North Roseville Specific Plan Phase 3

Final Environmental Impact Report (SCH #1999061039)

Prepared for:

City of Roseville Planning Department

Prepared by:

EIP Associates

September 2000

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1. INTRODUCTION

1. INTRODUCTION

This Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the North Roseville Specific Plan (NRSP) Phase 3 was prepared in order to respond to public comments received on the Draft EIR, which was circulated from May 3, 2000 to July 13, 2000.

Project Background

The project analyzed in the Draft EIR encompasses a total of 160 acres and proposes development of 580 low-density residential units on 119.1 acres, 99 medium-density residential units on 11.5 acres, an 8-acre elementary school site, a 13.6-acre park, and 7.8 acres for major roadways. At the time the Draft EIR was being written, the Roseville City School District (RCSD) was still evaluating the need to construct an elementary school on the project site. If a school was not constructed on the site, the total number of residential units developed would be reduced by 10 units for a total of 669 units. The park site would remain, although the acreage would be reduced to 9 acres. Therefore, the Draft EIR also included an evaluation of an option without the elementary school.

Since publication of the Draft EIR, the option without the school has become the project (please see also revised Figure 3-2 in Chapter 2 of this FEIR). The school district has decided not to construct an elementary school on the project site. The total number of dwelling units has decreased to 669 units, a 9-acre park would be constructed, and the internal roadway circulation has been slightly modified. In addition, the San Juan Water District will supply raw water to be treated and conveyed to the project site by the City of Roseville. The Draft EIR analyzed both project scenarios; therefore, the analysis included in the Draft EIR is adequate and does not require any changes. Changes to the project are reflected in Chapter 2, Changes to the Draft EIR.

The Draft EIR evaluated the potential environmental effects that could result from implementation of the NRSP Phase 3. The FEIR has been prepared in conformance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to section 15132 of the CEQA Guidelines. The Draft EIR, completed in May 2000, is hereby incorporated into this FEIR by reference. The FEIR presents substantive comments and recommendations received on the Draft EIR (see Chapter 3). It also provides responses to substantial environmental issues raised by those comments.

Contents of the Final EIR

Responses to all substantive comments were prepared by the lead agency and its consultant in accordance with the CEQA Guidelines. Comments and responses are grouped by letter and where appropriate, responses are cross-referenced between two letters. As the subject matter of

one topic may overlap between letters, the reader must occasionally refer to more than one letter and response to collect all information on a given subject. Where this occurs, cross-references are provided.

These comments and responses, in conjunction with the Draft EIR and the text changes, constitute the FEIR, which will be considered for certification by the City of Roseville City Council. A separate Mitigation Monitoring Plan (MMP) has been prepared for the project pursuant to the California Public Resources Code (PRC) 21081.6, and appears in Appendix A of this FEIR.

The Final EIR is organized as follows:

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Chapter 2 - Changes to the Draft EIR: This chapter lists the changes to the project and the Draft EIR made either in response to comments or at the initiative of the lead agency.

Chapter 3 - Written Comments and Responses: This chapter contains the comment letters followed by responses to the comments. Each letter and each comment within a letter has been given a number. Responses are numbered so that they correspond to the appropriate comment. Where appropriate, responses are cross-referenced between letters.

It should be noted that none of the changes to the Draft EIR, comments received, or responses provided results in a change to the substantive conclusions of the Draft EIR.

2. CHANGES TO THE DRAFT EIR

2. CHANGES TO THE DRAFT EIR

Introduction

During the public comment period, a number of comment letters provided additional information on the Draft EIR. This information identified specific minor inaccuracies in the Draft EIR text or provided updated information. The additional information provided in the comment letters is contained in Chapter 3 of this Final EIR. None of the information presented or the resulting revisions to the Draft EIR resulted in a change in the substantive conclusions of the Draft EIR (i.e., identification of new significant impacts).

