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## NOTICE OF PREPARATION

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**DATE:** July 14, 2006

**TO:** Responsible Agencies, Organizations and Interested Parties

**LEAD AGENCY:** City of Rancho Cordova  
Contact: Ben Ritchie  
2729 Prospect Park Drive  
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670

**SUBJECT:** Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement for the SunCreek Specific Plan project.

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Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE) and the City of Rancho Cordova propose to prepare a joint Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the development of SunCreek Specific Plan (SunCreek) project. The USACOE is the Lead Federal Agency for NEPA and the City of Rancho Cordova is the Lead State Agency for CEQA. NEPA jurisdiction is created by the need for permits to fill wetlands pursuant to section 404 of the Clean Water Act, which is a major federal action; therefore, an EIS is required in addition to an EIR. The determination to prepare a joint EIS/EIR was made by the City of Rancho Cordova and the USACOE.

As specified by the CEQA Guidelines, this Notice of Preparation will be circulated for a 30-day review period. The City of Rancho Cordova welcomes public input during this review. In the event that no response or request for additional time is received by any Responsible Agency by the end of the review period, the Lead Agency may presume that the Responsible Agency has no response.

### **PUBLIC MEETING**

**A Public Scoping Meeting will be held to receive input on the scope of the EIR/EIS on July 26 from 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. at the City of Rancho Cordova City Hall located at 2729 Prospect Park Drive in Rancho Cordova, CA. 95670**

Comments may be submitted in writing during the review period and addressed to:

David Young  
City of Rancho Cordova  
2729 Prospect Park Drive  
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670

**The comment period closes on August 14, 2006**

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## A. PROJECT LOCATION AND CURRENT USE

The SunCreek Specific Plan (SunCreek) project area consists of approximately 1,253 acres within the Sunrise Douglas Community Plan (SDCP) area in the City of Rancho Cordova, in eastern Sacramento County (see **Figure 1**, Vicinity Map). The SunCreek Specific Plan is the second specific plan area within the larger SDCP. The SunCreek project is a proposed mixed-use development, located east of Sunrise Boulevard between Jackson Highway (State Route 16) and Douglas Road. The SunCreek project site is depicted in **Figure 2**. Currently, the majority of the project site is undeveloped and used for grazing and limited agricultural purposes.

## B. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The applicant team has defined the following objectives for the proposed SunCreek project:

1. To implement the Sacramento Area Council of Governments' Blueprint and Smart Growth Principles, the City of Rancho Cordova's General Plan and the Sunrise Douglas Community Plan.
2. To provide a mixed use and mixed density residential housing development within the City of Rancho Cordova's Sunrise Douglas Community Plan area.
3. To develop several distinct neighborhoods within the project area, connected by a significant open space and recreational parkway.
4. To provide neighborhood-serving retail areas within the project area.
5. To provide additional new housing to balance the high employment concentrations currently existing in and around the City of Rancho Cordova.
6. To provide a mix of housing types within the project area to diversify the City of Rancho Cordova's housing stock.
7. To provide transportation facilities within the project area that are consistent with the City of Rancho Cordova's Circulation Plan.
8. To provide an appropriate site for a high school and middle school that will serve the Sunrise Douglas Community Plan Area.
9. To provide an appropriate site for a community park that will serve the Sunrise Douglas Community Plan Area.
10. To provide a key link in the city-wide trail network that connects the Folsom South Canal bike and pedestrian trail to corridors along the Laguna Creek and Cosumnes River tributaries.
11. To contribute to the planned Regional Preserve with development that is consistent with the September 2004 Conceptual Level Strategy for the conservation of wetlands within the Community Plan area.
12. To generate positive fiscal impacts for the City through development within the project area.





