



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

LONG RANGE PLANNING

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July 10, 2014

To: El Dorado County Planning Commission

From: David Defanti, Assistant Director

Subject: Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Targeted General Plan Amendments and the Zoning Ordinance Update (TGPA-ZOU)

PURPOSE

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires an analysis of the proposed Targeted General Plan Amendments and the Zoning Ordinance update (TGPA-ZOU). CEQA is a state required process. In accordance with CEQA, the County released a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) on March 24, 2014 for a 120-day public review period. This exceeds the standard 45-day period for the public review of DEIRs in order to provide the community ample time to review the DEIR. The DEIR contains the project description, impact analyses by affected resource, project alternatives, and mitigation measures for identified impacts. Written comments are being accepted by mail and on the County's website.

The DEIR public comment period closes on Wednesday, July 23, 2014 at 5:00 pm. All persons interested in the DEIR have the opportunity to provide comments at the Planning Commission meeting on July 10, 2014, or any time prior to the close of the public comment period. The Planning Commission meeting will be recorded. Staff encourages all persons interested in providing comments to submit written comments on or before the deadline.

The Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) will include written responses to the comments received during the review period.. Comments received on the DEIR after July 23, 2014 will be considered by the Planning Commission and Board during their deliberations, but may not receive written responses as part of the FEIR.

The purpose of the July 10, 2014 meeting is to provide opportunity for the public to submit comments on the DEIR. The DEIR simply analyzes the potential impacts of the TGPA/ZOU. It does not "approve" the TGPA/ZOU, nor does the Planning Commission intend to consider the TGPA/ZOU at this meeting. Therefore this meeting is not a forum to debate the contents of the TGPA-ZOU.

Subsequent public meetings will be scheduled with the Planning Commission and the Board to discuss the contents of the TGPA-ZOU and consider it for approval. These subsequent meetings are the appropriate forum to discuss the merits of the proposed changes studied in the TGPA-ZOU. Written comments on the TGPA-ZOU Project may be submitted at any time, including prior to or during upcoming Planning Commission and Board meetings on the Project.

BACKGROUND

El Dorado County's General Plan Policy 2.9.1.2 requires a two-year review of the County's General Plan after initial adoption, and then five-year reviews thereafter. The purpose of the five-year review is to identify and address changes in development patterns and state laws, correct imperfections or errors, and to streamline the implementation of the General Plan. The first five-year review found that the General Plan's Assumptions, Strategies, Concepts and Objectives are still valid, and have not changed so drastically that the County would need to consider substantially amending them during this five-year planning cycle. However, the five-year review did identify areas of concern within the General Plan that are impacting the development of moderate housing, the creation of jobs, the loss of tax revenues to neighboring communities, and impacting the agriculture and natural resource industries in the County.

On April 4, 2011 the Board of Supervisors adopted a Resolution of Intention (ROI 051-2011) for a Targeted General Plan Amendment to address findings from the first five-year review of the General Plan. Through this review process, the County recognized the need for improvement in the following areas:

- 1) reduced constraints for development of moderate income housing,
- 2) support and encouragement of increased employment opportunities,
- 3) the capture of sales tax revenue, and
- 4) the protection and promotion of agricultural industries within the County.

The Board directed staff to work with the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) and its Regulatory Reform Subcommittee to address issues in regards to meeting the County's General Plan goals and objectives. After an extensive public outreach and participation process, County staff and EDAC's Regulatory Reform Subcommittee developed a set of draft targeted amendments to the policies adopted in the 2004 General Plan (i.e., the Targeted General Plan Amendments or TGPA) and corresponding implementation actions needed as part of the comprehensive Zoning Ordinance update (ZOU) and Land Development Manual.

The proposed ZOU was prepared by County staff in order to comply with the General Plan's Implementation Program, including Measure LU-A, and with state law mandating that the zoning ordinance must be consistent with the General Plan.

