
3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

3.0 INTRODUCTION TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS AND ASSUMPTIONS USED

The following is an introduction to the environmental analysis for the proposed project, including a discussion of general assumptions used in the analysis and a discussion regarding the cumulative analysis. The reader is referred to the individual technical sections of this Draft EIR (Sections 3.1 through 3.14) for further information on the specific assumptions and methodologies used in the analysis for each particular technical subject.

ANALYSIS ASSUMPTIONS USED TO EVALUATE THE IMPACTS OF THE PROJECT

BASELINE ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS ASSUMED IN THE DRAFT EIR

Section 15125(a) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that an EIR include a description of the physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of the project as they exist at the time the Notice of Preparation (NOP) is published. The CEQA Guidelines also specify that this description of the physical environmental conditions is to serve as the baseline physical conditions by which a lead agency determines whether impacts of a project are considered significant.

The environmental setting conditions of the project site and the surrounding area are described in detail in the technical sections of Draft EIR (see Sections 3.1 through 3.14). In general, these setting discussions describe the setting conditions of the project site and the surrounding area as they existed when the NOP for the project was released on May 11, 2011.

Projected Buildout Conditions Associated with Proposed Project

For the purposes of the environmental analysis, the Draft EIR compared the proposed project to the existing physical conditions on the project site, rather than any existing future development that the existing General Plan designation or zoning could allow.

Buildout of the project site would result the development of a continuing care retirement community (CCRC) consisting of 48 acres of development, with all but the proposed emergency access road, trails, and sewer lift station to be clustered within the northwest portion of the site. Approximately 4 acres of the site would be used for agricultural uses (gardens), with 163 acres remaining as undeveloped open space. At buildout, the proposed project would accommodate residents in a variety of independent and supportive living arrangements including independent living, assisted living, nursing care, physical rehabilitation, and memory impairment housing within a campus-like setting featuring commercial and recreational uses and transportation and a variety of other services..Detailed descriptions of each project component are located in Section 2.0, Project Description, of this Draft EIR.

Population and Housing Units

Housing units proposed as part of the project were calculated based on a maximum population of 415 persons on the project site.

Statistics and case studies for continuing care retirement communities (per the *2005 CCRC Profile Study* by the CCRC Profile Task Force and the *2004 CCRC Washington DC Overview Study* by The Retirement & Assisting Living Committee) indicate that the general population for CCRCs has an average age of 84 years, with women outnumbering men three to one. Approximately 35 percent of the independent living population comprises couples (double occupancy), and the remaining 65 percent are single or widowed. Approximately 9 percent of the assisted living population resides in double occupancy, and approximately 64 percent of the nursing care population resides in double occupancy (SCO 2011).

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Of the 415 persons proposed for the project site, 25 percent (104 residents) would require special care provisions ranging from assisted living, memory impairment housing, and/or nursing care facilities. Of the 104 persons requiring special care, the proposed project has factored approximately 60 percent (62 persons) who would require assisted living or memory impairment housing facilities and 40 percent (42 persons) who would require nursing care. Due to the level of care required for those in assisted living, memory impairment housing, or the skilled nursing care facility, double occupancy is much more efficient and the ratio of double occupancy is different than for those residing in independent housing.

For the purposes of estimating the number of housing types for the total project population of 415, housing types were calculated based on the single-occupancy and double-occupancy ratios outlined as follows:

Independent Living: The independent living population comprises approximately 75 percent of the base population, or 311 persons ($415 \times 75\% = 311$). Of those 311 persons, 35 percent, or 108 persons ($311 \times 35\% = 108$) would be living in couples/double-occupancy units and 65 percent, or 203 singles, would be living alone. The project is accounting for 203 ($203 \times 1 = 203$) single-occupancy units and 54 ($108/2 = 54$) double/couples-occupancy units. Therefore, the total number of independent living units is estimated to be 257 units ($54 + 203$).

Assisted Living/Memory Impaired: Of the 25 percent of the base population, or 104 persons ($415 \times 25\% = 104$ persons), needing special care, 60 percent, or 62 persons ($104 \times 60\% = 62$ persons), would be in the assisted care/memory impairment living units. Of those 62 persons, 9 percent, or 6 persons ($62 \times .09 = 6$ persons), would be housed as couples/double-occupancy in 3 units (6 persons/2 persons per unit = 3 units) and 91 percent, or 56 singles, would be living alone in 56 units. Therefore, the total number of units estimated to house the assisted living/memory impaired population is 59 units ($3 + 56$).

Nursing Care: The remaining 40 percent, or 42 persons, of the 104 persons ($104 \text{ persons} \times 40\%$) needing special care would require nursing care. Of those 42 persons, 64 percent, or 26 persons, would be housed within double-occupancy units (2 beds per unit; 13 units) and the remaining 16 persons would be housed within single-bed units (16 units). Therefore, the total number of units estimated to house those needing nursing care is 29 units ($13 + 16$).