City of Rancho Cordova  
Planning Department

**Figure 2**  
**SunCreek Specific Plan Project Area**

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## C. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The SunCreek Specific Plan will guide the development of 1,253.6 acres in the City of Rancho Cordova. The Plan will provide residential neighborhoods, schools, parks, and neighborhood commercial centers to serve workers in the Highway 50 Corridor. The SunCreek Plan Area (Plan Area) is located in the south area of the City of Rancho Cordova. It is bounded on the east by Grantline Road and on the west by Sunrise Boulevard. Kiefer Road runs east to west through the Plan Area. The Plan Area is within the Sunrise Douglas Community Plan (SDCP) area, which was adopted by Sacramento County in August 1996. The project's regional location and project site is depicted in **Figure 1** and **Figure 2**, respectively. The Community Plan Area became part of the City of Rancho Cordova upon incorporation in July 2003.

The Plan Area is undeveloped land with relatively poor agricultural soils. The area was used sporadically for dry land farming and grazing on spring grasses. Grazing of domestic animals and the naturalization of Mediterranean grasses has led to the displacement of most native species, resulting grasslands dominated by non-native grasses and herbs.

The Plan Area abuts the SunRidge Specific Plan (SRSP) area that is developing in a pattern of residential, public services and commercial uses. Single family residential neighborhoods are the primary land use planned along the northern edge of the Plan Area. A permanent wetland preserve open space is located north of the Plan Area adjacent to Kiefer Boulevard. This wetland area extends northeast to Jaeger Road where it intercepts the Plan Area and extends farther to the northeast along the north edge of the Plan Area. The western edge of the Plan Area abuts planned residential neighborhoods in most instances, however, the portion of the Plan Area south of Kiefer Boulevard abuts Sunrise Boulevard and there is no plan for development to the west. The Sacramento Rendering Plant is located west of Sunrise Boulevard and south of Kiefer Boulevard. The southern edge of the Plan Area abuts agricultural lands within the Sunrise Douglas Community Plan. These lands may be planned for development in the future. The Sacramento County Regional Landfill is located to the south and east of the Plan Area. An undeveloped buffer area on the north side of Grantline Road acquired by Sacramento County separates the Plan Area from the landfill site.

The SunCreek Plan provides a design based on neighborhoods oriented to a common public access feature such as a school, park or common open space area. Single family residential is the predominant land use in the Plan Area; however, the plan provides a diversity of housing types ranging from executive homes to multi-family apartment buildings. The Plan Area also includes parks within the neighborhoods and commercial land uses in Commercial Mixed Use designations. The SunCreek Plan would also provide sites for three elementary schools, and a joint middle school and a high school campus. The SunCreek Plan also proposes a mix of park sizes and configurations, to be located adjacent to the planned schools.

The Plan Area would provide approximately 216 acres of wetland preserves, generally located along the primary drainage corridor. The preserve area was identified and defined in a process with the responsible Federal agencies to provide a comprehensive and connected resource protection area. The site area includes gently rolling grassland crossed by shallow natural drainages. Various wetland types, including vernal pools are found in concentrated areas scattered throughout much of the area.

Development which impacts wetlands will be subject to a Federal Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 404 permit as authorized by the US Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). The permitting

process is designed to regulate the unauthorized fill of materials into waters of the US, including swales and drainages, and to define mitigation requirements in the event that fill and related impacts to wetlands cannot be avoided. The mitigation must comply with US Fish and Wildlife Service standards for the preservation of the pools, and associated species such as vernal pool fairy shrimp. The Plan Area is located primarily within the headwaters of the Laguna Creek watershed. A small portion of the northwest corner of the Plan Area is located in the Morrison Creek watershed. These two natural drainages convey storm water to the Beach Stone Lakes area in western Sacramento County. The rolling grasslands are interspersed with grassy swales; seasonal drainage courses which provide significant amounts of natural storage.

