

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND REGULATORY GUIDANCE

This document is a Subsequent Mitigated Negative Declaration (SMND) prepared pursuant to the Public Resources Code Section 21157.5 and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines section 15162(b) for the proposed North Douglas project. This Subsequent MND has been prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Public Resources Code Sections 21000 *et seq.*, and the State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15162.

An initial study is prepared by a lead agency to determine if a project may have a significant effect on the environment. In accordance with the State 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. 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), a Mitigated Negative Declaration may be prepared instead.

When a Mitigated Negative Declaration already has been adopted for a project, State CEQA Guidelines Sections 15162 set forth the criteria for determining whether a subsequent MND may be prepared in support of further agency action on the project. Under these Guidelines, a subsequent MND shall be prepared if any of the following three criteria are met:

- (a) *When an EIR has been certified or negative declaration adopted for a project, no subsequent EIR shall be prepared for that project unless the lead agency determines, on the basis of substantial evidence in the light of the whole record, one or more of the following:*
 - (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*

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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.*

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE SUBSEQUENT MND

The North Douglas Mitigated Negative Declaration was adopted with Conditions of Approval by the City of Rancho Cordova on June 21, 2004 (State Clearinghouse No. 2004012062). An Addendum to the MND was adopted by the City on August 1, 2005 and expanded the original analysis of environmental impacts of several improvements not disclosed at the time of the original MND.

As part of the Mitigated Negative Declaration, Mitigation Measure 13.1 was adopted to reduce the project's impact on fire protection services to less than significant. Mitigation Measure 13.1 requires that:

- *Prior to the issuance of building permits for the 251st unit, a secondary access road designed to the satisfaction of the Fire District and the City of Rancho Cordova shall be constructed. This road would need to be evaluated for environmental impacts prior to construction.*

In order to satisfy Mitigation Measure 13.1 as adopted in the Mitigated Negative Declaration, the project applicant has submitted a plan for a proposed secondary access road extending east from the northeast corner of the North Douglas project to Grant Line Road. Because this road was not part of the project as analyzed in the MND, the potential impacts of this road were not addressed. Evaluation of the road and its potential impacts necessitates the preparation of a Subsequent Mitigated Negative Declaration. A Subsequent Negative Declaration is given the same notice and public review as an MND, in accordance with State CEQA Guidelines Sections 15087 and 15072.

The required environmental evaluation of the secondary access road constitutes new information not known at the time of adoption of the MND and thus requires the preparation of this Subsequent Mitigated Negative Declaration. The purpose of this Subsequent MND is to evaluate the potential environmental impacts that will be caused or made more significant by the construction of the proposed road, and to identify new mitigation measures, if needed, to ensure that the environmental impacts of the North Douglas project are less than significant.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES TO THE ORIGINAL DOCUMENT

Project Characteristics

The North Douglas project has been changed to incorporate a secondary access road pursuant to Mitigation Measure 13.1 of the original Mitigated Negative Declaration prepared for North Douglas. This road will extend east from the northeast corner of the North Douglas subdivision and connect to Grant Line Road. A water line and fire hydrants will extend along a portion of the road. At the intersection of the secondary access road and Grant Line Road, a protected left turn off of Grant Line Road onto the secondary access road will be constructed. **Figure 5** has

been updated to include the secondary access road. **Figure 6** and **Figure 7** have been added to show the configuration of the secondary access road and the intersection of Douglas Road and Grant Line Road.

Environmental Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures

Consideration of the proposed secondary access road has been incorporated in to Section 3.0 of this document. The potential environmental impacts of the addition of the secondary access road are discussed in each appropriate checklist. As a result of updating this Mitigated Negative Declaration, new checklist items have been added to reflect updates to CEQA Guidelines for initial studies. Discussion of the project's potential for environmental impacts to each of the new items has been included. None of the checklist items has warranted the addition or modification of any mitigation measures. New checklist items are found in the following areas:

- VIII Hydrology and Water Quality, items e), f), and g); and,
- XVII Mandatory Findings of Significance, item b).

