

NOTICE OF PREPARATION

DATE: November 3, 2023

TO: State Clearinghouse
1400 Tenth Street
Sacramento CA, 95814

TO: Responsible Agencies, Organizations, and Interested Parties

LEAD AGENCY: City of Rancho Cordova
Contact: Darcy Goulart
2729 Prospect Park Drive
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670

SUBJECT: Environmental Impact Report for the Westborough at Easton Specific Plan

In discharging its duties under Section 15125 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, the City of Rancho Cordova (as Lead Agency) intends to prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for The Westborough at Easton Specific Plan (also known as “the Specific Plan” or “the proposed project”). The City will be the lead agency for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”).

In accordance with Section 15125 of the CEQA Guidelines, the City of Rancho Cordova has prepared this Notice of Preparation to provide Responsible Agencies and other interested parties with sufficient information describing the proposed project and its potential environmental effects.

The determination to prepare an EIR was made by the City of Rancho Cordova. As specified by the CEQA Guidelines, the Notice of Preparation (NOP) 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 on November 14, 2023 at 5:30 p.m. in the
Rancho Cordova City Hall, American River South Room
2729 Prospect Park Drive,
Rancho Cordova**

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

Darcy Goulart, Planning Manager
City of Rancho Cordova
2729 Prospect Park Drive
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670

The comment period closes on December 4, 2023.

A. Location, Current Use, and Surrounding Use

The Westborough at Easton Specific Plan Area (Plan Area) consists of approximately 1,236.0 acres of land area located within the City of Rancho Cordova and 312.2 acres located within unincorporated Sacramento County, for a total of 1,548.2 acres (see Figure 1). The Plan Area is located along the eastern edge of Rancho Cordova, and south of the American River, Highway 50, Folsom Boulevard, and the Folsom South Canal. The Plan Area's western border, and the majority of the northern border is defined by the Folsom South Canal, an aqueduct that diverts water from the American River at Nimbus Dam. The remainder of the Plan Area's northern border consists of existing commercial uses and Aerojet Rocketdyne (Aerojet) property. The eastern border of the Plan Area is comprised of Hazel Avenue (which becomes Nimbus Road south of Folsom Boulevard), additional Aerojet property, AMPAC Fine Chemicals (AMPAC) property, and open spaces. The southern border is formed by White Rock Road, a four-lane arterial roadway which was expanded, repaved, and improved with curbs and gutters in recent years. See Figure 1 for a regional location map of the Plan Area.

Currently, the Plan Area consists of undeveloped, gently rolling terrain; a network of paved/unpaved roadways and monitoring wells, and highly disturbed areas that include dredge tailings.¹ Large portions of the Plan Area were extensively modified as a result of historical gold mining operations (e.g., dredge mining). Vegetated patches containing mostly oak woodlands, grasslands, or ruderal species occur within undeveloped parcels or are interspersed between dredge tailing piles. Buffalo Creek flows east to west through the northern portion of the Plan Area, generally parallel to the Folsom South Canal, and supports limited riparian habitat. There are also areas containing vernal pools and wetlands in the Plan Area. An unused rail spur runs north to south through the Plan Area and connects to the regional rail line parallel to Folsom Boulevard. Several structures related to former uses of the site are located in the eastern portion of the Plan Area. Additionally, groundwater extraction and treatment (GET) wells are located within and adjacent to the Plan Area and used for cleanup of legacy groundwater contamination. The Plan Area ranges in elevation from approximately 120 to 160 feet above mean sea level.

Surrounding land uses include development in the Gold River area north of the Folsom South Canal and Highway 50; Aerojet and AMPAC properties and light industrial/commercial uses to the east; industrial and commercial uses to the west in Nimbus Industrial Park and White Rock Business Park; and open space, rural, and industrial uses to the south, including mining and recycling facilities. The Plan Area is located between two other planned developments – Glenborough at Easton to the northeast and Rio del Oro at Easton to the south, which are similarly planned for a mix of residential, commercial, civic, and open space uses. Light rail transit lines are located south of Folsom Boulevard, with existing stations at Sunrise Boulevard and Hazel Avenue near the northern boundary of the Plan Area. A future light rail station is planned by the Sacramento Regional Transit District (SacRT) along Folsom Boulevard to the north between Highway 50, the Folsom South Canal, and the northern boundary of the Plan Area. A heavy rail track administered by the Sacramento County/Placerville Joint Powers Authority runs adjacent to the existing light rail transit line. See Figure 2 for a local context map.

¹ Dredge tailings are mining byproducts consisting (in this case) of sand, gravel, fine soils, and large river cobbles.

