2.0 **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**
This section is the project description for the proposed Dollar General projects (proposed projects; projects). The purpose of the project description is to describe the projects in a way that will be meaningful to the public, reviewing agencies, and decision-makers. As described in Section 15124 of the CEQA Guidelines, a complete project description must contain the following information but is not required to supply extensive details beyond that needed for evaluation and review of the environmental impact:

- The location of the proposed project
- A statement of project objectives
- A general description of the project’s technical, economic, and environmental characteristics
- A statement briefly describing the intended uses of the EIR

As discussed in Section 1.0, Introduction, each Dollar General store represents a separate project under CEQA, but the County has determined that all three stores should be analyzed in a single EIR to ensure that the cumulative impacts associated with all three stores are adequately considered. A description of each of the projects is provided below.

2.1 REGIONAL LOCATION AND VICINITY

Each of the project sites is located in the western-central area of unincorporated Nevada County (see Figure 2.0-1). Nevada County is bounded by Yuba and Sierra counties to the north, Placer County to the west and south, and the state of Nevada to the east. The county covers approximately 978 square miles and contains three incorporated cities—Grass Valley, Nevada City, and Truckee. Unincorporated communities such as Alta Sierra and Penn Valley are found in the western portion of the county. The major population centers in Nevada County are connected primarily by State Route (SR) 49 and SR 20.

PROJECT SITES AND IMMEDIATE VICINITY

Project locations include:

- **Alta Sierra site**: 10166 Alta Sierra Drive, Grass Valley, CA 95949 (store site) and APNs 25-430-10 and 25-430-12 (off-site septic system parcels)
- **Penn Valley site**: 17652 Penn Valley Drive, Penn Valley, CA 95946
- **Rough and Ready Highway site**: 12345 Rough and Ready Highway, Grass Valley, CA 95945

*Figure 2.0-1* shows the locations of the three sites relative to one another and the regional vicinity.

*Table 2.0-1* shows the acreage, current use, General Plan land use designation, and zoning district for each of the sites.
2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Table 2.0-1
SITE CHARACTERISTICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Assessor’s Parcel Number</th>
<th>Parcel Acreage</th>
<th>General Plan Designation</th>
<th>Zoning District</th>
<th>Current Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alta Sierra</td>
<td>25-430-08 (store site)</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>Neighborhood Commercial (NC)</td>
<td>Neighborhood Commercial (C1)</td>
<td>Vacant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25-430-10 (septic system tight line)</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>Neighborhood Commercial (NC)</td>
<td>Neighborhood Commercial (C1)</td>
<td>Commercial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25-430-12 (septic system leach field)</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>Neighborhood Commercial (NC)</td>
<td>Neighborhood Commercial (C1)</td>
<td>Commercial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penn Valley</td>
<td>51-120-06</td>
<td>1.20*</td>
<td>Community Commercial (CC)</td>
<td>Community Commercial- Site Performance Combining (C2-SP)</td>
<td>Vacant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rough and Ready Highway</td>
<td>52-122-03</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>Neighborhood Commercial (NC)</td>
<td>Community Commercial (C2)</td>
<td>Single-story commercial building</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Portion of a 5.95-acre parcel

As shown in Table 2.0-1, two of the sites are currently undeveloped land, while the Rough and Ready Highway site has an existing commercial building. The building at the Rough and Ready Highway site would be removed as a part of site development for that project.

Alta Sierra Site: The Alta Sierra site is located east of SR 49 and south of Grass Valley, in the community of Alta Sierra (Figure 2.0-2). The site is located in the western Sierra Nevada foothills between Alta Sierra Drive and Little Valley Road. The project site consists of three parcels, one parcel for the construction of the retail store (APN 25-430-08) and two adjacent parcels for an off-site septic system (APNs 25-430-10 and -12). The parcel on which the store would be constructed is vacant, is covered entirely with montane hardwood-conifer forest, and is situated on a hillside that generally slopes to the south. Elevations range from approximately 1,994 feet in the north to 1,964 feet near the southeastern and southwestern property corners. The off-site parcels are developed with commercial uses.

