
Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The City of Vacaville (City) has prepared this Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to provide the general public and interested agencies with information about the potential environmental impacts of the Alamo Creek and Ulatis Creek Detention Basins Project (Proposed Project). This EIR was prepared in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA, California Public Resources Code Section 21000-21178) and the CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations [CCR], Title 14 15050).

The Proposed Project includes construction of two stormwater detention basins, one adjacent to Alamo Creek and one adjacent to Ulatis Creek. Both basins would be upstream and northwest of the City, within an unincorporated portion of Solano County (County). The Proposed Project would increase stormwater detention along Alamo and Ulatis Creeks resulting in a decrease in future flooding within the City.

1.2 GENERAL BACKGROUND

The City has historically experienced flooding within the urban reaches along Alamo and Ulatis Creeks. Within the City, at least 12 flood related disaster events have occurred since 1963 (City of Vacaville 2008). During storms that occurred in December 2002 and December 2005, Alamo and Ulatis Creeks overtopped their banks and flooded established neighborhoods within the City up to 4 feet deep and caused millions of dollars in damage to private and public property.

The City and County have conducted several studies to identify effective mechanisms for reducing flooding in the City's urban areas and based on the studies have completed several projects to reduce flood risk within the City. These projects however would only minimally reduce flooding. Therefore, additional flood reduction strategies, including the Proposed Project, are being evaluated.

1.3 ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

CEQA requires the preparation of an EIR when a fair argument can be made that a project may have a significant effect on the environment. The purpose of an EIR is to provide decision makers, public agencies, and the general public with an objective, informational document that fully discloses the potential environmental effects of the Proposed Project. The EIR process is specifically designed to: describe the objective evaluation of potentially significant direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of the Proposed Project; identify alternatives that could substantially lessen or avoid any of the Proposed Project's significant effects; and to identify potentially feasible measures that mitigate significant effects of the Proposed Project. In addition, CEQA requires that an EIR identify those adverse impacts determined to remain significant after mitigation.

1.3.1 Lead Agency

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines, Sections 15050 and 15367, the City of Vacaville is the Lead Agency for the Proposed Project. The "Lead Agency" is defined as the public agency which has the principal responsibility for carrying out or disapproving a project.

1.3.2 Notice of Preparation and Scoping

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15082, a Notice of Preparation (NOP) was prepared on February 8, 2010 and circulated through the State Clearinghouse for a 30 day review period from February 8, 2010 through March 9, 2010. The NOP was distributed to responsible and trustee agencies, interested parties and organizations, as well as private organizations and individuals who may have an interest in the Proposed Project. The purpose of the NOP was to provide notification that an EIR for the Proposed Project was being prepared and to solicit guidance on the scope and content of the document. Comment letters were received from the following: the County; AT&T; Department of Water Resources, Division of Safety of Dams (DSOD); Solano Irrigation District (SID), and several members of the public. The NOP and the comments received on the NOP are included in Appendices A and B, respectively, of this EIR.

1.3.3 Draft EIR and Public Comments

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15105, the Draft EIR is being circulated for public review and comment for a period of 45 days. During this period, the general public, as well as interested organizations and agencies, may submit comments on the Draft EIR's accuracy and completeness to the City. The public can review the Draft EIR at the City's website at http://www.ci.vacaville.ca.us/departments/public_works/, or at the following address during normal business hours:

City of Vacaville
Public Works Department
650 Merchant Street
Vacaville, CA 95688-6908
Contact: Deborah Faaborg

and

City of Vacaville
Community Development Department
650 Merchant Street
Vacaville, CA 95688-6908
Contact: Fred Buderl

A public meeting, for the purpose of receiving verbal comments, will be held on the Draft EIR for the Proposed Project during the 45-day public review period. Upon completion of the public review period, the City will prepare a Final EIR (FEIR), which will include both written and oral comments on the Draft EIR received during the public review period and responses to those comments, as well as any revisions to the Draft EIR made in response to public comments.

