

This section summarizes the purpose of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR); describes (1) the environmental procedures that are to be followed according to State law; (2) the intended uses of the EIR; (3) the project's relationship to the City of Citrus Heights's General Plan; and, (4) the EIR's scope and organization.

1.1 BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

This Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been prepared in conformance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to evaluate the environmental effects of the proposed Stock Ranch Guide for Development (i.e. "Guide") and the environmental effects of development adhering to provisions of the proposed Guide, which encompasses approximately 129 acres of vacant land in the City of Citrus Heights.

The City of Citrus Heights, (City), acting as **lead agency**, has prepared this Draft EIR to provide the public and responsible trustee agencies with information about the potential environmental effects of the proposed Stock Ranch Guide for Development. As described in the CEQA Guidelines Section 15121(a), an EIR is a public **informational document** that assesses potential environmental effects of the proposed project, as well as identifies mitigation measures and alternatives to the proposed project that could reduce or avoid its adverse environmental impacts. Public agencies are charged primarily with avoiding impacts. When complete avoidance is not feasible, agencies must minimize the environmental impacts of proposed development while at the same time balancing a variety of public objectives, including economic, environmental, and social factors.

What is a "Lead Agency"?

The "Lead Agency" is the agency (in this case, the City of Citrus Heights), which will be primarily responsible for approving and overseeing the implementation of a project.

CEQA requires the preparation of an EIR prior to approving any "project" which may have a significant effect on the environment. For the purposes of CEQA, the term "project" refers to the whole of an action, which has the potential for resulting in a direct physical change or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment (CEQA Guidelines Section 15378[a]). With respect to the proposed Stock Ranch Development, the City has determined that the Guide for Development is a "project" within the definition of CEQA, which has the potential for resulting in significant environmental effects.

The Stock Ranch project site has been addressed in a number of documents over the last several years. The Citrus Heights Community Plan, approved by Sacramento County in January 1978, designated the project site as Special Planning Area #3, one of nine identified in Citrus Heights. In addition, a previous EIR was completed for the Stock Ranch site in April 1992. At that time, the Stock Ranch site consisted of 172 acres. The EIR focused on environmental impacts associated with a land use change (requiring a General Plan Amendment, Community Plan Amendment, and Rezoning) from business park to industrial, commercial, and residential uses. More recently, the *Stock Ranch Background Report* was completed in September 1999. These sources, as well as the April 1999 *City of Citrus Heights General Plan: Summary of Background Information* (Crawford, Multari and Clark, 1999) were used, when possible, as an informational resource in the preparation of this EIR. Please see Section 3.0 of this report for a detailed description of proposed uses and activities.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.2 TYPE OF DOCUMENT

The CEQA Guidelines identify several types of EIRs, each applicable to different project circumstances. This EIR has been prepared as a **Program EIR** pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15168. This type of analysis focuses primarily on the changes in the environment that would occur as a result of a series of actions that can be characterized as one large project, related either: (1) geographically, (2) as logical parts in the chain of contemplated actions, (3) in connection with issuance of rules, regulations, plans, or other general criteria to govern the conduct of a continuing program, or (4) as individual activities carried out under the authorizing statutory or regulatory authority and having similar environmental effects which can be mitigated in similar ways.

The purpose of a program-level EIR (CEQA Guidelines Section 15168) is to allow environmental review of a project at its earliest possible stage (CEQA Guidelines Section 15004). Therefore, the EIR can only identify and mitigate those impacts associated with and reasonably anticipated in association with the proposed project.

While the Stock Ranch Guide for Development provides a land use concept, further refinement of project details will occur as specific development proposals within the Stock Ranch Guide for Development area are submitted. The City of Citrus Heights Community Development Department will examine these specific projects. If the project complies with the Guide for Development's regulations and guidelines, no further environmental review (beyond this EIR) will be prepared.

Subsequent development projects anticipated include, but are not limited to, tentative subdivision maps for residential areas, development projects for the commercial areas (e.g. development plan review, conditional use permit, etc.), and improvement plans for parks, trails, roadways and infrastructure facilities.

1.3 INTENDED USES OF THE EIR

This EIR has been prepared in accordance with CEQA. The EIR is intended to evaluate the environmental impacts of the Stock Ranch Guide for Development at a programmatic level. As such, this EIR is used to evaluate broad impacts associated with the proposed project. According to CEQA Guidelines Section 15168(c), subsequent activities associated with Stock Ranch must be examined in light of this EIR to determine whether additional CEQA documents must be prepared. If later activities would have effects not examined in this EIR, CEQA Guidelines Section 15168(c)(1) requires the preparation of a new initial study leading to either an EIR or negative declaration. If the agency finds, in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15162, that later activities do not cause new environmental effects or require new mitigation measures, Section 15168(c)(2) stipulates that such activities can be approved as being within the scope of the project covered by the **Program EIR** and no additional environmental document would be required.