Penn Valley Site: The Penn Valley site is located north of Penn Valley Drive and south of SR 20 in the community of Penn Valley (Figure 2.0-3). While the proposed project is located on an existing, vacant 5.95-acre parcel, only 1.2 acres are proposed for development. The 1.2-acre parcel would be created through a lot line adjustment proposed as part of the Penn Valley project. Vegetation on the site is dominated by annual grassland and a scattering of trees, including valley oak, Oregon ash, white alder, and arroyo willow, along the perimeter of the site. Wetlands have been identified on the site. In addition, Squirrel Creek is located on the 5.95-acre parcel but not within the proposed 1.2-acre project area. Project development would affect a portion of the identified wetlands. The site elevation is approximately 1,400 feet and generally slopes from the southeast to the northwest. The change in grade over the 1.2-acre site is approximately 7 feet.

Rough and Ready Highway Site: The Rough and Ready Highway site is located directly south of Rough and Ready Highway at the southwest corner of the highway and West Drive (Figure 2.0-4). The project site has an existing commercial building that would be demolished as a part of the project development. The project site lies on the west slope of the Sierra Nevada foothills at an elevation of ±2,500 feet and is a fairly level parcel. The site contains mostly non-native varieties of horticultural plants, with the exception of one ponderosa pine and three gray pines.
Figure 2.0-2
Regional Vicinity - Alta Sierra Site

Legend
- Project Site

Source: Nevada County (2015), ESRI.
Figure 2.0-4
Regional Vicinity - Rough and Ready Highway Site
**SURROUNDING LAND USES**

**Alta Sierra Site:** The Alta Sierra store site is surrounded by asphalt or pavement on all four sides, with existing commercial development to the north and south of the site and Alta Sierra Drive and Little Valley Road to the west and east, respectively. West of Alta Sierra Drive are two undeveloped parcels zoned Community Commercial (C1). Other uses to the west include commercial development, with a personal storage facility, a real estate office, and the Oak View Center, a commercial development. East of Little Valley Road is a developed residential parcel. The next closest residential parcel is approximately 180 feet from the northeastern property boundary and approximately 400 feet from the proposed building. Rural residential uses dominate the landscape east of Little Valley Road, including the Alta Sierra residential subdivision. To the south of the project site is the Alta Sierra Market. To the north of the project site is another developed property with three commercial buildings. Farther north/northwest along Alta Sierra Drive are other commercially developed properties consisting of a variety of uses, including but not limited to a gas station, a bike shop, a pizza parlor, and a specialty wine shop. See Figure 2.0-5.

**Penn Valley Site:** The Penn Valley site is surrounded on three sides by development. To the south is Penn Valley Drive, with the Penn Valley Seventh-day Adventist Church and the Penn Valley Gardens residential subdivision farther to the south. A US Post Office, a gas station, and the Penn Valley Shopping Center are located east of the site. Northeast of the site is vacant land, followed by the Creekside Village mobile home park. Directly north of the site is vacant land, with SR 20 beyond. West of the site is the Penn Valley Mini Storage facility. See Figure 2.0-6.

**Rough and Ready Highway Site:** The Rough and Ready Highway site is located in a rural residential neighborhood; however, as noted above, there is an existing commercial building on the property. Adjacent land uses include two single-family residences and other rural residential uses to the west. Directly east of the site are West Drive and single-family residential uses, followed by a small mobile home park. South of the site are single-family residential uses. Across Rough and Ready Highway are single-family residential uses and transitional housing, followed by vacant undeveloped land farther to the north. See Figure 2.0-7.

### 2.2 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15124(b), a clear statement of objectives and the underlying purpose of the projects are to be discussed. The following is a statement of project objectives based on information provided by the project applicant.

The objectives of the proposed commercial developments are as follows:

- Expand and provide new retail options in close proximity to local consumers by providing shopping opportunities in a safe and secure environment.