Four mitigation measures are revised in this Subsequent MND. The timing and implementation of three mitigation measures were revised in order to ensure consistency between all phases of the project and all levels of subsequent environmental review, as well as to ensure that timing and implementation of the measures is appropriate and effective in reducing their associated impacts. The timing and implementation of mitigation measures MM 4.1c, MM 5.1, and MM 11.2 was modified.

Mitigation Measure 4.1b has been modified to show that the option of paying a Swainson's hawk impact mitigation fee to the City of Rancho Cordova is no longer an available option for mitigation of Swainson's hawk impacts. Additionally, the wording of the measure was changed to show that in the event that the City of Rancho Cordova adopts a Swainson's hawk mitigation policy or program, the applicant would be subject to that policy or program. Previously, the measure was worded such that the applicant may or may not have been subject to any City policy or program. Both changes are minor technical changes reflecting changes in City policies and practices since the time the original MND was approved.

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. In accordance with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15051(b)(1), "the lead agency will normally be the agency with general governmental powers, such as a city or county, rather than an agency with a single or limited purpose." Based on these criteria, the City of Rancho Cordova is the lead agency for the North Douglas project.

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1.3 PURPOSE AND DOCUMENT ORGANIZATION

The purpose of this Initial Study and Draft SMND 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. Textual deletions will be shown as a ~~strike through~~. Textual additions will be shown underlined.
- **3.0 Environmental Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures** – Describes the environmental setting for each of the environmental subject areas, evaluates a range of impacts classified as “no impact,” “less than significant,” or “less than significant with mitigation incorporation” in response to the environmental checklist, and provides mitigation measures, where appropriate, to mitigate potentially significant impacts to a less than significant level. Changes to the environmental analysis in this section are shown in underline and ~~strike through~~ revision marks.
- **4.0 Cumulative Impacts** – Includes a discussion of cumulative impacts of this project. Changes to the environmental analysis in this section are shown in underline and ~~strike through~~ revision marks.
- **5.0 Determination** – Provides the environmental determination for the project.
- **6.0 Report Preparation and Consultations** – Identifies staff and consultants responsible for preparation of this document, persons and agencies consulted, and references.
- **7.0 References** – List of references used in preparation of the SMND and the original MND.

1.4 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, which is anticipated for the end of June 2006. The City is currently in the process of preparing a Draft General Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) consistent with the state planning and zoning law and CEQA.

While the General Plan and DEIR are underway, the City has adopted a Vision Book, Revised Draft Land Use Map Book (adopted as revised on January 17, 2006), and Circulation Plan. The Vision Book establishes the conceptual vision of the City and reflects the compilation of ideas from the community on a wide variety of topics related to the future of Rancho Cordova. It includes ideas that relate to specific sites and issues, as well as ideas that are more conceptual in nature. The Circulation Plan describes the basic roadway, bikeway, transit, and pedestrian system that will form the backbone of the City as it develops. The General Plan Land Use Map combines geographical areas of the City with generalized and specific land use designations to guide the City's future development patterns. The intent of the General Plan Land Use Map is to establish a variety of new land use designations that reflect more mixed land uses, and in some

cases, a higher density of development envisioned for the City. These mixed-use categories provide for residential, commercial, and office uses all on a single site. Per Government Code §65360(b), new development proposals and actions by the City will be examined for their consistency with these interim policies and standards. The City has subsequently publicly released drafts of the Rancho Cordova General Plan and Rancho Cordova General Plan Draft Environmental Impact Report (State Clearinghouse No. 2005022137).

If to the extent the City adopts, notices, publishes or makes available to decision makers and the public new conceptual policies, standards, and proposals, these policies will be deemed to be General Plan proposals under consideration or study consistent with Government Code §65360(b). Proposed projects will be measured against those new proposals rather than inconsistent provisions in other interim City policies and the Sacramento County General Plan (in accordance with Rancho Cordova City Council Resolution No. 89-2005 adopted on July 18, 2005). The Sacramento County General Plan was adopted in 1993 and is currently undergoing an update.