



PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT

PLANNING SERVICES DIVISION

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Date: May 30, 2025

To: Planning Commission (Agenda Date: July 10, 2025)

From: Cameron Welch, Senior Planner and Cori Resha, Dudek

**Subject: Informational Workshop on the Proposed Creekside Village Specific Plan
(GPA20-0001, Z20-0005, SP20-0001, TM20-0002, DA24-0002)**

PURPOSE

The purpose of this informational workshop is to provide the Planning Commission and public an overview of the proposed Creekside Village Specific Plan (CVSP). This is an informational item to provide the Planning Commission with a general understanding of what is proposed regarding development potential, entitlements, overview of the environmental review process to date, and the tentative hearing schedule for the project. While the informational meeting is not intended to solicit or obtain comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR), this staff memo provides an overview of the environmental review process that led to a revised reduced impact land plan that staff and the applicant currently intend to recommend for approval.

No action or recommendation to the Board of Supervisors is being sought from the Planning Commission for this item at the informational workshop. A recommendation will be sought at a future Planning Commission public hearing.

Entitlements Requested for the Original Proposed Project and Reduced Impact Alternative

Adoption of the proposed CVSP would include amending the General Plan land use designation, a rezone, a new specific plan document, including associated development standards, and approval of a new tentative subdivision map. The applicant is also pursuing a development agreement with the County. The original application with the County proposed a 918-unit residential project, which is referred to in this staff report as the original Proposed Project (OPP) for clarity.

Through the process of preparing the Draft EIR, an environmentally superior revised project with only 763 units was developed. The revised 763-unit tentative map and corresponding Specific Plan was analyzed in the Draft EIR as what is called the Reduced Impact Alternative (RIA). Because the 763-unit RIA reduced environmental impacts, the County requested the applicant to evaluate

the RIA in the Draft EIR at a project-specific level so the RIA could be considered along with the OPP. Two (2) unique specific plan documents and two (2) distinct subdivision maps will therefore be included for consideration at this project site.

Based on analysis completed at this time, County staff intends to recommend the RIA for approval because it reduces environmental impacts, including reducing impacts to Tribal Cultural Resources (TCR). Though the OPP provides a better economic return from a development perspective, the applicant has committed to the Tribes, County staff, and members of the community that it will support approval of the RIA because it is environmentally superior and addresses the concerns of numerous stakeholders. Because both the OPP and RIA are analyzed at the project-specific level in the Draft EIR, the Planning Commission, at the appropriate time, may make a recommendation regarding either project to the Board of Supervisors.

In addition, the Latrobe School District, a small district that includes an elementary school and a middle school, indicated during preparation of the Draft EIR that its existing schools could not absorb the increase in students generated by the OPP. Therefore, the Latrobe School District requested a reduction in the number of non-age restricted conventional housing units. The applicant reached an agreement with the Latrobe School District that, due to the District's limited capacity, no more than 150 single-family dwelling units may be built as non-age restricted at Creekside Village. This agreement is consistent with the Active Adult Option analyzed in the Draft EIR with the OPP and limit of conventional units in the RIA.

The OPP would have the following development potential (Attachments B and C):

- 918 residential dwelling units with an Active Adult Option that would limit all but 150 units to age-restricted active adult (55+)
- 1.8-acre commercial site with a maximum of 5,400 square feet of building area
- 13.6 acres of park uses
- 44.8 acres of open space

The RIA would have the following development potential (Attachments D and E):

- 763 residential dwelling units with a mix of conventional and active adult homes with a limit of 150 non-age restricted homes
- 14.1 acres of park uses
- 44.4 acres of open space

Location and Project History

The approximately 208-acre specific plan area is located on the west side of Latrobe Road, south of Investment Boulevard, directly adjacent to the southern boundary of the El Dorado Hills Business Park (Attachment A), Supervisor District 2.

The project site was previously part of the private El Dorado Hills Business Park. In 2018, the site was approved to be de-annexed by the El Dorado Hills Business Park Owners Association. In February 2019, the first version of the CVSP was submitted and ultimately put on hold in October 2021 due to opposition to the project. In April 2022, another development company submitted an application for a warehouse and distribution center project (Project Frontier). Project Frontier was met with substantial opposition and was withdrawn in May 2023. Following the withdrawal of Project Frontier, community representatives requested the Creekside Village applicant to re-initiate the residential project. In July 2023, the applicant submitted the current project referred to herein as the OPP.