1.3.4 Final EIR and EIR Certification

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Sections 15132 and 15362 and upon completion of the 45-day public review period, a Final EIR will be prepared that will include: a revision of the Draft EIR, comments and recommendations received on the Draft EIR, and the City's responses to comments received. The Final EIR will also include a Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting Plan (MMRP) in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15097. Prior to the City approving the Proposed Project, CEQA requires that the lead agency certify that the EIR has been completed in compliance with CEQA, that the City Council reviewed and considered the information in the EIR, and that the EIR reflects the independent judgment of the Lead Agency. In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Sections 15091 and 15093, the City Council will be required to adopt a Findings of Fact and for impacts determined to be significant and unavoidable, adopt a Statement of Overriding Considerations.

1.4 SCOPE OF THE EIR

An Initial Study Environmental Checklist (Environmental Checklist) (Appendix A) was prepared to determine whether the Proposed Project could result in a significant impact on the environment, and to focus the EIR analysis on resource areas with potentially significant impacts and those topics that require relatively detailed analyses in order to determine the severity of impacts. Based on the Environmental Checklist and a review of additional resource data, implementation of the Proposed Project could result in potentially significant impacts on the following resource areas, which are analyzed in detail in this EIR.

- Aesthetics and visual resources
- Land use and agriculture
- Air quality and greenhouse gas emissions
- Biological resources
- Cultural resources
- Hydrology, water quality, and hazardous materials
- Noise
- Public services (includes recreation)
- Transportation/traffic

Based on the conclusions reached in the Environmental Checklist and a review of additional resource data, the Proposed Project would have no significant impact or a less than significant impact on the following environmental resource areas. These resource areas are not discussed in this EIR.

- Mineral resources
- Utilities/service systems
- Geology and soils

- Population and housing

1.5 ORGANIZATION OF THE EIR

This EIR is organized into the following eight chapters.

Chapter 1. Introduction: This chapter provides a general overview describing the intended use of the EIR and the review and certification process.

Chapter 2. Executive Summary: This chapter presents an overview of the results and conclusions of the environmental analysis and a summary of potential impacts of the Proposed Project and feasible mitigation measures.

Chapter 3. Project Description: This chapter describes the location, size and design of the Proposed Project, and includes project objectives and a list of anticipated approvals needed to develop the Proposed Project.

Chapter 4. Environmental Evaluation: This chapter includes a topic-by-topic analysis of impacts that would or could result from implementation of the Proposed Project. Topics discussed in this chapter are those identified in the Initial Study Checklist as requiring further analysis (Appendix A). The analysis is organized in nine topical sections for each of the resource areas listed under Section 1.4.

Chapter 5. Alternatives to the Proposed Project: This chapter includes an assessment of alternative methods for accomplishing most of the basic objectives of the Proposed Project. As required under CEQA, the analysis provides adequate information for decision makers to make a reasonable choice between alternatives based on the avoiding or substantially lessening the impacts of the Proposed Project and alternatives. In determining, at the time of action on the Proposed Project, whether any of the alternatives are feasible or adequately satisfy project objectives, decision makers can rely on this assessment and on any additional information in the administrative record.

Chapter 6. Other CEQA Required Considerations: This Chapter includes a discussion of issues required by CEQA including: the Proposed Project's potential growth-inducing impacts; Proposed Project impacts that are identified as significant and unavoidable; irreversible changes to the natural environment resulting from the proposed project; and a summary of cumulative impacts.

Chapter 7. Report Preparation: This chapter identifies the lead agency staff and consultants involved in the preparation of this EIR. This chapter also lists the agencies and individuals at each agency that were consulted during the EIR preparation process.

Chapter 8. References: This chapter identifies the references and personal communications cited in the EIR.

The **Appendices** contain a number of reference items providing support and documentation of the analyses performed for this report. Other reports are available at the City's Community Development Department office, located at 650 Merchant Street in Vacaville, California.