Subsequent actions that would most likely be taken by the City regarding the Stock Ranch Guide for Development project that this EIR would be used for include:

- Approval of development agreement(s) for the Stock Ranch Guide for Development project.
- Approval of private projects and development plans for projects in the study area.
- Approval of public projects, including parks and infrastructure.
- Tentative and final subdivision maps.
- Regional Water Quality Control Board, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits and Water Quality Certification or waiver, under Sections 401 and 402 of the Clean Water Act (CWA).
- California Department of Fish and Game streambed alteration agreements, (Sections 1601 and 1603 of the Fish and Game Code).
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) approval of Section 404 permits.
- Other permits.

1.4 RELATIONSHIP TO THE CITY OF CITRUS HEIGHTS GENERAL PLAN

The City of Citrus Heights incorporated on January 1, 1997, and adopted Sacramento County's General Plan as the City of Citrus Heights General Plan (i.e. the existing General Plan). Following incorporation, the City began development of a new General Plan. In July 2000, a Draft General Plan was released for public review.

A Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) for the City's General Plan was also prepared and released for public review in July 2000. The purpose of the Draft EIR is to provide the public and interested public agencies with information about the potential environmental effects of the proposed General Plan.

The proposed project includes an amendment to the existing General Plan, which would be amended to reflect the proposed land uses. In the event that the draft General Plan is adopted prior to approval of the proposed project, the land use plan and development policies of the Stock Ranch Guide for Development will be consistent with and incorporated into the new General Plan, and the proposed amendment would not be necessary.

Current zoning at the Project site, introduced through a General Plan Amendment and change of zone in 1992, includes designations for residential, commercial, office/industrial, and open space uses. The site's proposed land uses (General Commercial, Low Density Residential, Medium Density Residential, Residential Cluster and Sylvan Commerce District Zone, and Open Space) include specific commercial, residential, and open space uses. The proposed project would require a change of zone to SPA (Special Planning Area) to implement the land uses proposed in the Guide for Development.

1.5 USE OF DRAFT GENERAL PLAN

Upon its incorporation in 1997, the City of Citrus Heights adopted the County of Sacramento's General Plan, which became the City of Citrus Heights General Plan; the County of Sacramento's Zoning Code was also adopted and became the City of Citrus Heights Zoning Code. Approximately 18 months after incorporation, the City began preparation of a new

1.0 INTRODUCTION

General Plan (a process which is required by state law to be completed within 30 months of incorporation). Because the General Plan was not ready for adoption in time to meet the state-mandated 30-month timeline, a request was made to the State Office of Planning and Research (OPR) for a time extension.

The City of Citrus Heights received approval for a request for a second and final six-month extension of time (expiring on December 31, 2000) to complete the General Plan (Nissen, pers. comm., 2000) (**Appendix A**). The extension applies to all elements of the General Plan except the Housing Element. Pursuant to Government Code Section 65361, during the period of this extension, the City is not required to maintain a complete general plan.

The extension includes several conditions of approval that allow the City to continue to process and consider projects which were initiated or filed prior to the effective date of the first extension (July 12, 1999), provided that the City shall not approve such projects unless it makes written findings, based on substantial evidence in the record, that:

- There is reasonable probability that the project will be consistent with the future adopted General Plan, and
- There is little or no probability that the project will be detrimental to or interfere with the future adopted General Plan

The Governor's Office of Planning and Research recognizes that the Draft General Plan will undergo revisions during the deliberations preceding final adoption. Accordingly, the City Council may make orderly revisions to the Draft General Plan and refer to the Draft General Plan back to the Planning Commission for further consideration, as it deems necessary (Nissen, pers. comm., 2000).

Because the City's new General Plan is expected to be adopted in November 2000 (prior to the consideration of the proposed Stock Ranch project by the City Council), this Draft EIR uses the Draft General Plan as the basis for determining standards of significance and, where appropriate, consistency with City goals and policies. The General Plan EIR was also used to consider cumulative impacts.