- Enhance the commercial retail offerings in Nevada County.

- Develop each commercial development in a way that is compatible in design with the surrounding neighborhood.

- Provide commercial developments that serve the local market area for each development in Nevada County.
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Figure 2.0-5
Project Location - Alta Sierra Site

Legend
- Project Site
- Parcel Boundaries
Figure 2.0-6
Project Location - Penn Valley Site

Source: Nevada County (2015); ESRI.
Figure 2.0-7

Project Location - Rough and Ready Highway Site

Legend

Source: Nevada County (2015); ESRI.
2.3 **PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS**

As stated previously, the subject of this EIR is the development of three Dollar General stores on three different sites in Nevada County. As shown in **Table 2.0-2**, all of the Dollar General projects would have the same building square footage and are similar in total developed area. Site plans for the three projects are shown in **Figures 2.0-8a and 2.0-8b** (Alta Sierra site and off-site improvements), **Figure 2.0-9** (Penn Valley site), and **Figure 2.0-10** (Rough and Ready Highway site).

**Table 2.0-2**
**OVERVIEW OF PROJECT ATTRIBUTES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Building Area</th>
<th>Surfaced Area*</th>
<th>Landscape Area</th>
<th>Open Space (percentage of total)</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Proposed Parking Spaces</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alta Sierra</td>
<td>9,100 sq. ft.</td>
<td>20,260 sq. ft.</td>
<td>7,481 sq. ft.</td>
<td>6,622 sq. ft. (15.2%)</td>
<td>43,463 sq. ft. (1.00 acre)</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penn Valley</td>
<td>9,100 sq. ft.</td>
<td>24,511 sq. ft.</td>
<td>7,039 sq. ft.</td>
<td>11,823 sq. ft. (22.6%)</td>
<td>52,473 sq. ft. (1.20 acre)</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rough and Ready Highway</td>
<td>9,100 sq. ft.</td>
<td>19,354 sq. ft.</td>
<td>8,451 sq. ft.</td>
<td>7,405 sq. ft. (16.7%)</td>
<td>44,310 sq. ft. (1.02 acre)</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Surfaced area includes paved area, hardscape surrounding building, sidewalks, ramps, and curbs.

**EXTERIOR BUILDING DESIGN**

While the footprints of the proposed buildings are the same for each of the stores, the exterior design elements differ slightly. The exterior design of each of the buildings is based on a western motif. The tallest part of each building is 26 to 27 feet in height, with the majority of the building approximately 18 feet in height. **Figure 2.0-11** (Alta Sierra site), **Figure 2.0-12** (Penn Valley site), and **Figure 2.0-13** (Rough and Ready Highway site) show the exterior elevations for each project.

**LIGHTING**

Lighting for the proposed projects would be designed in accordance with Section L-II 4.2.8, Lighting, of the Nevada County Code. All lighting would be required to be shielded to prevent the light source from being visible from adjacent properties or roadways. A lighting plan, including a photometric overlay, has been prepared for each of the projects.\(^1\)

**LANDSCAPING**

As shown in **Table 2.0-2**, landscaping would be provided for each of the projects. For commercial uses, the County requires landscaping to be installed along street frontages, within parking lot interiors, and along property lines of commercial or industrial sites abutting residential properties. A landscaping plan, based on County Code Section L-II 4.2.7, Landscaping, has been prepared for each of the projects.

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\(^1\) A photometric overlay shows the measurement of the intensity of light or of relative illuminating power at a given spot.
2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

PARKING REQUIREMENTS

Section L-II 4.2.9, Parking, of the Nevada County Code identifies parking requirements for development in the county. For general retail uses, the parking requirement is 1 space per 200 square feet of gross floor area plus 1 space per 600 square feet of outdoor use area. The code allows the required number of parking stalls to be modified by the Planning Agency if a parking study, submitted by the applicant and prepared by a registered professional engineer authorized to practice as a traffic engineer, substantiates that the number of stalls needed for the proposed use is significantly different from the standard. Based on square footage, each of the projects would require 46 parking spaces. Proposed parking at each site differs depending on the lot size and configuration, and building layout, with the Alta Sierra and Rough and Ready Highway sites seeking a reduction in the required number of spaces, as shown in Table 2.0-2. The proposed reduced parking is substantiated by traffic engineer studies showing a reduced demand. The proposed parking layout for each site is shown on the respective site plans (see Figures 2.0-8a, 2.0-9, and 2.0-10).

