

2 INTRODUCTION

This Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) provides an assessment of the impacts anticipated to result from implementation of the proposed Placer County Government Center (PCGC) Master Plan Update Project (PCGC Master Plan Update or project). The PCGC Master Plan Update proposes an update to the 1993 Master Plan for the PCGC that would establish a long-term vision and ongoing facilities planning guide. The proposed PCGC Master Plan Update would guide capital improvement projects at the PCGC campus over a 20-year planning horizon. As described in Chapter 3, Project Description, the proposed PCGC Master Plan Update includes a campus vision, development context and guiding principles, site and facilities assessment, facilities utilization study, transportation and circulation planning, infrastructure and utilities planning, landscape and open space planning, an economic development study, site and facilities planning, zero net energy and water planning, and a phasing and implementation plan.

In addition to providing a programmatic analysis of the environmental effects associated with implementation of the PCGC Master Plan Update, this EIR provides project-level analysis of two individual development projects that are planned to occur in the first development phase under the proposed Master Plan Update.

2.1 PURPOSE AND INTENDED USE OF THIS EIR

Placer County prepared this Draft EIR in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.), the CEQA Guidelines (14 California Administrative Code Section 15000 et seq.), and Placer County's Environmental Review Ordinance (County Code, Chapter 18). As provided under CEQA, an EIR is a tool for disclosing to the general public, the local community, responsible agencies, trustee agencies, other interested public agencies, and decision-making bodies (e.g., Planning Commission, Board of Supervisors) the potential significant environmental effects (i.e., impacts) resulting from implementation of a project, as well as possible measures to mitigate those significant impacts and alternatives to the proposed project that could avoid significant impacts. In a practical sense, an EIR functions as a method of fact-finding, allowing the lead agency, the public, and other public agencies an opportunity to review and evaluate baseline conditions and project impacts. Accordingly, this Draft EIR provides the primary source of environmental information for the County of Placer (County) and other public agencies to consider when exercising any permitting authority or approval power directly related to implementation of this project. As stated in CEQA Guidelines, Section 15121(a):

An EIR is an informational document which will inform public agency decision-makers and the public generally of the significant environmental effect of the project, identify possible ways to minimize the significant effects, and describe reasonable alternatives to the project. The public agency shall consider the

information in the EIR along with other information which may be presented to the agency.

2.2 TYPE OF EIR

This Draft EIR considers the overall environmental effects from build-out of the proposed PCGC Master Plan Update and presents a more detailed analysis of two individual construction projects within the first implementation phase of the PCGC Master Plan Update. As provided by CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines, the analysis is presented at two levels of detail: a programmatic analysis of the overall PCGC Master Plan Update, and a project-level analysis of the two construction projects. In both cases, the analysis identifies the changes in the physical environment that would result from construction and operation of the project, as required by CEQA Guidelines Section 15168, and is consistent with Section 15151 of the CEQA Guidelines, which states the following:

An EIR should be prepared with a sufficient degree of analysis to provide decision makers with information which enables them to make a decision which intelligently takes account of environmental consequences. An evaluation of the environmental effects of a proposed project need not be exhaustive, but the sufficiency of an EIR is to be reviewed in the light of what is reasonably feasible. Disagreement among experts does not make an EIR inadequate, but the EIR should summarize the main points of disagreement among the experts. The courts have looked not for perfection but for adequacy, completeness, and a good faith effort at full disclosure.

Programmatic Analysis

With respect to the analysis of the overall PCGC Master Plan Update, this EIR is consistent with the description of a Program EIR under CEQA Guidelines Section 15168. Implementation of the PCGC Master Plan Update would entail a “series of actions that can be characterized as one large project” where these actions are related geographically, carried out under the same authorizing authority, and having generally similar environmental effects which can be mitigated in similar ways.” This EIR identifies the environmental setting and regulatory framework under which the proposed PCGC Master Plan Update would be implemented and presents mitigation measures that would be applied to each individual construction project undertaken in implementation of the project to ensure that impacts are reduced to the extent feasible.

