

## **SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 - Overview of the CEQA Process**

This Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) is prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to evaluate the potential environmental impacts associated with the implementation of the Proposed City of Elk Grove Sphere of Influence (SOI) Amendment project (LAFC # 09-10, State Clearinghouse No. 2010092076). This document is prepared in conformance with CEQA (California Public Resources Code, Section 21000, et seq.) and the CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15000, et seq.).

#### **1.1.1 - Overview**

The proposed project consists of an application to Sacramento Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) to amend the City of Elk Grove's SOI. The current SOI is coterminous with the City boundary. The amended SOI would include an additional 7,869 acres generally described as the areas south of Bilby Road/Kammerer Road and Grant Line Road. Section 2, Project Description provides a complete description of the project.

#### **1.1.2 - Purpose and Authority**

This Draft EIR provides a program-level analysis of the environmental effects of the Proposed City of Elk Grove Sphere of Influence Amendment (SOIA) project. The environmental impacts of the proposed project are analyzed in the EIR to the degree of specificity appropriate, in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Sections 15146 and 15180. This document addresses the potentially significant adverse environmental impacts that may be directly or indirectly associated with the expansion of the existing City of Elk Grove SOI boundary. There are no specific land use entitlements proposed at this time in conjunction with the proposed SOIA. No physical development is proposed in conjunction with the proposed application. However, this EIR acknowledges that future urbanization of the project area may occur as an indirect result of this SOIA; therefore, this EIR contains a programmatic analysis of reasonably foreseeable indirect environmental impacts attributable to or would result from the proposed project. This Draft EIR is intended to serve as an informational document for the public agency decision makers and the public regarding the proposed project. This document is not intended as a programmatic document for use to "tier" the CEQA analysis for future projects.

CEQA requires that an EIR contain, at a minimum, certain specific elements. These elements are contained in this Draft EIR and include:

- Table of Contents
- Introduction
- Executive Summary

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- Project Description
- Environmental Setting, Significant Environmental Impacts, and Mitigation Measures
- Cumulative Impacts
- Significant Unavoidable Adverse Impacts
- Alternatives to the Proposed Project
- Growth-Inducing Impacts
- Effects Found Not To Be Significant
- Areas of Known Controversy

**1.1.3 - Lead Agency Determination**

The Sacramento LAFCo is designated as the lead agency for the project. CEQA Guidelines Section 15367 defines the lead agency as “the public agency, which has the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving a project.”

This Draft EIR was prepared by Michael Brandman Associates, an environmental consultant. Prior to public review, it was extensively reviewed and evaluated by the Sacramento LAFCo staff. This Draft EIR reflects the independent judgment and analysis of the Sacramento LAFCo as required by CEQA. Lists of organizations and persons consulted and the report preparation personnel are provided in Section 8, Persons and Organizations Consulted/List of Preparers, of this Draft EIR.

**1.1.4 - LAFCo Authority**

LAFCo’s powers are set forth in the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 (Act). The legislative intent of Section 56300 of the Government Code requires that each LAFCo establish policies and exercise its powers in a manner that provides planned, well-ordered, efficient urban development patterns with appropriate consideration of preserving open space lands within those patterns. LAFCo’s purposes are the discouragement of urban sprawl and the encouragement of the orderly formation of local agencies based upon local conditions and circumstances. The project must be approved by LAFCo and meet all LAFCo requirements. Specific Policy Elements established by the Act are as follows:

- Encourage orderly growth and development patterns (Section 56001).
- Discouraging urban sprawl, preserving open-space and prime agricultural lands, efficiently providing government services, and encouraging the orderly formation and development of local agencies based upon local conditions and circumstances (Section 56301).
- Guide development away from open space and prime agricultural land uses unless such action would not promote planned, orderly, and efficient development (Section 56377).

In order to implement the legislative mandate, LAFCos have the specific authority to review the following actions: annexations to, or detachment from, cities or districts; formation or dissolution of

districts; incorporation or disincorporation of cities; consolidation or reorganization of cities or districts; establishment of subsidiary districts; and development of, and amendments to, sphere of influence.

In order to implement the legislative policies, LAFCo has the power to approve, modify and approve, or deny applications and impose terms and conditions (Section 56885.5). However, LAFCo may not exercise direct land use authority through use of zoning or subdivision processes.