OVERVIEW OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS THAT LED TO THE PREFERRED PLAN

To address potential significant impacts, an EIR is required to evaluate a reasonable range of alternatives that would avoid or lessen environmental impacts while still meeting most of the objectives of the project. Because alternatives are designed to reduce environmental impacts from the project, it is often difficult to identify appropriate or meaningful alternatives until the environmental analysis of the proposed project has been completed.

Preparation of a Draft EIR also requires the lead agency, in this case the County, to consult with California Native American Tribes (Tribes) that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area regarding the presence of TCRs. If a tribe requests consultation on alternatives to a project, the consultation is required to include that topic. (Public Resources Code section 21080.3.2.)

For CVSP, multiple local Tribes requested consultation and, through the consultation process with the Tribes, it was revealed that TCRs exist within the site and would be impacted by the layout of the subdivision in the OPP. While the County, Tribes, and project applicant discussed potential mitigation measures to reduce the impacts, the Tribes determined that such mitigation measures would not be adequate and requested preparation of an alternative subdivision layout that avoids the TCRs. Based on this request and new information discovered during preparation of the Draft EIR through consultations, the project applicant worked with the Tribes to develop an alternative, the RIA, that avoided these important resources. The RIA also considered concerns of the community regarding traffic and concerns of the Latrobe School District regarding limited capacity. Given the ability to address significant impacts to TCRs and concerns of the community and Latrobe School District, the County decided that the RIA should be analyzed at a project-specific level so that the County could ultimately approve the RIA instead of the OPP. This Draft EIR therefore evaluates the land use plan that was originally submitted by the applicant as the OPP and also analyzes the RIA at the project-specific level in Chapter 5, Alternatives. Because the OPP and RIA are analyzed at the project-specific level with independent tentative maps and specific plans, either can be approved.

While an alternative developed through review under CEQA is not routinely recommended for approval, the ability to shift to an environmentally superior alternative based on the analysis in the Draft EIR demonstrates the value of environmental review, and the alternatives analysis required in CEQA. As courts have explained, “[t]he CEQA reporting process is not designed to freeze the ultimate proposal in the precise mold of the initial project; indeed, new and unforeseen insights may emerge during investigation, evoking revision of the original proposal.” (*South of Market Community Action Network v. City and County of San Francisco* (2019) 33 Cal.App.5th 321, 336 [quoting *County of Inyo v. City of Los Angeles* (1977) 71 Cal.App.3d 185, 199].) “The whole point of requiring evaluation of alternatives in the Draft EIR is to allow thoughtful consideration and public participation regarding other options that may be less harmful to the environment.” (*Ibid.* [citing *San Franciscans Upholding the Downtown Plan v. City and County of San Francisco* (2002) 102 Cal.App.4th 656, 695].)

Based on the analysis to date, staff intends to recommend approval of the RIA but will consider all comments received during the public comment period and the Final EIR before making a final recommendation to the Planning Commission. It should also be noted that the location of and information about the TCRs is confidential and protected under state law, thus cannot be provided as part of the informational meeting or Draft EIR circulated for public review.

OVERVIEW OF THE FUNCTION OF SPECIFIC PLANS

Specific plans are a land use planning tool for the further implementation of the General Plan for individual development proposals in a defined geographic area. They give local land use agencies the ability to establish land use and design regulations to create development that is consistent with site-specific physical constraints and opportunities as well as available infrastructure. All subsequent development within the boundaries of the specific plan area is subject to the requirements of an adopted specific plan.

Sections 65450 through 65457 of the California Government Code grant authority to the County for the development and adoption of specific plans. Chapter 130.56 (Specific Plans) of the El Dorado County Ordinance Code specifies that the Board of Supervisors shall have review authority of original jurisdiction for specific plan applications, after review and recommendation by the Planning Commission. The Board of Supervisors may adopt a proposed specific plan under El Dorado County Code Section 130.56.030 only if it finds that the plan:

- Is consistent with and implements the General Plan;
- Is consistent with any applicable airport land use plan, in compliance with Public Utilities Code Section 21676; and

- Will not have a significant effect on the environment or a statement of overriding considerations has been made for the proposed specific plan in compliance with the provisions of California Code of Regulations Section 15093 CEQA.