Figure 1. Regional Location Map

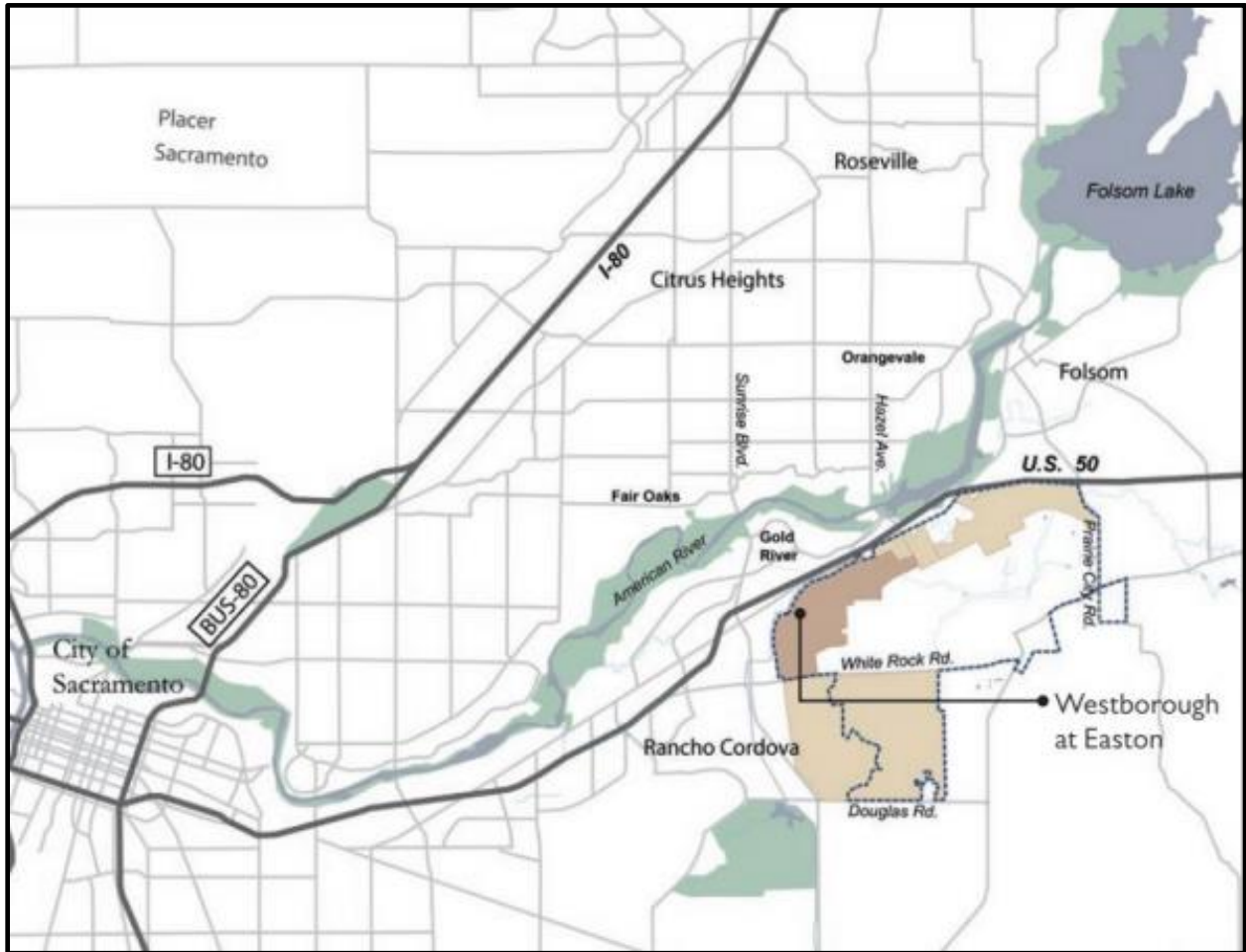
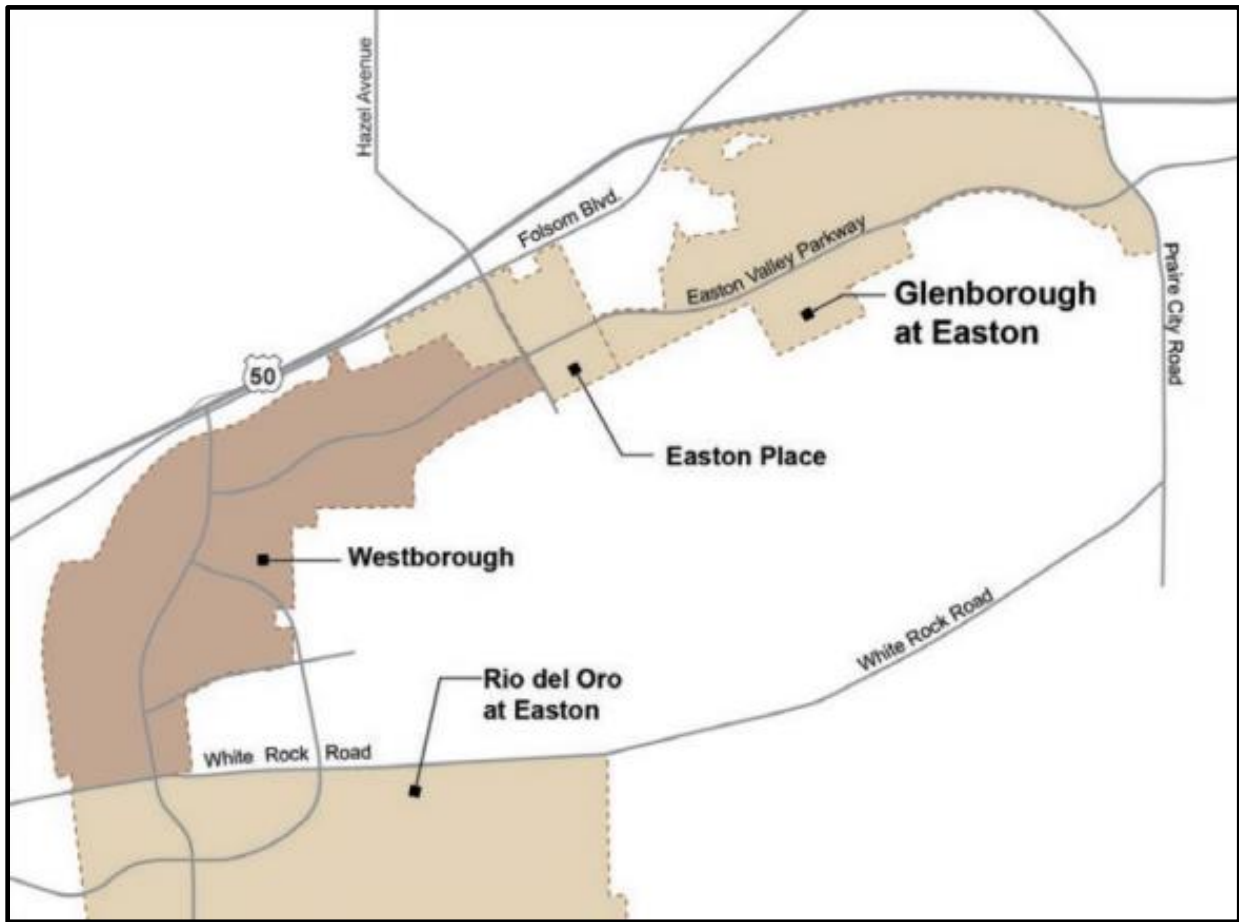


