



CITY OF SCOTTS VALLEY

SCOTTS VALLEY PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT

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Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Valley Gardens Project

DATE: September 21, 2021

TO: Office of Planning & Research State Clearinghouse and Affected Agencies;
Property Owners within 300 feet of the Project Site via US Mail)

FROM: City of Scotts Valley

LEAD AGENCY: City of Scotts Valley
Planning Department
1 Civic Center Drive
Scotts Valley, CA 95066

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Contract Planner
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Phone: (408) 340-5642 x119

SUBJECT: **Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report for the Valley Gardens Project**

Notice of Preparation

Notice is hereby given that the City of Scotts Valley (Lead Agency) will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed Valley Gardens Project (the proposed project or project). The EIR will address the potential physical and environmental effects of the proposed project for each of the environmental topics outlined in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). A complete description of the project and draft EIR scope is available on the City's website: <https://www.scottsvalley.org/242/Current-Projects>

The City will use the EIR when considering approval of the proposed project. Responsible Agencies, which are public agencies other than the City of Scotts Valley that have a role in approving or implementing the proposed project, will also need to consider the EIR prepared by the City of Scotts Valley when issuing approvals for the implementation of the proposed project.

The City has prepared this Notice of Preparation (NOP) to provide Responsible Agencies, Trustee Agencies, and other Interested Organizations and Persons with a description of the proposed project and to identify potential environmental effects pursuant to State CEQA requirements.

The City has not prepared an Initial Study. Under CEQA, a Lead Agency may proceed directly with preparation of the EIR without preparation of an Initial Study if it is clear that an EIR will be required (CEQA Guidelines Section 15060[d]). The City has made such a determination for this proposed project.

Public Review and Comment Period

Further notice is hereby given that the City invites comments on the scope and content of the EIR in response to this NOP. Pursuant to Section 15082 of the State CEQA Guidelines, this NOP will be circulated for a 30-day review period. At a minimum, responses to this NOP should focus on the potentially significant environmental effects that the proposed project may have on the physical environment that should be addressed in the EIR, ways in which those effects might be minimized, and potential alternatives to the proposed project that should be addressed in the EIR. In your response, please include your name, the name of your agency or organization (if applicable), and contact information.

Comments on the NOP may be received in writing by 5:00 p.m. on October 25, 2021, and should be sent to:

Susie Pineda
Contract Planner
spineda@m-group.us

or

City of Scotts Valley
Planning Department
1 Civic Center Drive
Scotts Valley, CA 95066

Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report for the Valley Gardens Project

Introduction

The purpose of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is to inform decision-makers and the general public of the environmental effects of a proposed project that a Lead Agency may implement or approve. The EIR process is intended to provide information sufficient to evaluate a project and its potential for significant impacts on the environment, to examine methods of reducing adverse impacts, and to consider alternatives to the project.

The EIR for the proposed project will be prepared and processed in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, as amended. In accordance with the requirements of CEQA, the EIR will include the following:

- A summary of the project;
- A project description;
- A description of the existing environmental setting, potential environmental impacts, and mitigation measures;
- Alternatives to the project as proposed; and
- Environmental consequences, including (a) any significant environmental effects which cannot be avoided if the project is implemented; (b) any significant irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources; (c) the growth inducing impacts of the proposed project; (d) effects found not to be significant; and (e) cumulative impacts.

Project Location

The 30.11-acre project site is located on 263 Mount Hermon Road in the City of Scotts Valley. See [Figure 1: Project Location](#). Primary access to the project site will be from Mount Hermon Road and Lockwood Lane. Surrounding uses include commercial retail to the north along Mount Hermon Road, single-family residential to the west and south, and the Silver Lakes mobile home park to the east.

Project Background

The project site was formerly operated as the Valley Garden Golf Course. The nine-hole “executive” course was designed by Bob Bakdock and opened in 1971. It closed in 2019 after nearly 50 years in operation. The project site has a General Plan and Zoning designation of Open Space (OS) on a majority of the site, and Commercial Service (C-S) fronting Mount Hermon Road.

Project Description

As shown in [Figure 2: Project Site Plan](#), the proposed project is comprised of 116 residential dwelling units and approximately 8,500 square feet of commercial building space and up to 1,500 square feet of associated outdoor dining areas. Housing will consist of a mix of single- and two-story structures including 12 duplex buildings (24 units). Incorporating a variety of unit sizes and floor plans, the architecture of the project will reflect a “farmhouse” theme incorporating sloped roof and stucco and wood siding, with wood accents such as horizontal siding, board and batten, and wood posts and railings. The commercial component of the project will have a similar architectural theme complimenting the residential designs.

