NOTICE OF PREPARATION
OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
HIDDEN GROVE PROJECT

Date: December 22, 2023

To: Responsible and Trustee Agencies, Interested Parties, and Organizations

Subject: Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report for the Hidden Grove Project

The Town of Loomis will be the Lead Agency and will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) compliant with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the Hidden Grove Project (proposed project).

Section 15063(b) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that, if during the Initial Study analysis, the lead agency determines that there is substantial evidence that any aspect of the project may cause a significant effect on the environment, the lead agency shall prepare an EIR.

The purpose of this notice is to provide an opportunity to comment on the scope and content of the EIR. The Town will rely on responsible and trustee agencies to provide input relevant to areas within the jurisdiction of such agencies. Specifically, input is requested related to the following:

1. **Scope of Environmental Analysis —** guidance on the scope of analysis for this EIR, including identification of specific issues that will require closer study due to the location, scale, and character of the project;
2. **Mitigation Measures —** ideas for feasible mitigation, including mitigation that would avoid, eliminate, or reduce potentially significant or significant impacts; and
3. **Alternatives —** suggestions for alternatives to the proposed project that could potentially reduce or avoid potentially significant or significant impacts.

The purpose of the EIR is to provide information about potential significant physical environmental impacts of the proposed project, to identify possible ways to minimize those significant impacts, and to describe and analyze possible alternatives to the proposed project if potential significant impacts are identified. Preparation of a Notice of Preparation (NOP) or EIR does not indicate a decision by the Town to approve or deny the project. However, prior to making any such decision, the Planning Commission and Town Council must review and consider the information contained in the EIR.

As outlined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15082(b), each responsible and trustee agency must identify specific environmental issues, alternatives, and mitigation measures that should be explored in the EIR. If responses are not received within 30 days, the Town will assume that the responsible and trustee agencies do not have a response to make.

WRITTEN COMMENTS

Please provide written comments before 5:00 PM on January 26, 2024. Comments, along with the name and contact information of the appropriate person in your organization, should be addressed to:

Christy Consolini, Planning Director
Town of Loomis
P.O. Box 1330 Loomis, CA 95650
hiddengrove@loomis.ca.gov

SCOPING MEETING

The Town is also inviting public comments regarding the scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the EIR. Written comments can be provided as described above. However, a scoping meeting open to the public will be held to receive verbal comments. At the meeting, staff will give a brief presentation of the EIR process and will take public comment on the scope of the proposed EIR and alternatives. The scoping meeting will be held at 7:00 PM on January 23, 2024 at the Depot (5775 Horseshoe Bar Road, Loomis, CA).

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The project site was previously proposed for development as part of the Village at Loomis Project. The Village at Loomis Project included 418 residential units, 56,000 square feet (sf) of commercial uses, and 25,000 sf in office uses on a 66.58-acre site, which encompassed the entirety of the current project site. An EIR was completed for the Village at Loomis Project pursuant to CEQA. The EIR was certified and the project was approved by the Town Council in 2019. However, following project approval by the Town Council, the approval was overturned by Town voters through a voter referendum in 2019. The referendum invalidated the project approval, invalidated zoning changes to the project site proposed as part of the Village at Loomis Project, and invalidated the Village at Loomis Development Agreement. The referendum did not invalidate the certification of the EIR or changes in General Plan land use designations for the site.

A new project application has been submitted for the currently proposed Hidden Grove Project, which is separate from the Village at Loomis Project.

PROJECT LOCATION

The 61.7-acre project site is located north of the Interstate 80 (I-80)/Horseshoe Bar Road interchange in the Town of Loomis, California (see Figure 1 and Figure 2). The project site consists of nine parcels, identified by Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APNs) 043-080-007, -008, -015, and -044, as well as APN 044-094-001, -004, -005, -006, and -010. Currently, the project site consists of undeveloped land comprised of grasses and trees, except for four single-family residences located in the western portion of the project site. The majority of the project site slopes downward towards the southwest to an unnamed perennial stream that runs from north to south through the central portion of the project site and flows off-site into Secret Ravine.

Vacant land exists to the north, south, and east (across I-80) of the project site. Surrounding existing land uses include single-family and duplex residential uses and the Loomis Grammar School to the north; commercial uses to the south; the Loomis Library, Veterans Hall, and commercial and single-family uses to the west; and scattered single-family residences to the east, across I-80 and beyond the vacant land.

