

NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF
A DRAFT PROGRAM ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (EIR)
AND NOTICE OF PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING
FOR THE
EL DORADO COUNTY TARGETED GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT AND
COMPREHENSIVE ZONING ORDINANCE UPDATE

Date: xx/xx/2012

To: Interested Parties

From: El Dorado County Administrator's Office

The County of El Dorado will be the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Targeted General Plan Amendment (TGPA) and Zoning Ordinance Update (ZOU). The purpose of this Notice of Preparation/Notice of Public Scoping Meeting is to request the views of public agencies and interested persons as to the scope and content of the environmental information and analyses, including the significant environmental impacts, reasonable alternatives, and mitigation measures that should be included in the Draft EIR. The project description, location, and potential environmental effects are summarized in the attached materials.

Written comments should be sent at the earliest possible date, but not later than 45 days after the receipt of this notice. Keep in mind that there will be another opportunity to submit detailed comments when the Draft EIR is released for public review. Submittal of electronic copies of comments in Microsoft® Word format is appreciated. Please mail or send your comments to:

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2850 Fairlane Court, Building "C"
Placerville, CA 95667
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The County will conduct a series of public scoping meetings on the project to provide additional information and to receive verbal and written input. The format of the scoping meetings will include a brief overview of the project by County staff, followed by a question and answer session. The scoping meetings will be held at times and places listed below:

[Scoping Meeting dates, times and locations]

[SIGNATURE BLOCK]

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Location

This project involves changes to policies of the County General Plan and the adoption of an update to the Zoning Ordinance. These changes will take effect county-wide in those areas that under County jurisdiction. In addition, the County will consider amending the Camino/Pollock Pines Community Region Boundary in the 2004 General Plan, making a number of General Plan map amendments to address inconsistencies between the General Plan and the Zoning Ordinance, and consider expanding the boundaries of certain agricultural districts.

Project Description

The County is proposing a limited number of amendments to its General Plan and the adoption of an update to the Zoning Ordinance. The full texts of the proposed changes are available from the Development Services Department, Planning Services, 2850 Fairlane Court, Building "C," Placerville, CA 95667 and online at the Land Use Policy Programmatic Update website, and at the following County libraries:

Main Library in Placerville, 345 Fair Lane, Placerville, CA 95667. HOURS: Tuesday & Wednesday 12-7, Thursday, Friday & Saturday 10-5, closed Sunday & Monday.

Cameron Park Branch, 2500 Country Club Dr., Cameron Park, CA 95682. HOURS: Monday, Wednesday & Friday 10-5, Tuesday & Thursday 12-7, 2nd Saturday of each month 10-3, closed Saturday & Sunday.

El Dorado Hills Branch, 7455 Silva Valley Parkway, El Dorado Hills, CA 95762. HOURS: Monday 1-5, Tuesday & Wednesday 12-7, Thursday & Friday 10-5, Saturday 1-5, closed Sunday.

Georgetown Branch, 6680 Orleans Street, P. O. Box 55, Georgetown, CA 95634. HOURS: Tuesday & Wednesday 12-7, Thursday 10-5, Friday 1-5, Saturday 10-3, closed Sunday & Monday.

Pollock Pines Branch, 6210 Pony Express Trail, P O Box 757, Pollock Pines, CA 95726. HOURS: Tuesday 12-7, Wednesday & Thursday 10-5, closed Friday, Saturday, Sunday & Monday.

South Lake Tahoe Branch, 1000 Rufus Allen Blvd., South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150. HOURS: Tuesday & Wednesday 10-8, Thursday, Friday & Saturday 10-5, closed Sunday & Monday.

General Plan Amendments

Amendments to the General Plan are proposed for the Land Use Element; Transportation and Circulation Element; Public Services and Utilities Element; Public Health, Safety and Noise Element; Conservation and Open Space Element; and, Agriculture and Forestry Element.

The General Plan amendments to be covered in the EIR are primarily proposed policy changes. The only proposed changes in General Plan Land Use Designations are noted below and are limited in extent.

General Plan amendments being considered include some options for changes in designations and policies. The EIR will analyze all of the potential options under consideration. The Board of Supervisors will make its choice among the options when it adopts the amendments sometime in 2013.