This section describes changes to the Draft EIR that have occurred as a result of refinements to the project since the Draft EIR was released, staff review and/or discussions with the applicant. These changes are in addition to those described in Chapter 3. None of these changes alters the substantive conclusions of the Draft EIR.

Changes to the Proposed Project

The Draft EIR analyzed two versions of the proposed project; the project with an elementary school and an option without the school. Since publication of the Draft EIR, the option without the school has become the project. Therefore, the following changes are made to the proposed project. These changes do not alter the substantive conclusions of the Draft EIR because both project scenarios were analyzed.

The changes to the proposed project include:

- Decrease in the total number of residential units from 679 to 669.
- Decrease in the park acreage from 13.6 to 9.0 acres.
- > No elementary school.
- > Slight modification to the internal roadway system.
- San Juan Water District to supply raw water to the City of Roseville for treatment and conveyance to serve the project.

The land uses identified in Table 3-1 of the Draft EIR have been modified to omit the school site and incorporate the land use changes discussed above. The changes include:

TABLE 3-1 NRSP PHASE 3 PROPOSED LAND USE PLAN							
DR-1	LDR	6.4	RS-DS	9.4	60		
DR-2	LDR	5.4	R1-DS	14.6	79		
DR-3	LDR	4.3	R1-DS	77.2	335		
DR-4	LDR	4.6	R1-DS	42	195		
DR-50	Park		PR	9.0			
	ROW			7.8			
TOTAL				160.0	669		

Figure 3-2 has also been revised to reflect the change in land uses and to include the modified internal roadway system shown at the end of this chapter.

Changes to the Draft EIR

The following corrections and clarifications are hereby incorporated into the Draft EIR. These changes are in addition to those revisions identified in Chapter 3 of this Final EIR.

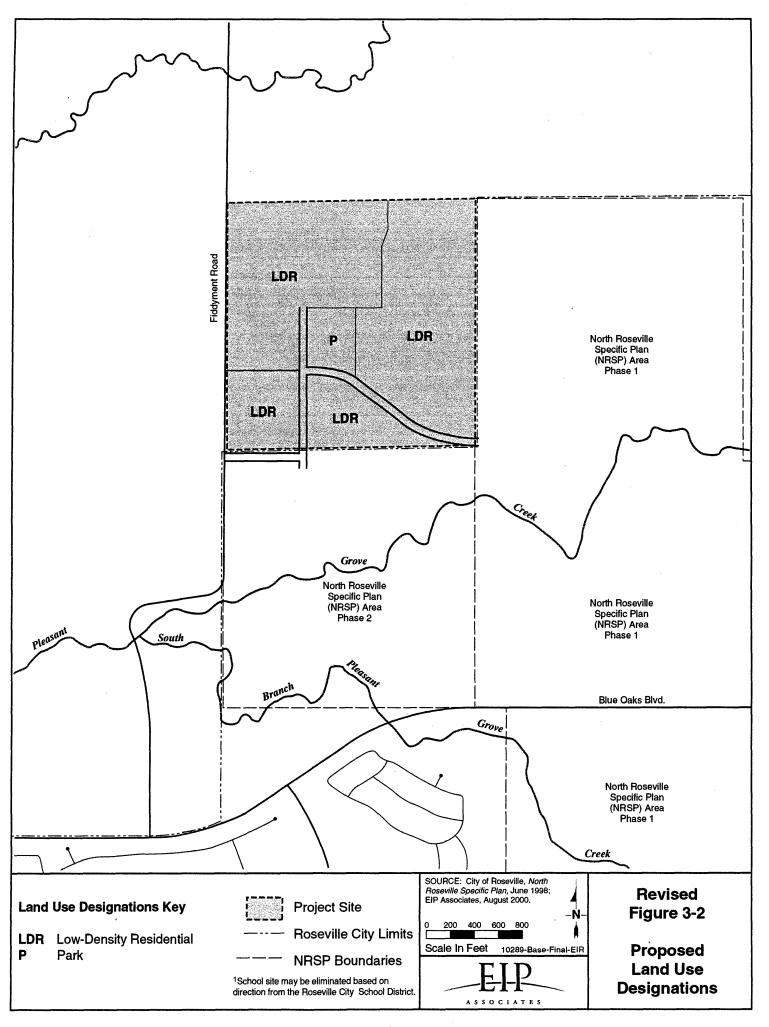
4.3 Biological Resources

The third and fourth sentences in the 4th paragraph on page 4.3-1 are revised to read:

A total of 1.39 0.17 acres of jurisdictional wetlands of the U.S. were identified during a survey of the project site in March 2000 July 1998.[†] These include 0.05 0.1 acre of vernal pool, 0.18 .03 acre of seasonal wetlands, and 1.15 .04 acres of drainage swales.

Table 4.3-1 on page 4.3-3 is revised to read:

TABLE 4.3-1 EXISTING HABITAT ON THE PROJECT SITE				
Habitat	Estimated Acreage			
Annual Grassland	158.62 <u>159.83</u>			
Vernal Pools	0.05 <u>0.1</u>			
Seasonal Wetlands	0.18 <u>.03</u>			
Drainage Swale	1.15 <u>.04</u>			
TOTAL	160.0			
SOURCE: Sugnet and Associates, 1998.				



The third paragraph on page 4.3-4 is revised to read:

A wetland delineation was submitted to the USCOE on March 19, 1999 and has subsequently been revised to reflect a total of 1.39 0.17 acres of jurisdictional wetlands. The USCOE verified the wetland delineation May 12, 1999 (see Appendix D).

The last paragraph on page 4.3-5 of the Draft EIR is revised to read:

<u>Vernal Pool Fairy Shrimp (Branchinecta lynchi)</u>. Status: Federal threatened. <u>Vernal pool Tadpole Shrimp (Lepidurus packardi)</u>. Status: Endangered. Fairy shrimp <u>Vernal pool crustaceans</u> are small (11 to 27 mm) crustaceans adapted to survive the annual flooding and drying of vernal pools.

The first paragraph on page 4.3-8 is revised to read:

The US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) determined the vernal pool fairy shrimp to be threatened and the vernal pool tadpole shrimp to be endangered under the Federal Endangered Species Act in September 19, 1994 (59 FR 48136). Vernal pool fairy shrimp crustaceans occur commonly in vernal pools in the Roseville area, and have been found in both natural and constructed vernal pools in the vicinity of the project site.

An new paragraph is added at the top of page 4.3-8:

Amphibians

California Tiger Salamander (Ambystom a calirniense). Status: Federal candidate. California tiger salamander (CTS) typically use seasonally ponded habitats for egg laying and larval development and rodent burrows in uplands for dry season refuge. CTS breed in seasonal water bodies including vernal pools, seasonal wetlands, stockponds, and ponded areas of intermittent drainages. Eggs are laid during the winter months. The critical period in larval development is late winter through early spring (March through May) when seasonal ponds begin to dry. If potential habitat is too shallow or ephemeral, larvae will die before metamorphosis to the adult stage. Although potential habitat exists within the project site, the site is located outside the known range of the species. Therefore, impacts to CTS will not be addressed.

The first and second complete sentences on page 4.3-14 under Impact 4.3-1 are revised to read:

Correspondence with the project applicant indicates that mitigation for loss of wetlands would involve the purchase of preservation credits for the 0.1 acres of vernal pools at a ratio of at least 2:1 in a USFWS-approved mitigation bank to satisfy the needs for mitigation. If this option is not acceptable to the regulatory agency at the time of project permitting, the applicant shall also dedicate at least one vernal pool creation credit for every acre of habitat directly affected. This would include create new or restore 1.39 acres of existing wetlands the 0.1 acres of vernal pools at a ratio of at least 1:1 for a total mitigation ratio of 3:1 for preservation and creation credits.

