

# 1 INTRODUCTION

This draft environmental impact report (Draft EIR) evaluates the environmental impacts of the proposed Generations at Green Valley (project). It has been prepared under the direction of El Dorado County in accordance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 21000 et seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations [CCR] Section 15000 et seq.). This chapter of the Draft EIR provides information on:

- ▶ the project requiring environmental analysis (synopsis),
- ▶ the purpose and intended uses of this Draft EIR,
- ▶ the scope of this Draft EIR,
- ▶ agency roles and responsibilities,
- ▶ the public review process,
- ▶ the organization of this Draft EIR, and
- ▶ the standard terminology used in this Draft EIR.

## 1.1 PROJECT REQUIRING ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

The project site encompasses 280 acres on five parcels in an unincorporated area of El Dorado County, in the eastern portion of the El Dorado Hills Community Region. Existing land uses in the project area consist of single-family residences and rural residential areas. The El Dorado County General Plan land use designations for the site are Low Density Residential (LDR) and Open Space (OS), and the site is zoned as Estate Residential Ten-Acre (RE-10), Estate Residential Five-Acre (RE-5), and Recreational Facility Low (RF-L). The project involves amending the General Plan land use designations to High-Density Residential (HDR), Low-Density Residential (LDR), and Public Facilities (PF). The project also involves rezoning the site to Residential, Single-Unit (R1 [6,000-square lot minimum]) Open Space (OS), Recreational Facilities High (RF-H), and Estate Residential Five-Acre (RE-5). The project involves subdividing the project site into 379 residential lots (378 new residences and the retention of the existing residence on site), a clubhouse lot, a park site lot, 12 landscape lots, and nine open space lots. Age restrictions would apply to 214 of the residential lots. The project would also include off-site roadway intersection, water, wastewater, and electrical improvements. The reader is referred to Chapter 2, "Project Description," for further details on the project.

## 1.2 PURPOSE AND INTENDED USES OF THIS DRAFT EIR

According to CEQA, preparation of an EIR is required whenever it can be fairly argued, based on substantial evidence, that implementing a proposed project may result in a significant environmental impact. An EIR is an informational document used to inform public-agency decision makers and the general public of the significant environmental impacts of a project, identify possible ways to minimize the significant impacts, and describe reasonable alternatives to the project that could feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project while substantially lessening or avoiding any of the significant environmental impacts. Public agencies are required to consider the information presented in the EIR when determining whether to approve a project.

This Draft EIR has been prepared to meet the requirements of a project EIR as defined by Section 15161 of the State CEQA Guidelines. A project EIR focuses on the changes in the physical environment that would result from implementation of a project, including its planning, construction, and operation.

## 1.3 SCOPE OF THIS DRAFT EIR

This Draft EIR includes an evaluation of the following 16 environmental issue areas, as well as other CEQA-mandated issues (e.g., cumulative impacts, growth-inducing impacts, significant and unavoidable impacts, alternatives):

- ▶ aesthetics;
- ▶ air quality;
- ▶ archaeological and historical cultural resources;
- ▶ biological resources;
- ▶ energy;
- ▶ geology, soils, and paleontological resources;
- ▶ greenhouse gas emissions and climate change;
- ▶ hazards and hazardous materials;
- ▶ hydrology and water quality;
- ▶ land use, planning, agriculture, and forestry resources;
- ▶ noise and vibration;
- ▶ population and housing;
- ▶ public services and recreation;
- ▶ transportation;
- ▶ utilities and service systems;
- ▶ tribal cultural resources; and
- ▶ wildfire and evacuation.

Under CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines, a lead agency may limit an EIR's discussion of environmental effects to those effects that the lead agency has determined would or may be significant (CEQA Section 21002.1[e]; State CEQA Guidelines Sections 15128, 15143). Information used to determine which impacts would or may be significant was derived from review of the project; review of applicable planning documents and CEQA documentation; information gathered during fieldwork; feedback from public and agency consultation; comments received during a public scoping meeting held on March 12, 2024; and comments received on the notice of preparation (NOP) (see Appendix A of this Draft EIR).

The NOP was distributed on February 23, 2024, to responsible agencies, interested parties and organizations, and private organizations and individuals that may have an interest in the project. Further information on the NOP and scoping process is provided below in Section 1.5, "CEQA Public Review Process."

## 1.4 AGENCY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### 1.4.1 Lead Agency

As lead agency, El Dorado County is responsible for completion of the environmental review requirements under CEQA and considering whether to approve the project.

### 1.4.2 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. The only trustee agency that has jurisdiction over resources potentially affected by the project is the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Responsible agencies are public agencies other than the lead agency that have discretionary-approval responsibility for reviewing, carrying out, or approving elements of a project. Responsible agencies should participate in the lead agency's CEQA process, review the lead agency's CEQA document, and use the document when making a decision on project elements.

