

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND REGULATORY GUIDANCE

This document is an Initial Study (IS) prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the proposed Heritage Falls project (hereafter referred to as “the proposed project”). This IS has been prepared in accordance with the CEQA, Public Resources Code Sections 21000 et seq., and the State CEQA Guidelines.

An Initial Study is conducted by a lead agency to determine if a project may have a significant effect on the environment. In accordance with the CEQA Guidelines, Section 15064, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) must be prepared if the Initial Study indicates that the proposed project under review may have a potentially significant impact on the environment. A negative declaration may be prepared instead, if the lead agency prepares a written statement describing the reasons why a proposed project would not have a significant effect on the environment, and, therefore, why it does not require the preparation of an EIR (CEQA Guidelines Section 15371). According to CEQA Guidelines Section 15070, a negative declaration shall be prepared for a project subject to CEQA when either:

- (a) *The Initial Study shows there is no substantial evidence, in light of the whole record before the agency, that the proposed project may have a significant effect on the environment, or*
- (b) *The Initial Study identified potentially significant effects, but:*
 - (1) *Revisions in the project plans or proposals made by or agreed to by the applicant before the proposed negative declaration is released for public review would avoid the effects or mitigate the effects to a point where clearly no significant effects would occur, and*
 - (2) *There is no substantial evidence, in light of the whole record before the agency, that the proposed project as revised may have a significant effect on the environment.*

If revisions are adopted into the proposed project in accordance with the CEQA Guidelines Section 15070(b), a Mitigated Negative Declaration is prepared.

1.2 LEAD AGENCY

The lead agency is the public agency with primary responsibility over a proposed project. Where two or more public agencies will be involved with a project, State CEQA Guidelines Section 15051 provides criteria for identifying the lead agency. State CEQA Guidelines 15051(b) states:

- (b) If the project is to be carried out by a nongovernmental person or entity, the lead agency shall be the public agency with the greatest responsibility for supervising or approving the project as a whole.
 - (1) The lead agency will normally be the agency with the general governmental powers, such as a city or county, rather than an agency with a single or limited purpose such as an air pollution control district or a district which will provide public service or public utility to the project.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

As the proposed project is to be carried out by a private construction company and as the City of Rancho Cordova has general governmental powers over the proposed project, the lead agency for the proposed project is the City of Rancho Cordova.

1.3 PURPOSE AND ORGANIZATION OF THE DOCUMENT

The purpose of this Initial Study is to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project.

This document is divided into the following sections:

- **1.0 Introduction** - Provides an introduction and describes the purpose and organization of this document.
- **2.0 Project Description** - Provides a detailed description of the proposed project.
- **3.0 Initial Study Checklist** - Describes the environmental setting for each of the environmental subject areas (as described in Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines), evaluates a range of impacts classified as “no impact,” “less than significant,” or “potentially significant” in response to the environmental checklist.
- **4.0 Determination** - Provides the environmental determination for the project.
- **5.0 Report Preparation and Consultations** - Identifies staff and consultants responsible for preparation of this document.
- **6.0 References** – Provides a list of references used to prepare the Initial Study.

1.4 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK AND ASSUMPTIONS

The City of Rancho Cordova was incorporated July 1, 2003. At that time, the City adopted Sacramento County’s General Plan by reference until the formal adoption of its own General Plan. The City adopted the General Plan on June 26, 2006 and certified the Environmental Impact Report for the General Plan as adequate and complete at that time. The proposed project is subject to the policies and designations of the City of Rancho Cordova General Plan (hereafter referred to as the General Plan). Earlier draft versions of the General Plan are no longer valid and were not considered when determining the proposed project’s consistency with City Policies.