Impact 4.3-5 on page 4.3-16 is revised to read:

IMPACT 4.3-5: Loss of federally-listed threatened vernal pool

fairy crustacean habitat.

SIGNIFICANCE: Potentially significant

MITIGATION MEASURE: Mitigation Measure 4.3-1 (Purchase credits in an

approved wetland mitigation fund or other mitigation required by the 404 permit to ensure no

net loss of wetlands.)

RESIDUAL SIGNIFICANCE: Potentially significant and unavoidable.

At least one species of <u>listed</u> fairy shrimp that is a federally-listed threatened species has been observed in the project vicinity, and could be considered likely to occur in the vernal pool on the project site. No vernal pool tadpole shrimp were observed. The vernal pool fairy shrimp <u>and vernal pool tadpole shrimp is a are federally listed species and the "take" of this these species is prohibited without specific authorization from the USFWS under Sections 7 or 10 of the Federal Endangered Species Act. The wetland delineation and permitting process on for the wetland areas on the project site has been verified by the USCOE.</u>

3. WRITTEN COMMENTS AND RESPONSES



United States Department of the

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office 2800 Cottage Way, Room W-2605 Sacramento, California 95825

IN REPLY REFER TO: PPN 2215

RECEIVED

June 15, 2000

JUN 16 2000

Laura Conti Roseville Planning Department 316 Vernon Street, Suite #104 Roseville, California 95678

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Subject:

Draft Environmental Impact Report for North Roseville Specific Plan Phase 3

(SCH #99061039), Roseville, Placer County, California

Dear Ms. Conti:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the North Roseville Specific Plan Phase 3, dated May 3, 2000, regarding the proposal to annex a 160-acre parcel, Doctor's Ranch, to the City of Roseville, for residential development.

Our comments are intended to assist you in your review of the proposed project and will not take the place of any formal comments that may be required at a later date pursuant to the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (FWCA) or the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act).

SERVICE POLICY

Under provisions of the FWCA, the Service advises the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) on projects involving dredging and fill activities in "waters of the United States," and special aquatic sites, which include wetlands such as those found on the proposed project site. Since the proposed project will require a Corps permit, pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, the Service will provide comments to the Corps under FWCA authority. When reviewing U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) Public Notices, the Service generally does not object to projects meeting the following criteria:

- 1. They are ecologically sound;
- 2. The least environmentally damaging reasonable alternative is selected;
- 3. Every reasonable effort is made to avoid or minimize damage or loss of fish and wildlife resources and uses;
- 4. All important recommended means and measures have been adopted, with guaranteed implementation to satisfactorily compensate for unavoidable damage; or

5. For wetland and shallow water habitats, the proposed activity is clearly water dependent and there is a demonstrated public need.

The Service may recommend the "no project" alternative for those projects which do not meet all of the above criteria, and where there is likely to be a significant fish and wildlife resource loss.

It is the regional policy of the Service to ensure no net loss of wetland acreage or value, whichever is greater. To offset unavoidable resource losses for acceptable projects, the Service recommends that appropriate mitigation be provided. The Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act define mitigation to include: (1) avoiding the impact; (2) minimizing the impact; (3) rectifying the impact; (4) reducing or eliminating the impact over time; and (5) compensating for impacts. The Service supports and adopts this definition of mitigation and considers the specific elements to represent the desirable sequence of steps in the mitigation planning process. Accordingly, we maintain that the best way to mitigate for adverse biological impacts is to avoid them altogether.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This proposed project consists of annexing the 160-acre Doctor's Ranch property to the City of Roseville for residential development. The project site is located in the rapidly developing Roseville/Rocklin/Lincoln area of Placer County approximately 1.25 miles north of the intersection of Fiddyment Road and Blue Oaks Road. This parcel is bounded on the east and south by properties that are being developed as Phases 1 and 2 of the North Roseville Specific Plan, respectively. The project site, historically dry farmed but currently fallow, consists of annual grasslands (primarily non-native species) and seasonal wetlands. On the west-central portion of the property lies a grove of trees composed of the tree of heaven (*Allanthus altissima*). The site appears to support a prey base sufficient to attract various species of foraging raptors including white-tailed kite (*Elanus leucurus*), northern harrier (*Circus cyaneus*), and red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*).