Figure 2. Local Context Map



B. Project Characteristics

The proposed project is the Westborough at Easton Specific Plan (Specific Plan), which provides the land use, transportation, open space, infrastructure, financing, and regulatory framework for development and conservation in the approximately 1,548-acre Plan Area. The proposed land uses for the Plan Area include a mix of residential uses ranging in density from 2.1 dwelling units/acre up to 40 dwelling units/acre, commercial retail and services, logistics and operations, data centers, office, light industry, transit-oriented development, schools, parks, and open space and preserve areas. The Specific Plan proposes the following elements:

- 7,130 residential units
- Approximately 320.4 acres of commercial uses
- Three schools (two elementary schools and one middle school)
- Approximately 77 acres of parks
- Approximately 15.8 acres of neighborhood green space
- Approximately 199 acres of open space
- Approximately 55.9 acres of Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle (VELB) Preserve

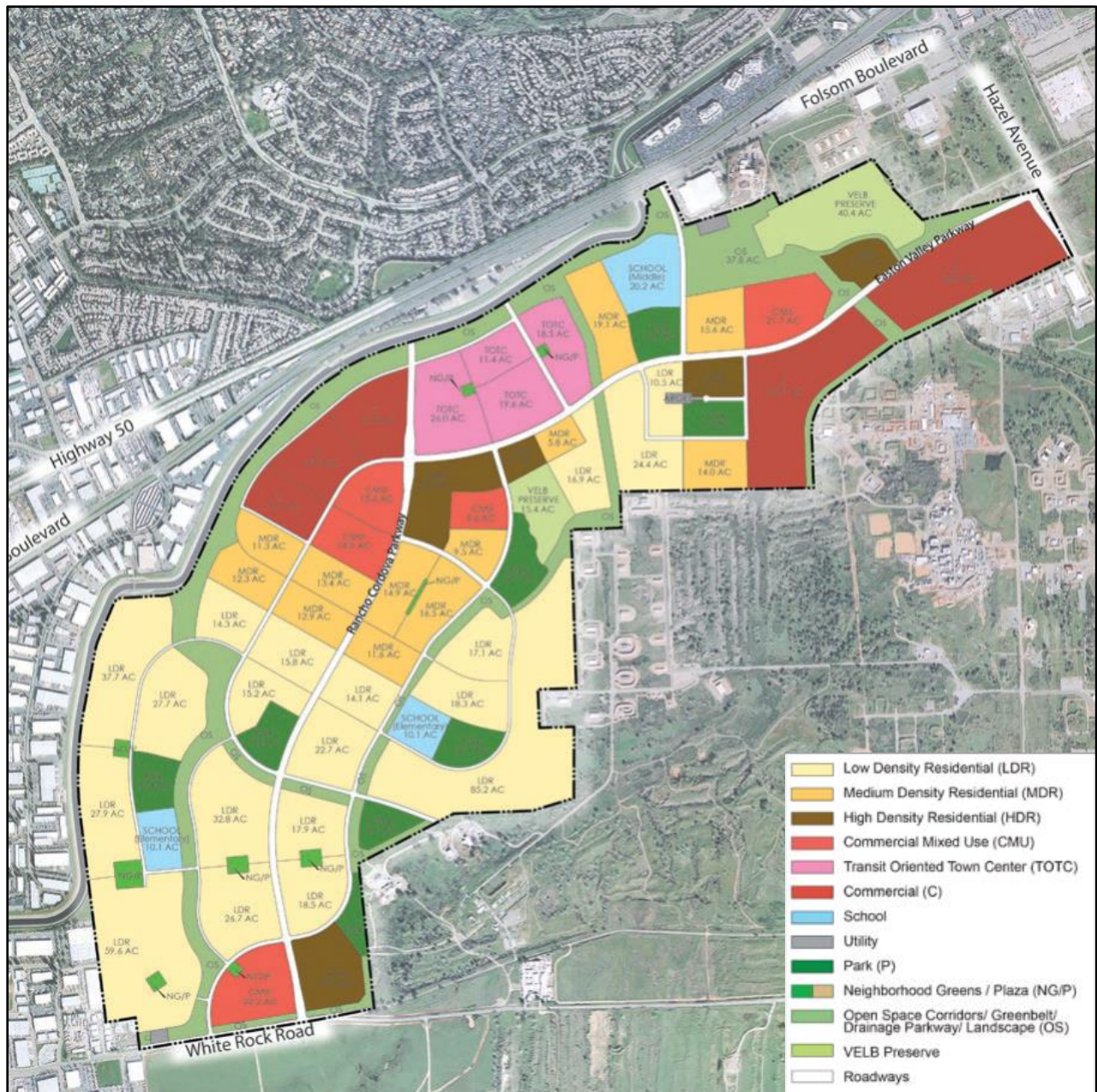
The Specific Plan envisions development of districts and neighborhoods connected to one another via streets and an open space network. Low-density residential uses would be concentrated at the southern and western portions of the Plan Area, intermixed with parks, green spaces, plazas, and schools. Medium-density residential uses would be located in the approximate center of the Plan Area, bordered by high-density residential uses and commercial mixed-use areas. Commercial and transit-oriented uses would be concentrated in the central northern part of the Plan Area near the future light rail station, buffered from Folsom Boulevard and Highway 50 by an open space corridor. Additional commercial and high-density residential uses would be located along the eastern border, proximate to the existing commercial land uses near the Folsom Boulevard/Hazel Avenue intersection.