The Plan Area would obtain water service from the Sacramento County Water Agency (SCWA). The SCWA would serve as water wholesaler and retailer and would also own and operate all water production, transmission, storage, and distribution facilities providing service to users located within the SunCreek project area. The initial water supply will be groundwater obtained from wells located to the southwest. In the future, surface water will also be delivered to this site and will be mixed with groundwater in the conjunctive use of surface water and groundwater to meet the water needs of the Plan Area development. Groundwater will be used to meet demands until a surface water supply source is secured and developed. **Table 1** illustrates the proposed land use categories, the associated acreage and the approximate amount of residential units anticipated for each land use designation.

**TABLE 1  
SUMMARY OF LAND USES**

Land Use Designation	Land Use	Acres	Residential Density Range (if applicable)	Unit Range <sup>2</sup>
HDR	High Density Residential	34.25	18.1 – 40 (du/ac) <sup>1</sup>	655 – 750
MDR	Medium Density Residential	464.67	6.1 – 18 (du/ac)	2,368 - 2,722
LDR	Low Density Residential	114.66	2.1 – 6 (du/ac)	686
CMDR	Compact Density Residential	93.49	12.1 – 18 (du/ac)	1,284 – 1,394
CMU	Commercial Mixed Use	19.21	-	50
Canal	Canal	9.14	-	-
DB	Detention Basin	19.10	-	-
P/QP	Public/Quasi Public	7.39	-	-
Park	Parks	99.92	-	-
PP	Pocket Parks	10.05	-	-
PC	Parkway, Paseos and Trails	20.97	-	-
School	Schools	113.71	-	-
-	Major Roads	11.80	-	-
VC	Village Center	3.06	-	-
Wetland	Wetland/Vernal Pools	216.43	-	-
WB	Wetland Buffer/Bike Path Corridor	25.09	-	-
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,252.94</b>	-	<b>5,043 – 5,602</b>

Notes: 1. Range of residential dwelling units per acre.

2. The EIR/EIS will assume the greatest possible number of residential units in order to evaluate a "worst-case" scenario of potential impacts.

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**Figure 3** illustrates the proposed SunCreek site plan and land uses. As indicated in **Table 1**, the buildout of the proposed Specific Plan could include the development of up to 5,602 residential units in various density ranges.

#### Residential

The SunCreek project would provide for the construction of up to 5,602 dwelling units in five residential land use classifications. The majority of residential units would be in the Medium Density Residential (MDR) designation and the Commercial Mixed Use (CMU) portion of the project would also provide limited residential opportunities.

#### Commercial

As indicated, the SunCreek project would include CMU land use designations for commercial and retail uses. The CMU designations would be constructed in three separate areas (adjacent to Sunrise Boulevard, the proposed Rancho Cordova Parkway, and just south of Chrysanthy Boulevard) and encompass 19.21 acres of the project's total acreage.

#### Parks/Pocket Parks/Parkway/Paseos/Trails

The SunCreek project would include several parks (both neighborhood and pocket parks) totaling 109.97 acres and an additional 20.97 acres of open space designated parkways, paseos, and trails located throughout the site to allow for safe pedestrian and bicycle circulation.

#### Wetland Preserve

Approximately 216.0 acres of the project site would be designated for a wetland preserve area to minimize impacts to on-site vernal pools and other sensitive biological resources.

#### Schools

There are 113.71 acres designated for school uses within the SunCreek project area. The project would include one combined high school/middle school site and three elementary schools.

#### Public Utilities and Services

Public services, utilities and other infrastructure improvements will be needed to serve the SunCreek project. The project proponent would be required to coordinate with the various service providers and with other project proponents in the SDCP to provide these services on an as needed schedule.

#### Roadway Improvements

The project would require both off- and on-site roadway improvements including but not limited to, the extension of Kiefer Boulevard from Sunrise Boulevard to Grant Line Road, the construction of Chrysanthy Boulevard, Americanos Boulevard and Jaeger Road, to provide safe and adequate access to the project area and circulation within the greater Sunrise Douglas Community Plan area.