Use of a Program EIR to evaluate the ultimate build-out of a phased project is consistent with the direction in CEQA Guidelines Section 15165. Two key advantages to preparing a Program EIR are the ability to comprehensively evaluate cumulative impacts, project alternatives, and mitigation measures, and the ability to streamline environmental review for individual actions that are consistent with the project.

The PCGC Master Plan Update provides for an approximately 20-year planning horizon (with an approximate phasing plan based on four 5-year tiers) for the Placer County Government Center property. The PCGC Master Plan Update proposes to establish a guide for the County to implement facility and infrastructure projects and consider private development proposals within the PCGC campus. While the PCGC Master Plan Update presents a land use plan with conceptual building and hardscape footprints and an approximate phasing plan for build-out of the PCGC campus, specific construction details are not available for most individual projects that may be undertaken within the PCGC Master Plan Update, except for the two individual construction projects within the first implementation phase of the PCGC Master Plan Update as discussed in the following Project-Level Analysis section. Environmental review of future individual construction projects will be necessary before construction, consistent with CEQA Guidelines Sections 15152 and 15168, and with Placer County Environmental Review Code Section 18.20.120.

The County anticipates relying on the programmatic analysis of the proposed PCGC Master Plan Update to guide future environmental review of each individual construction project or phase undertaken as part of implementation of the PCGC Master Plan Update. As provided in CEQA Guidelines Section 15168, future environmental review of projects within the PCGC campus may range from completion of a consistency review to establish that an individual project is consistent with the PCGC Master Plan Update and this EIR, to preparation of a Supplemental or Subsequent EIR, as defined in CEQA Guidelines Sections 15162 and 15163.

Where the analysis in this EIR determines that the project may result in a significant or potentially significant environmental effect, mitigation measures are provided, where feasible, to avoid, reduce, or compensate for those impacts. The mitigation measures identify clear performance standards that the County or other land developer must achieve. The future environmental review of each individual project or phase will begin with a consistency review to determine whether the project meets the land use planning concepts and guidance of the PCGC Master Plan Update, and whether it achieves the applicable performance standards and other mitigation measure requirements established in this EIR. This consistency review will be used to determine the appropriate level of any additional environmental review that may be required under CEQA, consistent with CEQA Guidelines Sections 15168(c) and 15168(d).

Project Level Analysis

In addition to the programmatic analysis of the overall PCGC Master Plan Update, this EIR presents a project-level analysis of two specific development projects within the PCGC Master Plan Update: a new Health and Human Services building and a multifamily residential community located on the east side of 1st Street near B Avenue. Consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15161, the project-level analysis provides a higher level of detail of the physical environmental effects of each of these two individual projects based on conceptual site plans, grading and drainage plans, and proposed

uses. This EIR’s analysis of the proposed Health and Human Services Building and Multifamily Residential project includes consideration of the proposed site layout, building design, construction activities, and likely operational characteristics of each of these two projects, as provided in Chapter 3, Project Description. The analysis also documents each individual project’s specific contribution to the overall environmental impacts of the proposed PCGC Master Plan Update, and the effectiveness of the mitigation measures identified for the PCGC Master Plan Update when applied to the individual projects.

2.3 LEAD, RESPONSIBLE, AND TRUSTEE AGENCIES

The County is the lead agency for the PCGC Master Plan Update because it holds principal responsibility for approving and implementing the project. As required by CEQA, a list of the responsible and trustee agencies is provided in Section 3.5, Discretionary Actions and Use of this EIR. A responsible agency is a public agency other than the lead agency that has discretionary approval over a project. A trustee agency is defined as a state agency that has jurisdiction by law over natural resources that are held in trust for the people of the state.

2.4 ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

This EIR was prepared to meet all of the substantive and procedural requirements of CEQA. As the lead agency, the County has the primary responsibility to conduct the environmental review and to approve or deny the proposed project. The County may rely on this EIR in its consideration of adopting the proposed PCGC Master Plan Update and future actions taken to implement the PCGC Master Plan Update; making findings regarding identified impacts; and, if necessary, adopting a statement of overriding considerations regarding these impacts.