Factors to be considered by Sacramento LAFCo when reviewing the proposed SOIA are the following:

- Population, population density; land area and land use; per capita assessed valuation; topography, natural boundaries, and drainage basins; proximity to other populated areas, the likelihood of significant growth in the area and in adjacent incorporated and unincorporated areas during the next 10 years.
- Need for organized community services; the present cost and adequacy of governmental services and controls in the area; probable future needs for such services and controls; probable effect of the proposed incorporation, formation, annexation, or exclusion and of alternative courses of action on the cost and adequacy of services and controls in the area and adjacent areas.
- The effect of the proposed action and of alternative actions on adjacent areas, on mutual social and economic communities of interests, and on the local governmental structure of the county.
- Conformity of the proposal and its effects with commission policies on providing planned, orderly, efficient patterns of urban development and with state policies and priorities on conversion of open-space lands to other uses.
- Effect of the proposal on maintaining the physical and economic integrity of lands in an agricultural preserve in open-space uses.
- The definiteness and certainty of the boundaries of the territory, the nonconformance of proposed boundaries with lines of assessment or ownership, the creation of islands or corridors of unincorporated territory, and other similar matters affecting the proposed boundaries.
- Conformity with appropriate city or county general and specific plans.
- The “sphere of influence” or any local agency that may be applicable to the proposal being reviewed.

### **LAFCo Compliance with CEQA**

The Policies, Standards, and Procedures adopted by the Sacramento LAFCo include policies and procedures for implementing CEQA requirements for environmental review of LAFCo projects.

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These policies and procedures include a list of standards for determining the significance of environmental impacts, as well as requirements that EIRs for LAFCo actions include an evaluation of countywide or cumulative impacts and an alternatives analysis evaluating a reasonable range of alternatives. After reviewing the information in an environmental document, LAFCo may:

- At its discretion, approve a project without change if the anticipated environmental impacts are insignificant.
- Require an applicant to modify a project.
- Establish mitigation measures as conditions of project approval.
- Deny the proposal because of its unacceptable adverse environmental impacts.
- Approve a project despite its significant adverse environmental impacts by making findings of fact and a statement that project benefits outweigh the costs (statement of overriding considerations).

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**1.2 - Scope of the EIR**

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This Draft EIR addresses the potential environmental effects of the proposed project. The Sacramento LAFCo issued a Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the proposed project on September 27, 2010, which circulated between September 27, 2010 and October 26, 2010, for the statutory 30-day public review period. The scope of this Draft EIR includes the potential environmental impacts identified in the NOP and issues raised by agencies and the public in response to the NOP. The NOP is contained in Appendix A of this Draft EIR.

Twenty-five comment letters were received in response to the NOP. They are listed in Table 1-1 and provided in Appendix A of this Draft EIR.

**Table 1-1: NOP Comment Letters**

Status	Affiliation	Signatory	Date
Public Agencies	Sacramento County Municipal Services Agency Department of Waste Management and Recycling	Paul Philleo, Director,	July 30, 2008
	California Department of Transportation	Alyssa Begley, Chief	August 22, 2008
	California Highway Patrol	A. R. Jones, Captain	September 23, 2010
	Florin Resource Conservation District	Thomas S. Bartlett, CPA, Finance Manager	September 24, 2010

**Table 1-1: (cont.): NOP Comment Letters**

Status	Affiliation	Signatory	Date
Public Agencies (cont.)	Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District	Sarena Deeble	October 1, 2010
	Elk Grove Unified School District	Robert Pierce, Associate Superintendent	October 8, 2010
	Sacramento County Planning and Community Development Department	Michael Winter, Planner III	October 13,2010
	Cosumnes Community Services District	Jeff Ramos, General Manager	October 13,2010
	Sacramento Regional Transit District	Rosemary Covington	October 13, 2010
	Sacramento County Department of Waste Management and Recycling	Dave Ghirardelli	October 18,20101
	Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District	Larry Robinson, Program Coordinator	October 26, 2010
	Sacramento County Municipal Services Agency	Antonia Barry, Principal Environmental Analyst	October 26, 2010
	California Department of Transportation	Alyssa Begley, Chief	October 27, 2010
	Sacramento Municipal Utility District	Jerry Clark, Land Agent	November 2, 2010
Private Organizations and Individuals	Sacramento Audubon Society	Keith Wagner, President	July 26, 2006
	Private Citizen	Marilyn Armbruster	October 24, 2010
	The Nature Conservancy	Michael Conner, Project Director	October 26, 2010
	Private Citizen	Lynn Wheat	October 26, 2010
	Private Citizen	Mark Dempsey	October 26, 2010
	Friends of the Swainson's Hawk	James P. Pacht, Attorney at Law	October 27, 2010
	Cosumnes Basin Habitat Defense Project	Mike Eaton	October 27, 2010
	Habitat 2020	Rob Burness	October 27, 2010
	Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge Association	Robert Burness, Chair, Watershed Committee	October 27, 2010
	Private Citizen	Tina Suarez-Murias	October 27, 2010
Habitat 2020 and Sierra Club	Sean Wirth	October 28, 2010	
Source: Sacramento County LAFCo, 2010.			