OPEN SPACE REQUIREMENTS

Nevada County Code Section L-II 4.2.10, Permanent Open Space/Maximum Impervious Surface, establishes minimum standards for the provision of permanent open space as part of proposed development projects. The code requires projects that are one acre or more in size and below 4,000 feet elevation to maintain a minimum of 15 percent of the site as permanent open space. As shown in Table 2.0-2, each of the proposed projects would set aside a portion of the respective project site as permanent open space in accordance with this standard.

UTILITIES

Potable water for all three sites would be provided by the Nevada Irrigation District (NID). Existing water lines are located in Alta Sierra Drive, adjacent to the Alta Sierra site, and on-site for the Penn Valley site and the Rough and Ready Highway site. Off-site construction within the existing roadway is necessary to connect the Alta Sierra site to water infrastructure. No off-site construction for connection to water infrastructure is necessary for the Penn Valley and Rough and Ready Highway sites. To provide adequate water volume and flow to meet fire suppression requirements, the Rough and Ready Highway location would require the installation of an approximately 48,000-gallon underground water tank with pump to satisfy fire flow requirements. The Rough and Ready Highway project will also include a fire pump to operate an on-site fire hydrant and building sprinklers. The tank and hydrant will be located within the project site.

Wastewater treatment and disposal would be provided through septic systems at the Alta Sierra and Rough and Ready Highway sites. The Alta Sierra site septic system would include off-site tight lines and leach fields on adjacent parcels directly to the north of the project site. The septic system for the Rough and Ready Highway site would be accommodated within the project parcel, so no off-site improvements would be necessary. The Penn Valley site would connect to the Nevada County Sanitation District-Penn Valley sewer system through existing sewer lines within Penn Valley Drive adjacent to the site.

Storm drainage for each of the sites would include on-site detention, which would ultimately flow into off-site storm drainage ditches or washes. Each project would be designed to maintain post-project surface drainage flows at pre-project levels. Curb openings would direct stormwater runoff into a bioretention basin where it would pass through a water quality filter. The flow would then be conveyed via pipe to adjacent underground detention pipes. The detention pipes would drain at a rate less than the pre-development flows to a roadside ditch for the Alta Sierra and Rough and Ready Highway sites. The Penn Valley site’s runoff would flow into a wash.
Electrical service is provided to the three sites by Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E). Electrical power poles are adjacent to each site. No off-site improvements would be required to provide electrical power to the Alta Sierra or Penn Valley sites. However, installation of a new power pole would be required adjacent the Rough and Ready Highway site.

Circulation

**Alta Sierra Site:** Access to the Alta Sierra site would be via Alta Sierra Drive, which is identified as a major collector roadway by the County. According to the Nevada County Engineering Division, the average number of daily vehicle trips for this roadway at milepost 0.2 east of SR 49 was 5,213 trips in 2012 (Nevada County 2012). SR 49 is located approximately 600 feet from the project site.

**Penn Valley Site:** Access to the Penn Valley site would be via Penn Valley Drive, which is identified as a major collector roadway by the County. According to the Nevada County Engineering Division, the average number of daily vehicle trips for this roadway at milepost 2.81 west of Spenceville Road was 3,825 trips in 2011 (Nevada County 2012). SR 20 is less than 1 mile from the site.

**Rough and Ready Highway Site:** The project site is located adjacent to Rough and Ready Highway. Two access points to the site would be provided by Rough and Ready Highway and West Drive. Rough and Ready Highway is identified as a major collector and the average number of daily vehicle trips at milepost 5.68 west of Ridge Road was 5,099 in 2011 (Nevada County 2012). West Drive is not identified on the County’s traffic count list.