Notice of Preparation and Public Outreach

To initiate the EIR process, the County circulated a Notice of Preparation (NOP) to solicit agency and public comments on the scope of the environmental analysis to be included in the EIR. The public review period for the NOP began on September 7, 2017, and comments were received through October 6, 2017. The NOP was submitted to the County Clerk and the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research State Clearinghouse, and posted on the County’s website for a 30-day public review period.

A public scoping session was held by the County on September 18, 2017. The purposes of this scoping session were to provide the public and governmental agencies with information on the proposed project and the CEQA process, and to give attendees an opportunity to identify environmental issues that should be considered in the EIR. No verbal comments were received from attendees at this meeting, which was held in an open house format where attendees could gather at several information stations that provided information on project land use, biological and historical resources, hydrology, and transportation. Attendees were invited to mail or email

their comment letters to the County during the NOP public review period. The County received 22 comment letters, which included comments from the California Department of Transportation, the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, the Placer County Local Agency Formation Commission, the Placer County Airport Land Use Commission, the Placer County Air Pollution Control District, the Nevada Irrigation District, and several individuals and representatives of local organizations.

In addition, the County has engaged in many public outreach efforts outside of the EIR process. Since the start of the PCGC Master Plan Update process in April 2016, the public outreach process has had a multifaceted approach to informing and gathering feedback from a wide range of community members and stakeholders. The following are examples of the varied approaches the County and its consultant team have used to engage the public.

Community Workshops

Several public open houses were hosted by the County and the master planning consultant team to gather feedback from the community on the draft PCGC Master Plan Update. Three workshops were held; April and August, 2016 and January, 2017.

Board Meetings

The Placer County Board of Supervisors has reviewed and provided direction and feedback on various elements of the draft PCGC Master Plan Update at several Board Meetings since March of 2016. At each of these meetings the public was given an opportunity to see the progress of the project and provide comment.

County Meetings

At various stages of planning over the last two years, the draft PCGC Master Plan Update has been presented at the Placer County Planning Commission, North Auburn Municipal Advisory Group, Foresthill Forum, Meadow Vista Municipal Advisory Council, Weimar/Applegate/Colfax Municipal Advisory Council and the Historical Advisory Board. These meetings provided additional opportunities for the public to see and provide input on the master plan progress.

Community Organization Meetings

Additionally, the County and the master planning consultant team presented project progress at local community organization meetings that were open to the public, including but not limited to the Highway 49 Business Association, Auburn Recreation District, and the Auburn Aviation Association.

County Website and other Media

Early on in the master planning effort, a PCGC Master Plan Update page was created on the Placer County website to provide the public project and meeting information. In addition, a short video was produced and posted to the website and YouTube to provide the public background information on the history of the government center and the process for planning for its future development. This video was widely distributed and shared at many of the public meetings listed above. In addition, over the last several years, the draft PCGC Master Plan Update has also been covered in local and regional newspaper outlets, along with their associated websites, and public radio. In addition, a master email contact list was developed and used to distribute PCGC Master Plan Update project and meeting announcement information to interested community members

Draft EIR

This Draft EIR is subject to a 45-day public review period. In accordance with Section 15087 of the CEQA Guidelines, the County published a Notice of Availability of the Draft EIR at the same time it submitted a Notice of Completion and copies of the Draft EIR to the State Clearinghouse to initiate the public review period. Comments on the adequacy of the Draft EIR and the County's compliance with CEQA may be submitted in writing to the County, as lead agency, prior to the end of the public review period for the Draft EIR. During the public review period, the County's Planning Commission will hold a public workshop to receive public comments on the Draft EIR.

Final EIR

Following the close of the public review period for the Draft EIR, the County will prepare a Final EIR, which will include written responses to all comments received during the Draft EIR public review period. The Final EIR will consist of the Draft EIR (showing any changes in ~~strikeout~~/underline), comments received during the public review period, and responses to those comments. The Final EIR must be certified before it can be used as the basis for decision making.

