



# PLANNING & BUILDING DEPARTMENT

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To: Planning Commission Agenda of June 9, 2022

From: Gina Hamilton, Planning Manager

Date: May 25, 2022

**Subject: Responses to Input Received at the April 28, 2022 Planning Commission Hearing on the Central El Dorado Hills Specific Plan – A14-0003/SP12-0002/Z14-0005/SP86-0002-R/Z14-0005/ PD14-0004/TM14-1516/DA14-0003**

The County received substantial testimony, comment letters, and emails regarding the Central El Dorado Hills Specific Plan (CEDHSP) during the April 28, 2022 Planning Commission public hearing. These comments are available for public review at the County of El Dorado legistar site: [County of El Dorado - Calendar \(https://eldorado.legistar.com\)](https://eldorado.legistar.com).

County staff has reviewed this input and believes that the April 28, 2022 Staff Report, along with its associated exhibits and attachments, addresses this input. However, County staff wishes to provide additional information on the following topics discussed at the hearing:

1. Capital Improvements Associated with Latrobe Road/El Dorado Hills Boulevard at U.S. 50 Overcrossing
2. General Plan Consistency
3. Pedregal Planning Area Development Potential
4. Range of Recreation Uses Allowed for Recreational Facilities High Zoning
5. Function of Project Objectives
6. Adequacy of the Revised Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR)

These topic areas are addressed below.

## **TOPIC AREA 1 – CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH LATROBE ROAD/EL DORADO HILLS BOULEVARD AT U.S. 50 OVERCROSSING**

The Planning Commission inquired about the planned widening of the northbound portion of Latrobe Road/El Dorado Hills Boulevard. According to El Dorado County Department of Transportation's (DOT) 2021 Adopted Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Project 36104001, design and construction is planned to start during the 2026-2027 fiscal year. As identified in the May 5, 2022 memorandum from DOT (Attachment A), CIP Project 36104001 would widen the northbound portion of this roadway under the U.S. 50 overcrossing in the following manner:

- Two left-turn lanes onto the U.S. 50 westbound on-ramp,
- Three through lanes continuing to northbound El Dorado Hills Boulevard, and
- One right-turn lane onto Saratoga Way into the Raley's shopping center.

## **TOPIC AREA 2 – GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY**

Several comments were received expressing concern that the CEDHSP was inconsistent with the El Dorado County General Plan. As identified in the April 28, 2022 Staff Report, General Plan Policy 2.2.5.2, Zoning Ordinance Section 130.56.030, and California Government Code Section 64554 all require that the project be consistent with the General Plan. State law and published case law identify that perfect conformity between a proposed project and the applicable general plan is not required because “it is nearly, if not absolutely, impossible for a project to be in perfect conformity with each and every policy set forth in the applicable plan” (*Pfeiffer v. City of Sunnyvale City Council* [2011] 200 Cal.App.4th). This recognition that perfect conformity is not possible is addressed in the Introduction chapter of the County’s General Plan.

The CEDHSP would amend the General Plan Land Use Map in a manner that would provide a new mix of higher-density housing within the El Dorado Hills Community Region that would involve the redesignation of Open Space land uses in the Serrano Westside Planning Area (El Dorado Hills Executive Golf Course site). The April 28, 2022 Staff Report analysis identifies that the CEDHSP’s amendments to the General Plan Land Use Map would be consistent with the central policy direction set forth in the Introduction chapter of the General Plan by:

- Clustering development that would maintain the urban character of the El Dorado Hills Community Region while protecting open space areas and promoting natural resource uses (on-site oak woodlands).
- Increasing the amount of housing options by providing a variety of housing opportunities at a range of densities near an existing local job base and/or infrastructure in the project area.
- Improving and expanding local park and recreational facilities in El Dorado Hills through the provision of a 15-acre park site.
- Recognizing that urban growth should be focused in the General Plan designated Community Regions such as El Dorado Hills.
- Promoting infill development in an area where public infrastructure and roadways already exist that can serve urban development and reduce infrastructure costs.
- Implementing a Public Facilities Financing Plan (PFFP) to fully fund its on-site services and apportioned share of off-site services.
- Providing a range of residential density and product types that support the ability of the private sector to create and provide housing opportunities for all residents regardless of income, race, sex, age, religion, or any other arbitrary factor.

The consistency analysis in Attachment 6 of the April 28, 2022 Staff Report is focused on consistency with General Plan policies because policies are specific statements that guide decision-making. They are a commitment of the local legislative body to a particular course of action. By contrast, goals are a general expression of community values and therefore may be abstract. Objectives are specified ends, conditions, or states that are intermediate steps toward attaining a goal. The consistency analysis in Attachment 6 of the April 28, 2022 evaluates the CEDHSP’s consistency with 128 General Plan policies applicable to the project and determines that the project would be consistent with these policies.