1.6 INCORPORATION OF STOCK RANCH GUIDE FOR DEVELOPMENT

The *Stock Ranch Guide for Development* (EIP, 2000) is a comprehensive guide that describes what the Stock Ranch should look like, what uses are appropriate for this land, what measures should be taken to preserve and mitigate the loss of sensitive habitat, and how to make future development compatible with surrounding neighborhoods. The elements of the Guide include a Vision Statement, Development Plans (land use, open space, circulation, drainage, infrastructure, and landscape), Development Standards, Design Guidelines, and an Implementation Strategy. Aspects of the Guide that respond to impacts are incorporated as appropriate throughout this EIR, typically as they apply to impacts identified in Section 4.0. For the most part, the Guide serves to mitigate impacts to less than significant levels through site design, setbacks and a variety of other requirements which respond to the site's features and surrounding neighborhoods.

The Guide to Development will also be incorporated by reference in the Special Planning Area (SPA) ordinance presented to the City for adoption; its standards will be used to provide land use standards and regulations, and to establish the “zoning districts” which will be used in implementing the SPA.

1.7 ORGANIZATION AND SCOPE

Sections 15122 through 15132 of the CEQA Guidelines identify the content requirements for Draft and Final EIRs. An EIR must include:

- A description of the environmental setting,
- An environmental impact analysis,
- Mitigation measures,
- Alternatives,
- Growth-inducing impacts,
- Significant non-avoidable impacts, and
- Cumulative impacts

The environmental issues addressed in the Draft EIR were established through review of environmental documentation developed for the project and responses to the Notice of Preparation. Based upon these comments, agency consultation and review of the project application, the City determined the scope for this EIR.

This Draft EIR is organized in the following manner:

Section 1.0 - Introduction

Section 1.0 provides an introduction and overview describing the intended use of the EIR and the review and certification process.

Section 2.0 - Executive Summary

This section summarizes the characteristics of the proposed project and provides a concise summary matrix of the project's environmental impacts and associated mitigation measures.

Section 3.0 - Project Description

This section provides a detailed description of the proposed project, including intended objectives, background information, and physical and technical characteristics.

Section 4.0 Environmental Setting, Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Section 4.0 contains an analysis of environmental topic areas as identified below. Each subsection contains a description of the existing setting of the project area, identifies project-related impacts, and recommends mitigation measures.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Sections 4.1 through 4.12 in this EIR provide an integrated presentation of the setting, environmental impacts, and mitigation measures. Potential effects of implementing the proposed project, including cumulative effects, are identified; along with mitigation measures recommended to lessen or reduce identified impacts. In cases where no mitigation is available, this fact is noted. This EIR provides an analysis of environmental effects specifically associated with the proposed project, as well as an evaluation of project impacts in light of the environmental analysis provided in the City General Plan EIR. Consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15183, this EIR addresses environmental effects that are peculiar to the project and utilizes mitigation measures that are based on adopted City development policies and standards to mitigate anticipated impacts.

The following major environmental topics are addressed in this section:

- **4.1 Land Use:** Addresses the land use impacts associated with implementation of the project including project compatibility with surrounding land uses, consistency with City's land use goals and policies, analysis of land use patterns, potential land use conflicts, and impacts to adjacent uses.
- **4.2 Population, Employment and Housing:** Examines the impacts of the project on local population characteristics, and examines impacts on housing stock and City employment and the jobs/housing balance.
- **4.3 Noise:** Examines noise impacts during construction and at project buildout, including potential noise generation from mobile and stationary sources. This section also addresses the impact of noise on neighboring residential uses.
- **4.4 Transportation and Circulation:** Addresses the impacts on the local and regional road system. In addition, the section assesses impacts on transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities.
- **4.5 Human Health/Risk of Upset:** Assesses the likelihood for the presence of hazardous materials or conditions on the project site and in the project area and their potential impact on human health.
- **4.6 Air Quality:** Discusses local and regional air quality impacts associated with construction activities (short-term) and increased traffic (long-term) resulting from project implementation.
- **4.7 Hydrology and Water Quality:** Examines the impacts of the project on local hydrological conditions, including drainage areas, groundwater, and changes in drainage flow rates.
- **4.8 Geology and Soils:** Addresses the potential impacts the project may have on soils, soil suitability for development, and seismic hazards for proposed development.

- **4.9 Biological Resources:** Addresses the project's impacts on habitat, vegetation, and wildlife including listed, proposed and candidate threatened and endangered species.
- **4.10 Cultural Resources:** Addresses the potential for development activities to impact cultural resources on the project site, if these resources are present. Examines the potential that such resources exist.
- **4.11 Public Services and Utilities:** Discusses the impacts the project may have on the existing public services and utilities and assesses potential increases in demand.
- **4.12 Visual Resources/Light and Glare:** This section assesses the potential increase in nighttime illumination produced by the project as well as overall aesthetic impacts of the development and operation of the proposed project.