An approximately 8,500 square feet commercial area will be located close to Mount Hermon Road. Tenancy is envisioned to include locally-serving retail uses such as a restaurant(s), coffee shop, bakery, or other similar types of uses. Supporting these commercial uses will be approximately 1,500 square feet of outdoor dining space. This commercial area will be served by a surface parking lot, all of which will be separated from the residential land uses by landscaped areas.

Primary access to the site is from Mount Herman Road and Lockwood Lane via a new local road (Drive A). Access to the commercial uses are from Drive A. Internal access to the residential units are from two secondary local roads and a series of cul-de-sacs (Courts A through J). A separated multi-use pedestrian/bicycle trail will be constructed, generally adjacent to Drive A.

In addition to certification of a Final EIR, the proposed project will require the following City approvals:

- General Plan Amendment to change a majority of the existing Open Space (OS) land use designation to Residential – Medium High (R-MH) and expand the size of the Commercial Service (C-S) land use destination fronting Mount Hermon Road.
- Zone Change a majority of the existing Open Space (OS) zoning designation to R-M-6 Residential Medium High / Planned Development and to expand and rezone the Commercial Service to Commercial Service / Planned Development
- Planned Development in conjunction with the Zone Change request to allow for the approval of a general development plan incorporating alternative development standards.
- Vesting Tentative Tract Map for the subdivision of land for residential, commercial and common areas.
- Use Permits
- Design Review to evaluate the site design and architecture of the project
- Planned Sign Program to evaluate the proposed signs for the project.

Project Alternatives

The EIR will include an evaluation of various alternatives including a no-project alternative. Additional alternatives will be considered based on comments received on this NOP and the analysis of impacts in the EIR.

Potential Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Project

The EIR will describe the existing environmental conditions on the project site and will identify the significant environmental impacts anticipated to result from development of the project as proposed. Where potentially significant environmental impacts are identified, the EIR will also discuss mitigation measures that may make it possible to avoid or reduce significant impacts, as appropriate.

The level of analysis in the EIR for each environmental resource is described below.

Aesthetics

The EIR will discuss the visual setting and any impacts that would potentially occur as a result of the project. This will include an analysis of the visual character and compatibility of public views of the site and its surroundings.

Agriculture

The project site is not used for agricultural purposes so this environmental resource topic will not be addressed in the EIR, apart from a brief analysis under the EIR section “Environmental Resources Considered But Eliminated.”

Air Quality

The EIR will describe the existing air quality conditions in and adjacent to the project site and will evaluate the project’s potential air quality impacts, including short-term air quality impacts associated with construction and consistency with guidelines as defined by the Monterey Bay Air Resources District (MBARD).

Biological Resources

The project site consists largely of manicured turf (no longer maintained) and trees.

The EIR will describe the characterize and map the major plant communities within the project site. It will also identify sensitive biotic resources, including habitats, plant or wildlife species of concern including the potential for presence of the Mt. Hermon June beetle, a federally listed species. The EIR will evaluate the potential effects of the proposed project activities on sensitive biotic resources and recommend measures to avoid or reduce such impacts. It will also include an analysis of potential adverse impacts on state or federally protected wetlands.

Cultural Resources

The project site is located in a mapped area of “moderate archaeological sensitivity” in the General Plan Conservation & Open Space Figure OS-2, "Archeological Sensitivity Zones". Due to the level of earth disturbance required, archaeological monitoring will be required as a standard condition of approval.

The EIR will discuss potential impacts to various cultural resource classes (i. e. Native American sites, potential historical resources) within the project site and will include mitigation measures to reduce potential impacts to a less than significant level.

Geology and Soils

The project site is not located within a State of California Earthquake Fault Zone (formerly known as Alquist-Priolo Special Study Zone) and no mapped fault traces are known to cross the site. The project site is not located in the General Plan Safety Element Map S-4 “Landslide Deposits” and is not mapped in the General Plan Safety Element Map S-5 “Slopes”.

The EIR will discuss the existing geologic and soil conditions, including potential impacts from seismic activity, on the project site, and will discuss the potential for the project to result in impacts to geology and soils on the project site.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions & Energy

The EIR will examine the potential for the project to result in global climate change impacts due to greenhouse gas emissions.

Because significance threshold has not yet been adopted by the MBARB, the effects of the proposed project will be evaluated based not on the quantity of emissions, but rather on whether practicable available control measures can be implemented.

This section will also include a discussion of the potential energy impacts and ways of avoiding or reducing inefficient, wasteful and unnecessary consumption of energy.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

The project site is not included on a list of sites from Santa Cruz County Environmental Health Services Agency, where hazardous materials were previous used or stored. General Plan Safety Element Figure S-6 “Evacuation Routes” shows Mount Hermon Road as a primary evacuation route in the City’s Emergency Response Plan. The addition of the project will not change the function of Mount Hermon Road as a primary evacuation route. A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) will be prepared for the project site.