Table 3.0-1 depicts the residential unit counts based on the percentage of occupancy types.

**TABLE 3.0-1
RINCON DEL RIO DWELLING UNITS BY OCCUPANCY**

Type of Dwelling Unit	Number of Double-Occupancy Units	Number of Double-Occupancy Residents	Number of Single-Occupancy Units	Number of Single-Occupancy Residents	Total Number of Residents
Independent Living	54	108	203	203	311
Assisted Living	3	6	56	56	62
Nursing Care	13	26	16	16	42
TOTAL	70	140	275	275	415

Source: SCO 2011

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Using the calculations above, the independent living units would house an average of approximately 1.21 people per unit; the assisted care/memory impairment units would house an average of approximately 1.76 people per unit; and the nursing care units would house an average of approximately 1.45 people per unit.

PROJECT OFF-SITE INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS

The Draft EIR also considers the environmental impacts of off-site infrastructure constructed as a result of the proposed project. The proposed project would trigger the need for the following off-site infrastructure:

- Improvements to Rincon Way to meet County standards;
- A water service mainline extension from the northeast corner of the site at Rodeo Flat Road; and
- A sewer force main along Rodeo Flat Road, continuing down Timber Ridge Road, and eventually terminating at an existing manhole located on Riata Way near the Lake of the Pines Sewer Treatment Facility.

The water service mainline and sewer force main would be located within the existing Rodeo Flat Road Public Utility Easement (PUE). For the most part, the PUE has been previously disturbed and infrastructure would be placed underground, which would minimize the extent of environmental effects.

PROJECT CONSTRUCTION EFFECTS

As discussed in Section 2.0, Project Description, the proposed project is anticipated to be constructed in ten phases; however, phases may be combined and/or modified based on market conditions. In order to avoid large areas of grading over long periods of time, grading activities would be phased with the development to the maximum extent possible. Phase one would consist primarily of construction of the sewer and water system, primary and emergency access roads, and a portion of the Village Center. Phase two would include construction of the remaining buildings within the Village Center. Phases three through ten would continue buildout of the project to the outer areas surrounding the Village Center, including additional project amenities, cottage-style homes for independent living, duplexes, fourplexes, cohousing affordable units, and assisted living and nursing care units.

STRUCTURE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

Sections 3.1 through 3.14 of this Draft EIR contain a detailed description of current setting conditions (including applicable regulatory setting) and an evaluation of the direct and indirect environmental effects resulting from the implementation of the proposed project. Furthermore, Sections 3.1 through 3.14 of this Draft EIR contain describe feasible mitigation measures and identify whether significant environmental effects of the project would remain after application of the feasible mitigation measures. The individual technical sections of the Draft EIR include the following information:

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Existing Setting

This subsection includes a description of the physical setting associated with the technical area of discussion, consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15125. As previously identified, the existing setting is based on conditions as they existed when the NOP for the proposed project was released on May 11, 2011.

Regulatory Framework

This subsection identifies applicable federal, state, regional, and local plans, policies, laws, and regulations that apply to the technical area of discussion.

The Nevada County General Plan serves as the overall guiding policy document for the unincorporated areas of Nevada County. As required by CEQA Guidelines Section 15125(d), a summary of any inconsistencies between the proposed project and the Nevada County General Plan is contained in **Appendix 3.0-A** of this Draft EIR. While this Draft EIR analyzes any inconsistencies between the proposed project and the Nevada County General Plan pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15125(d), the Nevada County Board of Supervisors would make the ultimate determination of consistency with the General Plan.

Impacts and Mitigation Measures

This subsection identifies direct and indirect environmental effects associated with implementation of the proposed project. Standards of significance are identified and used to determine whether the environmental effects are considered “significant” and require the application of mitigation measures. Each environmental impact analysis is identified numerically (e.g., Impact 3.9.1 – Surface Water Quality Impacts) and is supported by substantial evidence.

Mitigation measures for the proposed project were developed through a review of the environmental effects of the proposed project by consultants with technical expertise as well as by environmental professionals, in coordination with the County. In some cases, the mitigation measures identified consist of “performance standards” that identify clear requirements that would avoid or minimize significant environmental effects (the use of performance standard mitigation is allowed under CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.4(a) and is supported by case law *Rio Vista Farm Bureau Center v. County of Solano* ([1st Dist. 1992] 5 Cal. App. 4th at pp. 371, 375–376 [7 Cal. Rptr. 2d 307])).