Section 5.0 – Effects Found Not to be Significant

This section summarizes the environmental impacts that were determined to be less than significant during the preparation of this EIR. This section includes a discussion of each of these environmental areas, and a basis for the determination that they would not have a potentially significant impact.

Section 6.0 - Alternatives to the Project

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6 requires that an EIR describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, which could feasibly attain the basic objectives of the project and avoid and/or lessen the environmental effects of the project. This alternatives analysis provides a comparative analysis between the project and the selected alternatives that include:

- **“No Project” Alternative:** The project site would be developed as currently proposed without a rezone or general plan amendment. The portion of the project site north of Arcade Creek would be developed with business professional (MP), shopping center (SC) and multi-family residential uses (RD-20). The portion of the project south of Arcade Creek would be developed with multi-family uses and business professional. This alternative is examined in Section 6.2.1
- **Reduced Retail Alternative:** This alternative proposes a reduction in the amount of retail acreage north of Arcade Creek. The square footage of retail development per acre would remain the same as under the proposed project, however, the uses would be located further north of Arcade Creek. Residential uses (RD-20) would “wrap around” the north side of Arcade Creek south of the commercial uses continuing the development pattern to the east. This alternative is examined in Section 6.2.2
- **Single-Family Residential Alternative:** This alternative proposes all single-family residential development (RD-5) north of Arcade Creek. No commercial uses are

1.0 INTRODUCTION

proposed north of the creek. Uses south of Arcade Creek would be the same as those under the proposed project. This alternative is examined in Section 6.2.3

- **Mixed Single-Family/Multi-Family Residential Alternative:** This alternative proposes a mixture of single-family and multi-family development units north of Arcade Creek. Multi-family units would be clustered adjacent to Arcade Creek similar to the existing development pattern occurring to the east. Single-family uses would be developed in the area to the north of the multi-family uses and south of Auburn Boulevard. This alternative is examined in Section 6.2.4

Alternative locations for this project are considered infeasible due to the absence of other similar sites in Citrus Heights (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.6(2)(B)). Alternative site evaluations are most relevant for public and other projects where there is a considerable choice in location. For example, a power plant or roadway alignment may be located in different areas or on public land, and achieve the same objectives. The project applicant for the Stock Ranch project does not have this same flexibility.

Section 7.0 - Long-Term Implications of the Project

This section contains discussions and analysis of various topical issues mandated by CEQA including cumulative impacts and significant environmental effects that cannot be avoided if the project is implemented and growth inducing impacts.

Section 8.0 - Report Prepares and References

This section lists all authors and agencies that assisted in the preparation of the report by name, title, and company or agency affiliation.

Appendices

This section includes all notices and other procedural documents pertinent to the EIR, as well as all technical material prepared to support the analysis.

1.8 ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

The review and certification process for the EIR will involve the following procedural steps:

Notice of Preparation and Initial Study (*Already Completed*)

In accordance with Section 15082 of the CEQA Guidelines, the City of Citrus Heights prepared a NOP of an EIR on March 20, 2000. The City of Citrus Heights was identified as the lead agency for the proposed project. This notice was circulated to the public, local, state, and federal agencies, and other interested parties to solicit comments on the proposed project. The March 20, 2000 NOP is presented in **Appendix A**. Concerns raised in response to the NOP were considered during preparation of the Draft EIR and are presented in **Appendix A**.

Draft EIR (*This document*)

This document constitutes the Draft EIR (DEIR). The DEIR contains a description of the project, description of the environmental setting, identification of project impacts, and mitigation measures for impacts found to be significant, as well as an analysis of project alternatives. Upon

1.0 INTRODUCTION

completion of the DEIR, the City will file the Notice of Completion (NOC) with State Office of Planning and Research to begin the public review period (Public Resources Code, Section 21161).

Public Notice/Public Review (*Public review has begun with the publishing of this document— please contact the City of Citrus Heights for the beginning and end dates of the public and agency review period*)

Concurrent with the NOC, the City will provide public notice of the availability of the DEIR for public review, and invite comment from the general public, agencies, organizations, and other interested parties. The public review and comment period should be no less than 30 days or longer than 90 days. The review period in this case is expected to be 45 days. Public comment on the DEIR will be accepted both in written form and orally at public hearings. Although no public hearings to accept comments on the EIR are required by CEQA, the City expects to hold a public comment meeting during the 45-day review period prior to EIR certification. Notice of the time and location of the hearing will be published prior to the hearing. All comments or questions regarding the DEIR should be addressed to:

Colleen McDuffee
Citrus Heights
Planning Department
6237 Fountain Square Drive
Citrus Heights, California 95621

E-mail: cmcduffee@ci.citrus-heights.ca.us

Response to Comments/Final EIR (*Future step*)

Following the public review period, a Final EIR will be prepared. The Final EIR will respond to written comments received during the public review period and to oral comments made at any public hearing.