Findings and Statement of Overriding Considerations

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15091, no public agency can approve or carry out a project for which a certified EIR identifies one or more significant effects unless the public agency makes one or more of the following findings, which must be supported by substantial evidence in the record:

- Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the Final EIR.

- Such changes or alterations are within the responsibility and jurisdiction of another public agency and not the agency making the finding. Such changes have been adopted by such other agency or can and should be adopted by such other agency.
- Specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations make the mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR unfeasible.

CEQA requires that the findings be provided in writing and must include a brief explanation of the rationale for applying a specific finding to each of the significant impacts identified in the EIR. Further, CEQA Guidelines Section 15093 requires that if the decision-making agency intends to approve a project that will result in significant impacts that cannot be “avoided or substantially lessened, the agency shall state in writing the specific reasons to support its action,” recognizing that there may be “specific economic, legal, social, technological or other benefits” of a proposed project that outweigh a project’s unavoidable adverse environmental effects. This Statement of Overriding Considerations must be separate from the findings required under CEQA Guidelines Section 15091.

Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program

Pursuant to Section 15097 of the CEQA Guidelines, if the County Board of Supervisors approves the proposed project, the County must adopt a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) that encompasses each of the mitigation measures presented in the EIR. The purpose of the MMRP is to ensure compliance with required mitigation during implementation of the project. An MMRP defines the requirements for monitoring and reporting for revisions to the project and for compliance with conditions of approval that the lead agency has required as mitigation to lessen or avoid significant environmental effects. The project’s MMRP will be prepared concurrently with the Final EIR. In addition, the County will rely on a variety of permit processes when conducting ongoing monitoring to ensure compliance with these permits and the mitigation measures throughout implementation of the PCGC Master Plan Update. These permits and processes include the following:

- Design/Site Review Committee Approval
- Improvement Plan Approval
- Improvement Construction Inspection
- Encroachment Permit
- Grading Permit Approval
- Building Permit Approval
- Certification of Occupancy

2.5 DOCUMENT ORGANIZATION

This EIR was designed for easy use and reference. Following is a brief summary of the contents of each chapter of this EIR:

- **Executive Summary (Chapter 1)** – Includes a summary of the project components and a table of project impacts and mitigation measures.
- **Introduction (Chapter 2)** – Provides a description of this EIR, including its purpose, intended use, type, scope, and standards for adequacy; identifies lead, responsible, and trustee agencies; describes the environmental review process; and summarizes how the document is organized.
- **Project Description (Chapter 3)** – Includes a discussion of the project site; a statement of project objectives; a general description of the project site’s environmental characteristics, including proposed plans for development; and the required agency approvals.
- **Environmental Analysis (Chapters 4 through 19)** – Includes a topic-by-topic analysis of baseline environmental conditions without the project, and impacts that would or could result from development of the project. It also identifies potentially feasible mitigation measures that, if adopted, would reduce the level of significance of the environmental impacts. The results of field visits and data collection, and the findings of technical reports are included as part of the analysis.
- **Project Alternatives (Chapter 20)** – Includes an assessment of alternative methods for accomplishing most of the basic objectives of the proposed project while avoiding or substantially lessening at least one significant impact of the project. This assessment provides information for decision makers to make a reasoned choice among potentially feasible alternatives based on comparing the impacts of the alternatives to the impacts of the proposed project.
- **Other CEQA Considerations (Chapter 21)** – Includes a discussion of additional issues required by CEQA, including significant unavoidable adverse impacts, irreversible environmental changes, and growth inducement. The analysis of cumulative impacts is included in the technical analysis contained in Chapters 5 through 19.
- **List of EIR Preparers (Chapter 22)** – Lists the organizations and individuals involved in preparation of the EIR.
- **Appendices** – Contains reference items and technical reports that support and provide documentation for the analysis presented in the EIR.