## **TOPIC AREA 3 – DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL OF PEDREGAL PLANNING AREA**

Comments and questions were received at the public hearing regarding development potential of the Pedregal Planning Area based on zoning as well as land conditions (e.g., slopes, oak woodlands, and wetland features). Table 1 of the April 28, 2022 Staff Report identifies the

Pedregal Planning Area maximum development potential based on zoning and planning area acreage is 759 residential units. However, this planning area does include seeps and wetland features (Revised Final EIR Figure 3.3-1) as well as slope conditions (Figure 3.5-1 – 15.3 acres of the planning area have slopes in excess of 30 percent) that would likely limit the extent of land area available for the development of residential units. Additionally, the extent site development would also be restricted due to the onsite archaeological and historic resources (Pedregal Archaeological District). The maximum development potential that could occur under existing zoning when factoring these constraints is not known. The Pedregal Planning Area is proposed to include 237 residential units and has been designed to minimize impacts to oak woodlands, and to avoid slopes that exceed 30 percent.

#### **TOPIC AREA 4 – RANGE OF USES ALLOWED WITHIN THE RECREATIONAL FACILITIES, HIGH-INTENSITY ZONE**

Several comments expressed concerns and confusion regarding the extent of recreational uses that are allowed under the existing Recreational Facilities, High-Intensity zone for the El Dorado Hills Executive Golf Course site (Exhibit K of the April 28, 2022 Staff Report). The Revised Final EIR Volume I, Chapter 4, “Alternatives Analysis,” provides an analysis of a Zoning Consistent Alternative (Alternative 4) that would retain the existing Recreational Facilities High-Intensity zone.

Section 130.25.020 of the Zoning Ordinance identifies the following uses that are permitted or allowed through approval of a permit in the Recreational Facilities, High-Intensity zoning district.

##### Allowed Use (No Permit Required)

- Hiking and Equestrian Trail
- Parks (Day Use and Picnic Area)
- Private Recreation Area (as part of an approved development plan or subdivision)
- Resource Protection and Restoration
- Commercial Recreation (Arcade and Indoor Entertainment)
- Minor Public Utility Service Facilities

##### Allowed Subject to the Approval of an Administrative Permit

- Hunting/Fishing Club - Farm
- Marina – Non-motorized Craft
- Parks (Nighttime Use)
- River Put-in and Take-out
- Snow Play Area
- Commercial Stable
- Public Swimming Pool
- Public Tennis Court
- Trail Head Parking or Staging Area
- Commercial Employee Caretaker Permanent Housing
- Commercial Recreation (Outdoor Entertainment, Outdoor Sports and Recreation)
- Commercial Health Resort and Retreat Center
- Commercial Seasonal Sales

Allowed Subject to the Approval of a Temporary Use Permit

- Special Events - Temporary
- Commercial Contractor's Office
- Temporary Storage Yard – Equipment and Material

Allowed Subject to the Approval of a Conditional Use Permit

- Campground
- Golf Course
- Hunting/Fishing Club - Farm Facilities
- Marina – Motorized Craft
- Off-Road Vehicle Recreation Area
- Recreational Vehicle Park
- Ski Area
- Commercial Automotive and Equipment – Fuel Sales (Accessory to off highway or off road vehicle recreational uses)
- Commercial Large Amusement Complex (In Community Regions only)
- Commercial Off Highway or Off Road Recreation Area
- Commercial Food, Beverage, and General Merchandise Sales
- Commercial Hotels and Motels (In Community Regions only)
- Commercial Specialized Education and Training
- Mineral Exploration
- Mining – Subsurface
- Community Services – Minor
- Intermodal Facility (Transportation)
- Communication Facilities

Allowed Subject to the Approval of a Temporary Mobile Home Permit

- Commercial Employee Caretaker Temporary Housing

**TOPIC AREA 5 – FUNCTION OF PROJECT OBJECTIVES**

The Planning Commission inquired about the development of the project objectives that are identified in the Revised Final EIR and whether the project objectives were created by the County. The project objectives were developed by the applicant and County staff to meet EIR content and analysis requirements under State CEQA Guidelines Section 15124(b) that states:

*A statement of the objectives sought by the proposed project. A clearly written statement of objectives will help the lead agency develop a reasonable range of alternatives to evaluate in the EIR and will aid the decision makers in preparing findings or a statement of overriding considerations, if necessary. The statement of objectives should include the underlying purpose of the project and may discuss the project benefits.*

The project objectives from the Revised Final EIR are identified below and were used as part of the screening analysis for alternatives evaluated in the Revised Final EIR in Volume I, Chapter 4, "Alternatives Analysis."