The EIR will summarize the findings of the Phase I ESA and discuss the project’s potential to create significant hazards to the public or environment or emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous materials.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Development of the project site will create impervious surfaces and thereby reduce the area available for groundwater infiltration. The project site is located in a mapped area of “High Protection/ Recharge” in the General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element Figure OS-5 (Hydrological Resources).

The EIR will discuss the hydrologic and hydraulic conditions on the project site as well as drainage conditions in the project area and the potential for flooding. Potential water quality impacts and conformance with the Scotts Valley Stormwater Technical Guide (2104), as well as applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board requirements, will be addressed.

This section will also analyze the groundwater conditions in the project area and will discuss the use of groundwater, trends, and general aquifer conditions.

Land Use and Planning

The EIR will discuss the proposed project’s consistency with adopted plans and policies including the City’s General Plan.

Mineral Resources

The project site is located in a mapped area of “Resource Zone Undetermined” (1994 General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element, Figure OS-4, “Mineral Resource Zones”).

The project site is not used for any mining or quarrying activity. As such, this environmental resource topic will not be addressed in the EIR, apart from a brief analysis under the EIR section “Environmental Resources Considered But Eliminated.”

Noise

A portion of the project site fronting Mount Hermon Road is located in noise contours ranging from 60 to 70 dBA, as shown in General Plan Noise Element Figure N-1, “Existing Noise Contours”. The General Plan Noise Element uses the 24-hour average day-night noise level (DNL) for defining community noise impacts. The maximum standard is 60 decibels (dB) DNL of exterior noise and 45 dB DNL for interior noise.

The EIR will include a discussion of noise impacts primarily resulting from project construction. The analysis will identify the existing setting and the noise levels associated with construction activities. Post-construction project operations are not expected to significantly increase noise levels beyond what is currently occurring at the project site. Conformance with the City of Scotts Valley’s noise guidelines will be analyzed.

Population and Housing

The proposed project would result in an increase in population and housing that is well within the land use buildout capacity projections identified within the City of Scotts Valley General

Plan (1994), as well as the Association of Monterey Bay Area Government's 2018 Regional Growth Forecast for the City of Scotts Valley.

As such, this environmental resource topic will not be addressed in the EIR, apart from a brief analysis under the EIR section "Environmental Resources Considered But Eliminated."

Public Services and Recreation

Although the proposed project is an in-fill project located within an urban environment, impacts to public services and recreation will be evaluated. The EIR will assess the potential for the project to result in substantial adverse physical impacts to public services (such as fire and police protection services and schools) and the potential for the project to impact public recreation facilities.

Transportation and Traffic

The EIR will include a vehicle miles traveled (VMT) analysis using the City's Draft VMT Implementation Guidelines and the regional VMT Calculator (calibrated for Scotts Valley) to determine VMT per capita for residential uses (retail uses under 50,000 square feet are exempt).

If a significant VMT impact is identified, the EIR will identify possible transportation demand management (TDM) program measures (as identified in Appendix B of the VMT Implementation Guidelines) to reduce VMT on a per capita basis.

The EIR will also include a traffic impact analysis (TIA) which will be included as an informational section in the EIR. The TIA analysis will include AM and PM peak hour intersection level of service analysis for the following nine (9) intersections:

1. Graham Hill Road / Lockewood Lane
2. Estrella Drive / Lockewood Lane
3. Street A / Lockewood Lane
4. Mount Hermon Road / Lockewood Lane
5. Mount Herman Road / Drive A
6. Mount Herman Road / Kings Village Road
7. Mount Herman Road / Spring Lakes Drive
8. Mount Herman Road / Scotts Valley Drive
9. Mount Herman Road / La Madrona Drive / SB Highway 17 off-ramp

The TIA will analyze the following four scenarios: Existing, Existing + Project, Cumulative, and Cumulative + Project. All scenarios will be analyzed using trip generation rates from the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) *Trip Generation Manual, 10th Edition*

Tribal Cultural Resources

This section will address if the project would cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource as either a site, feature, place, and/or cultural landscape, or object with a cultural value to a California Native American tribe.

Utilities and Service Systems

This section will address water supply, wastewater, electricity, natural gas, and communications. Project-related demand for facilities and services will be estimated and compared against existing capacity and proposed future capacity associated with the proposed project. Potential impacts will be assessed based upon a comparison of the increased demand for services and utilities and the ability of the City and other utility districts to accommodate this increased demand.

Water supply, including an analysis of future water supply and demand during drought conditions will be analyzed based on demand and supply projections as identified by the Scotts Valley Water District.