A land use summary for the proposed Specific Plan is provided in Table 1 below and the conceptual land use plan is shown on Figure 3. Individual project components are also described in further detail below.

Table 1. Westborough Specific Plan Land Use Summary

Land Use	Acreage	Average Density (du/acre)	Units
Low Density Residential (LDR) (2.1–6.0 du/ac)	503.1	5.0	2,516
Medium Density Residential (MDR) (6.1-18.0 du/ac)	157.0	10.0	1,570
High Density Residential (HDR) (18.1-40 du/ac)	68.8	25.0	1,719
Commercial Mixed Use (CMU)	84.0	--	800
Transit Oriented Town Center (TOTC)	75.5	--	525
Commercial (C)	160.9	--	--
School	40.4	--	--
Utility/GET Facilities	4.6	--	--
Park (P)	76.7	--	--
Neighborhood Greens /Plaza (NG/P)	15.8	--	--
Open Space Corridors/Greenbelt/Drainage Parkway/Landscape (OS)	199.0	--	--
VELB Preserve	55.9	--	--
Roadways	106.4	--	--
<i>Total</i>	<i>1548.2</i>	--	<i>7,130</i>

Figure 3. Conceptual Land Use Plan



General Plan and Zoning

Per the City of Rancho Cordova General Plan, the Plan Area is located primarily within the Westborough Planning Area in City limits, and partially within the Aerojet Planning Area in unincorporated Sacramento County. The Planning Area designation in the City’s General Plan is intended to direct further planning efforts in undeveloped areas where detailed land planning will be evaluated in conjunction with Specific Plans. The proposed Specific Plan provides the land use categories, zoning, development standards, and design guidelines intended to guide buildout of the Westborough area in alignment with the City of Rancho Cordova General Plan and zoning code.

The proposed Specific Plan would require a portion of the Plan Area (approximately 312.2 acres) to be annexed into the City of Rancho Cordova.

Access and Circulation

Vehicles

Primary vehicle access and circulation would be provided via three new major arterial roadways: Rancho Cordova Parkway, Easton Valley Parkway, and White Rock Road. Rancho Cordova Parkway, a proposed six-lane roadway with bike lanes in each direction, would travel north-south through the Plan Area and provide direct access from a new interchange with Highway 50. Access to Rancho Cordova Parkway would also be provided from the south at White Rock Road. White Rock Road would be widened from a four-lane road to a six-lane expressway and serve as the main southern entry into the Plan Area. Easton Valley Parkway, a proposed six-lane roadway with bike lanes in each direction, would travel east to west through the Plan Area and intersect Rancho Cordova Parkway at a grade-separated roundabout in the approximate center of the Plan Area. A new traffic signal would be installed at the intersection of Easton Valley Parkway and Hazel Avenue at the eastern boundary. The proposed arterial roadways would have 16-foot center medians and 8-foot-wide sidewalks separated from the roadway by 10-foot-wide tree wells.

In addition to the major arterial roadways, the Specific Plan proposes a network of minor arterials, collector streets, minor commercial streets, and local streets which would correspond to the proposed development intensities and land uses. See the proposed vehicular circulation plan, Figure 4, for an illustration of the plan.

Bicycle and Pedestrian

Bicycle and pedestrian circulation would be integrated into the road system throughout the Plan Area. Major arterials would include bike lanes and sidewalks along the entirety of their lengths. Class I paths (paved right-of-way for exclusive use by bicyclist, pedestrians, or other non-motorized forms of travel) would be located along major arterials, consisting of 12-foot-wide paved surfaces with 2-foot-wide decomposed granite shoulders on either side. Class II bike lanes (one-way facilities defined by pavement striping and signage for exclusive or preferential bike travel) would consist of 5- to 7-foot-wide lanes along streets in the Plan Area. Additionally, multipurpose trails are planned throughout greenways and open space corridors, consisting of 8- to 10-foot-wide paved surfaces with decomposed granite shoulders. The bicycle and pedestrian facilities would be planned to integrate into existing and planned City of Rancho Cordova facilities (as identified in the Bicycle Master Plan), including the existing Class I bike path along the Folsom South Canal and future bike lanes on White Rock Road. Both at-grade and grade-separated crossings are proposed throughout the circulation system.

Public Transportation

Public transit would be facilitated by the future light rail station on Folsom Boulevard at the northern boundary of the Plan Area, which is related to but not part of the improvements under the proposed Specific Plan. Nearby areas are currently served by SacRT light rail (Gold Line) and bus lines (lines 74 and 109).

Open Space/Recreation

The proposed Specific Plan includes approximately 347 acres of land dedicated to parks and open space, including a Community Park, Neighborhood Parks, trails, two preserves, neighborhood greens and plazas, and landscape corridors. The Community Park would be in the approximate center of the Plan Area and a total of 13 Neighborhood Parks would be interspersed

throughout, with a proposed greenbelt connecting these areas. Land uses on the northern border would be buffered from Folsom Boulevard and Highway 50 by open spaces. Refer to Figure 5 for the proposed parks and open space plan.

The proposed Specific Plan also includes establishment of two areas (totaling approximately 56 acres) of elderberry shrub preserve to protect the habitat of the Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle, which is a species listed as Threatened under the Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA).

