
I. INTRODUCTION

A. INTRODUCTION TO THE REVISED DRAFT EIR

In accordance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines (California Public Resources Code §§21000 et seq., California Code of Regulations, §§15000 et seq.), a Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) for the proposed Healdsburg 2030 General Plan (hereinafter “proposed Project” or “proposed General Plan”) was prepared and circulated for public review in February 2008 (SCH No. 2007082030). Although comments were received on the Draft EIR, before a Final EIR could be prepared addressing these comments, it was determined that certain land uses and data should be revised and that additional work was needed on assessing and quantifying the proposed General Plan’s potential greenhouse gas impacts as related to climate change.

While the General Plan and its Draft EIR were in process, the City prepared and certified an EIR in connection with the approval of the Saggio Hills project (SCH No. 2003062025), which involves the development of 258 acres in Sub-Area C with a 130 room resort hotel, 70 resort residences, a community park, a fire substation and land dedicated to the City of Healdsburg for the construction of up to 150 affordable housing units. The February 2008 General Plan Draft EIR evaluated the potential land use uses for the Saggio Hills project site that would have been allowed by the General Plan land use designations in effect at that time, namely 574 single-family units. Because of the subsequent Saggio Hill project approval and its effect on calculations involved in General Plan 2030 buildout projections, this Healdsburg 2030 General Plan Revised Draft EIR ("Revised Draft EIR") has been prepared to reflect (1) General Plan buildout with the Saggio Hills project; (2) the amendment to the General Plan Land Use Map approved for Saggio Hills (see Figure III-5 in Section III); and (3) the environmental analysis included in the certified Saggio Hills EIR.

Other significant revisions to the Draft EIR include the quantification of the proposed General Plan’s greenhouse gas emissions and further analysis of the effects of General Plan buildout on these emissions (see, e.g., Section IV.D). Corrections have also been made to remove minor internal inconsistencies in the evaluation of significant and unavoidable impacts and the characterization of those impacts in the prior General Plan Draft EIR.

A detailed description of the proposed Healdsburg 2030 General Plan is contained in Section III (Project Description) of this Revised Draft EIR.

The Lead Agency for the proposed Project is the City of Healdsburg, located at 401 Grove Street, Healdsburg, California, 95448.

Because the proposed Project will require approval of certain discretionary actions by the City of Healdsburg and other governmental agencies, the proposed Project is subject to the California Environmental Quality Act. The City determined an EIR should be prepared for the proposed General Plan because it could have a significant effect on the environment.

B. PURPOSE OF THE EIR

The City has commissioned this EIR on the proposed General Plan for the following purposes:

- To satisfy CEQA requirements.
- To inform the general public, the local community, and responsible, trustee, and state and federal agencies of the nature of the proposed General Plan, its potentially significant environmental effects, feasible policies and mitigation measures to mitigate those effects, and reasonable and feasible alternatives.
- To enable the City to consider the environmental consequences of approving the proposed Project.
- For consideration by responsible agencies in issuing permits and approvals for the proposed Project.

As described in Sections 15121 (a) and 15362 of the CEQA Guidelines, an EIR is an informational document that will inform public agency decision makers and the public of the significant environmental effects of a project, identify possible ways to minimize the significant effects, and describe reasonable alternatives to a project. The purpose of this EIR, therefore, is to focus the discussion on those potential effects on the environment of the proposed Project that the Lead Agency has determined are or may be significant. In addition, feasible policies and/or mitigation measures are required, when applicable, that could reduce significant impacts to less-than-significant levels.

The Lead Agency is required to consider the information in the EIR, along with any other relevant information, in making its decision on the proposed Project. Although the EIR does not determine the ultimate decision that will be made regarding implementation of the proposed Project, CEQA requires the City to consider the information in the EIR and make findings regarding each significant effect of the proposed Project.

This Revised Draft EIR was prepared in accordance with Section 15151 of the CEQA Guidelines, which defines the standards for EIR adequacy:

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 would 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.

C. PROPOSED PROJECT

The proposed General Plan is a proposed comprehensive revision and update of the Healdsburg General Plan as amended through September 15, 2008. The proposed General Plan includes the following nine elements: Land Use, Economic Development, Transportation, Public Services, Natural Resources, Safety, Community Design, Historic and Cultural Resources, and Administration and Implementation.

Proposed revisions to the current General Plan include revising the Land Use Map and the General Plan Policy Document and Background Report. Revisions to the General Plan Land Use Map include deletions and additions of designations to reflect changes in the proposed General Plan Policy Document as well as the reclassification of some parcels. Revisions to the current General Plan policies and implementation programs generally fall into several categories, such as minor rewording, revisions to reflect changed conditions, changes to allowable uses and density, additions and deletions of land use designations, additions of performance standards, and additions and deletions of policies.

No changes have been made to the current General Plan's Housing Element as part of the proposed Project. The Housing Element will be revised in 2009 in concert with the revision cycle established by state law.

