



**CITY OF ELK GROVE**  
**8401 LAGUNA PALMS WAY • ELK GROVE, CALIFORNIA 95758**  
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## NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

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**DATE:** November 18, 2022

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

**LEAD AGENCY:** City of Elk Grove  
Contact: Christopher Jordan, Director of Strategic Planning and Innovation  
8401 Laguna Palms Way  
Elk Grove, CA 95758

**PROJECT:** The New Zoo at Elk Grove

**APPLICANT:** City of Elk Grove and Sacramento Zoological Society

**COMMENT PERIOD:** November 21, 2022 to January 13, 2023

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In discharging its duties under Section 15021 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, the City of Elk Grove (as lead agency, hereinafter "City" or "Elk Grove") intends to prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the **New Zoo at Elk Grove** (the "Project"). In accordance with Sections 15082 of the CEQA Guidelines, the City has prepared this Notice of Preparation (NOP) to provide the Office of Planning and Research, responsible and trustee agencies, and other interested parties with sufficient information describing the Project and its potential environmental effects.

The City made the determination to prepare an EIR following preliminary review of the Project. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15063(a), because an EIR is needed, an initial study has not been prepared. Probable environmental effects of the Project are described in the attached Project summary.

As specified by the CEQA Guidelines, the NOP will be circulated for a 53-day review period. **The comment period runs from November 21, 2022 to January 13, 2023.** The City welcomes public input during the review period. If the City has not received either a response or a well-justified request for additional time by a responsible agency or the Office of Planning and Research by the end of the review period, the City may presume that each responsible and trustee agency and the Office of Planning and Research had no response to make. (CEQA Guidelines, § 15082(b)(2).)

CEQA provides for a Lead Agency to facilitate one or more Scoping Meetings, which provide opportunity for determining the scope and content of the EIR. Traditionally, the City hosts one Scoping Meeting for agencies and the general public during the NOP comment period. A video presentation by staff, introducing the Project and outlining the CEQA process, is available for review at the website URL listed below. This video and comment opportunity will be available at the link below throughout the NOP comment period (November 21, 2022 to January 13, 2023).

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

City of Elk Grove  
Office of Strategic Planning and Innovation  
c/o Christopher Jordan  
8401 Laguna Palms Way  
Elk Grove, CA 95758  
cjordan@elkgrovecity.org

<http://www.elkgrovecity.org/zoo>

## PROJECT LOCATION AND SETTING

The Project site (Assessor's Parcel Numbers [APNs] 132-0320-010, -001 and -002; and 132-2390-006) is located at the northwest intersection of Kammerer Road and Lotz Parkway (Figure 1) in the City of Elk Grove. The Project site is a fallow field surrounded by single-family residences to the east, agriculture to the south and west, and active construction of a new residential subdivision to the north.

The core of the Project site (APNs 132-0320-010, -001 and -002) is within the Southeast Policy Area Community Plan and has a land use designation of Light Industrial/Flex (LI/F), Resource Management and Conservation (RMC), and Employment Center (EC). The City is in the process of a General Plan amendment to place the southern portion of the Southeast Policy Area and portions of the Promenade Parkway corridor into the Livable Employment Area Community Plan, a new Community Plan. That effort includes consideration of the Project site used as a zoological park, but not to a sufficient detail as to approve the Project.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project would result in the operation of a zoological park and associated support and operational, retail, and guest services facilities on the Project site as part of the development of the New Zoo in Elk Grove. The Project would include a new Special Planning Area (SPA) referred to as the Zoological Park SPA, development of the zoo, parking facilities, off-site public infrastructure improvements, and an animal browse program. These Project elements are further described below and shown in Figure 2, [Zoological Park SPA](#)

The Project would result in a new SPA for the Project site that would establish a land use plan and allowed uses for properties within the Zoological Park SPA. The SPA would also include development standards such as minimum setbacks and height limits. Permitting requirements including thresholds for Design Review and identification of the approving authority for various permits required to construct and operate the proposed Zoo would be contained in the SPA.

### Zoological Park

The zoological park would include various facilities and buildings that would encompass the proposed Zoo. The main facility would be on approximately 65 acres and would be designed to support an average annual attendance of between 1.1 and 1.6 million visitors. The following elements would be included in the zoological park:

- ▶ Main entry complex;
- ▶ Education center;
- ▶ Main restaurant, bar, and event space (referred to as the Lodge), with access for both ticketed and non-ticketed guests;
- ▶ Animal care center;
- ▶ A restaurant/cafeteria within the Zoo (referred to as the Food Hall), along with various smaller retail and food pavilions;
- ▶ Play areas and structures for children;
- ▶ Overnight accommodations including an area for personal tents, a tent camp with safari tents, and suites attached to animal care quarters;
- ▶ Warehouse and storage support facilities; and
- ▶ Other animal care/holding and guest services facilities.