Figure 1
Regional Vicinity Map

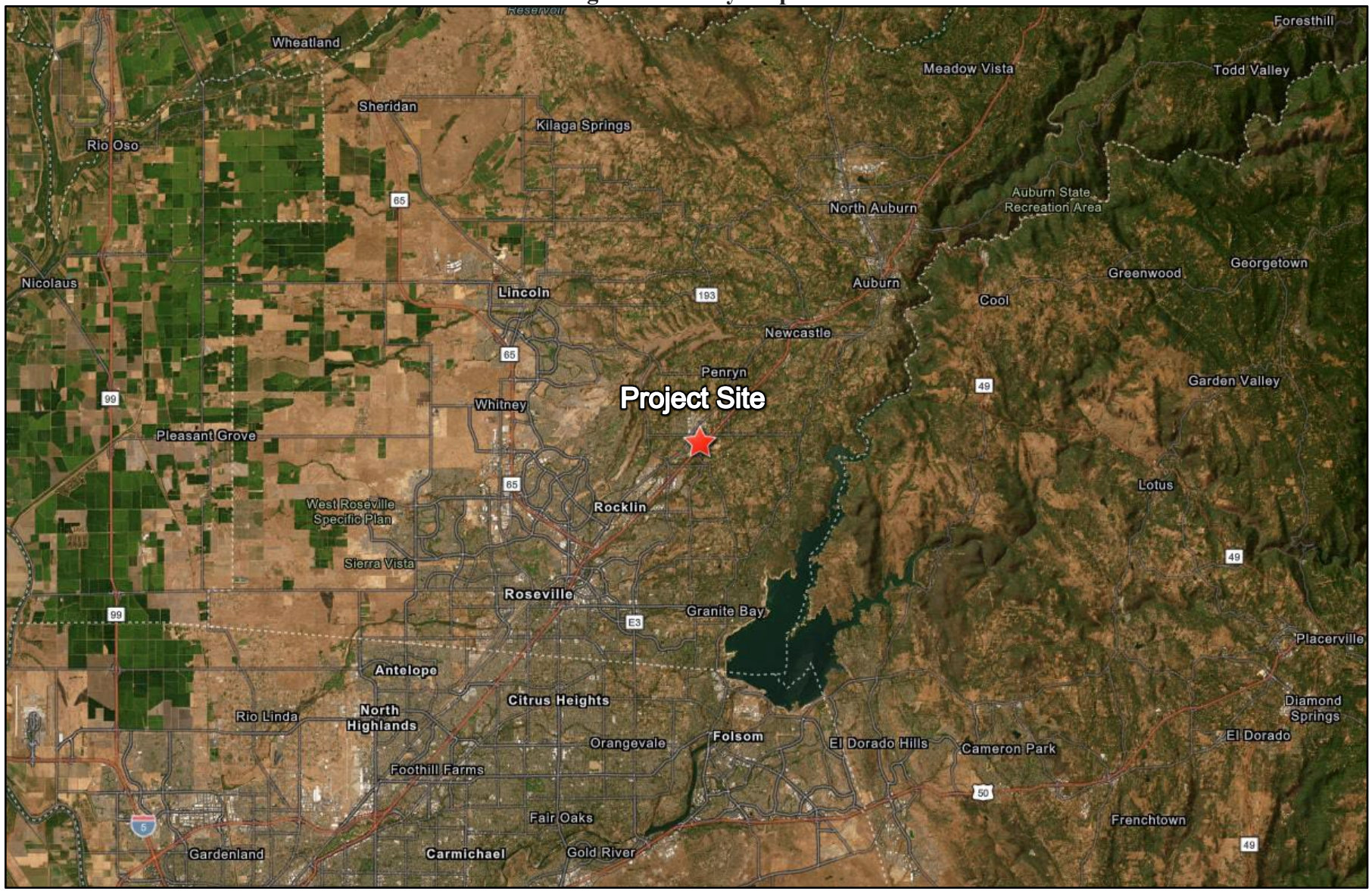

Figure 2
Project Site Boundaries

The Town of Loomis General Plan designates the project site as Town Center Commercial (TC), Residential – Medium Density (RM), Residential – Medium-High Density (RMH), Residential – High Density (RH), and Public-Quasi Public (PQP). The project site is zoned Office Commercial (CO), Central Commercial (CC), General Commercial (CG), and Single Family Residential-5 (RS-5).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project would include the demolition of the existing on-site structures, as well as the removal of 1,396 of the 1,720 on-site trees, followed by development of a residential community. The proposed project includes a Tentative Subdivision Map (TSM) to divide the nine parcels that comprise the project site into 204 single-family lots (identified as Units A through D), one multi-family lot with 140 units (Unit E), one Town Center Commercial lot with nine residential units (Unit D), and 12.8 acres of open space, parks, and landscaping. In addition, the proposed project includes a request for incentives and concessions, pursuant to California Government Code 65915. For further details on the proposed project, see the Project Description section of the attached Initial Study.

