

2. Introduction

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, Chapter 14 California Code of Regulations, Section 15378[a], the Terra Vi Lodge Project is considered a “project” subject to environmental review as its implementation is “an action [undertaken by a public agency] which has the potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment.” The assessment in this Final Environmental Impact Report (Final EIR) is intended to inform the County’s decision-makers, other responsible agencies, and the public-at-large of the nature of the proposed project and its effect on the environment.

2.1 PROPOSED PROJECT

The proposed project is designed as a hotel lodge comprised of various single, two-, and three-story elements. The building design accommodates a setback, maximizing the distance between taller structures and adjacent residential properties to minimize visibility from both public and private views. Elements of the project include a public market, general lodge with 100 guestrooms, two manager’s suites, and multi-purpose uses, indoor and outdoor areas, 26 cabin rooms, as well as five employee apartments with four rooms in each unit, for a total of 20 employee rooms. A total of 40 jobs would be created once the project is operational. Refer to Figure 3-4 in Chapter 3, Project Description, of the Draft EIR, for the proposed project’s site plan.

2.2 EIR SCOPE

This Final EIR identifies and analyzes site specific potential impacts of the project which were determined in the Draft EIR. The analysis of the Draft EIR discloses the specific short-term impacts (construction) and long-term impacts (operation) that would occur as a result of project approval and implementation.

2.3 ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

2.3.1 DRAFT EIR

Pursuant to CEQA Section 21080(d)¹ and CEQA Guidelines Section 15063,² the County determined that the proposed project could result in potentially significant environmental impacts and that an EIR would be required. In compliance with CEQA Section 21080.4, the County circulated the Notice of Preparation

¹ The CEQA Statute is found at California Public Resources Code, Division 13, Sections 21000 to 21177.

² The CEQA Guidelines are found at California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, Sections 15000 to 15387.

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(NOP) of a Draft EIR for the proposed project to interested agencies and persons on May 2, 2019 for a 30-day review period. Due to a clerical issue, the NOP was reissued and submitted to the Office of Planning and Research State Clearinghouse on November 15, 2019 for an additional 30-day review period. A public Scoping Meeting was held on May 13, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. in the Groveland Community Hall located at 18720 Main Street in the Town of Groveland. The NOP and scoping process solicited comments from responsible and trustee agencies, as well as interested parties regarding the scope of the Draft EIR. Appendix A, Notice of Preparation and Comments on the Notice of Preparation, of the Draft EIR contains the NOP, as well as the comments received by the County in response to the NOP.

The scope of the Draft EIR was established by the County of Tuolumne through the EIR scoping process and includes an analysis of both the proposed project's impacts and cumulative impacts in the following issue areas:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Forestry Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Parks and Recreation
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Transportation
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Wildfire
- CEQA-Mandated Assessment Conclusions:
 - Significant Unavoidable Impacts
 - Impacts Found Not To Be Significant
 - Significant Irreversible Changes
 - Growth-Inducing Impacts

The Draft EIR was available for review by the public and interested parties, agencies, and organizations for a 45-day comment period starting on June 16, 2020 and ending on July 30, 2020. During the comment period, the public was invited to submit written comments on the Draft EIR via mail or e-mail to the Tuolumne County Community Development Department.

2.3.2 FINAL EIR

Upon completion of the 45-day review period for the Draft EIR, the County reviewed all comments received and prepared written responses for each comment. These letters are included in Appendix K of this Final EIR. This Final EIR includes written responses for each comment received during the public review period. This Final EIR consists of the Draft EIR, the comments received on the Draft EIR, and the responses to those comments, and describes any changes to the Draft EIR that have resulted from the comments received.

If the Tuolumne County Planning Commission determines that the project may be approved, it will certify this Final EIR and adopt and incorporate into the project all feasible mitigation measures identified in the EIR and may also require other feasible mitigation measures as conditions of approval.

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However, the Planning Commission may also find that the project does not satisfy the required findings for approval and decide to reject the project on that basis. In that case, the Planning Commission is not required to certify the Draft EIR.

The decisions regarding the Draft EIR and project approval would be appealable to the Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors, an elected body, which would then decide on both the EIR and project.

2.3.3 MITIGATION MONITORING

Public Resources Code Section 21081.6 requires that the lead agency adopt a monitoring or reporting program for any project for which it has made mitigation findings pursuant to Public Resources Code 21081. Such a program is intended to ensure the implementation of all mitigation measures adopted through the preparation of an EIR. The Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for the proposed project is included in Appendix R of this Final EIR.

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