

# 1 INTRODUCTION

This draft subsequent environmental impact report (Draft SEIR) evaluates the environmental impacts of the proposed City of Folsom 2035 General Plan Amendments for Increased Residential Capacity Project (project). This Draft SEIR has been prepared under the direction of City of Folsom (City) in accordance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 21000 et seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines to determine if the project would result in new or substantially more severe impacts than those identified in the EIR prepared for the 2035 General Plan. This chapter of the Draft SEIR provides information on:

- ▶ the project requiring environmental analysis (synopsis);
- ▶ the type, purpose, and intended uses of the Draft SEIR;
- ▶ the scope of this Draft SEIR;
- ▶ the agency roles and responsibilities;
- ▶ the public review process;
- ▶ the organization of the Draft SEIR; and
- ▶ the standard terminology.

## 1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

The City, acting as the lead agency, has prepared this Draft SEIR to provide the public and responsible and trustee agencies with information about the potential environmental effects of the proposed project. As described in State CEQA Guidelines Section 15121(a), an EIR is a public informational document that assesses potential environmental effects of the proposed project and identifies mitigation measures and alternatives to the proposed project that could reduce or avoid its adverse environmental impacts. Public agencies are charged with the duty to consider and minimize environmental impacts of proposed land use plans and development where feasible and are obligated to balance a variety of public objectives, including economic, environmental, and social factors.

## 1.2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The following provides a brief summary and overview of the 2035 General Plan Amendments for Increased Residential Capacity Project. Chapter 2, "Project Description," of this SEIR includes a detailed description of the project, including maps and graphics:

The project would:

- ▶ Amend the 2035 General Plan and Zoning Code to increase the minimum density and maximum floor area ratio (FAR) standards for the East Bidwell Corridor Mixed-Use Overlay and establish a new Transit Oriented Development Overlay for the areas surrounding Iron Point and Glenn Stations,
- ▶ Amend the Folsom Plan Area Specific Plan to allow increased residential development,
- ▶ Amend the Town Center District overlay zoning designation in the Folsom Plan Area to allow for increased residential capacities and FAR,
- ▶ Through these actions, to create capacity for up to 6,046 additional residential units in the City.

## 1.3 PURPOSE AND INTENDED USES OF THIS DRAFT SEIR

Pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15162, an SEIR should be prepared if an EIR has been certified for a project, but one or more of the following conditions are met.

- (1) Substantial changes are proposed in the project which will require major revisions of the previous EIR or negative declaration due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects;
- (2) Substantial changes occur with respect to the circumstances under which the project is undertaken which will require major revisions of the previous EIR or Negative Declaration due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects; or
- (3) New information of substantial importance, which was not known and could not have been known with the exercise of reasonable diligence at the time the previous EIR was certified as complete or the Negative Declaration was adopted, shows any of the following:
  - A. The project will have one or more significant effects not discussed in the previous EIR or negative declaration.
  - B. Significant effects previously examined will be substantially more severe than shown in the previous EIR;
  - C. Mitigation measures or alternatives previously found not to be feasible would in fact be feasible, and would substantially reduce one or more significant effects of the project, but the project proponents decline to adopt the mitigation measure or alternative; or
  - D. Mitigation measures or alternatives which are considerably different from those analyzed in the previous EIR would substantially reduce one or more significant effects on the environment, but the project proponents decline to adopt the mitigation measure or alternative.

The City certified the City of Folsom 2035 General Plan Update Final EIR (General Plan EIR) and adopted the General Plan in August 2018. The General Plan was amended in August 2021 for the Housing Element Update. This project represents an update to the adopted 2035 General Plan. Because the project proposes changes to the land uses evaluated in the General Plan EIR that could involve new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects, the City has determined that the preparation of a SEIR is the appropriate environmental review document for the project, pursuant to the requirements of State CEQA Guidelines Section 15162.

It should be noted that a portion of the project is located in the Folsom Plan Area Specific Plan (FPASP) south of Highway 50. The City adopted the FPASP and certified the Final EIR/Environmental Impact Study (EIS) (FPASP EIR/EIS) in June 2011. The 2035 General Plan and its EIR incorporated the FPASP and its policies and impact analysis. Although this SEIR is based on the analysis in the 2035 General Plan EIR, the SEIR also evaluates the project in light of the impact analysis provided in the FPASP EIS/EIS.

The General Plan, Draft EIR, Final EIR, and Addendum are available for review through the City and online at the following location: <https://www.folsom.ca.us/government/community-development/planning-services/general-plan>.

An EIR is a public informational document used in the planning and decision-making process. An EIR assesses the environmental effects related to the planning, construction, and operation of a project and indicates ways to reduce or avoid significant environmental impacts. An EIR also discloses significant environmental impacts that cannot be avoided; any growth-inducing impacts of a project; effects found not to be significant; and significant cumulative impacts of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects in combination with the impacts of the project.