The following agencies may have responsibility for, or jurisdiction over, implementation of project elements.

## STATE AGENCIES

- ▶ California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- ▶ Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board

## REGIONAL AND LOCAL AGENCIES

- ▶ El Dorado County Air Quality Management District
- ▶ El Dorado Local Agency Formation Commission
- ▶ El Dorado Hills County Water District (also known as the El Dorado Hills Fire Department)
- ▶ El Dorado Hills Community Services District
- ▶ El Dorado Irrigation District

## 1.5 CEQA PUBLIC REVIEW PROCESS

As identified above in Section 1.3, “Scope of This Draft EIR,” in accordance with CEQA regulations, an NOP was distributed to responsible agencies, interested parties and organizations, and private organizations and individuals that could have 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 input on the scope and content of the document. The NOP and responses to the NOP are included in Appendix A of this Draft EIR.

This Draft EIR is being circulated for public review and comment for a period of 45 days. During this period, comments from the general public, as well as from organizations and agencies, on environmental issues may be submitted to the lead agency.

Upon completion of the public review and comment period, a Final EIR will be prepared that will include both written and oral comments on the Draft EIR received during the public review period, responses to those comments, and any revisions to the Draft EIR made in response to public comments. Together, the Draft EIR and Final EIR make up the EIR for the project.

## 1.6 DRAFT EIR ORGANIZATION

This Draft EIR is organized into chapters, as identified and briefly described below. Chapters are further divided into sections (e.g., Chapter 3, “Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures,” and Section 3.5, “Energy”):

- ▶ The “Executive Summary”: This chapter introduces the Generations at Green Valley Project; provides a summary of the environmental review process, effects found not to be significant, and key environmental issues; and lists significant impacts and mitigation measures to reduce significant impacts to a less-than-significant level, if feasible.
- ▶ Chapter 1, “Introduction”: This chapter provides a synopsis of the project; a description of the purpose and intended uses of this Draft EIR; a description of the scope of this EIR; a description of the lead, trustee, and responsible agencies; a summary of the public review process; a description of the organization of this EIR; and definitions of standard terminology used in this EIR.
- ▶ Chapter 2, “Project Description”: This chapter describes the location, background, goals, and objectives for the project and describes the project elements in detail.
- ▶ Chapter 3, “Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures”: The sections in this chapter evaluate the environmental impacts that would be generated by implementing the project, arranged by subject area (e.g., land

use, hydrology and water quality). In each section of Chapter 3, the regulatory background, existing conditions, analysis methodology, and thresholds of significance are described. The anticipated changes to the existing conditions during and after development of the project are then evaluated for each subject area. For any significant or potentially significant impact that would result from project implementation, mitigation measures are presented, and the level of impact significance after mitigation is identified. Environmental impacts are numbered sequentially in each section (e.g., Impact 3.2-1, Impact 3.2-2, etc.). Any required mitigation measures are numbered to correspond to the impact numbering; therefore, the mitigation measure for Impact 3.2-2 would be Mitigation Measure 3.2-2.

- ▶ Chapter 4, “Cumulative Impacts”: This chapter provides information required by CEQA regarding cumulative impacts that would result from implementation of the Generations at Green Valley Project, as well as other past, present, and probable future projects.
- ▶ Chapter 5, “Alternatives”: This chapter evaluates alternatives to the project, including alternatives considered but eliminated from further consideration, the No Project Alternative, and two alternative development options. It also identifies the environmentally superior alternative.
- ▶ Chapter 6, “Other CEQA Sections”: This chapter evaluates growth-inducing impacts and the irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources, and it discloses any significant and unavoidable adverse impacts.
- ▶ Chapter 7, “Report Preparers”: This chapter identifies the preparers of this document.
- ▶ Chapter 8, “References”: This chapter identifies the documents and individuals used as sources for the analysis.

## 1.7 STANDARD TERMINOLOGY

This Draft EIR uses the following standard terminology:

- ▶ “No impact” means no change from existing conditions (no mitigation is needed).
- ▶ “Less-than-significant impact” means no substantial adverse change in the physical environment (no mitigation is needed).
- ▶ “Potentially significant impact” means a substantial adverse change in the physical environment that might occur (mitigation is identified because potentially significant impacts are treated as significant).
- ▶ “Significant impact” means a substantial adverse change in the physical environment that would occur (mitigation is identified).
- ▶ “Significant and unavoidable impact” means a substantial adverse change in the physical environment that would occur and that cannot be avoided, even with the implementation of all feasible mitigation.