Previously adopted specific plans in the County include the El Dorado Hills Specific Plan, Northwest El Dorado Hills Specific Plan, Bass Lake Hills Specific Plan, Promontory Specific Plan, Carson Creek Specific Plan, and Valley View Specific Plan. Except for the Bass Lake Hills Specific Plan, development within these plans is nearing or at complete buildout. Other specific plan proposals currently under review with the County include the Lime Rock Valley Specific Plan and the Village of Marble Valley Specific Plan.

FUNCTION OF GENERAL PLANS AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY

Overview of the Function of a General Plan

General Plans are the constitution of a community. They express the community's development goals and embodies public policy relative to the distribution of future land uses, both public and private. The California Supreme Court has referred to general plans as the "constitution for future development." General plans establish a community's land use, circulation, environmental, economic, and social goals, and policies as they relate to future growth and development. General plans are the basis for local government decision-making, including decisions on development approvals and exactions.

However, *planning is a continuous process*. General plans should be reviewed regularly, regardless of their planning horizon, and revised as new information becomes available and as community needs and values change. State law requires annual reviews of general plans and the opportunity to amend general plans four (4) times a year to address changed conditions.

El Dorado County General Plan Policy 2.2.5.2 requires all discretionary projects to be reviewed for consistency with applicable General Plan policies in addition to the requirements of Zoning Ordinance Section 130.56.030. California Government Code Section 64554 requires that specific plans be consistent with the agency's general plan. State law does not require perfect conformity between a proposed project and the applicable general plan 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 1552, 1563.)

"Once a general plan is in place, it is the province of elected city officials to examine the specifics of a proposed project to determine whether it would be 'in harmony' with the policies stated in the plan." (*Spring Valley Lake Association v. City of Victorville* (2016) 248 Cal.App.4th 91, 99. "Because policies in a general plan reflect a range of competing interests, the governmental

agency must be allowed to weigh and balance the plan’s policies when applying them, and it has broad discretion to construe its policies in light of the plan’s purposes.’” (*Naraghi Lakes Neighborhood Preservation Assn. v. City of Modesto* (2016) 1 Cal.App.5th 9, 18–19 [quoting *San Franciscans Upholding the Downtown Plan v. City & County of San Francisco* (2002) 102 Cal.App.4th 656, 677–678].)

Recognizing that perfect conformity is not possible, the Introduction chapter of the El Dorado County General Plan provides:

In implementing the General Plan, it must be applied comprehensively. No single component (map, goal, objective, policy, or map) can stand alone in the review and evaluation of a development project. Conversely, the absence of a specific policy enabling a particular aspect of a project (exclusive of basic density consistency) is not to be grounds for a finding of General Plan inconsistency. Projects inherently raise policy issues. It is the task of the decision makers, consistent with State law, to weigh project benefits and consequences up against the General Plan as a whole. The merits of a project should ultimately be determined by its consistency with goals, objectives, and policies of all the elements and the land use map. Development standards as set forth in the Zoning Ordinance and other County policies must be consistent with the standards in this Plan. The Plan standards represent a careful balancing of competing economic, social, and environmental interests.

Guiding Provisions of the El Dorado County General Plan

The Introduction chapter of the El Dorado County General Plan identifies the long-range direction and policy for the use of land in the County through the Statement of Vision, Plan Strategies, Plan Concepts, and Plan Objectives. These are listed below and are the basis of the General Plan’s goals, objectives, policies, and implementation measures contained in each of the plan’s nine elements. These provisions constitute the central policy direction of the General Plan.

Statement of Vision

The vision for future growth in the County includes the following:

1. Maintain and protect the County’s natural beauty and environmental quality, vegetation, air and water quality, natural landscape features, cultural resource values, and maintain the rural character and lifestyle while ensuring the economic viability critical to promoting and sustaining community identity.

2. Where appropriate, encourage clustered development as an option to maintain the integrity and distinct character of individual communities, while protecting open space and promoting natural resource uses.
3. Make land use decisions in conjunction with comprehensive transportation planning and pursuing economically viable alternative transportation modes, including light rail. Adopt a Circulation Element providing for rural and urban flows that recognize limitations of topography and natural beauty with flexibility of road standards.
4. Promote a better balance between local jobs and housing by encouraging high technology activities and value-added activities tied directly to available resource-based industries such as the timber industry, tourism, agriculture, mining, and recreation.
5. Increase the amount of affordable housing by providing a variety of housing types and encouraging residential projects to reflect affordability in light of the existing local job base and/or infrastructure.
6. Encourage efforts to locate a four-year college and support the ability of elementary, middle, and high schools to keep pace with population growth.
7. Improve and expand local park and recreational facilities throughout the County.
8. Recognize that the General Plan is a living document which must be updated periodically, consistent with the desires of the public, and provide for public involvement in the planning process.