Figure 4. Vehicular Circulation Plan

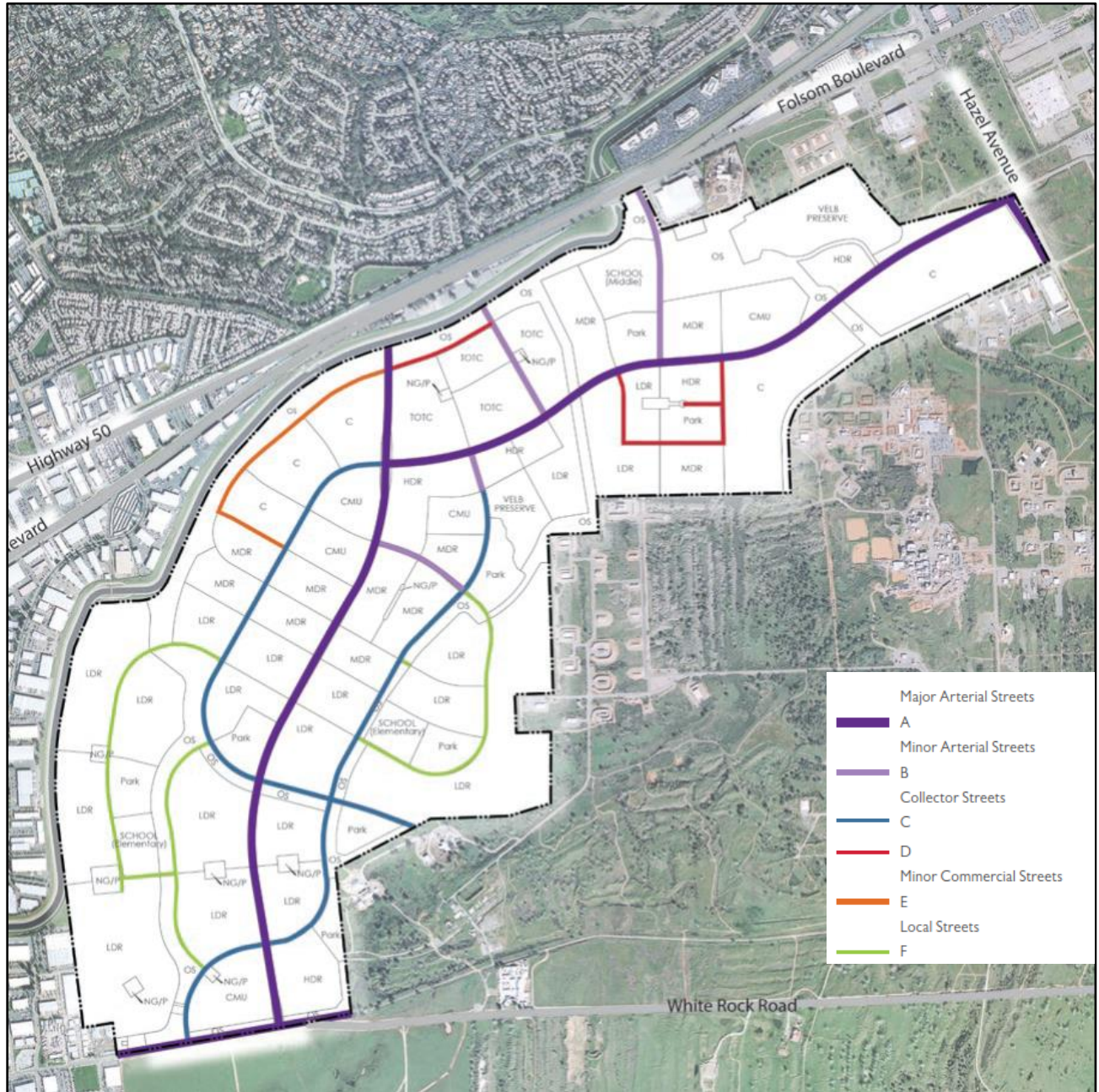


Figure 5. Parks and Open Space Plan



Public Services

The proposed Specific Plan would provide various public facilities to accommodate the proposed development, including schools, fire protection facilities, and a library.

Schools

Two new elementary school sites and one middle school site are included in the Specific Plan. The proposed schools are planned for inclusion in the Folsom Cordova Unified School District. The three school sites would occupy approximately 40 acres of the Plan Area and would be co-located with neighborhood parks to encourage shared use of recreational facilities.

Fire Protection

The Plan Area is within Sacramento Municipal Fire Department's (SMFD) service area. Based on the anticipated future population and SMFD staffing standards, the proposed Specific Plan would require construction of one approximately 2.5-acre fire station in the Plan Area, the location of which is to be identified as of the writing of this NOP. The fire station would be design and constructed to meet SMFD standards, and advance coordination would be completed with the agency.

Police Protection

The Plan Area is served by the City of Rancho Cordova Police Department, which contracts for service with the County of Sacramento Sheriff Department, with a facility at 2897 Kilgore Road, approximately one mile west of the Plan Area. The Specific Plan is expected to require an increase in police staffing to serve the increase in population and the new areas of development.

Utilities

New utility connections and expansions of service would be included as part of Specific Plan implementation, as described below. The planned infrastructure system will be constructed in coordination with the phased development of the Plan Area. The City may require that certain off-site improvements are completed in conjunction with a particular phase of development, but all infrastructure for each phase of development will be required to include all on-site backbone infrastructure and off-site facilities necessary to serve each phase of development, including necessary transportation, sewer, water, recycled water, storm drainage, dry utilities, school, and other facilities and improvements.