### 1.2.1 - Environmental Issues Determined Not To Be Significant

Certain subjects with various topical areas were determined not to be significant. Other potentially significant issues are analyzed in these topical areas; however, the following issues are not analyzed:

- Forest Land Zoning (Section 3.2, Agricultural Resources)
- Forest Lands (Section 3.2, Agricultural Resources)
- Septic and Alternative Wastewater Disposal Systems (Section 3.6, Geology, Soils, and Seismicity)
- Airport and Private Airstrip Hazards (Section 3.8, Hazards and Hazardous Materials)
- Seiche, Tsunami, or Mudflow Hazards (Section 3.9, Hydrology and Water Quality)
- Aviation Noise (Section 3.12, Noise)
- Displacement of Persons or Housing (Section 3.13, Population and Housing)
- Air Traffic Patterns (Section 3.15, Transportation/Traffic)

An explanation of why each issue is determined not to be significant is provided in Section 7, Effects Found Not To Be Significant.

### 1.2.2 - Potentially Significant Environmental Issues

The NOP found that the following topical areas may contain potentially significant environmental issues that will require further analysis in the EIR. These sections are as follows:

- Aesthetics, Light, and Glare
- Agricultural Resources
- Air Quality/Greenhouse Gases
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology, Soils, and Seismicity
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Transportation
- Utilities and Service Systems

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## 1.3 - Organization of the EIR

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This Draft EIR is organized into the following main sections:

- **Section ES: Executive Summary.** This section includes a summary of the proposed project and alternatives to be addressed in the Draft EIR. A brief description of the areas of controversy and issues to be resolved, and overview of the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, in addition to a table that summarizes the impacts, mitigation measures, and level of significance after mitigation, are also included in this section.

- **Section 1: Introduction.** This section provides an introduction and overview describing the purpose of this Draft EIR, its scope and components, and its review and certification process.
- **Section 2: Project Description.** This section includes a detailed description of the proposed project, including its location, site, and project characteristics. A discussion of the project objectives, intended uses of the Draft EIR, responsible agencies, and approvals that are needed for the proposed project are also provided.
- **Section 3: Environmental Impact Analysis.** This section analyzes the environmental impacts of the proposed project. Impacts are organized into major topic areas. Each topic area includes a description of the environmental setting, methodology, significance criteria, impacts, mitigation measures, and significance after mitigation. The specific environmental topics that are addressed within Section 4 are as follows:
  - **Section 3.1 – Aesthetics:** Addresses the potential visual impacts of the proposed project and the overall increase in illumination produced by the project.
  - **Section 3.2 – Agricultural Resources:** Addresses the potential conversion of Important Farmland to non-agricultural use, as well as conflicts with Williamson Act contracts and agricultural zoning.
  - **Section 3.3 – Air Quality:** Addresses the potential air quality impacts associated with project implementation, as well as consistency with the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Pollution Control District’s air quality plans.
  - **Section 3.4 – Biological Resources:** Addresses the project’s potential impacts on habitat, vegetation, and wildlife; the potential degradation or elimination of important habitat; and impacts on listed, proposed, and candidate threatened and endangered species.
  - **Section 3.5 – Cultural Resources:** Addresses potential impacts of project development on known historical resources and potential archaeological and paleontological resources.
  - **Section 3.6 – Geology, Soils, and Seismicity:** Addresses the potential impacts the project may have on soils and assesses the effects of project development in relation to geologic and seismic conditions.
  - **Section 3.7 – Greenhouse Gas Emissions:** Addresses the potential greenhouse gas emissions impacts as a result of project implementation.
  - **Section 3.8 – Hazards and Hazardous Materials:** Addresses the potential for the presence of hazardous materials or conditions on the project site and in the project area that may have the potential to impact human health.
  - **Section 3.9 – Hydrology and Water Quality:** Addresses the potential impacts of the project on local hydrological conditions, including drainage areas, and changes in the flow rates.
  - **Section 3.10 – Land Use and Planning:** Addresses the potential land use impacts associated with division of an established community and consistency with the

Sacramento County General Plan, Sacramento LAFCo Policies, and the City of Elk Grove General Plan.