The following is a summary of the proposed amendments and updates:

Land Use Map

1. Camino/Pollock Pines Community Region Boundary amendment to create three Rural Centers, including Camino, Cedar Grove, and Pollock Pines, to allow for separate and distinct opportunities for each of the communities.
2. Agriculture District Boundary Expansion for Garden Valley-Georgetown, Coloma, Camino-Fruitridge, Gold Hill, Oak Hill, Pleasant Valley and Fair Play-Somerset.
3. Limited Land Use Cleanup identified through the Zoning Ordinance Update.

Proposed Policy Amendments

1. *Policies 2.1.1.1 and 2.1.2.1:* Analyze the possibility of adding new, amending, or deleting existing Community Regions or Rural Center planning areas.
2. *Policy 2.1.1.3:* Commercial/Mixed-Use - Amend to allow residential density by increasing residential use as part of a mixed-use development from 16 units per acre to 20 units per acre.
3. *Policy 2.2.1.2, Table 2-1, and Table 2-1:* Commercial and Industrial- Amend to allow for commercial and industrial uses in the rural regions.
4. *Policy 2.2.1.2:* Commercial/Mixed Use- Delete sentence, "The residential component of the project shall only be implemented following or concurrent with the commercial component."
5. *Policy 2.2.1.2:* Delete requirement for industrial lands to be restricted to only industrial lands within, or in close proximity to, community regions and rural centers. Delete the requirement that industrial lands in rural regions can only provide for on-site support of agriculture and natural resource uses.
6. *Policy 2.2.1.2:* Amend multi-family density from 24 units per acre to 30 units per acre to comply with California Government Code 65583.2(c)(iv) and (e). Amend the multi-family land use to

encourage a full range of housing types including small-lot single-family detached design without a requirement for a planned development.

7. *Policy 2.2.1.2: High Density Residential-* Delete requirement for a planned development application on projects of three or more units per acre.
8. *Policy 2.2.1.2: High Density Residential-* Analyze the effects of increasing high density residential land use density from a maximum of five units per acre to eight units per acre.
9. *Policy 2.2.1.2: Open Space-* Amend policy to make reference to Objective 7.6.1.
10. *Table 2-2:* Amend table to reflect changes in density for commercial/mixed-use from 16 units per acre to 20 units per acre and multi-family from 24 units per acre to 30 units per acre.
11. *Policy 2.2.1.5 and Table 2-3:* Amend Policy to direct that the regulation of building intensities be established in the Zoning Ordinance and delete Table 2.3.
12. *Policies 2.2.3.1, 2.2.3.2, and 2.2.5.4:* Amend the 30% open space requirement inside of community regions and rural centers to allow lesser area of "improved open space" on site; set criteria for options in meeting a portion of the requirement off-site or by an in-lieu fee option as deemed necessary.
13. *Table 2-4:* Amend to reflect Zoning Ordinance Update revision to zones.
14. *Policy 2.2.4.1:* Amend the Density Bonus Policy which allows incentive for the creation of open space as part of residential projects, and implement policy specifics through Zoning Ordinance.
15. *Policy 2.2.5.4:* Delete policy [Planned Development].
16. *Policy 2.2.5.8:* Amend the policy requirement for a neighborhood services zone and allow for objectives to be met in a related zone.
17. *Policy 2.2.5.10:* Delete requirement for special-use permit for agriculture support services; incorporate standards and permitted uses into Zoning Ordinance.
18. *Policy 2.4.1.3:* Amend policy to recognize the historical town sites of El Dorado/Diamond Springs and other historical town sites.
19. *Policies 2.9.1.2, 2.9.1.3, and 2.9.1.4:* Amend criteria for establishing community region and rural center boundaries. Amend timeframe for revision by the Board of Supervisors allowing for amendments to the boundaries to be completed by Board of Supervisors on an as needed basis.
20. *Add New Policies* setting criteria for infill sites and identify opportunity areas that will provide incentives substantial enough to encourage the development of these vacant/underutilized areas. This amendment would set criteria for CEQA streamlining opportunities but would not amend land use or go beyond existing EIR growth projections or densities set by the General Plan. These policies may support the use of traditional neighborhood design guidelines, mixed-use, and form-based codes.

