

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Executive Summary has been prepared in accordance with Section 15123 of the State California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines. This Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) has been prepared by the County of Los Angeles Department (County) to analyze the potential impacts of implementing the first phase (Phase One) of the previously adopted NorthLake Specific Plan (Specific Plan).

### ES-1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

In 1992, the County adopted the NorthLake Specific Plan. The Specific Plan established land use designations and development standards for an approximate 1,330-acre area within Grasshopper Canyon that previously was limited to non-urban/agricultural zoned development. In conjunction with consideration of the Specific Plan project, the NorthLake Specific Plan EIR (SP EIR) (SCH #1988071329) was certified in 1992 as a Program EIR. As defined in the CEQA Guidelines (Section 15168), a Program EIR is an EIR prepared on a series of actions that can be generally characterized as one large and related project. The Program EIR is used with later/subsequent activities to determine whether additional environmental documentation will be necessary and/or to simplify the scope of additional environmental documentation.

The current Project (described in detail in Section 3.0, Project Description) would implement Phase One of the Specific Plan. As the Lead Agency responsible for CEQA compliance, the County reviewed the need for additional environmental documentation to tier off of the Program EIR to address implementation of Phase One. Because a Program EIR (the SP EIR) was already completed to address the development of the adopted NorthLake Specific Plan and because there have been minor additions and changes to the NorthLake Specific Plan development project description and environmental conditions since its adoption, the County determined that a Supplemental EIR should be prepared. Therefore, this Draft SEIR will perform two functions: it will serve to update information included in the previously approved SP EIR and it will provide project-specific analyses of environmental effects associated with the current Phase One project.

### ES-2 PROJECT SUMMARY

The NorthLake Specific Plan site comprises approximately 1,330 acres of undeveloped land east of Interstate 5 (I-5), west of Castaic Lake, and north of the community of Castaic, California in unincorporated Los Angeles County. The proposed project involves: 1) amendments to both the Specific Plan and Development Agreement to remove the requirement to construct a golf course, permit schools serving grades kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup>, provide flexibility to locate the required library site within the Specific Plan area or off-site in close proximity to the Specific Plan area, and to modify the recycled water system for the golf course and landscape irrigation;<sup>1</sup> 2) approval of two separate Conditional Use Permits, one for Site Plan Review of VTTM 51852 and the other for related grading and infrastructure improvements on adjacent Hillside Management Areas that fall outside the Specific Plan boundary; 3) approval of VTTM 51852 to subdivide the Phase One area into approximately 1,151 lots; and 4) approval of various encroachment permits and service district annexations.

<sup>1</sup> Upon coordination with the County, it was determined that the optional wastewater treatment plant would not be constructed on-site, and that the site would be served through annexation to Santa Clarita Valley Sanitation District. Since reclaimed water will no longer be generated on-site, reclaimed water usage for landscape irrigation will be delayed until County facilities can support reclaimed water use at the project site.

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The proposed project involves a modification to the Specific Plan land uses that substitutes the golf course with the provision of recreational amenities dispersed throughout the entire 1,330-acre Specific Plan area. This modification necessitates a Specific Plan Amendment to address adjustments to the recreational uses including the elimination of a golf course use and replacement with a range of other recreational/open space amenities, including a mixture of sizes and types of parks suitable for a variety of ages and activity levels of project residents. More detail on the requested Specific Plan Amendment is provided in the following section.

The proposed project also involves development on approximately 670 acres of the Phase One area to be implemented as depicted on Vesting Tentative Tract Map (VTTM) No. 51852, the CUP/Site Plan Review, and the CUP for grading at the borrow site. Additionally, an Amendment to the Development Agreement is proposed.

Consistent with the prior approval, implementation of VTTM 51852 involves site grading that would fill in a portion of Grasshopper Creek Canyon to enable development in this area, including the grading of earth to be used for project fill from an adjacent approximately 77-acre borrow site that is part of a larger 140-acre parcel owned by the Applicant. The borrow site lies outside of, but adjacent to, the eastern boundary of the Specific Plan area and within a designated "Hillside Management Area." A Conditional Use Permit for Hillside Management Area (RCUP 200400015) will address the grading requirements for earth removal at the borrow site.