Water Service

The Plan Area is currently located within the City of Folsom service territory for provision of water. The proposed Specific Plan includes a request to annex into the Golden State Water Company's (GSWC) service area. Four points of connections to the existing GSWC system would be established, including an existing 24-30" transmission main near the intersection of Citrus Road and Trade Center Drive, an existing 14" water line west of the Folsom Boulevard crossing of the Folsom South Canal, an existing 14" water line near the intersection of Marketplace Lane and Folsom Boulevard, and an existing 12" water line near the intersection of Hazel Avenue and Atlanta Street. Based on unit demand factors per the GSWC Urban Water Management Plan and anticipated population of the proposed Specific Plan, additional water distribution and storage facilities are expected to be constructed within the Plan Area. Ongoing coordination with GSWC will be completed to evaluate supply and demand and identify any required improvements on- or off-site as part of the annexation process.

Wastewater Service

Wastewater service to the Plan Area is provided by the Sacramento Area Sewer District (SASD). The Plan Area is currently undeveloped and new service connections would be required. The eastern portion of the Plan Area would be served by an existing trunk sewer line installed in Hazel Avenue and most of the remaining area would be served by gravity sewer lines connecting to a proposed pump station at the southwest corner. Sewer lines would be placed in new surface streets to connect to proposed developments. The Specific Plan would install a new force main in White Rock Road to convey wastewater off-site. Wastewater would be conveyed to SASD's

regional collection facilities, ultimately reaching the Sacramento Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant north of Elk Grove.

Stormwater Drainage and Flood Control

The Plan Area lies within the Buffalo Creek watershed and would drain to the existing Buffalo Creek flume, which crosses the Folsom South Canal on the north side of the Plan Area. Stormwater treatment measures (bioswales, detention basins, etc.) would be integrated into landscape features within open space corridors and greenways. The proposed project also includes construction of several off-site stormwater detention basins to the east of the Plan Area in open spaces owned by Aerojet that would contribute to overall management of runoff from the new development. Culverts would be constructed as needed to provide stormwater conveyance through open space/drainage corridors at roadway crossings. Stormwater management would be consistent with standards and guidelines in the Stormwater Quality Design Manual for the Sacramento Region.

Solid Waste

The Sacramento County Department of Waste Management and Recycling would provide solid waste collection and disposal services to the Plan Area, including recycling and green waste services.

Electricity and Natural Gas

The Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) would provide electric service to the proposed Specific Plan and Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) would provide natural gas service. SMUD operates three existing substations in the vicinity of the Plan Area that would provide electrical service to the proposed development. Existing overhead 12 kilovolt (kV) and 69 kV transmission lines extend from the nearby substations and intersect the Plan Area in several locations. One existing overhead 69kV line at the northeastern portion of the Plan Area is proposed to be relocated to retain connectivity between SMUD's Prairie City and Nimbus Substations. The relocated line would be placed in a new alignment to the southeast consisting of both overhead and underground segments. Additionally, three potential locations (for a total of five acres) are under consideration for new SMUD substations along the southern and eastern boundaries of the Plan Area.

Required Approvals

The proposed project requires approval of the following discretionary entitlements. The proposed project would require City approval of the following:

- Certification of the EIR
- Adoption of the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program
- General Plan amendments to amend the Land Use Diagram to reflect the land use plan proposed within the Specific Plan; amend the Circulation Plan to reflect the proposed circulation plan, including for Rancho Cordova Parkway, Easton Valley Parkway, White Rock Road, minor arterial streets, collector streets, and planned intersection

improvements; and amend the bikeway and trails plan to reflect proposed on- and off-street bikeways in the Plan Area.

- Approval of the Westborough at Easton Specific Plan
- Approval of proposed changes to the Aeroject Special Planning Area ordinance
- Rezoning and zoning
- Large Lot Tentative Subdivision Maps and Tentative Subdivision Maps
- Approval of public facilities financing plan

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

- Approval from the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) for the proposed annexation of unincorporated Sacramento County lands into the City of Rancho Cordova and rezoning
- Approval from LAFCo and SASD for annexation of property into SSAD
- United States Army Corps of engineers (ACOE) – Individual Permit (404)
- Adoption of the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) – Section 7 Consultation/Biological Opinion
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) – 1602 Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement
- Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (CVRWQCB) – Section 401 Water Quality Certification
- Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (SMAQMD) – Authority to Construct/Permit to Operate, approval of Air Quality Management Plan

Future development within the Specific Plan Area would be subject to additional approvals, which may include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- Tentative subdivision maps
- Conditional use permits
- Tree removal permits
- Development review
- Design review
- Building and grading permits

C. Project Background

The purpose of the EIR is to provide information about potential significant physical environmental impacts of implementing the Westborough at Easton Specific Plan, to identify

feasible ways to reduce those significant impacts, and to describe and analyze possible alternatives to the proposed project if potential significant impacts are identified. Preparation of an NOP and EIR does not indicate a decision by the City to approve or disapprove the project. However, prior to making any such decision, the City Council must review and consider the information contained in the EIR.

D. Potential Environmental Effects

Based on the information the City has examined to date, the EIR would be likely to focus on environmental analysis related to the following areas: Aesthetics, Agriculture and Forestry Resources, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources, Energy, Geology and Soils/Mineral Resources, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology and Water Quality, Land Use and Planning, Noise, Population and Housing, Public Services and Recreation, Transportation, Utilities and Service Systems, and Wildfire. In addition, statutorily required sections and discussion of project alternatives will be included. The City will refine the scope of analysis, if appropriate, based on input received as a part of the NOP scoping process. The following section is a preliminary summary of the contents of each of the technical chapters of the EIR.