BOARD DIRECTION

On November 14, 2011, the Board of Supervisors adopted three additional Resolutions of Intention (ROI's). ROI 182-2011 (Attachment 1A), outlined the specific General Plan Policies to be considered and analyzed for possible amendment. ROI 183-2011 (Attachment 1B) and ROI 184-2011 (Attachment 1C) authorized the Development Services Department to proceed with a comprehensive Zoning Ordinance update. In January of 2012, ICF International was awarded a contract with the County to complete an environmental review of the TGPA-ZOU Project.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Targeted General Plan Amendment (TGPA)

As its name implies, the TGPA consists of a set of targeted amendments to the General Plan. It is not a comprehensive update and does not make extensive changes to the current General Plan. The TGPA includes the following General Plan components that address the four objectives identified in the five-year review and recent changes in State laws. The following issues, by Element of the General Plan, are included in the DEIR's project description (for specific policies see the Project Checklist; Attachment 2A):

1. Land Use Element:
 - a. Camino/Pollock Pines Community Region change to a Rural Center
 - b. Agriculture District boundary expansion
 - c. Commercial/Mixed-Use and Multi-Family development
 - d. Rural commercial policies
 - e. Planned Development policies
 - f. Industrial use policies
 - g. Infill and opportunity site development
 - h. Agricultural and rural land support policies
 - i. Limited map correction amendments; no comprehensive land use amendments
2. Transportation and Circulation Element:
 - a. Regional planning coordination
 - b. Land development standards
 - i. Complete Streets
 - c. El Dorado Hills Business Park employment cap limits
3. Public Services and Utilities Element:
 - a. Water and public sewer connection requirements
4. Public Health, Safety and Noise Element:
 - a. Air Quality objectives and support of an Air Quality-Energy Conservation Plan
 - b. Noise standards for public transportation and infrastructure projects
5. Conservation and Open Space Element:
 - a. 30% Slope limitations in Community Regions
 - b. Mineral resource policies
6. Agriculture & Forestry:
 - a. Agricultural setbacks in Community Regions
 - b. Ranch Marketing allowances for commercial grazing operations
 - c. Agricultural support services

Zoning Ordinance Update (ZOU)

A comprehensive update to El Dorado County's Zoning Ordinance has not occurred in over 30 years. State Planning and Zoning law requires a County's Zoning Ordinance to be consistent with its General Plan. The following global revisions were made to the current Zoning Ordinance. (For specific proposed changes, see Project Checklist; Attachment 2A).

1. Amended zoning map to reflect zones consistent with underlying land use designation
2. Revised document to reduce regulations and simplify processes
3. Relied on State and Federal minimum regulations where feasible
4. Reorganized the document for ease of use
5. Updated text to bring into conformance with the General Plan

6. Created new zones to reflect current zoning needs
7. Deleted obsolete and unnecessary zone districts
8. Created overlay zones to more effectively implement General Plan policies
9. Increased the use of matrices in the document for clarity and ease of use
10. Moved design standards and guidelines to the Design Standards and Guidelines Manual
11. Expanded uses in the agricultural, rural and natural resource zones to provide opportunities for agricultural support services, recreation, and rural commerce.
12. Updated the home occupation regulations to allow for employees and expanded home businesses with updated standards
13. Increased the number and type of commercial zones to further specify the type, design, and location of commercial uses, consistent with the General Plan
14. Revised the terms in the glossary

EL DORADO COUNTY TGPA-ZOU DRAFT EIR

Projects such as the TGPA-ZOU inherently raise policy issues. It is the task of the decision makers, consistent with State law, to weigh the benefits and consequences of the proposed changes and strive to achieve a balance of competing economic, social, and environmental interests. The FEIR assists decision makers by providing them with information about the TGPA/ZOU's environmental impacts. The EIR prepared for the TGPA/ZOU neither approves nor denies this project.

The DEIR for the TGPA-ZOU project analyzed possible environmental impacts to visual resources (aesthetics), agricultural and forestry resources, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, land use and planning, noise, population and housing, transportation, and the County's water supply. The Draft EIR lists proposed environmental mitigation measures for any impacts that are considered "significant". The report also lists alternatives to the project, and other CEQA considerations. Written comments received during the 120-day public comment period ending on July 23rd will be responded to and including in the FEIR.

EL DORADO COUNTY TGPA-ZOU HEARINGS

The July 10th meeting is an opportunity for the public to provide comments on the DEIR and is not a forum to debate the proposed TGPA-ZOU. Subsequent public hearings will be scheduled with the Planning Commission and the Board to discuss the contents of the TGPA-ZOU. These hearings are the appropriate forum to discuss the merits of the proposed changes embodied in the TGPA-ZOU. Written comments on the merits of the TGPA-ZOU Project may be submitted at any time, including prior to or during upcoming Planning Commission and Board hearings on the Project. Ultimately, adoption of any of the proposed changes contained in the TGPA-ZOU project is a policy decision that will be informed by the FEIR, public testimony, and other factors.