21. *Policies TC-1a, TC-1b, and Table TC-1:* Revise policies and table to bring objectives into conformance with Policies TC-1p, TC-1r, TC-1t, TC-1u, TC-1w, TC-4f, TC-4i, HO-1.3, HO-1.5, HO-1.8, HO-1.18, HO-5.1 and HO-5.2, to allow for narrower streets and roadways and to support the development of housing types affordable to all income levels.
22. *Policies TC-1m, TC-1n(B), TC-1w:* Amend policies to cleanup language including; TC-1m delete “of effort”; TC-1n(B) replace “accidents” with “crashes;” and, TC-1w delete word “maximum.”
23. *Tables TC-2, TC-Xb, and TC-Xd:* Amend or delete Table TC-2 and maintain list outside of General Plan and amend any policies referring to Table TC-2.
24. *Policy TC-Xb (C):* Amend to refer to Figure TC-1 when referencing the circulation diagram.
25. *Policy TC-Xg:* Amend to include that each development shall also design necessary improvements as well as construct and/or fund them.
26. *Policy TC-Xi:* Amend to allow for coordination of regional projects to be delivered on a schedule agreed to by related regional agencies and therefore not subject to meeting the scheduling requirements of the policies of this General Plan.
27. *Policies TC-4a, TC-4d, and TC-4f:* Amend to cleanup language to ensure consistency with subsequent adopted plans.
28. *Policies TC-4i, TC-5a, TC-5b, and TC-5c:* Amend to provide more flexibility when requiring sidewalks.
29. *Policy TC-1y:* Analyze the potential for deleting the El Dorado Hills Business Park employment-cap limits, including option identified in TC-1v.
30. *Policies TC-Xd, TC-Xe and TC-Xf:* Analyze impacts to revising the policies to clarify the definition of “worsen,” what action or analysis is required if the threshold of “worsen” is met, clarification of the parameters of analysis (i.e., analysis period, analysis scenarios, methods), thresholds and timing of improvements.
31. *Add New Goal and associated policies* recognizing the requirements of California Government Code § 65080(b)(2)(I) implemented through the regional Metropolitan Transportation Plan to provide California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) streamlining opportunities for qualified projects.
32. *Add New Policy* to support the development of new or substantially improved roadways to accommodate all users, including bicyclists, pedestrians, transit riders, children, older people and disabled people, as well as motorists, consistent with appropriate code requirements. Add implementation measure to update the applicable manuals and standard plans to incorporate elements in support of all users (Assembly Bill 1358 - Complete Streets Act of 2008).
33. *Policy 5.1.2.2 and Table 5-1:* Amend policy and table to provide flexibility when achieving minimum level of service requirements consistent with related policies being considered for amendment.

34. *Policy 6.4.1.4 and 6.4.1.5:* Amend policies and remove flood insurance rate maps to address recommendations by the Office of Emergency Services and Homeland Security regarding dam failure inundation.
35. *Policy 6.5.1.11 and Tables 6-1 thru 6-5:* Revise existing noise standards to establish attainable noise thresholds with regard to temporary nighttime construction activities and other temporary exceedances.
36. *Objective 6.7.1 and 6.7.5:* Amend to reflect updated air quality plan opportunities that support the adoption of a separate Air Quality - Energy Conservation Plan. Create policy(s) to implement these objectives.
37. *Policy 7.1.2.1:* Amend the restrictions for development on 30% slopes and set standards in the Zoning Ordinance and Grading Ordinance.
38. *Policy 7.2.1.2 and 7.1.2.3:* Amend to clarify which mineral resource zones are required to be mapped.
39. *Objective 7.6.1.3(B):* Amend to delete specific references to zones to conform to the changes proposed in the Zoning Ordinance update.
40. *Policy 8.1.3.2:* Amend policy to provide a limited buffer for lands within a community region by adding language similar to Policy 8.4.1.2 to Policy 8.1.3.2 to bring the forest resources and agriculture lands buffering policies consistent with one another.
41. *Policy 8.2.4.2:* Amend policy to eliminate special-use permit requirement for visitor-serving uses and establish standards and permitted uses in the Zoning Ordinance.
42. *Policy 8.2.4.4:* Amend policy and any related policies to allow for ranch marketing activities on grazing lands.

Zoning Ordinance Update

The proposed comprehensive Zoning Ordinance Update has two elements: 1) revising the zoning maps to bring existing zoning designations into conformance with the General Plan, and 2) providing a comprehensive update of the text of the Zoning Ordinance both to bring conformance with the General Plan and to modernize implementation tools.

The following is a summary of the proposed changes:

1. Conform the zone districts to the General Plan land use designations.
2. Eliminate conflicting provisions of the existing Ordinance.
3. Include provisions in the Ordinance to implement General Plan Implementation Measures LU-A, HO-6, HO-16, HS-K, CO-A, AF-A, ED-N, ED-P, ED-II, ED-JJ, ED-KK, and ED-QQ.
4. Ensure that the Ordinance is consistent with applicable State and federal laws.