Aesthetics

The Aesthetics chapter of the EIR will describe the existing visual character of the Plan Area and assess the potential for buildout of the proposed Specific Plan to change the visual character of the site and vicinity. Effects on scenic vistas, resources, and designated scenic road or highway will be described, in addition to any light and glare impacts from the proposed development. Mitigation measures will be identified for any significant impacts.

Agriculture and Forestry Resources

The Plan Area was historically used for agriculture but is no longer considered suitable due to past disturbance and disposal of dredge tailings associated with former mining uses on-site. The Plan Area also does not contain any forestry resources and the proposed Specific Plan is not anticipated to have any effect on forestry uses.

Air Quality

The Air Quality chapter of the EIR will summarize the regional air quality setting, including climate and topography, existing ambient air quality, regulatory setting, and presence of any sensitive receptors near the project site. The air quality impact analysis will be informed by guidance provided by the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (SMAQMD) guidelines. A quantitative assessment of short-term and long-term increases of criteria air pollutant emissions of primary concern (i.e., ROG, NO_x, and PM₁₀) resulting from construction and operation the proposed Specific Plan will be included. The California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) will be used to quantify emissions, based on project-specific data and inputs, and the operational air quality assessment will consider Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) information as provided in the traffic assessment. Toxic air contaminant effects and odor effects will be discussed qualitatively. Existing pollutant exposure and odor effects associated with the operation of nearby groundwater extraction and treatment facilities and hazardous waste treatment facilities at AMPAC Fine Chemicals will also be evaluated.

Biological Resources

The Biological Resources chapter will discuss potential impacts to plant communities, wetlands, and wildlife. The EIR will provide an analysis of potential effects on rare, endangered, candidate sensitive, and special-status species based on biological resources technical reports prepared for the proposed Specific Plan, including a Biological Resources Assessment, Arborist Survey Report, Special Status Plant Surveys, Swainson's Hawk Foraging Habitat Assessment, and Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle Survey. In addition, the biological resources analysis will discuss the effects of the proposed project on wildlife movement throughout the area. Recommended mitigation measures will be incorporated, if necessary, to reduce significant impacts to biological resources.

Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources

The Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources chapters of the EIR will discuss the potential impacts to historical, archaeological, and tribal cultural resources from implementation of the proposed Specific Plan. The chapters will include the results of a Cultural Resources Assessment and Inventory Report prepared for the proposed Specific Plan. Potential effects on historic structures, human remains, and other buried resources will be assessed. The chapters will also discuss compliance with Assembly Bill (AB) 52 regarding notification of relevant tribes and opportunities for tribal input on the project. Recommended mitigation measures will be incorporated, if necessary, to reduce potentially significant cultural and tribal cultural resources impacts.

Energy

The Energy chapter of the EIR will assess the proposed Specific Plan's construction and operational energy consumption. The same inputs used for the air quality and GHG assessments will provide the basis for energy calculations. Energy use and associated emissions are included in air quality and GHG modeling; thus, environmental impacts associated with energy use and efficiency will be captured in the analysis of air quality and GHG emissions.

Geology and Soils/Mineral and Paleontological Resources

The Geology and Soils/Mineral and Paleontological Resources chapter of the EIR will summarize the setting of the Plan Area, including seismic setting, soil characteristics, and topography. This chapter will include an analysis of geologic resources, hazards, and soil types, incorporating the results of the Preliminary Geotechnical Engineering Study prepared for the proposed Specific Plan. The discussion will include, as appropriate, ground rupture from faulting; potential damage from strong seismic ground shaking; liquefaction; and settlement/subsidence. There are areas adjacent to the Plan Area which are actively or historically mined, and any significant or locally important mineral resource recovery areas within the Plan Area will be identified. Additionally, the geologic formations on which the Plan Area is located will be identified and a sensitivity assessment will be completed for potentially significant paleontological resources. Recommended mitigation measures will be incorporated, if necessary, to reduce significant impacts to geology, soils, mineral resources, or paleontological resources.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions chapter will discuss potential impacts due to construction or operational GHG emissions from the proposed Specific Plan. Consistency with a locally approved climate action plan will be discussed, as relevant, or construction and operation

emissions would be calculated using CalEEMod and compared to an appropriate threshold. Estimates of VMT will be incorporated from the Specific Plan traffic study. The GHG analysis will be coordinated with any required air quality management plan that may be recommended by SMAQMD. Mitigation measures will be identified, if necessary, to reduce significant GHG impacts. This chapter of the EIR will focus on GHG emissions and will not provide an evaluation of future impacts of climate change on the project site or the Specific Plan.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

The Hazards and Hazardous Materials chapter will include a summary of historic site information, environmental databases, and hazardous materials studies of the Plan Area and adjacent uses. Specific attention will be paid to the existing hazardous materials conditions of the Plan Area and ongoing treatment programs in accordance with regulatory requirements. An existing Superfund² site designated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is located adjacent to the eastern edge of the Plan Area, and there are existing groundwater extraction and treatment facilities in place to treat contaminated groundwater from this site. Additionally, the Department of Toxic Substances Control has issued an Emergency Permit to AMPAC Fine Chemicals, located just to the east of the Plan Area, to treat hazardous waste through a controlled reaction with a chemical solution. This chapter will assess the proposed Specific Plan's compatibility with nearby hazardous materials conditions and prescribe mitigation measures, as needed, to ensure that construction and operation do not exacerbate existing conditions or result in new hazardous materials impacts.