It should be noted that the proposed project has submitted a planning application to the Town under the auspices of Senate Bill (SB) 330, also known as the Housing Crisis Act of 2019. SB 330 provides that if a proposed housing development is consistent with objective General Plan standards and criteria, then rezoning of a project site is not required (Government Code Section 65589.5[j][4]). Although the existing zoning districts identified above are not consistent with the General Plan land use designations, provided that all land uses proposed as a part of the project are consistent with Town's General Plan land use designations, rezoning of the project site would not be required as a part of the project pursuant to Government Code Section 65589.5(j)(4).

The proposed project would require the following approvals from the Town of Loomis:

- Certification of the EIR and adoption of a Mitigation Monitoring Plan;
- Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map;
- Future Tentative Map for Unit E; and
- Affordable Housing Density Bonus Concessions and Waivers.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The Town determined that an EIR was required for specific impact areas based on an Initial Study prepared for the proposed project (see attached). A copy of the Initial Study is available on the Town's website at: https://loomis.ca.gov/loomis-hidden-grove-project/. Based on the analysis within the Initial Study, the impact areas to be covered by the EIR include the following: air quality, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and energy; biological resources; cultural resources; geology and soils; hydrology and water quality; noise; public services and recreation; transportation; tribal cultural resources; and utilities and service systems.

The EIR will evaluate the potential environmental effects of the proposed project, as compared to existing baseline conditions, along with a reasonable range of alternatives, including the no-project alternative. The EIR will also address direct, reasonably foreseeable indirect, cumulative, and growth-inducing effects, and will identify feasible mitigation measures, if available, to reduce any identified significant and potentially significant impacts.

Each environmental technical chapter will include the following: an introduction; existing environmental setting; regulatory context; standards of significance; method of analysis; identification of environmental impacts; development of mitigation measures and monitoring strategies to address potentially significant impacts; level of significance after mitigation; and a discussion of potential cumulative impacts and mitigation measures to address potentially significant impacts. In addition, consistency with the General Plan Housing element and the proposed project's participation in Density Bonus programs shall be addressed as a separate impact discussion in each of the applicable chapters. The following paragraphs provide a general discussion of the anticipated topics that will be included in the technical chapters of the EIR.

Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Energy – The Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions, and Energy chapter of the EIR will include a quantitative assessment of short-term (i.e., construction) and long-term (i.e., operational) increases of criteria air pollutant emissions of primary concern (i.e., reactive organic gases, oxides of nitrogen, and particulate matter), as well as construction-related and operational GHG emissions from both stationary and mobile sources. The project's cumulative contribution to regional air quality will be discussed. The air quality and GHG analysis for the proposed project will be performed using the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) software program and following the Placer County Air Pollution Control District (PCAPCD) guidelines. The significance of air quality impacts will be based on PCAPCD-recommended methodology.

The construction analysis will account for all on-site demolition as well as the construction of new buildings and infrastructure. The chapter will also evaluate the potential localized health impacts resulting from air pollutants, including toxic air contaminants (TACs), using the California Air Resources Board (CARB) "Air Quality and Land Use Handbook: A Community Health Perspective." Vehicle miles traveled and vehicle trip generation data from the project-specific Vehicles Miles Traveled (VMT) Analysis Memorandum will be used as model input data. Mitigation measures will be incorporated to reduce any significant air quality impacts, and anticipated reductions in emissions associated with proposed mitigation measures will be quantified.

Impacts related to energy consumption will also be addressed in this chapter. The focus will be on whether the proposed project could result in a potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation. This discussion will also evaluate whether the project would conflict with or obstruct a State or local plan for renewable energy. Feasible and appropriate mitigation measures or alternatives to avoid or reduce adverse impacts will be identified, as needed.

Biological Resources – The Biological Resources chapter of the EIR will summarize the setting and describe the proposed project's potential impacts to plant communities, oak woodlands, wildlife, and wetlands, including any adverse effects on rare, endangered, candidate, sensitive, and special-status species for the project site. In addition, the Biological Resources chapter will discuss the proposed project's consistency with the Town of Loomis Tree Ordinance. Analysis in the chapter will be based on a Biological Resources Assessment (BRA), an Arborist Report, and a Wetland Delineation Report. Feasible and appropriate mitigation measures or alternatives to avoid or reduce adverse impacts will be identified, as needed.

Cultural Resources – The Cultural Resources chapter of the EIR will describe the potential effects to historical and archaeological resources from build-out of the proposed project. Analysis in the chapter will be based on a Cultural Resources Inventory Report (CRIR). The chapter will also provide recommendations, if applicable, for future management of any cultural resources found in the project

area. Feasible and appropriate mitigation measures or alternatives to avoid or reduce adverse impacts will be identified, as needed.

Geology and Soils (including Paleontological Resources) – The Geology and Soils chapter of the EIR will summarize the setting and describe the potential effects from soil erosion, earthquakes, liquefaction, and expansive soils, as well as identify any unique geological features within the project area. The chapter will also discuss the potential for paleontological resources to occur on the project site. Feasible and appropriate mitigation measures or alternatives to avoid or reduce adverse impacts will be identified, as needed.