The zoological park would be constructed in two main phases. Phase I would include construction of the Green Corridor and Africa zones. Specific animal habitats within these zones may be further phased. The California, Australia, and Asia zones would be developed as part of Phase II as funding becomes available.

## Parking Facilities

Two main guest parking lots would be constructed to support parking for the Zoo. The North Lot would adjoin to the guest entrance to the facility and the South Lot would be across Classical Way to the south of the Zoo. A total of 1,100 to 1,300 parking spaces would be distributed between the two lots. Employee parking would be located on and off site from the main Zoo facilities. A 2.22 acre employee lot would be constructed off the main site, across Lotz Parkway at the intersection of Lotz Parkway and Overture Way east of the main portion of the Project site. Driveway access to the employee lot would occur along Overture Way. At least 120 bicycle parking stalls would be installed as part of the Project.

## Off-Site Public Infrastructure

Off-site public infrastructure improvements for the Project would include roadway improvements, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, potable and recycled water infrastructure, sewer infrastructure, electrical and telecommunications infrastructure, and storm drainage. Roadway improvements would include the widening of Lotz Parkway, an extension of Classical Way and Road B, and a variety of intersection improvements. A new Class I path would be constructed along the west side of Lotz Parkway and a new Class IV bikeway would be constructed along the east side of Road B.<sup>1</sup> Water and sewer lines would be extended to the site to serve the Project. Electrical and telecommunication infrastructure would be extended to the site in joint trenches along the roadway network. A new stormwater retention basin would be constructed west of Road B.

## Animal Browse Program

The Project would include a Browse Program to address the nutritional needs of the herbivore and omnivore species housed at the Zoo. Under the program, plant clippings would be gathered from various sites around the City, processed at the Zoo, and fed to the animals. The Browse Program would utilize vegetation from existing parks, open space, and landscaping as well as two future sites. The Arcadian Village Park Site at 8341 Sheldon Road as well as Elk Ridge Way Property between Elk Ridge Way and Lodestone Circle would provide additional vegetation for the Browse Program once the two projects are completed.<sup>2</sup> Finally, the Browse Program would have a community partnership where residents or neighborhoods could participate in the program by planting browse vegetation.

## PROBABLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

The EIR will evaluate whether implementing the proposed Project would potentially result in one or more significant environmental effects. The following issue areas will be addressed in the EIR:

- ▶ Aesthetics
- ▶ Agriculture Resources
- ▶ Air Quality
- ▶ Biological Resources
- ▶ Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources
- ▶ Energy
- ▶ Geology and Soils
- ▶ Greenhouse Gases and Climate Change
- ▶ Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- ▶ Hydrology and Water Quality

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<sup>1</sup> A Class I path is a bike path or shared-use path away from vehicle travel and off the roadway. A Class IV bikeway is a separated bikeway that is separated from vehicle traffic by physical features, such as flexible barriers.

<sup>2</sup> This EIR does not provide environmental review for the Arcadian Village Park Site or Elk Ridge Way Property projects, but does analyze transportation of vegetation materials from the two sites.

- ▶ Land Use and Planning
- ▶ Noise and Vibration
- ▶ Public Services
- ▶ Transportation
- ▶ Utilities and Service Systems

### **Issues Scoped Out from Analysis in the EIR**

The City has determined that the Project would have no significant impacts on the following environmental issue areas. These areas will not be discussed in the EIR for the reasons discussed below.

#### **Forestry Resources**

No forestry resources have been identified in the City. The Project site does not have trees that would be used for forestry. Therefore, there would be no impacts related to forestry resources, and this issue will not be discussed in the EIR.

#### **Mineral Resources**

No significant mineral resources have been identified in the City. The Project site is not used for mineral extraction, nor is it designated as an important mineral recovery site. Therefore, there would not be no impacts related to mineral resources, and this issue will not be discussed in the EIR.

#### **Population and Housing**

The Project would include development of zoological park on undeveloped land. The Project would not include new housing, displace existing housing or people, or result in population growth. Therefore, there would be no significant impacts related to population and housing and this issue will not be discussed in the EIR.

#### **Recreation**

The Project would not contribute to unplanned population growth and would not include any new housing that would increase the use of existing recreational facilities or demand for new recreational facilities. The Project would provide additional recreational opportunities in the City through the development of a zoological park. Therefore, there would be no impacts related to recreation, and this issue will not be discussed in the EIR.

#### **Wildfire**

The project site is not located in or near a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone. Therefore, there would be no significant impacts related to wildfire, and this issue will not be discussed in the EIR.



Source: adapted by Ascent in 2022.

Figure 1 Project Site



Source: Image produced and provided by SHR Studios in 2022.

Figure 2 Project Site Master Plan