Hydrology and Water Quality

The Hydrology and Water Quality chapter will summarize the setting of the Plan Area and identify potential effects on drainage, flooding, groundwater, and water quality. The Plan Area contains numerous aquatic resource types, including seasonal wetlands, vernal pools, and a creek (Buffalo Creek), which are considered jurisdictional waters pursuant to the Clean Water Act and the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act. This chapter will include an analysis of impacts to groundwater and surface water during construction and operation of the proposed Specific Plan. Increased stormwater drainage due to the new impervious surface areas and effects on receiving waters and groundwater recharge will also be considered. The analysis will use the Biological Resources Assessment, Level 1 Drainage Study, Aquatic Resources Delineation, and any regulatory permits and correspondence to characterize impacts. Recommended mitigation measures will be incorporated, if necessary, to reduce significant hydrology and water quality impacts.

Land Use and Planning

The Land Use and Planning chapter of the EIR will evaluate the consistency of the proposed Specific Plan with local and regional areawide plans, such as the City of Rancho Cordova's General Plan and the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS), specifically as it pertains to the environmental policies within these plans. LAFCo requirements related to the proposed annexation will also be discussed.

² Superfund sites are polluted sites which require a long-term response to clean up contamination. The EPA oversees and manages the cleanup of polluted sites pursuant to the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA).

Noise and Vibration

The Noise chapter of the EIR will be based on a project-specific noise analysis, assuming the maximum development capacity permitted under the proposed Specific Plan. The noise analysis will include measuring the existing ambient noise environment, predicting construction and operational noise, and developing noise control mitigation measures, as appropriate. Analysis of the proposed Specific Plan's potential impact on surrounding sensitive receptors due to construction noise and vibration will be included. Potential noise associated with traffic will be evaluated in relation to the Noise Element of the City's General Plan and relevant ordinances. Existing technical information related to noise generation associated with operation of the groundwater extraction and treatment facilities adjacent to the Plan Area will also be included in the analysis. The EIR will include an assessment of potential short-term, construction-related vibration, as well as ongoing operational vibration impacts on adjacent vibration-sensitive uses. Recommended mitigation measures will be incorporated, if necessary, to reduce potentially significant noise impacts.

Population and Housing

The Population and Housing chapter will assess the population increase anticipated from implementation of the proposed Specific Plan and discuss whether substantial unplanned growth would occur. The proposed Specific Plan will be assessed relative to the City's General Plan. Reference will be made to LAFCo requirements and other regional growth plans and forecasts, given that the Specific Plan proposes annexation into the City. This chapter will also assess whether extensions of utility services will contribute to unanticipated growth beyond the scope of the proposed Specific Plan.

Public Services and Recreation

The Public Services and Recreation chapter will describe the current setting and potential demands the proposed project may have on public services, including fire, police, schools, parks, and recreation that may lead to a potentially significant adverse environmental impact. The Rancho Cordova General Plan, General Plan EIR, and relevant standards from local agencies will be used to evaluate the potential impacts on public services. If necessary, input will be sought from representatives of local agencies with jurisdiction over specific public services, such as the SMFD or the Cordova Recreation and Park District. To the extent that public services are provided by the proposed Specific Plan to offset new demands, that will be discussed.

Transportation

The Transportation chapter of the EIR will incorporate a transportation impact study (TIS) to evaluate transportation-related impacts of the proposed Specific Plan. The TIS will examine the existing and future transportation system and evaluate the proposed Specific Plan for consistency with relevant programs, plans, ordinances, or policies, such as the SACOG's MTP/SCS, the Rancho Cordova General Plan, and the City's Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plans. The chapter will also include an analysis of VMT generated by the proposed project, using the Sacramento County Transportation Analysis Guidelines. Project features which contribute to reductions in VMT, such as proximity to transit, inclusion of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and locally serving retail/commercial uses, will be considered in the analysis. The chapter will also evaluate the adequacy of site access, emergency access, possible design hazards, and on-site circulation. Recommended mitigation measures will be incorporated, if necessary, to reduce significant transportation impacts.

Utilities

The Utilities chapter will focus on the potential effects on water supply, wastewater treatment, stormwater drainage, solid waste, and other utility services such as telecommunications. The analysis will incorporate information from a project-specific Water Supply Assessment to evaluate the potential new demand resulting from the proposed Specific Plan and the ability to accommodate that demand with existing or planned supply sources. In addition, wastewater and solid waste issues will be analyzed using the Rancho Cordova General Plan and General Plan EIR. Improvements identified by the Specific Plan applicant team as necessary to serve the development proposed by the Specific Plan will be identified in the EIR, including off-site extensions of utility lines or modifications of facilities to accommodate new demands. Recommended mitigation measures will be incorporated, if necessary, to reduce utilities impacts.

Wildfire

The Plan Area is not located within any mapped Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ) as designated by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE); these areas are concentrated in eastern and southern Sacramento County, with areas listed as Moderate Fire Hazard located approximately three miles east of the Plan Area.

E. Alternatives

The EIR will examine alternatives to the proposed Specific Plan, including a “No Project” alternative and one or more alternative development scenarios depending on the impacts identified. Other alternatives that may be discussed could include reduced development alternatives (e.g., smaller footprint or less residential units), and/or alternative locations. Alternatives discussed will be chosen based on their ability to reduce or avoid identified significant impacts of the proposed Specific Plan while achieving most of the identified objectives of the project.

F. Significant Unavoidable Impacts

The EIR will identify any significant impacts that cannot be avoided or reduced to less than significant levels with mitigation, if the project is implemented as proposed.

G. Cumulative Impacts

The EIR will include a cumulative impacts section that will address the potentially significant cumulative impacts of the proposed Specific Plan when considered with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the area.

H. Other Required CEQA Sections

In conformance with the CEQA Guidelines, the EIR will also include the following sections: (1) consistency with local and regional plans and policies, (2) growth-inducing impacts, (3) significant and irreversible environmental changes, (4) references and organizations/persons consulted, and (5) EIR authors.