According to the DEIR, 1.39 acres of jurisdictional wetlands were verified by the Corps on May 12, 1999 (#199900252). These wetlands include 0.05 acre of vernal pool, 1.15 acres of drainage swales, and 0.19 acre of seasonal wetlands. These wetlands provide habitat for the federally listed vernal pool fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta lynchi*) and vernal pool tadpole shrimp (*Lepidurus packardi*).

GENERAL COMMENTS

Biological Resources

During a site visit by Service and ECORP staff on March 8, 2000, it was agreed that the original wetland delineation underestimated the size of a vernal pool located on the north end of the property. The DEIR should be revised to reflect this reflect this change through communication with ECORP staff.

1-2

1-3

1-4

The DEIR indicates that all wetlands on the project site, including vernal pools and swales, would be lost as a result of project implementation, but that mitigation through the purchase of credits would reduce the residual significance to "less than significant". The Service does not concur with this finding. First, the project applicant intends to mitigate for 1.39 acres of wetland loss through the purchase of credits in a USFWS-approved mitigation bank, or, if this option is not acceptable, would create new or restore existing wetlands at a 1:1 ratio. The Service contends that at a minimum, purchased credits should be of equivalent or higher value than the impacted habitat to compensate for direct impacts. Further, impacts to listed vernal pool invertebrates resulting from implementation of this project, as proposed, may not be adequately minimized without preservation of vernal pool habitat at a ratio of at least 2:1, and creation or restoration of vernal pool habitat at a ratio of at least 1:1.

1-6

Second, loss of wetland habitats within the City of Roseville and larger Placer County has been extensive due to rapid development in recent years. Many of these developments have failed to incorporate avoidance measures into land use plans, instead relying upon offsite mitigation measures to compensate for impacts to natural resources. This strategy has resulted in a precipitous decline in wetland, riparian, and grassland habitats and populations of federally listed species (e.g., vernal pool invertebrates) within Roseville City boundaries. Consequently, the Service cannot support projects that completely defer to offsite compensation in the absence of efforts to avoid wetland and other biological resources onsite.

1-7

The DEIR also concludes that implementation of Mitigation Measure 4.3-2 would minimize disturbance to Swainson's hawk and other legally-protected raptors to a "less than significant" level. Although the proposed mitigation may indeed reduce disturbance to nesting raptors, it does not compensate for the loss of grasslands that provide valuable foraging habitat for these species. The DEIR should specify a distinction between disturbance and foraging habitat loss, and address the residual significance of these two impacts separately.

1-8

Public Services and Utilities

The DEIR indicates that currently it remains 'unknown whether the City of Roseville, Placer County Water Agency (PCWA), or San Juan Water District (SJWD) would serve the proposed project and that determination of the water provider will be made as part of the project approval process'. Although the DEIR does describe these three water supply options, it does not evaluate the implications of each on biological resources (e.g., fisheries, groundwater, etc.,). These impacts should be disclosed in the DEIR for the proposed project. Should the 160-acre Doctor's Ranch development receive water granted to the City of Roseville by a proposed Warren Act Contract, impacts to federally listed species, including vernal pool invertebrates, and their habitats should be evaluated in the Biological Assessment for this contract as well as in this DEIR.

1-9

The DEIR describes the potential water conveyance and wastewater systems that would serve the proposed project site, yet does not address any impacts associated with construction these systems. Based on Figures 4.8-2 and 4.8-3, the proposed water main and gravity wastewater lines will cross Pleasant Grove Creek, which would affect this riparian corridor. The DEIR does