- El Dorado County's (County's) primary objective for the proposed project is to create development patterns that make the most efficient and feasible use of existing infrastructure and public services while promoting a sense of community as envisioned by the County's General Plan. There are an additional 15 objectives of the proposed project, as follows.
  - **Fulfill regional land use objectives by achieving Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS) Consistency.** Establish new development that fulfills regional land use objectives by directing growth to the established community of El Dorado Hills and achieving consistency with The Sacramento Area Council of Governments' (SACOG's) adopted 2020 MTP/SCS.
  - **Curtail suburban sprawl.** Curtail suburban sprawl (County General Plan Goal 2.1) by utilizing undeveloped infill sites and promoting mixed-use development patterns to accommodate the County's future population growth and support economic expansion.
  - **Assist in meeting future Regional Housing Needs Allocations (RHNA) needs.** Assist in meeting the County's RHNA for the 2022–2030 Housing Element Update by introducing new lands zoned multifamily.
  - **Broaden the housing stock in El Dorado Hills.** Maximize opportunities for higher-density housing as an alternative to single-family detached dwellings. Offer land uses to accommodate various lot sizes, densities, and product types to satisfy the market demands of existing and future household types, sizes, and income levels (County General Plan Goal HO-1), including the senior population (County General Plan Goal HO-4).
  - **Provide a strong community identity and quality built environment.** Establish a community setting with an identifiable character and a visually attractive design theme that is compatible with the surrounding area and contributes to the quality of life and economic health (County General Plan Goal 2.4). Carefully plan and incorporate visual elements that enhance and promote a sense of community (County General Plan Goal 2.5) and provide quality residential environments for all income levels (County General Plan Goal HO-2).
  - **Utilize existing infrastructure and public services.** Promote compact land use patterns in Community Regions to maximize existing public services, such as water, wastewater, parks, schools, solid waste, fire protection, law enforcement, and libraries, thus accommodating new growth in an efficient manner (County General Plan Goal 5.1).
  - **Improve connectivity of the regional roadway network.** Provide an opportunity for the County to expand its regional roadway network and improve parallel capacity to US 50.
  - **Encourage future transit opportunities.** Locate development in the El Dorado Hills Community Region within walking distance of El Dorado Hills Boulevard to improve the feasibility of future transit services, thus reducing traffic congestion

and offer alternative transportation choices to a range of users (County General Plan Goal TC-2).

- **Create a new non-motorized transportation system.** Create a new non-motorized transportation system (County General Plan Goal TC-4) linking new development to existing retail services. Incorporate Class I bike paths, “complete streets” with Class II bike lanes, and sidewalks in new development to promote alternative transportation modes and reduce vehicle miles traveled.
- **Improve north-south pedestrian and bicycle connectivity.** Reduce barriers to pedestrians created by US 50 and improve access between the north and south sides of the freeway and improve pedestrian and bicycle safety.
- **Provide opportunities for recreational facilities in El Dorado Hills.** Provide recreational facilities for the health and welfare of residents and visitors (County General Plan Goal 9.1), thus promoting opportunities to capitalize on recreational uses through tourism and recreational based businesses and industries (County General Plan Goal 9.3).
- **Maintain characteristics of natural landscape.** Maintain natural landscape features, including ridgelines (County General Plan Goal 2.3), conserve existing natural resources for ecological value (County General Plan Goal 7.4), and conserve open space to provide for the enjoyment of scenic beauty (County General Plan Goal 7.6).
- **Minimize impacts on oak woodlands.** Minimize impacts on the oak woodlands by directing new development to areas with minimal or little oak canopy.
- **Protect important cultural resources.** Protect the County’s important cultural resources (County General Plan Goal 7.5), including significant pre-historic and Native American resources and unique historical features of the County’s Gold Rush history.
- **Foster sustainable communities.** Foster sustainable communities (County General Plan Goal 2.1) by utilizing sustainable design practices to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and increase the efficiency of energy and water use in new development (County General Plan Goal HO-5).

## TOPIC AREA 6 – ADEQUACY OF THE REVISED FINAL EIR

Several comments state that the Revised Final EIR inadequately addresses the environmental impacts (e.g., air quality, greenhouse gases and climate change, biological resources, cultural resources, law enforcement services, fire protection, park facilities, loss of open space, traffic, and water supply) of the CEDHSP. ICF Jones and Stokes, Inc., (EIR Consultant) and County staff have reviewed these comments and have determined that these comments and concerns have been adequately addressed in the Revised Final EIR. County staff recommends that the Planning Commission recommend certification of the Revised Final EIR to the Board of Supervisors.