The Revised Draft EIR Project Description has been modified to include the Saggio Hills project as approved by the City Council on September 15, 2008 and October 8, 2008. With the amendments to land uses made by the Saggio Hills approval, General Plan buildout will include fewer residential units, more commercial square footage and more hotel units than envisioned by the proposed General Plan studied in the original February 2008 Draft EIR. Industrial square footage is unchanged from the prior Draft EIR.

D. TYPE OF EIR

The proposed General Plan governs the anticipated future development for the City. Its adoption does not constitute a commitment to any specific project, construction schedule, or funding priority. Each project undertaken during the planning horizon of the proposed General Plan must be approved individually by the City, in compliance with CEQA. Therefore, this proposed General Plan is a First Tier/Program EIR that evaluates the effects of the entire proposed General Plan at a program level.

Section 15168(a) of the CEQA Guidelines defines a Program EIR as an EIR which may be prepared on a series of actions that can be characterized as one large project and are related either: 1) geographically; 2) as logical parts in the chain of contemplated actions; 3) in connection with the issuance of rules, regulations, plans, or other general criteria to govern the conduct of a continuing program; or 4) as individual activities carried out under the same authorizing statutory or regulatory authority and having generally similar environmental effects which can be mitigated in similar ways.

Section 15168(b) of the CEQA Guidelines indicates that use of a Program EIR can provide the following advantages. The Program EIR can:

1. Provide an occasion for a more exhaustive consideration of effects and alternatives than would be practical in an EIR on an individual action;
2. Ensure consideration of cumulative impacts that might be slighted in a case-by-case analysis;
3. Avoid duplicative reconsideration of basic policy considerations;
4. Allow the Lead Agency to consider broad policy alternatives and program-wide mitigation measures at an early time when the agency has greater flexibility to deal with basic problems or cumulative impacts; and
5. Allow reduction in paperwork.

With respect to other development projects that may be proposed during the proposed General Plan planning horizon, CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines state that subsequent projects should be examined in light of the Program EIR to determine whether additional environmental documentation must be prepared. If no new significant effects would occur, all significant effects have been adequately addressed and no new mitigation measures would be required, the subsequent projects within the scope of the proposed General Plan could rely on the environmental analysis provided in the Program EIR, and no additional environmental documentation must be prepared. The subsequent documents may also rely on the Program EIR, as appropriate, for general discussions and for the analysis and cumulative impacts, but would be tiered to allow the subsequent documents to focus on more project- and site-specific impacts. In either case, CEQA findings must be made for subsequent projects.

E. EIR REVIEW PROCESS

Notice of Preparation

Comments from identified responsible and trustee agencies, as well as interested parties on the scope of the EIR, were solicited through a Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an EIR process. The NOP for the EIR was circulated for a 30-day review period between August 3, 2007 to September 3, 2007. A public scoping meeting was also held on Tuesday, August 28, 2007 at Healdsburg City Hall to solicit input from agencies, individuals, and organizations. A copy of the NOP is included in Appendix A. Comments submitted in response to the NOP and made at the EIR public scoping meeting are included in Appendix B.

The physical conditions that existed at the end of the scoping period (September 3, 2007) are the baseline that was used for assessing potential environmental impacts, unless otherwise noted. An exception is provided in the case of the Saggio Hills project, which was approved by the City Council in September and October 2008. Because of its size and significance to the long-term development of the community, this Revised Draft EIR includes this project in its analyses.

Environmental Review Process

The initial Draft EIR was circulated for review and comment by the public and other interested parties, agencies, and organizations. The Draft EIR comment period began on February 20, 2008 and ended on April 22, 2008. During the public review, the Healdsburg Planning Commission held a public meeting on April 22, 2008 for interested public and agencies. The City received five comment letters on the Draft EIR during and after the 45-day public review period. However, prior to the preparation of the Final EIR, the City modified the proposed Project as described above.

The City has chosen to recirculate the complete Revised Draft EIR for review and comment by the public and other interested parties. Therefore, pursuant to 14 California Code of Regulations, Section 15000 *et seq.* ("CEQA Guidelines") Section 15088(f)(1), the City will prepare responses to comments for the Final EIR only regarding comments received in response to the Revised Draft EIR, and not to prior comments. Therefore, parties who may have submitted earlier comments should resubmit them during the public comment period for the Revised Draft EIR, to the extent they are still pertinent in light of changes to the Revised Draft EIR. All comments or questions about the Revised Draft EIR should be addressed to:

City of Healdsburg
Planning and Building Department
ATTN: Rick Tooker, Director
401 Grove Street
Healdsburg, CA 95448

Final EIR

Following the close of the comment period on the Revised Draft EIR, responses to all comments that raised significant environmental issues regarding the proposed Project will be prepared for publication in the Final EIR. The Revised Draft EIR and Final EIR will together make up the General Plan EIR, which will be considered for certification at public meetings of the Planning Commission and City Council. The General Plan EIR must be certified by the City Council before the General Plan can be adopted.