- **Section 3.11 – Mineral Resources:** Addresses potential environmental impacts to mineral resources resulting from project implementation.
  - **Section 3.12 – Noise:** Addresses potential noise impacts on ambient noise levels as a result of project implementation.
  - **Section 3.13 – Population and Housing:** Addresses the growth-inducing effects of the proposed SOIA.
  - **Section 3.14 – Public Services:** Addresses potential impacts on fire protection and emergency medical services, police protection, schools, parks, libraries, and trails as a result of project implementation.
  - **Section 3.15 – Transportation:** Addresses the impacts on the local and regional roadway system, public transportation, bicycle, and pedestrian access.
  - **Section 3.16 – Utilities and Service Systems:** Addresses potential impacts on utility and service systems, including water, wastewater, storm drainage, solid waste, and energy providers as a result of project implementation.
- **Section 4: Cumulative Effects.** This section discusses the cumulative effects associated with the proposed SOIA, in conjunction with past, present, and future projects.
  - **Section 5: Alternatives to the Proposed Project.** This section compares the impacts of the proposed project with three land-use project alternatives: the No Project Alternative, the Alternate SOI Boundary Alternative, and the Enhanced Regional Alternative. An environmentally superior alternative is identified.
  - **Section 6: Other CEQA Considerations.** This section provides a summary of significant environmental impacts, including unavoidable and growth-inducing impacts. This section discusses the cumulative impacts associated with the proposed project, including the impacts of past, present, and probable future projects. In addition, the proposed project’s energy demand is discussed.
  - **Section 7: Effects Found Not To Be Significant.** This section contains analysis of the topical sections not addressed in Section 3.
  - **Section 8: Organizations and Persons Consulted/List of Preparers.** This section contains a full list of persons and organizations that were consulted during the preparation of this Draft EIR, as well as the authors who assisted in the preparation of the Draft EIR, by name and affiliation.
  - **Section 9: References.** This section contains a full list of references that were used in the preparation of this Draft EIR.



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

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## **1.4 - Documents Incorporated by Reference**

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As permitted by CEQA Guidelines Section 15150, this Draft EIR has referenced several technical studies, analyses, and previously certified environmental documentation. Information from the documents, which have been incorporated by reference, has been briefly summarized in the appropriate section(s). The relationship between the incorporated part of the referenced document and the Draft EIR has also been described. The documents and other sources that have been used in the preparation of this Draft EIR include, but are not limited to:

- County of Sacramento General Plan
- County of Sacramento Municipal Code
- City of Elk Grove General Plan
- City of Elk Grove Municipal Services Review

These documents are specifically identified in Section 9, References, of this Draft EIR. In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15150(b), these referenced documents and other sources used in the preparation of the Draft EIR are available for review at the Sacramento LAFCo.

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## **1.5 - Review of the Draft EIR**

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Upon completion of the Draft EIR, the Sacramento LAFCo filed a Notice of Completion (NOC) with the State Office of Planning and Research to begin the public review period (Public Resources Code, Section 21161). Concurrent with the NOC, this Draft EIR has been distributed to responsible and trustee agencies, other affected agencies, surrounding cities, and interested parties, as well as all parties requesting a copy of the Draft EIR in accordance with Public Resources Code 21092(b)(3). During the public review period, the Draft EIR, including the technical appendices, is available for review at the Sacramento LAFCo offices, located at the address provided below. Agencies, organizations, and interested parties not previously contacted or who did not respond to the NOP currently have the opportunity to comment on the Draft EIR during the public review period on the Draft EIR. Written comments on this Draft EIR should be addressed to:

Don Lockhart AICP, Assistant Executive Officer  
Sacramento Local Agency Formation Commission  
1112 I Street, Suite 100  
Sacramento, California 95814  
Phone: (916) 874-6458  
Email: Donald.Lockhart@SacLAFCo.org

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Submittal of electronic comments in Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF format is encouraged. Upon completion of the public review period, written responses to all significant environmental issues raised will be prepared and made available for review by the commenting agencies at least 10 days prior to the public hearing before the Commission on the project, at which the certification of the Final EIR will be considered. Comments received and the responses to comments will be included as part of the record for consideration by decision makers for the project.