Operations and Deliveries

The proposed Dollar General stores would operate between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.

Based on input from the project applicant, it is assumed that the proposed projects would have eight small truck/van deliveries per week and one to two semi-truck deliveries per week. Typical truck activity for the stores would consist of no more than one semi-truck delivery and one step-side van per hour during hours of operation.

Construction Activities

To prepare the Alta Sierra site for improvements, the applicant is proposing 5,988 cubic yards (cy) of earthwork, with 1,212 cy used as fill material and the remaining 4,776 cy exported off-site. Excess soils would be removed off-site via a temporary access (encroachment) on Little Valley Road. According to the applicant’s construction contractor, the developer anticipates approximately 450 round trips to the site, with about 40-50 trips for a period of 8-9 days. Staging of equipment and materials would be on-site.

The Penn Valley and Rough and Ready Highway sites would involve site preparation activities such as grading and trenching. These locations are flat and would not involve extensive earthwork as would occur at the Alta Sierra site. Staging of equipment and materials would be on-site.
2.4 REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS, PERMITS, AND APPROVALS FROM OTHER PUBLIC AGENCIES

PROJECT RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING PLANNING DOCUMENTS

General Plan

California state law requires cities and counties to prepare a general plan describing the location and types of desired land uses and other physical attributes in the city or county. General plans are required to address land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, and safety. The Nevada County General Plan is the County’s basic planning document and provides a comprehensive, long-term plan for physical development in the county. As shown in Table 2.0-1, the General Plan designates the Alta Sierra and Rough and Ready Highway project sites as Neighborhood Commercial and the Penn Valley site as Community Commercial.

According to the General Plan, the Neighborhood Commercial designation is intended to provide for local needs of nearby neighborhoods, and limited mixed-use employment opportunities, within Community Regions or as part of the development of Rural Centers. This designation should have not more than 10 acres of land area in any single location, and development should be grouped as a clustered and contiguous center to preclude strip development. Locations with this designation are required to provide for convenient, controlled access to arterial or collector roads (Nevada County 2014, p. 1-16).

The Community Commercial designation is intended to provide a variety of commercial uses, and limited mixed-use employment opportunities, to serve large geographic areas with a wider range of goods and services than are available in Neighborhood Commercial areas. Community Commercial designations are located within Community Regions, although they may serve areas outside the Community Region. Locations with this designation must contain 10 acres or more of land area with development grouped as a contiguous center to preclude strip development, with convenient, controlled access to arterial or major collector roads (Nevada County 2014, p. 1-17).

Zoning Ordinance

The Zoning Ordinance implements the policies of the General Plan by classifying and regulating the land uses and associated development standards in the county. The Alta Sierra site is zoned Neighborhood Commercial (C1) and the Rough and Ready Highway site is zoned Community Commercial (C1). The Penn Valley site is within the Community Commercial-Site Performance Combining (C2-SP) zoning district.

PERMITS AND APPROVALS

Nevada County will use this EIR in considering approval of each of the proposed projects. In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15126, the EIR will be used as the primary environmental document in consideration of all subsequent planning and permitting actions associated with each project, to the extent such actions require CEQA compliance. These County actions, both discretionary and ministerial, include but are not limited to the following:

- Development Permit
- Lot Line Adjustment (Penn Valley site)
- Aquatic Resources Management Plan (Penn Valley site)
2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- Oak Management Plan (Alta Sierra site)
- Certificate of Compliance (Penn Valley site)
- Building Permit
- Grading Permit
- Encroachment Permit

In addition to the above County actions, each of the projects may require approvals, permits, and entitlements from other public agencies for which this EIR may be used, including, without limitation, the following:

- California Department of Transportation, District 3
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Region 2
- Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Region 5)
- Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District
- State Water Resources Control Board
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
REFERENCES