Mitigation has been recommended to the extent feasible to reduce or avoid the project's significant impacts. Adopted mitigation measures from the 2035 General Plan EIR and/or FPASP EIR/EIS that apply to the project are identified. As an informational document for decision makers, a Draft SEIR is not intended to recommend either approval or denial of a project. CEQA requires the decision makers to balance the benefits of a project against its unavoidable environmental impacts. If environmental impacts of the project are identified as significant and unavoidable (i.e., no feasible mitigation is available to reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level), the City may

still approve the project if it believes that social, economic, or other benefits outweigh the unavoidable impacts. The City would then be required to make findings and state, in writing, the specific reasons for approving the project, based on information in the Draft SEIR and other information in the administrative record. In accordance with Section 15093 of the State CEQA Guidelines, the document containing such reasons is called a “statement of overriding considerations.”

The program-level analysis in this SEIR considers the broad environmental effects of the project consistent with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15168. This SEIR will be used to evaluate subsequent projects and activities under the project. This SEIR is intended to provide the information and environmental analysis necessary to assist public agency decision-makers in considering approval of the project. Additional environmental review under CEQA may be required for subsequent projects and would be generally based on the subsequent project’s consistency with the project and the analysis in this SEIR, as required under CEQA. It may be determined that some future projects or activities under the project may be exempt from further environmental review. When subsequent projects or activities under the project are proposed, the City will examine the projects or activities to determine whether their effects were adequately analyzed in the 2035 General Plan EIR, FPASP EIR/EIS, and this SEIR (CEQA Guidelines Section 15168(c)). If the projects or activities would have no effects beyond those disclosed in this SEIR, no further CEQA compliance would be required.

## 1.4 RELATIONSHIP TO THE CITY OF FOLSOM 2035 GENERAL PLAN

The City adopted its 2035 General Plan on August 2, 2018, pursuant to Government Code Section 65300. The General Plan acts as the official policy statement of the City and guides public and private development within the City in a manner that maximizes the social and economic benefits for all citizens. In addition, the General Plan also provides policy direction that guides land use development within the City, as well as provides protection for existing natural resources. As noted above, the 2035 General Plan incorporated the FPASP.

Previous environmental review for the General Plan was included in the *City of Folsom 2035 General Plan Draft and Final EIR* (General Plan EIR) (State Clearinghouse Number 2017082054). It should be noted that since adoption of the City’s General Plan in 2018, the General Plan was amended on August 24, 2021 with the adoption of the Housing Element Update. The General Plan EIR analyzed the General Plan based on the adopted General Plan land use designations. A Statement of Overriding Considerations was adopted for the impacts that were identified as significant and unavoidable.

## 1.5 SCOPE OF THIS DRAFT SEIR

This Draft SEIR includes an evaluation of the following 11 environmental issue areas as well as other CEQA-mandated issues (e.g., cumulative impacts, growth-inducing impacts, significant unavoidable impacts, alternatives):

- ▶ aesthetics,
- ▶ air quality,
- ▶ cultural and tribal cultural resources,
- ▶ energy,
- ▶ greenhouse gas emissions and climate change,
- ▶ land use and planning,
- ▶ noise and vibration,
- ▶ population and housing,
- ▶ public services,
- ▶ recreation,
- ▶ transportation, and
- ▶ utilities and service systems.

Under the CEQA statutes and the State CEQA Guidelines, a lead agency may limit an EIR’s discussion of environmental effects when such effects are not considered potentially significant (PRC Section 21002.1[e]; State CEQA Guidelines Sections 15128, 15143). Information used to determine which impacts would be potentially significant was derived from review of the project; review of applicable planning documents and CEQA documentation; field work; feedback from public and agency consultation; comments received during a public

scoping meeting held on August 17, 2023; and comments received on the Notice of Preparation (NOP) (see Appendix A of this Draft SEIR).

The NOP was distributed on July 24, 2023, to responsible agencies, interested parties, and organizations, as well as private organizations and individuals that may have an interest in the project. The purpose of the NOP and the scoping meeting was to provide notification that an EIR for the project was being prepared and to solicit input on the scope and content of the environmental document. The City provided a virtual scoping meeting on August 17, 2023. The scoping meeting introduced the project, outlined the CEQA process, and provided a method for directly submitting comments on the scope of the EIR. Comments were also received in writing via postal service and email.

As a result of the review of existing information and the scoping process, it was determined that each of the issue areas listed above should be evaluated fully in this Draft SEIR. Further information on the NOP and scoping process is provided below in Section 1.7, "Public Review Process."

## 1.6 AGENCY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### 1.6.1 Lead Agency

The City is the lead agency responsible for approving the project and for ensuring that the requirements of CEQA have been met. After the SEIR public review process is complete, the City Council will determine whether to certify the SEIR (see State CEQA Guidelines Sections 15090) and approve the project.

### 1.6.2 Trustee and Responsible Agencies

A trustee agency is a State agency that has jurisdiction by law over natural resources that are held in trust for the people of the State of California. The only trustee agency that has jurisdiction over resources potentially affected by the project is the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW).