5. Create new zones to reflect current zoning needs and implement the General Plan, including the following zones: Rural Lands, Forest Resources, Agricultural Grazing, Neighborhood Service, and Limited Agriculture.
6. Delete obsolete zones, including Unclassified, Agriculture, Residential-Agricultural, and Planned Commercial.
7. Create overlay zones to more effectively implement General Plan policies.
8. Expand potential uses in the agricultural and rural lands zones to provide for opportunities for agricultural support, recreation, and rural commerce, including allowing ranch marketing on grazing land.
9. Provide a range of intensities for home occupations based on size and zoning of parcels addressing the use of accessory structures, customers, and employees.
10. Modify zoning for Williamson Act contracted and rolled-out land to reflect the underlying General Plan land use designation.
11. Revise the zoning map to conform to standardized rules for zoning modifications based on the General Plan land use designations.
12. Provide a range of commercial zones to specify and direct the type, design, and location of commercial uses. Proposed zones include Commercial Regional (CR), Commercial General (CG), Commercial Community (CC), Commercial Planned Office (CPO), Commercial Limited (CL), and Commercial Mainstreet (CM).
13. Create a Rural Commercial Zone that would be permitted within the rural regions planning concept area.
14. Increase potential uses to provide additional agricultural support, recreation, home occupation, and other rural residential, tourist serving and commercial uses in zones in the rural regions.
15. Create standards (master plans) for mixed-use and traditional neighborhood design development to provide for a streamlined approval process and to protect the commercial viability of the site.
16. Include single-family detached development standards in the multi-family zone. Allow up to 15% of the project area for commercial uses as part of a mixed-use development in multi-family zones.
17. Provide multiple industrial zones to specify and direct the type, design, and location of industrial uses.
18. Provide alternative means to any open space requirement as part of a planned development to provide more flexibility and incentives for infill development and focus on recreation in community regions and rural centers.

19. Amend zoning map to include a historical overlay zone district to the historical town sites of El Dorado and Diamond Springs, in relationship to historical town sites but consistent with adopted General Plan and Zoning Ordinance policies.
20. Codify standards for wetland and riparian setbacks.
21. Provide opportunities for residential and recreational uses on Timber Production Zone land compatible with timber management and harvesting.

Project Objectives

The Targeted General Plan Amendment (TGPA) and Zoning Ordinance Update (ZOU) have the following objectives:

Targeted General Plan Amendment

1. Establish policies related to the development of housing affordable to the moderate income earner.
2. Establish policies that will result in job creation and improved sales tax revenues.
3. Establish policies that will promote and protect agriculture in the county.
4. Establish policies consistent with State laws.
5. Revise existing General Plan policies as needed to provide clarity.

Zoning Ordinance Update

1. Conform the zoning map to the General Plan land use designations.
2. Eliminate conflicting provisions within the existing Ordinance.
3. Include provisions in the Ordinance to implement General Plan Implementation Measures LU-A, HO-6, HO-16, HS-K, CO-A, AF-A, ED-N, ED-P, ED-II, ED-JJ, ED-KK, and ED-QQ.
4. Ensure that the Ordinance is consistent with applicable State and federal laws.
5. Reorganize the Ordinance for ease of use, including the use of tables to identify permitted uses and development standards, establishing specific use regulations for administrative review of specified uses.
6. Create new zones to reflect current zoning needs and implement the General Plan, including Rural Lands, Forest Resources, Agricultural Grazing, and Limited Agriculture.
7. Delete obsolete zones.
8. Create overlay zones to more effectively implement General Plan policies.

9. Expand potential uses in the agricultural and rural lands zones to provide for opportunities for agricultural support, recreation and rural commerce, including allowing ranch marketing on grazing land.
10. Provide a range of intensities for home occupations, based on size and zoning of parcels, adding the use of accessory structures, customers and employees.
11. Modify zoning for Williamson Act contracted and rolled-out land to reflect the underlying General Plan land use designations.
12. Revise the zoning map to conform to standardized rule sets for zoning modifications based on the General Plan land use designations.
13. Provide a range of commercial zones to specify and direct the type, design and location of commercial uses consistent with the General Plan.

Level of Detail for the Environmental Analysis in the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR)

The analysis will be at a program-level. It will focus on the reasonably foreseeable direct and indirect physical environmental effects that could result from implementation of the TGPA and the ZOU. Because no specific development projects are being proposed, the analysis will not be parcel-specific.