APPROACH TO THE CUMULATIVE IMPACT ANALYSIS

Definition of Cumulative Setting

CEQA Guidelines Section 15130 requires that EIRs include an analysis of the cumulative impacts of a project when the project’s effect is considered cumulatively considerable. In general, the cumulative setting conditions considered in this Draft EIR are based on:

- **Locally Adopted General Plan.** The Nevada County General Plan, which was approved by the Board of Supervisors in 1996 and subsequently amended in 2008 (Safety) and 2010 (Circulation/Housing), serves as the overall guiding policy document for the unincorporated areas of Nevada County.
- **Large-Scale Development Projects.** This includes current large-scale proposed development projects in the unincorporated county (see **Table 3.0-2**). Recently

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approved large-scale development projects in the county that have been approved but not built include Higgins Marketplace (commercial) and Saddle Ridge (residential), as well as Dark Horse (residential), which is only partially built. It should be noted that this list is not intended to be all-inclusive of development activities in the county but rather a general description of current development activities.

- **Effect of Regional Conditions.** The cumulative setting considers regional conditions for those issue areas that have implications beyond Nevada County, such as traffic, air quality, and climate change. Background traffic volumes and patterns on State Route (SR) 49, background air quality conditions in the Mountain Counties Air Basin (MCAB), and other associated environmental conditions that occur within the region, have the potential to affect these conditions within the county. Each technical section of the Draft EIR includes a description of the geographic extent of the cumulative setting for that resource based on the characteristics of the environmental issues under consideration as set forth in Section 15130(b) of the CEQA Guidelines.
- **Consideration of Existing Development Patterns.** The cumulative setting considers the current environmental conditions of existing development and past land use activities in the region. This includes major land use activities in unincorporated Nevada County as well as in the nearby incorporated cities.

Consideration of Cumulative Impacts

Each technical section in the Draft EIR considers whether the project's effect on anticipated cumulative setting conditions is cumulatively considerable (i.e., a significant effect). The determination of whether the project's impact on cumulative conditions is considerable is based on applicable public agency standards, consultation with public agencies, and/or expert opinion. In addition, as described above, the environmental effects of potential development of the proposed project is considered in the cumulative impact analysis. Section 4.0, Cumulative Impacts, provides a summary of the cumulative impacts associated with the development of the project.

Section 4.0, Cumulative Impacts, also discusses the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed amendments to the County's General Plan and Zoning Ordinance as they pertain to cumulative development in the county.

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**TABLE 3.0-2
PROPOSED LARGE-SCALE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN NEVADA COUNTY**

Name of Project	Use	Total Number of Dwelling Units	Total Non-Residential Square Footage	Location	Status
Bost Subdivision	Residential	3	–	19100 B-4 Ranch Road, Nevada City	In Process
Buck Mountain Estates (Phase 4)	Residential	1	–	11440 Karen Drive, Grass Valley	On Hold
Rattlesnake Ridge Estates	Residential	1	–	Within the Rattlesnake Ridge Estates Subdivision	On Hold
Ridge Rock Quarry	Mining	–	Unknown	22800 Pleasant Valley Road, North San Juan	In Process
Complete Wireless	Infrastructure	–	Unknown	14050 Pleasant Valley Road, Penn Valley	In Process
Blue Lead Mine	Mining	–	Unknown	18272 Red Dog Road, Nevada City	Initially Denied, On Hold
Liberty Hill Mine	Mining	–	Unknown	15864 Swamp Angel Road	On Hold
Teichert Aggregates' Boca Quarry	Mining	–	158 acres	16616 & 16774 Hamilton Road, Truckee	Project Description Being Revised
Shatterhand Holdings	Retail/Residential	20	14,312, sf	21719 Donner Pass Road, Soda Springs	Project Description Being Revised
Royal Gorge Subdivision	Residential/Recreational	18	166.2 acres	10187 Soda Springs Road, Donner Summit	On Hold
Saddle Ridge	Residential	80	–	At Combie Road and Armstrong Road in Lake of the Pines area	Amended Map In Process

Source: Nevada County 2011

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORTS UTILIZED IN THIS EIR

This Draft EIR utilizes technical information and analyses from previously prepared EIRs that are relevant to the consideration of environmental effects of the proposed project, which is supported by the CEQA Guidelines (see Sections 15148 [Citation] and 15150 [Incorporation by Reference]). In addition to materials cited, the following EIRs have been utilized in this Draft EIR:

- Nevada County. 1995. *Nevada County General Plan Environmental Impact Report, Vol. 1, Final Draft.*
- Nevada County. 2007. *Higgins Marketplace Draft Environmental Impact Report.*

By utilizing provisions of the CEQA Guidelines, the County, in preparing this Draft EIR, has been able to make maximum feasible and appropriate use of the technical information in these environmental impact reports. These EIRs and other referenced materials are available for review upon request at the Nevada County Community Development Agency Planning Department located at 950 Maidu Avenue, Suite 170, Nevada City, California 95959.

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REFERENCES

Nevada County. 2011. *Current Planning Major Project Status Report*.

SCO Planning, Engineering, and Surveying. 2011. *Total Unit Count and Occupancy per Unit*.
Grass Valley, CA.