Hydrology and Water Quality – The Hydrology and Water Quality chapter of the EIR will summarize setting information and identify potential impacts on storm water drainage, flooding, groundwater, and water quality. Generally, the chapter will address the project's estimated increase in peak flows and volume of runoff, as well as how stormwater will be treated prior to being discharged. Specifically, the analysis in the chapter will focus on the project's location within the FEMA 100-year floodplain Zones A and AE due to the Secret Ravine tributary, which crosses the middle of the site. Feasible and appropriate mitigation measures or alternatives to avoid or reduce adverse impacts will be identified, as needed.

Noise – The Noise chapter of the EIR will be based on a project-specific Noise Study. Potential noise-related impacts upon nearby sensitive receptors from construction noise and vibration will be assessed. The chapter will include an evaluation of the increases in traffic noise attributable to the proposed project, based on data provided by the traffic consultant. The chapter will also include an analysis of noise and vibration impacts associated with operation of the proposed project. Feasible and appropriate mitigation measures or alternatives to avoid or reduce adverse impacts will be identified, as needed.

Public Services and Recreation – The Public Services and Recreation chapter of the EIR will summarize setting information and identify potential new demand for public services, including, but not necessarily limited to, fire protection services, law enforcement, educational facilities, public parks, and recreation. The chapter will evaluate whether the proposed project would increase demands upon local service providers such that physical improvements would be required to existing facilities, or new facilities would be required, the construction of which could cause physical impacts to the environment. Feasible and appropriate mitigation measures or alternatives to avoid or reduce adverse impacts will be identified, as needed.

Transportation – The Transportation chapter will be based upon a project-specific Traffic Operations Analysis and VMT Qualitative Assessment. Impact determination for CEQA purposes will be based on VMT, consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3. The chapter will include evaluation of traffic conditions with alternative circulation networks and shall inform circulation improvement recommendations consistent with the Town's General Plan and VMT reduction requirements pursuant to CEQA.

The chapter will also describe the existing setting in regards to pedestrian, bicycle and transit facilities. The EIR chapter will include an analysis of the proposed project's potential impacts to such systems, as well as impacts related to conflicting with applicable programs, policies, and ordinances addressing the circulation system, vehicle safety hazards, and emergency access. Feasible and appropriate mitigation measures or alternatives to avoid or reduce adverse impacts will be identified, as needed.

Tribal Cultural Resources – The Tribal Cultural Resources chapter of the EIR will describe the potential effects to tribal cultural resources from build-out of the proposed project, pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21080.3.1. The chapter will also discuss outreach and consultation with tribes,

as required by Assembly Bill (AB) 52. Analysis in the chapter will be based on a CRIR. The chapter will also provide recommendations, if applicable, for future management of any tribal cultural resources found in the project area. Feasible and appropriate mitigation measures or alternatives to avoid or reduce adverse impacts will be identified, as needed.

Utilities and Service Systems – The Utilities and Service Systems chapter of the EIR will include an evaluation regarding the project's increase in demand for water supply, wastewater treatment, solid waste service, natural gas, and electricity. The chapter will evaluate the infrastructure improvements needed to provide water and sewer service to the project site, and whether the existing service providers can accommodate the proposed project. If existing water, sewer, solid waste, natural gas, or electricity facilities would be impacted, mitigation measures will be identified to ensure that the project's demand can be adequately accommodated. Feasible and appropriate mitigation measures or alternatives to avoid or reduce adverse impacts will be identified, as needed.

Statutorily Required Sections – Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 21100(B)(5), the Statutorily Required Sections chapter of the EIR will address the potential for growth-inducing impacts of the proposed project, focusing on whether removal of any impediments to growth would occur with the project. A summary of the significant and unavoidable impacts identified within the EIR will be included in this chapter, as well as a discussion of significant irreversible impacts. This chapter will generally describe the cumulative setting for the proposed project; however, a detailed description of the subject-specific cumulative setting will be included in each technical chapter of the EIR.

Alternatives Analysis – In accordance with Section 15126.6 of the CEQA Guidelines, the EIR will include an analysis of a range of alternatives, including a No Project Alternative. Consideration will be given to potential off-site locations consistent with CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.6(f)(2). If it is determined that an off-site alternative is not feasible, the EIR will include a discussion describing why such a conclusion was reached. The chapter will also include a section of alternatives considered but dismissed. The Alternatives Analysis chapter will describe the alternatives and identify the environmentally superior alternative. The alternatives will be analyzed at a level of detail less than that of the proposed project; however, the analyses will include sufficient detail to allow a meaningful comparison of the impacts. Such detail may include conceptual site plans for each alternative, basic quantitative traffic information (e.g., trip generation), as well as a table that will compare the features and the impacts of each alternative.