CEQA Findings

Implementation of the proposed Project has the potential to cause impacts on the environment in several areas. Impacts were found to be significant and unavoidable in the following areas, as no mitigation measures are available to reduce the impacts to a level of insignificance:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Noise
- Traffic/Circulation

Impacts to the following areas would be less than significant as a result of the policies included in the proposed General Plan; therefore no mitigation measures are required:

- Agricultural Resources
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology/Soils
- Hazards & Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology & Water Quality
- Land Use & Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Population & Housing
- Public Services
- Utilities

Mitigation Monitoring

CEQA states that no public agency shall approve or carry out a project for which an EIR has been certified which identifies one or more significant effects on the environment unless changes or alterations have been incorporated into the project which mitigate or avoid the significant impacts on the environment. The public agency must adopt a reporting or monitoring program for those measures that it has adopted or made a condition of Project approval in order to mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment. The Project does not require any mitigation measures, as all mitigation has been incorporated into the proposed Project. Therefore, a mitigation monitoring program (MMP) for the EIR is not required to be adopted at the time of Project approval.

F. ALTERNATIVES

Section 15126.6 of the CEQA Guidelines requires that an EIR describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the proposed Project that could feasibly attain the basic objectives of the proposed General Plan and avoid and/or lessen the significant environmental effects of the proposed General Plan. Feasible alternatives to the proposed Project are evaluated in Section VI (Alternatives to the Proposed Project). Five alternatives are analyzed, including the No Project/Existing General Plan Buildout, Quaker Hill Alternative, Chiquita Road Alternative, Nu Forest Products Alternative, and the Reduced Sphere of Influence Alternative. The Revised Draft EIR describes how alternatives to the proposed Project would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the proposed Project, and evaluates the comparative merits of the alternatives.

G. LEVELS OF SIGNIFICANCE

This Revised Draft EIR uses a variety of terms to describe the levels of significance of adverse impacts identified during the course of the environmental analysis. The criteria used to define significant effects on the environment are expressed as thresholds above which the proposed Project would have a significant effect. Thresholds may be quantitative or qualitative; they may be based on agency or professional standards or on legislative or regulatory requirements that are relevant to the impact analysis. Generally, however, thresholds of significance are derived from Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, as amended. The following are definitions of terms used in this Revised Draft EIR:

- **Less-than-significant impact:** Impacts that are adverse, but that do not exceed the specified standards of significance.
- **Potentially significant impact:** Significant impacts that may ultimately be determined to be less than significant; the level of significance may be reduced in the future through further definition of the Project detail. Potentially significant impacts may also be impacts about which there is not enough information to draw a final conclusion; however, for the purpose of this EIR, they are considered significant. Such impacts are equivalent to significant impacts and require the identification of policies and/or feasible mitigation measures.
- **Significant impact:** Impacts that exceed the defined standards of significance but can be eliminated or reduced to a less-than-significant level through the implementation of policies and/or feasible mitigation measures.
- **Significant and unavoidable impact:** Impacts that exceed the defined standards of significance and that cannot be eliminated or reduced to a less-than-significant level through the implementation of policies and/or feasible mitigation measures.

H. ORGANIZATION OF THE REVISED DRAFT EIR

This Revised Draft EIR is organized into seven sections as follows:

Section I (Introduction) - This section provides an introduction and a description of the intended uses of the EIR and the review and certification process.

Section II (Summary) - This section includes a summary of the project description, environmental impacts that would result from implementation of the proposed General Plan, proposed mitigation measures, and the level of significance of each impact before and after mitigation.

Section III (Project Description) - A complete description of the proposed Project including Project location, Project characteristics, and Project objectives is presented. This section also provides an overview of the study area's regional and local setting and history and background of Healdsburg's General Plan.

Section IV (Environmental Impact Analysis) - This section is the primary focus of this Revised Draft EIR. Each environmental issue contains a discussion of existing conditions for the project area, an

assessment and discussion of the significance of impacts associated with the proposed General Plan, proposed policies and mitigation measures, cumulative impacts, and level of impact significance after mitigation.

Section V (General Impact Categories) - This section provides a discussion of the potential growth inducement of the proposed Project as well as a summary of any significant unavoidable impacts associated with the proposed General Plan.

Section VI (Alternatives) - This section includes an analysis of a range of reasonable alternatives to the proposed General Plan to provide informed decision making in accordance with Section 15126(f) of the CEQA Guidelines.

Section VII (Preparers of the EIR and Persons Consulted) - This section presents a list of Lead Agency, other agencies and consultant team members that contributed to the preparation of the Revised Draft EIR. This section also identifies persons consulted during preparation of the Revised Draft EIR.

Section VIII (References) - This section presents a list of references used during preparation of the Revised Draft EIR.