purpose of the section, as well as a summary of impacts and mitigation measures, is included prior to the Environmental Setting subsection.

- **Environmental Setting:** This subsection presents the existing regional and local environmental conditions relevant to the consideration of project impacts. The applicable regulatory framework, plans, and policies, under which the proposed project would be implemented are also discussed.
- **Thresholds of Significance:** This subsection presents the criteria used to define significant effects on the environment. The criteria are expressed as thresholds, above which the project would have a significant effect on the environment. Thresholds may be quantitative or qualitative, and may be based on agency standards, or legislative or regulatory requirements.
- **Environmental Impacts and Mitigation:** This subsection discusses potential significant effects of the proposed project on the environment, based on whether it violates/exceeds stated thresholds of significance. Impact analyses are numbered sequentially in each subsection throughout the section. For instance, analyses in Section 4.2 are numbered 4.2-1, 4.2-2, 4.2-3, etc. A bold-font topic statement, including the analysis number, precedes the discussion of each potential impact. The significance conclusion, in italic-font, immediately follows the bold-font topic statement. The discussion that follows the topic statement includes substantial evidence to support the significance conclusions. This EIR includes the following terminology to denote the significance of environmental impacts:
 - *Less-than-Significant Impact.* A less-than-significant impact is one that would not result in a substantial adverse change in the physical environment. Less-than-significant impacts do not require mitigation under CEQA.
 - *Significant Impact.* Public Resources Code §21068 defines a significant effect on the environment as one that would cause “a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in the environment.” State CEQA Guidelines Section 15382 also defines a significant effect on the environment as “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...” Levels of significance can vary by project based on the existing physical environment.
 - *Potentially Significant Impact.* A potentially significant impact is one that, if it were to occur, would be considered a significant impact as described above. For CEQA purposes, a potentially significant impact is treated (i.e., mitigated) as if it were a significant impact.
 - *Significant and Unavoidable Impact.* A significant and unavoidable impact is one that would result in a substantial adverse effect on the environment that

cannot be avoided or mitigated to a less-than-significant level. Although a project with significant and unavoidable adverse impacts may be approved by a lead agency, the agency must first prepare written findings and adopt a Statement of Overriding Considerations, pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines §15093.

This subsection also provides any recommended mitigation measures to reduce the significant adverse environmental effects of the proposed project, to the extent feasible. These mitigation measures are listed immediately below the associated environmental impact. The State CEQA Guidelines (§15370) define mitigation as:

- a) Avoiding the impact altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action.
- b) Minimizing impacts by limiting the degree of magnitude of the action and its implementation.
- c) Rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment.
- d) Reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action.
- e) Compensating for the impacts by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.

The mitigation measures are listed numerically, corresponding to the impact necessitating mitigation. For example, Impact AGR 4.2-3 would be mitigated with MM AGR 4.2-3.

- **Level of Significance after Mitigation:** This subsection describes the status of each significant impact following implementation of all feasible mitigation measures. Either the impact would be reduced to a level below the significance threshold (i.e., mitigated to a less-than-significant level) or it would be concluded that feasible mitigation is not available or is insufficient to reduce an impact to less than significant. This would be a "significant unavoidable effect on the environment."

Chapter 5: Additional CEQA-Mandated Impacts Analyses

Chapter 5 discusses cumulative impacts that would result from the proposed project in combination with other related past, present and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the area, as well as the significant and unavoidable impacts of the project, and growth-inducing impacts.

Chapter 6: Alternatives Analysis

Chapter 6 describes a range of feasible alternatives to the project, at a level consistent with CEQA requirements. The alternatives are not analyzed at the same level of detail as the project; rather, they present options that could mitigate one or more significant

INTRODUCTION

environmental impacts while meeting the project's objectives, and are compared to the proposed project.

Chapter 7: Preparers of the EIR

Chapter 7 identifies the EIR authors and consultants who provided analysis in support of the EIR's conclusions.

Chapter 8: References

This chapter sets forth a comprehensive listing of all sources of information used in preparation of the EIR, including agencies and individuals consulted during preparation of the EIR.

Appendices

All project-specific technical reports and letters considered during preparation of the EIR are presented on a Compact Disc included with this report and are considered appendices to the EIR and thereby part of the record of proceedings.

End of Section.