Certification of the EIR/Project Consideration (*Future step*)

The City of Citrus Heights City Council will review and consider the Final EIR. If the City Council finds that the Final EIR is "adequate and complete," the Commission may certify the Final EIR. The rule of adequacy generally holds that the EIR can be certified if: 1) it shows a good faith effort at full disclosure of environmental information; and 2) provides sufficient analysis to allow decisions to be made regarding the project in contemplation of its environmental consequences.

Upon review and consideration of the Final EIR, the City Council may take action to approve, revise, or reject the project. A decision to approve the project would be

What is "Mitigation"?

"Mitigate" is defined by Webster's Dictionary as "1. to lessen in force or intensity . . . 2. to make less severe . . . 3. to make milder or more gentle . . ." As used in this report, "mitigation" is a change which is imposed on the project to make a potential impact less severe (for instance, a measure which reduces noise would "mitigate" a potential noise impact. Some mitigation measures are more effective than others; this document will identify when they are effective enough to reduce impacts to acceptable levels, or whether some unacceptable impacts would result even if proposed measures are implemented.

accompanied by written findings in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15091 and, if applicable, Section 15093. A Mitigation Monitoring Program, as described below, would also be adopted for mitigation measures that have been incorporated into or imposed upon the project to reduce or avoid significant effects on the environment. This Mitigation Monitoring Program will be designed to ensure that these measures are carried out during project implementation.

Mitigation Monitoring (*Future step*)

CEQA Section 21081.6(a) requires lead agencies to adopt a reporting and mitigation monitoring program to describe measures that have been adopted or made a condition of project approval in order to mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment. The specific "reporting or monitoring" program required by CEQA is not required to be included in the EIR, however it will be presented to the Planning Commission for adoption. Throughout the EIR, however, mitigation measures have been clearly identified and presented in language that will facilitate establishment of a monitoring and reporting program. Any mitigation measures adopted by the City as conditions for approval of the project will be included in a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program to verify compliance.

1.9 TERMS USED IN THIS REPORT'S ANALYSIS OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

This Draft EIR uses the following terminology to describe environmental effects of the proposed project:

- **Standards of Significance:** A set of criteria used by the lead agency to determine at what level or "threshold" an impact would be considered significant. Significance criteria used in this EIR include the CEQA Guidelines; factual or scientific information; regulatory performance standards of local, state, and federal agencies; and City goals, objectives, and policies.
- **Less Than Significant Impact:** A less than significant impact would cause no substantial change in the environmental (no mitigation required).
- **Significant Impact:** A significant impact would cause (or would potentially cause) a substantial adverse change in the physical conditions of the environment. Significant impacts are identified by the evaluation of project effects using specified standards of significance. Mitigation measures and/or project alternatives are identified to reduce project effects to the environment.
- **Significant Unavoidable Impact:** A significant and unavoidable impact would result in a substantial change in the environment that cannot be avoided or mitigated to a less than significant level if the project is implemented.
- **Cumulative Significant Impact:** A cumulative significant impact would result in a new substantial change in the environment from effects of the project when evaluated in the context of reasonably foreseeable development in the surrounding area.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- **Applicant** - Any person or other legal entity who applies to the City to develop or improve any portion of the real property within the project boundaries. The term "Applicant" shall include all successors in interest.
- **Developer** - Any person or other legal entity who performs actual construction activities that convert the project site to urban uses. Such activities include, but are not limited to, grading, building construction, and installation of infrastructure.
- **Draft EIR** - Draft Environmental Impact Report.
- **Final EIR** - Final Environmental Impact Report.
- **Existing General Plan** - The County of Sacramento's General Plan that the City is relying upon as its own during the interim period while the Draft General Plan is being prepared, reviewed, etc.
- **Draft General Plan** - The proposed General Plan to be considered by the Planning Commission and recommended to the City Council for action (expected to occur in November 2000).
- **Project** - The Stock Ranch Guide to Development, General Plan Amendment and Rezone.
- **Project Applicant** - Any person or other legal entity that is an "Applicant" as defined herein.
- **Project Site** - The real property described by the project application.