General Plan Strategies

The following is a list of strategies to provide for methods of achieving the visions and goals and to carry forward the Plan's principal purposes:

1. Recognize urban growth in Community Regions while allowing reasonable growth throughout the rural areas of the County.
2. Promote growth in a manner that retains natural resources and reduces infrastructure costs.
3. Encourage growth to reflect the character and scale of the community in which it occurs and recognize that planned developments are an effective planning tool to maximize community identity and minimize impact on the surrounding area.
4. Require new growth to fully fund its on-site services and apportioned share of off-site services.

5. Provide that Plan goals, objectives, and policies reflect the significant differences in characteristics between the principal land use planning areas of Community Regions, Rural Centers, and Rural Regions.
6. Provide sufficient land densities and land use designations throughout the County to accommodate the projected growth for all categories of development.
7. Support the ability of the private sector to create and provide housing for all residents regardless of income, race, sex, age, religion, or any other arbitrary factor to accommodate the County's projected share of the regional housing needs.
8. Recognize economic development as an integral part of the development of existing communities and new communities by allowing for a diverse mix of land use types which would facilitate economic growth and viability.

General Plan Concepts

The development of these visions and strategies serves to provide for the underlying approach of the General Plan. This approach is the identification of distinct planning concept areas where growth will be directed as a means of providing for a more manageable land use pattern. The concepts of the General Plan also recognize that differing levels of service will occur within community and rural areas.

Flexible boundaries shall be provided identifying Community Regions, Rural Centers, and Rural Regions on the General Plan Land Use Map for clear distinction between:

- A. Community Regions where growth will be directed and facilitated;
- B. Rural Centers where growth and commercial activities will be directed to serve the larger Rural Regions; and
- C. Rural Regions where resource-based activities are located will be enhanced while accommodating reasonable growth.

Higher levels of infrastructure and public services of all types shall be provided within Community Regions to minimize the demands on services in Rural Regions. The Capital Improvement Plan for the County and all special districts will prioritize improvements.

It is the explicit intent of the General Plan, through the appropriate application of these planning concept areas, to: (1) foster a rural quality of life; (2) sustain a quality environment; (3) develop a strong diversified, sustainable local economy; (4) plan land use patterns which will determine the level of public services appropriate to the character, economy, and environment of each region; and (5) accommodate the County's fair share

of the regional growth projections while encouraging those activities that comprise the basis for the County's customs, culture, and economic stability.

General Plan Objectives

Through the appropriate application of the above statements, the objectives of the General Plan are:

1. To develop a strong diversified and sustainable local economy;
2. To foster a rural quality of life;
3. To sustain a quality environment;
4. To accommodate the County's fair share of regional growth projections and affordable housing while encouraging those activities that comprise the basis for the County's customs, culture, and economic stability;
5. To oversupply residential and non-residential land use designations to provide market and landowner flexibility to more feasibly accommodate the market;
6. To concentrate and direct urban growth where infrastructure is present and/or can be more feasibly provided;
7. To recognize that funding limitations for infrastructure and services will result in lower levels of service while the County improves employment and housing opportunities;
8. To conserve, protect, and manage the County's abundant natural resources for economic benefits now and for the future;
9. To encourage infill development that more efficiently utilizes existing infrastructure and minimizes land use conflicts while avoiding the premature development of non-contiguous lands where direct and life cycle costs are greater;
10. To accomplish the retention of permanent open space/natural areas on a project-by-project bases through clustering;
11. To minimize down planning and/or down zoning where feasible;
12. To improve the jobs-to-housing ratio by giving preference to the development of high technology and value added employment centers and regional retail and tourism uses.

OVERVIEW OF THE PROPOSED CREEKSIDE VILLAGE SPECIFIC PLAN

Background

The site consists of Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) 117-010-032 and a portion of APN 117- 720-012. The CVSP site consists of undeveloped rolling annual grasslands typical of the topography of the western foothill region. The site has historically been used for grazing. Due to the rolling topography, the elevation of the site ranges from 470 feet above mean sea level along the western boundary of the site to a high of 640 feet above mean sea level in the southeast corner.