The ZOU includes a number of optional ordinances that will be considered by the County, but which may or may not be adopted. The EIR will examine these options as part of the project and will discuss the range of impacts that could result from adopting the options as part of the ZOU, or not.

Scope of the EIR– Potential Significant Effects

The County is preparing an Initial Study pursuant to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines to help identify potential significant effects to be analyzed in the Draft EIR. The following list of potentially significant effects is not intended to be comprehensive. The Draft EIR may address additional impacts as a result of the comments received on the Notice of Preparation, at the scoping meetings, and the Initial Study.

Comments and suggestions are requested regarding the environmental issues that will be analyzed in the EIR.

Potentially Significant Impacts to be Addressed in the EIR

At this time, the following issue areas are anticipated to be addressed in the EIR:

1. Aesthetics
2. Air Quality
3. Biological Resources

4. Cultural Resources
5. Greenhouse Gas Emissions
6. Land Use/Planning
7. Noise
8. Transportation/Traffic

Less Than Significant Impacts That Will Not Be Addressed in the EIR

Based on a preliminary review of the project, the County has determined that the proposed project would have a less than significant impact or noimpact on the CEQA issue areas identified below. This is a preliminary determination only and does not preclude the County from making a different determination upon further analysis.

The primary reasons for these preliminary determinations are asfollows:

Agricultural Resources

None of the proposed changes in General Plan policy or zoning regulations will result in any conflicts with existing zoning or conversions of farmland to nonagricultural use. In fact, the proposed project will only strengthen these policies.

Geology/Soils

None of the proposed changes in General Plan policy or zoning regulations will result in an increased risk from geologic hazards in that no reduction in safeguards are proposed.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

None of the proposed changes in General Plan policy or zoning regulations will result in the exposure of residents to hazards or hazardous materials. For example, no changes are proposed to regulations regarding naturally occurring asbestos.

Hydrology/Water Quality

None of the proposed changes in General Plan policy or zoning regulations will violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements, nor will the proposed project substantially alter or degrade groundwater supplies, existing drainage patterns, or water quality.

Mineral Resources

None of the proposed changes in General Plan policy or zoning regulations will substantively change mineral resource designations or the regulation of mineral resource recovery.

Population/Housing

None of the proposed changes in General Plan policy or zoning regulations will substantively change projected population or change the amount of housing need projected in the General Plan. The proposed increase in multi-family density may result in impacts to aesthetics, noise and other resources, and will be analyzed under those subjects.

Public Services, Utilities/Service Systems

Because none of the proposed changes in General Plan policy or zoning regulations will substantively change projected population or change the amount of housing need projected in the General Plan, or increase areas to be developed, the changes are not expected to substantially affect demand for public services or utilities.

Recreation

None of the proposed changes in General Plan policy or zoning regulations will reduce standards for recreational lands, nor will they substantially reduce recreational opportunities; therefore future recreational demands will be met during the future process of considering individual development projects.

Alternatives to be Addressed in the EIR

In accordance with Section 15126.6 of the State CEQA Guidelines, an EIR must “describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, which would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project, and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives.” The State CEQA Guidelines also require that a No Project Alternative be evaluated and that under specific circumstances an environmentally superior alternative be designated from among the remaining alternatives.

The EIR will evaluate a reasonable range of alternatives, selected by an alternatives screening analysis, that will include alternatives to meet most or all of the objectives described above, are potentially feasible, and reduce significant impacts associated with the proposed TGPA and ZOU. The EIR will include an explanation of why other alternatives were rejected from further analysis in the EIR.

The alternatives analysis may, in addition to the No Project Alternative, consider one or more of the reduced intensity alternatives for further development and analysis in the EIR. The selected alternatives will be analyzed at a qualitative level of detail for comparison against the impacts identified for the proposed project, consistent with the requirements of CEQA. Because this is a county-wide project, no alternative will be analyzed that is outside the county.

Requests for Additional Information

If you have any questions, please contact Shawna Purvines at the County of El Dorado, Development Services Department, Planning Services, 2850 Fairlane Court, Building “C,” Placerville, CA 95667, by

telephone at (530) 621-5362, or by e-mail toshawna.purvines@edcgov.us. Copies of this notice will also be available at the public scoping meetings.

Attachments:

1. Exhibit 1: Map of County Jurisdictional Area
2. Exhibit 2: Map of Camino/Pollock Pines Community Region Boundary
3. Exhibit 3: Map of proposed Agriculture District Boundary Amendment