# Legend

## Land Use

### Parks

- Public/Quasi-Public
- Park
- Pocket Park

### Transportation

- Boulevard
- Median
- Pedestrian Corridor
- School
- Street
- Alley

### Housing

- Medium Density Residential
- Low Density Residential
- High Density Residential

### Water Features

- Detention Basin
- Canal
- Wetland Buffer
- Wetland

### Commercial

- Commercial Mixed Use
- Village Center

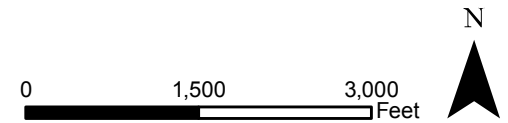
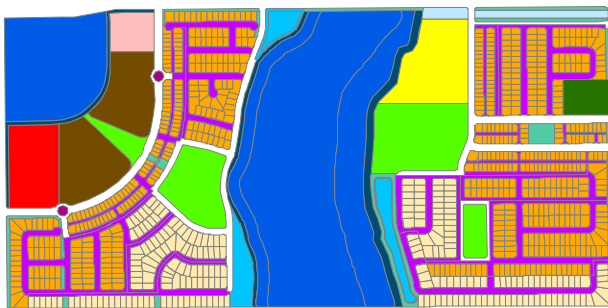
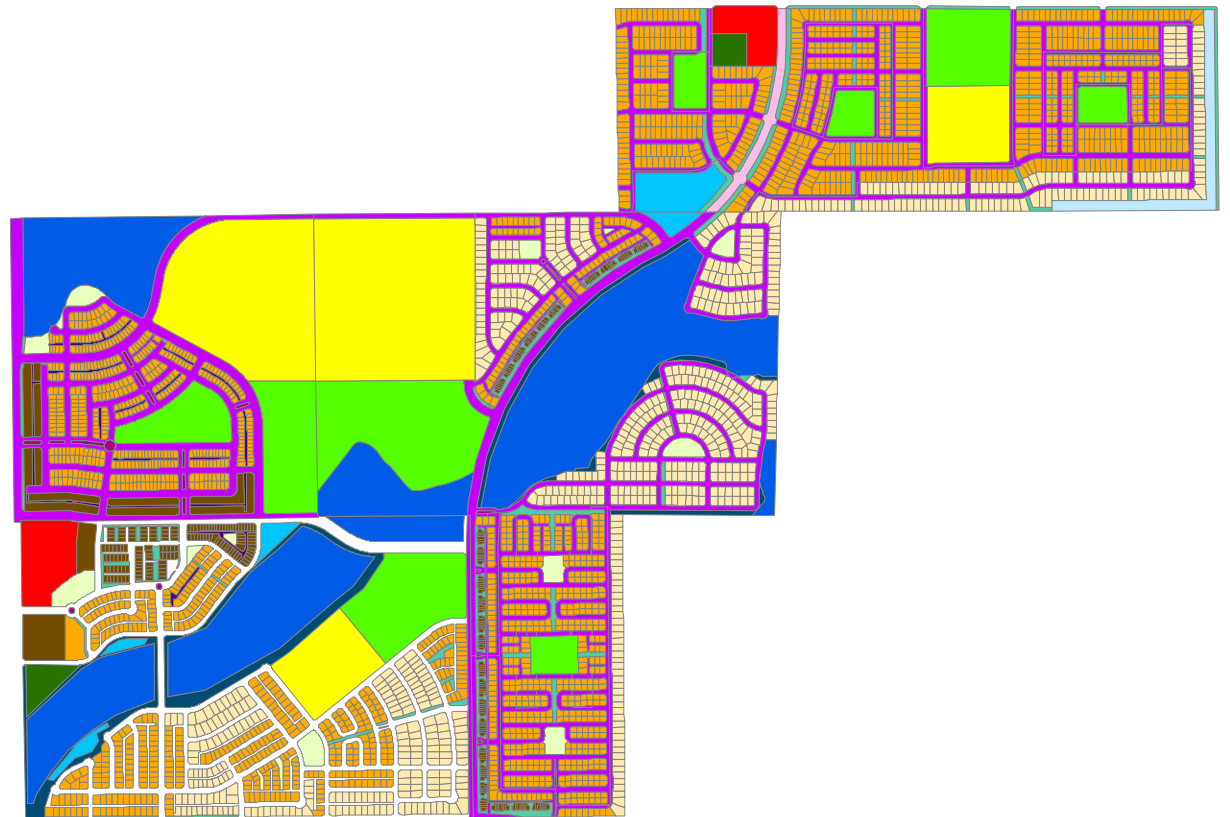