There are almost no trees on the site except for a small grove of six (6) blue oak trees located in the southeast corner situated on a small hilltop. There are three (3) seasonal drainages that cross the project site and merge at the western boundary to form one (1) intermittent drainage that drains offsite. Seasonal wetlands and a small vernal pool are also present on the site.

The site does not include any existing water, sewer, storm drain, natural gas, or electric utilities infrastructure.

Current General Plan Land Use Designations and Zoning

The project site is designated in the 2004 El Dorado County General Plan for Research & Development. Current County zoning is also Research & Development including a Design Review overlay.

Below is a further summary of the proposed entitlement requests:

General Plan Amendment

- 1) Amend the General Plan Land Use Map designation of subject lands from Research & Development (R&D) to Adopted Plan (AP). The AP land use category recognizes areas for which specific land use plans have been prepared and adopted. The respective land use map associated with each such plan is adopted as the General Plan map for each such area.
 - a. Land use designations under the CVSP-OPP would include the following:
 - i. CV-SFL Single Family Low Density
 - ii. CV-SFM-PD Single Family Medium Density Planned Development
 - iii. CV-NC Neighborhood Commercial
 - iv. CV-P Parks - Public or Private

- v. CV-OS1 Open Space Preserve
- vi. CV-OS2 Open Space Buffer
- b. Land use designations under the CVSP-RIA would include the following
 - i. CV-SFL Single Family Low Density
 - ii. CV-SFM Single Family Medium Density
 - iii. CV-P Parks - Public or Private
 - iv. CV-P-PD Parks - Public or Private
 - v. CV-OS1 Open Space Preserve
 - vi. CV-OS2 Open Space Buffer

Rezoning

- 1) Rezone of the project site from R&D to Specific Plan (SP).

Specific Plan

- 1) Adoption of the CVSP-OPP or CVSP-RIA, including the associated development standards.

Tentative Subdivision Map

- 1) Approve the Tentative Subdivision Map (TM) for the CVSP-OPP or CVSP-RIA.

APPLICANT OUTREACH MEETINGS

The project applicant team has been conducting outreach meetings with public agencies, chamber of commerce, homeowner associations, interest groups, and various boards. A summary of these meetings to date is provided below:

- June 28, 2023 – Blackstone HOA
- July 12, 2023 – Heritage HOA
- July 18, 2023 – El Dorado Hills APAC
- July 20, 2023 – EDH Business Park Board of Directors
- July 21, 2023 – John Adams Academy
- August 24, 2023 – El Dorado Hills Community Services District
- September 20, 2023 – El Dorado Hills APAC

- September 28, 2023 – El Dorado Hills Fire Department
- October 3, 2023 – Biological Site Walk with members of the Blackstone HOA, Heritage HOA, and Citizens in Support of El Dorado Hills
- December 1, 2023 – Tribal Cultural Resources Site Walk with County and Tribal Representatives
- December 21, 2023 – El Dorado Hills Fire Department
- January 3, 2024 – El Dorado Hills Fire Department
- January 12, 2024 – Latrobe School District
- February 9, 2024 – Tribal Cultural Resources Meeting with County and Tribal Representatives
- March 15, 2024 – Tribal Cultural Resources Site Walk with County and Tribal Representatives
- April 12, 2024 – El Dorado Hills APAC Transportation Sub-committee
- June 4, 2024 – El Dorado Hills APAC Environmental Sub-committee
- December 6, 2024 – Tribal Cultural Resources Site Walk with Tribal Representatives
- January 8, 2025 – El Dorado Hills APAC
- April 30, 2025 – El Dorado Hills APAC Transportation Sub-committee

NEXT STEPS

Next steps for this proposal include circulation of the Draft EIR for public review, and a Final EIR will be prepared, incorporating responses to comments received on the Draft EIR. The CVSP is currently expected to be heard by the Planning Commission sometime during the last quarter of 2025 or the first quarter of 2026. At that time, the Planning Commission will hold a public hearing to receive public comments and be asked to provide a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors on whether to approve the CVSP-OPP or the CVSP-RIA; or deny both options of the proposed specific plans. The date of the Board of Supervisors hearing to consider CVSP has yet to be determined. Additional public noticing will be sent out for both the subsequent Planning Commission hearing and the Board of Supervisors hearing.

STAFF MEMO ATTACHMENTS

Attachment ACVSP Location Map

Attachment BCVSP-OPP Project Land Use Map

Attachment CCVSP-OPP Summary Table

Attachment DCVSP-RIA Land Use Map

Attachment ECVSP-RIA Summary Table

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