Wildfire

This section will address if the project would impair an adopted emergency response or emergency evacuation plan, expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire, and/or require the installation or maintenance of infrastructure that may exacerbate fire risk that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment.

Cumulative Impacts

The EIR will include a discussion of the potentially significant cumulative impacts of the proposed project when considered with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the area. The analysis will include a discussion of all projects for which applications have been filed. This section will cover all relevant subject areas as defined in the CEQA Guidelines, and will specify which environmental resources are anticipated to experience significant cumulative impacts.

Other Required Sections

The EIR will also include, as appropriate, other information typically required for an EIR including: 1) Growth Inducing Impacts; 2) Significant Unavoidable Impacts; 3) Significant Irreversible Environmental Changes; 4) References; and 5) EIR Authors. Relevant technical reports will be provided in an appendices.

Figure 1: Project Location

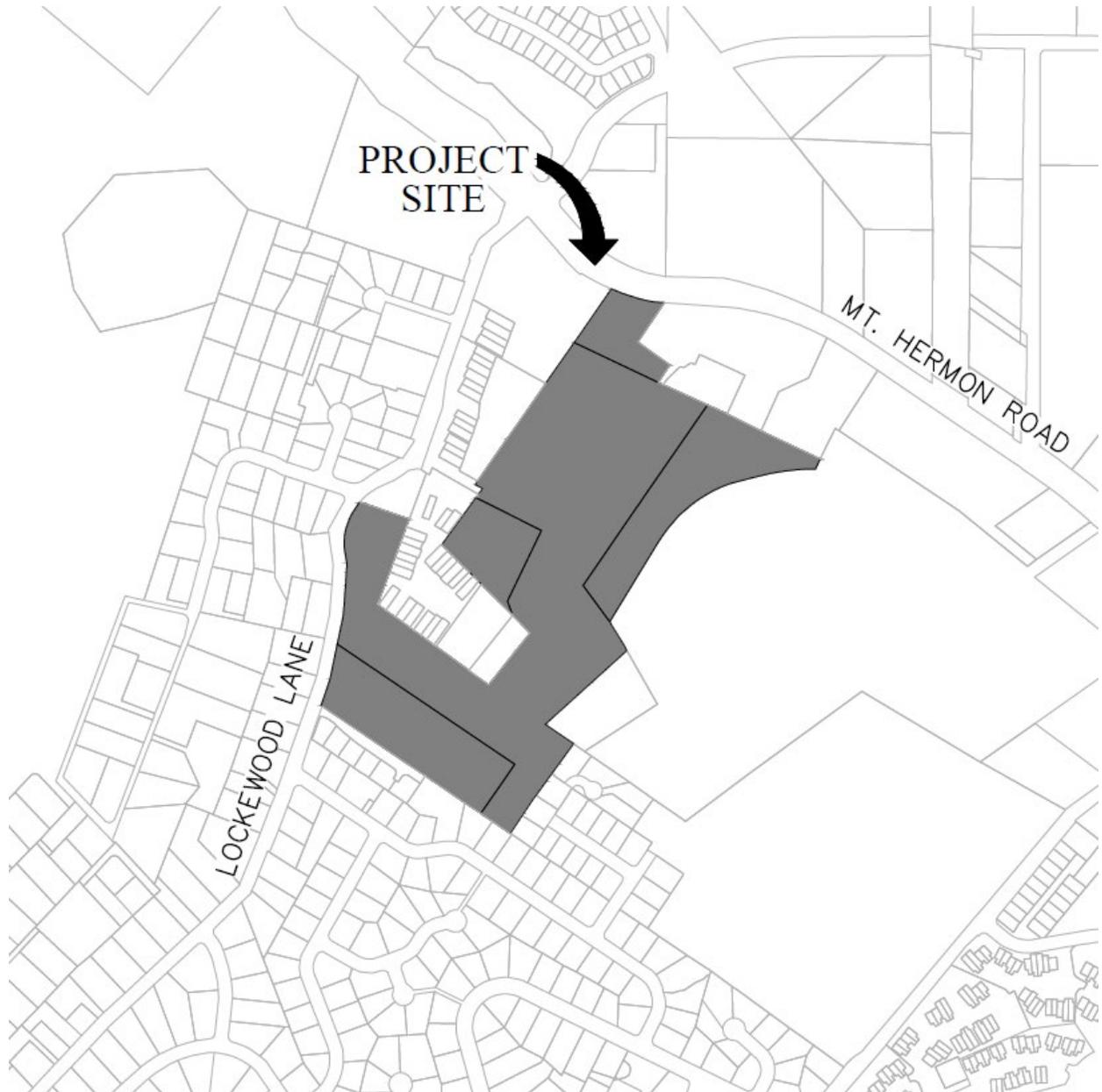


Figure 2: Project Site Plan

