

1.1 Project Background and Overview

The proposed Village of Marble Valley Specific Plan (VMVSP; proposed project) is a mixed-use community consisting of residential, commercial, agricultural, and open space uses (including 466 acres of natural open space land for passive day-use park or private natural open space). The project would provide for the development of up to 3,236 residential units, 475,000 square feet of office park/village commercial uses, 55 acres of agricultural use, 1,284 acres of open space, 87 acres of public facilities/recreational use (including two public elementary or middle schools and 47 acres of public parkland), and 61 acres of road areas and future rights-of-way. The proposed project would be designed in a manner that concentrates a majority of the density in a 1-mile core along the entry roadway and would be designed to preserve, enhance, and highlight the historical use of the property for limestone mining.

1.2 Purpose of this Environmental Impact Report

This draft environmental impact report (EIR) (State Clearinghouse No. 2013022043) has been prepared according to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (California Public Resources Code 21000 et seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3) to evaluate the potential environmental impacts associated with implementing the proposed project, including implementing the VMVSP, amending the County's General Plan and related specific plans, and making zoning changes (Chapter 2, *Project Description*).

CEQA requires public agencies to consider the potential adverse environmental impacts of projects under their consideration. This includes both direct impacts and reasonably foreseeable indirect impacts. A discretionary project that would have a significant adverse impact on the environment cannot be approved without the preparation of an EIR. This includes the proposed project.

According to Section 15002 of the State CEQA Guidelines, the basic purposes of CEQA include the following.

- Inform government decision makers and the public about the potential significant environmental effects of proposed activities.
- Identify ways that environmental damage can be avoided or significantly reduced.
- Prevent significant, avoidable damage to the environment by requiring changes in projects through the use of alternatives or mitigation measures when the governing agency finds the changes to be feasible.
- Disclose to the public the reasons why a governmental agency approved the project in the manner the agency chose if significant environmental effects are involved.

CEQA establishes a process for analyzing a project's potential environmental impacts. It is not a permit and does not regulate the project. CEQA also does not require that a proposed project be

approved or denied. CEQA's purposes are to ensure that public agencies make a good faith effort at disclosing the potential environmental impacts of projects to decision makers, the public, and other agencies, and implement actions that will reduce or avoid potential significant impacts (i.e., mitigation measures).

The El Dorado County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will review the Draft EIR to understand the project's impacts before taking action. They will also consider other information and testimony that will arise during deliberations on the project before making their decision.

1.2.1 Level of Detail and Scope of the Environmental Impact Report

CEQA identifies various types of EIRs, the most common of which is the project EIR. A project EIR focuses primarily on the changes in the environment that would result from a development project. It examines all phases of the project, including planning, construction, and operation. For the proposed project, this Draft EIR covers environmental impacts on a project level for onsite improvements consistent with the level of detail provided in the VMVSP, supported by site-specific studies.

Offsite improvements associated with the proposed project, including improvements or connections to existing infrastructure such as roadways, water, and wastewater are included in the project. Each of these offsite improvements is examined to determine potential impacts, and mitigation measures are recommended where necessary to reduce impacts. The offsite improvements are analyzed to the extent that details were available at the time that this Draft EIR was prepared, and later environmental review based on review of this EIR may be required once infrastructure details are known.

Senate Bill 375 and the Sustainable Communities Strategy

The proposed project would develop residential and commercial land uses within the "Developing Community" area in unincorporated El Dorado County and provides a mix of new housing. Therefore, it is consistent with the Sacramento Area Council of Government's 2020 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)/Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) and therefore could qualify for streamlined CEQA review and analysis. However, the County has elected not to tier from the MTP/SCS for CEQA streamlining. This document fully analyzes impacts related to air quality, greenhouse gases, traffic, and growth-inducing impacts.

1.3 Scoping and Public Involvement

1.3.1 Purpose of Scoping

CEQA outlines a scoping process as part of the environmental review of a proposed project. Section 15083 of the State CEQA Guidelines defines early consultation, also called *scoping*, as the opportunity for reviewing agencies and the public to identify the range of actions, alternatives, mitigation measures, and significant impacts to be analyzed in depth in an EIR. The opportunity to provide input on the issues and alternatives to be evaluated during the environmental process is provided to potentially affected federal, state, and local agencies; Native American tribes; and other

interested persons or organizations that may be concerned with the environmental effects of the project.

As described below, the scoping process for this EIR involved the distribution of an NOP of a draft EIR, holding a public scoping meeting, and requesting comments and input from agencies and individuals on the NOP. The County continued to accept comments and include individuals on distribution lists after the official end of the comment period.

1.3.2 Notice of Preparation Scoping Meetings

An NOP was prepared for the proposed project and published for a 30-day public review and comment period beginning February 20, 2013 (Appendix A, *Notice of Preparation and Comment Matrix*). The County held a public scoping meeting on March 6, 2013, at the Assembly Hall of the Cameron Park Community Services District in Cameron Park, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. The scoping meeting was an open-house-style event, with presentation boards and materials at stations operated by County staff and County consultants. The project applicants were also present. Thirty-four people attended the meeting.

Approximately 30 individuals provided written or verbal comments on the NOP. A summary table of these comments and where pertinent discussions can be found in this document is included in Appendix A. These comments were considered in preparing this Draft EIR. After review of all relevant comments received during the NOP comment period on environmental issues, the County determined that the following resource areas would be reviewed for potential environmental impacts.

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology, Soils, Minerals, and Paleontological Resources
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology, Water Quality, and Water Resources
- Land Use Planning and Agricultural Resources
- Noise and Vibration
- Population and Housing
- Public Services and Utilities
- Recreation
- Transportation and Circulation

In addition, in May 2011 (prior to the submitting a formal application for the proposed project), the applicants began hosting a number of informational meetings for specific groups as requested. These meetings have continued, with the most recent meeting in August 2015. Since that time the project has been dormant and there have been no substantial changes to the proposed project.