Figure 3  
Land Use



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#### D. REQUIRED APPROVALS

*City of Rancho Cordova:* Actions that would be required from the City Council, Planning Commission and/or City staff may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Large Lot/Small Lot Tentative Subdivision Map approval;
- Specific Plan to establish the policy framework and project development standards, including design guidelines, road cross-sections, parks, etc.;
- Adoption of a Public Facilities Financing Plan;
- Adoption of a Development Agreement for among other things, Police Tax, Park Renovation, and Park Improvement fee; and

Other discretionary approvals that may be required by other governmental agencies may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Take permits from the U.S., Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) under the Federal and State Endangered Species Acts
- Water quality permitting (NPDES and water quality certifications) under the Clean Water Act by the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board
- Wetland fill permits under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Approval of infrastructure details for water supply facilities by the Sacramento County Water Agency
- Approval of infrastructure details for wastewater conveyance facilities by Sacramento County Sanitation District No. 1 (CSD-1)
- Approval of the elementary school site acquisition and site plans by the Elk Grove Unified School District.
- Approval of park sites by the Cordova Recreation and Park District.

#### E. PROJECT BACKGROUND AND PLANNING CONTEXT

The SunCreek Specific Plan is part of the Sunrise Douglas Community Plan which was initiated by Sacramento County in 1993. The Sunrise Douglas Community Plan plays a significant role in providing a location for new housing to meet the demand generated by existing, planned, and approved employment-generating uses within and adjacent to the U.S. Highway 50 (U.S. 50) corridor. The U.S. 50 corridor has experienced substantial growth in employment-generating land use since the 1970's. Since 1980, the communities (now incorporated) of Folsom and Rancho Cordova have experienced intense housing demand and rapid employment growth due to expansion of the high technology, electronics, and new services industries. A substantial amount of land along the U.S. 50 corridor between the Bradshaw and the Hazel freeway interchanges has developed as either an industrial park or business park. As early as 1983,

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Sacramento County had initiated studies to address the growing imbalance between jobs and housing opportunities in the U.S. 50 corridor east of downtown Sacramento and extending to the El Dorado County boundary.

The Sunrise Douglas Community Plan established the policy framework and conceptual development plan for an estimated 6,015.3 acres in eastern Sacramento County. The Sunrise Douglas Community Plan Area is located within the Sacramento County General Plan Urban Policy Area and is shown as a new Urban Growth Area on the County General Plan map. The County designed the Sunrise Douglas Community Plan to be implemented by formation and adoption of more focused specific plans that would include detailed project development phasing and design standards.

The SunRidge Specific Plan that preceded the proposed SunCreek Specific Plan was the first of the specific plans included in the community plan. Modifications to the original SunRidge Specific Plan have caused the preparation of a second specific plan, SunRidge East. The SunCreek Specific Plan will be the third specific plan to implement the Sunrise Douglas Community Plan.

#### **F. POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS**

The SunCreek project has the potential to result in significant impacts related to biological resources (i.e., wildlife species, wetlands, etc.), air quality, noise, human health, hydrology and water quality, cultural and paleontological, and public service and utility systems. The EIR/EIS will address and evaluate the project-specific near-term, long-term, and cumulative impacts environmental associated with the proposed project.