Responsible agencies are public agencies, other than the lead agency, that have discretionary-approval responsibility for reviewing, carrying out, or approving elements of a project. Responsible agencies should participate in the lead agency's CEQA process, review the lead agency's CEQA document, and use the document when making a decision on project elements.

There are no agencies other than the City that have approval or permitting authority for the project. However, implementation of the proposed project could involve many responsible agencies, depending on the details of a future project. The following are some of the agencies that could be required to act as responsible agencies for subsequent projects under the 2035 General Plan Amendments for Increased Residential Capacity Project:

- ▶ CDFW,
- ▶ California Department of Transportation
- ▶ Sacramento Area Sewer District and Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District,
- ▶ Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District, and
- ▶ Sacramento Municipal Utility District.

## 1.7 PUBLIC REVIEW PROCESS

As identified above in Section 1.5, "Scope of this Draft SEIR," in accordance with CEQA regulations, a NOP was distributed on July 24, 2023, to responsible agencies, interested parties and organizations, and private organizations and individuals that could have interest in the project.

The purpose of the NOP was to provide notification that an EIR for the 2035 General Plan Amendments for Increased Residential Capacity Project was being prepared and to solicit input on the scope and content of the document. The NOP and responses to the NOP are included in Appendix A of this Draft SEIR.

This Draft SEIR is being circulated for public review and comment for a period of 45 days. During this period, comments from the general public as well as organizations and agencies on environmental issues may be submitted to the lead agency.

Upon completion of the public review and comment period, a Final SEIR will be prepared that will include both written and oral comments on the Draft SEIR received during the public review period, responses to those comments, and any revisions to the Draft SEIR made in response to public comments. The Draft SEIR and Final SEIR together will make up the SEIR for the project.

Before adopting the project, the lead agency, is required to certify that the SEIR has been completed in compliance with CEQA, that the decision-making body reviewed and considered the information in the SEIR, and that the SEIR reflects the independent judgment of the lead agency.

## 1.8 DRAFT SEIR ORGANIZATION

This Draft SEIR is organized into chapters, as identified and briefly described below. Chapters are further divided into sections (e.g., Chapter 3, "Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures" and Section 3.4, "Energy"):

- ▶ **The "Executive Summary":** This chapter introduces the project; provides a summary of the environmental review process, effects found not to be significant, and key environmental issues; and lists significant impacts and mitigation measures to reduce significant impacts to a less-than-significant level.
- ▶ **Chapter 1, "Introduction":** This chapter provides a synopsis of the project; a description of the type, purpose, and intended uses of this Draft SEIR; a description of the scope of this SEIR; a description of the lead and responsible agencies; a summary of the public review process; and a description of the organization of this SEIR; and definitions of standard terminology used in this SEIR.
- ▶ **Chapter 2, "Project Description":** This chapter describes the location, background, and goals and objectives for the project, and describes the project elements in detail.
- ▶ **Chapter 3, "Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures":** The sections in this chapter evaluate the expected environmental impacts generated by the project, arranged by subject area (e.g., land use, hydrology and water quality). In each subsection of Chapter 3, the regulatory background, existing conditions, analysis methodology, and thresholds of significance are described. The anticipated changes to the existing conditions after development of the project are then evaluated for each subject area. For any significant or potentially significant impact that would result from project implementation, mitigation measures are presented and the level of impact significance after mitigation is identified. Environmental impacts are numbered sequentially within each section (e.g., Impact 3.2-1, Impact 3.2-2, etc.). Any required mitigation measures are numbered to correspond to the impact numbering; therefore, the mitigation measure for Impact 3.2-2 would be Mitigation Measure 3.2-2.
- ▶ **Chapter 4, "Cumulative Impacts":** This chapter provides information required by CEQA regarding cumulative impacts that would result from implementation of the project, as well as other past, present, and probable future projects.
- ▶ **Chapter 5, "Alternatives":** This chapter evaluates alternatives to the project, including alternatives considered but eliminated from further consideration, the No Project Alternative, and two alternative development options. The environmentally superior alternative is identified.
- ▶ **Chapter 6, "Other CEQA Sections":** This chapter evaluates growth-inducing impacts and irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources, and discloses any significant and unavoidable adverse impacts.
- ▶ **Chapter 7, "Report Preparers":** This chapter identifies the preparers of the document.

- ▶ **Chapter 8, "References":** This chapter identifies the organizations and persons consulted during preparation of this Draft SEIR and the documents and individuals used as sources for the analysis.

## 1.9 STANDARD TERMINOLOGY

This Draft SEIR uses the following standard terminology:

- ▶ "No impact" means no change from existing conditions (no mitigation is needed).
- ▶ "Less-than-significant impact" means no substantial adverse change in the physical environment (no mitigation is needed).
- ▶ "Potentially significant impact" means a substantial adverse change in the environment that might occur (mitigation is recommended because potentially significant impacts are treated as significant).
- ▶ "Significant impact" means a substantial adverse change in the physical environment that would occur (mitigation is recommended).
- ▶ "Significant and unavoidable impact" means a substantial adverse change in the physical environment that would occur and that cannot be avoided, even with the implementation of all feasible mitigation.