The project applicants and the County have been in consultation with representatives from the Wilton Rancheria, the Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians, and the United Auburn Indian Community, in accordance with Senate Bill 18.

1.3.3 Future Opportunities for Public Input

The review period for this Draft EIR will be a minimum of 60 days, beginning on May 1, 2024 and ending on July 1, 2024. The Draft EIR and the Public Review Draft VMVSP are available on the County's website (<https://www.edcgov.us/Planning/>); at the El Dorado Hills Library, 7455 Silva Valley Parkway, El Dorado Hills; the Placerville Library, 345 Fair Lane, Placerville; and at the public counter at the Community Development Agency, 2850 Fairlane Court, Building C, Placerville. Technical studies prepared for the project, except where confidential (e.g., cultural resources), are also available on the County's website at the link above.

Written comments can be submitted by mail to:

Mr. Cameron Welch
El Dorado County, Planning and Building Department
2850 Fairlane Court, Building C
Placerville, CA 95667

Written comments can be submitted by email to: VMVSP@edcgov.us.

Comments may also be submitted after the end of the formal review period; however, it is possible that they may not be responded to in writing and included in the Final EIR. No comments on the Draft EIR will be responded to outside of the CEQA process, and commenters will not be sent individual responses to their comments. The responses will be contained in the Final EIR. Comments that are received too late for inclusion in the Final EIR will nonetheless be made available to the County Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors during their deliberations on the project.

1.3.4 Final Environmental Impact Report

After the close of the public review period for the Draft EIR, the County will prepare the Final EIR. The Final EIR will consist of the Draft EIR and the Final EIR and will include: the comments received during the formal review period of the Draft EIR; responses to the comments received that relate to environmental issues; and any revisions made to the Draft EIR in response to the comments in errata format. The Final EIR will also contain copies of the comments received during the public review period.

The Final EIR and accompanying Draft EIR will be available to the County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors for consideration during their decision-making process to approve or deny the project.

1.4 Intended Use of this Environmental Impact Report

This Draft EIR will examine the potential impacts of the project (the proposed VMVSP). The Final EIR will be considered by the County Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors prior to

taking their final action on the project. The agencies expected to use the Final EIR in the future include those listed below.

- El Dorado County Planning Commission.
- El Dorado County Board of Supervisors.
- El Dorado County Planning and Building Department.
- El Dorado Irrigation District.
- El Dorado Hills Community Services District.
- Cameron Park Community Services District.
- Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board.
- State Water Resources Control Board.
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife.
- El Dorado Local Agency Formation Commission.

Section 2.4, *Required Approvals*, identifies the specific County and state approvals and permits that would be required.

Federal agencies may use this EIR as reference for permitting purposes. These agencies may include the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, among others.

1.5 Document Format

The format of this Draft EIR is outlined below to assist the reader's review of the document.

- **Executive Summary** summarizes the contents and findings contained in this Draft EIR. It also contains a brief description of the project, alternatives, areas of known controversy, public review procedures, and a summary table listing project impacts, mitigation measures that have been recommended to reduce any significant impacts, and the level of significance of each impact following mitigation.
- **Chapter 1, Introduction**, is the introduction to the Draft EIR and describes the project background, purpose of the project, and the public review process.
- **Chapter 2, Project Description**, contains the project description. It summarizes the proposed VMVSP. Full copies of the VMVSP are available for public review at the County Community Development Agency and at public libraries as indicated in Section 1.3.3 above.
- **Chapter 3, Impact Analysis**, consists of sections containing the environmental analysis for each environmental topic (e.g., aesthetics, air quality, noise). Each section is organized according to the following framework.
 - Existing Conditions
 - Regulatory Setting
 - Environmental Setting

- Environmental Impacts
 - Methods of Analysis
 - Thresholds of Significance
 - Impacts and Mitigation Measures
- **Chapter 4, *Alternatives Analysis***, contains discussion of the project alternatives. As allowed by CEQA, most of the impacts of these alternatives are evaluated at a more general level than the analyses contained in Chapter 3.
- **Chapter 5, *Other CEQA Considerations***, contains discussions of additional topics required by CEQA, including growth-inducing impacts, cumulative impacts, unavoidable impacts, significant irreversible environmental changes, and other environmental impact analyses.
- **Chapter 6, *List of Preparers***, lists the organizations and persons consulted in preparation of the Draft EIR and the Draft EIR preparers.
- **Chapter 7, *References Cited***, provides details about the references cited and personal communications related to preparation of the Draft EIR. All of the items listed in Chapter 7, excepting confidential documents, are available for review during normal business hours at the County Community Development Agency offices: 2850 Fair Lane, Building C, Placerville.
- **Appendices A through L** contain copies of the NOP and comment letters and supporting technical reports.
 - Appendix A, *Notice of Preparation and Comment Matrix*
 - Appendix B, *Consistency with El Dorado County General Plan Policies*
 - Appendix C, *Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Studies and Calculations*
 - Appendix D, *EDCAQMD Rule 223-1 Best Management Practices and Rule 223-2*
 - Appendix E, *Plant Species*
 - Appendix F, *Oak Resources Technical Report*
 - Appendix G, *Native American Consultation Documentation*
 - Appendix H, *Water Supply Assessment*
 - Appendix I, *CEQA Guidelines Appendix F: Energy Conservation*
 - Appendix J, *Drainage Analysis*
 - Appendix K, *Transportation Impact Analysis*
 - Appendix L, *Deer Creek WWTP Mitigation Monitoring Program*
 - Appendix M, *Wildfire Risk Analysis*
 - Appendix N, *Fire Evacuation Assessment*