Project grading for all areas within Phase One and the borrow site will require the relocation of some existing on-site easements, pipelines, and utilities to accommodate the proposed cut depths and site plan configuration. An existing crude oil pipeline easement containing two oil pipelines that traverse the entire north-south length of the Specific Plan area will be relocated approximately 1,500 to 2,000 feet east of the property within the Castaic Lake State Recreation Area. One line will be relocated to the new easement and the second line will be truncated. An existing telecommunications/cable line that runs adjacent to the oil pipeline easement will be relocated under Ridge Route Road once this road has been realigned. An approximate ½-mile segment of an existing 34-inch natural gas pipeline currently located within Ridge Route Road will be relocated when the new alignment of Ridge Route Road is completed. Finally, three electrical transmission lines, operated by Southern California Edison and located in an easement and separate adjacent alignment along the project site's western edge parallel to Ridge Route Road, will be modified to reflect the final grading elevations and the site plan configuration. Within an approximate ½-mile segment, the height of the electric transmission towers will be raised and/or lowered to maintain safe clearance from the final grade elevation. Two or three of the towers, dependent on final engineered plans, will be shifted from their current alignment where the old towers will be demolished and new towers will be constructed to circumvent a residential planning area.

Extension of all utilities and some services to the project site will also be necessary to accommodate project implementation. To facilitate the provision of utilities and services, annexation to the Santa Clarita Valley Sanitation District and the Consolidated Sewer Maintenance District will be required. Other incidental approvals that have been issued (i.e., 404 Permit, 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement, and 401 Certification) are required to authorize development that will affect resources under regulatory agency control. Additionally, annexation to the appropriate service and financing districts, such as the Consolidated Fire Protection District of Los Angeles County, will be required as appropriate.

### **ES-3 PROJECT IMPACTS AND MITIGATION PROGRAM**

Table ES-1 at the end of this section provides a summary of the potential environmental effects of the proposed project, the recommended mitigation program, and identifies any unavoidable

adverse impacts. The reader is referred to the full text of this Draft SEIR as well as the technical appendices for a description of the environmental effects of the proposed project and the recommended mitigation measures.

#### **ES-4 PROJECT ALTERNATIVES**

Section 6.0 of this SEIR includes an analysis of a reasonable range of alternatives that could feasibly attain the basic objectives of the project. The following three alternatives to the proposed project area evaluated in this Draft SEIR:

- Alternative 1: Existing Specific Plan
- Alternative 2: Reduced Development Footprint
- Alternative 3: Reduced Development Intensity

Section 6.0, Alternatives, provides a description and a comparative analysis of each alternative to the proposed project in accordance with Section 15126.6 of the State CEQA Guidelines.

#### **ES-5 AREAS OF CONTROVERSY AND ISSUES TO BE RESOLVED**

Section 15123 of the CEQA Guidelines requires that an EIR identify areas of controversy and issues to be resolved which are known to the lead agency, including issues raised by other agencies and the public. Areas of controversy associated with the proposed project are known through the responses to the Notice of Preparation (NOP), the input solicited during the public scoping meeting held on September 9, 2004, as well as through an understanding of the issues in the area. The NOP/Initial Study and NOP response letters are included in Appendix A of this Draft SEIR.

The NorthLake Phase One project proposes to remove a golf course, previously required through the 1992 approval, in favor of a range of other public-inclusive recreational facilities. The proposed removal of the golf course has raised community concern. This concern constitutes a land use/policy issue to be evaluated by the Regional Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors when considering the overall project.

The CEQA impact for the Project as proposed is evaluated in this SEIR.

Many of the issues raised through the public process have been addressed through the SEIR; however, the elimination of the previously approved golf course remains a potential area of controversy and an issue for resolution. Reconciliation of this issue will be resolved through the land use decisions ultimately decided for the proposed project through the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors. No other outstanding issues are known.