



## Legislation Text

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### Memorandum

**TO:** Planning Commission

**FROM:** Scott DeLeon - Interim Community Development Director  
Mark Roberts - Principal Planner

**DATE:** March 4, 2020

**SUBJECT:** Guenoc Valley Mixed Use Planned Development Project Draft EIR  
**Supervisor District 1**

**ATTACHMENTS:** None

#### I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Lotusland Investment Holdings, Inc. has applied for approvals to develop the Guenoc Valley Mixed Use Planned Development Project. The County determined that an EIR was required, and has had a Draft EIR prepared for the project. As required by CEQA Guidelines Sections 15105 and 15087, the County has released the Draft EIR for review by the public and agencies for a 45-day public comment period, beginning February 21, 2020 and ending April 7, 2020.

The Proposed Project includes a General Plan amendment to designate the Guenoc Valley Site as Resort Commercial and rezone it to Guenoc Valley District (GVD), pursuant to the Middletown Area Plan Policy 6.3.1b. These amendments, if approved, would allow for the development of up to 400 hotel rooms, 450 resort residential units, 1,400 residential estates, and 500 workforce co-housing units within the zoning district. The Draft EIR analyzes the effects of the proposed General Plan amendment and rezoning of the Guenoc Valley Site to GVD on a programmatic level. In addition to the program level analysis, the Draft EIR provides a project level analysis of the impacts of the first phase (Phase 1) of the Proposed Project. Phase 1 proposes a phased subdivision and related entitlements to allow at full buildout up to 401 residential estates, 141 resort residential units, and 177 hotel units and accessory resort and commercial uses within the Guenoc Valley Site. In addition, Phase 1 includes a subdivision and rezone of the Middletown Housing Site to accommodate workforce housing, including 21 single family residences with optional accessory dwelling units, 29 duplex units in 15 structures, and a community clubhouse and associated infrastructure. Off-site infrastructure improvements under the Proposed Project include a proposed water supply well on the Off-site Well Site and pipeline located adjacent to and within Butts Canyon Road, along with intersection and electrical improvements.

The Draft EIR identified a range of impacts of the project, including less than significant impacts, significant impacts, and those significant impacts that cannot be reduced to a less than significant level and are therefore significant unavoidable impacts. Mitigation measures for significant impacts are also identified in the Draft EIR. Alternatives to the proposed project are evaluated in the Draft EIR as required by CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6.

The public is invited to comment on the Draft EIR. Comments on the Draft EIR will be responded to in writing in the Final EIR. No responses to comments are required at this public comment meeting.

*Please Note: The Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and supporting documents for the proposed Guenoc Valley Mixed Use-Planned Development Project are available for review at the link below:*

- [http://www.lakecountycalifornia.gov/Government/Directory/Community\\_Development/Planning/GuenocValley](http://www.lakecountycalifornia.gov/Government/Directory/Community_Development/Planning/GuenocValley).

## I. **PROJECT BACKGROUND**

### **EIR Scoping**

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15082, a Notice of Preparation (NOP) was circulated to the public, local, state and federal agencies, and other known interested parties for a 30-day public and agency review period on April 23, 2019. The purpose of the NOP was to provide notification that an EIR for the Proposed Project was being prepared and to solicit public input on the scope and content of the document.

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15082, the Lead Agency held two scoping meetings for the EIR on May 15, 2019, one in the morning at the County of Lake Board of Supervisors Chambers, and the other in the evening at the Middletown Library. Agencies and members of the public were invited to attend and provide input on the scope of the EIR. Comments from agencies and the public provided at the scoping meetings and in written comments submitted in response to the NOP are included in an Appendix to the Draft EIR. Issues raised during the scoping process are summarized in Section 1.5 of the Draft EIR.

### **Scope of DRAFT EIR**

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15063, an IS, in conjunction with comments received during scoping, was used to focus the EIR on effects determined to be potentially significant. The following environmental resources were determined to have the potential to be significantly affected by the Proposed Project and have therefore been addressed in detail in the Draft EIR:

- Aesthetics
- Agriculture and Forestry
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gases and Climate Change
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use / Planning
- Noise and Vibration
- Population / Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation and Circulation
- Utilities / Service Systems
- Wildfire

Potential impacts associated with Mineral Resources were identified through the IS as not significant and less than significant and therefore are not addressed in the Draft EIR.

## I. **FINDINGS OF THE DRAFT EIR**

The Draft EIR identified a range of impacts of the project, including less than significant, significant, and significant and unavoidable impacts. Mitigation measures for impacts are also identified in the Draft EIR. The findings of the Draft EIR are summarized in the Executive Summary of the Draft EIR.

I. **TIPS FOR THE PUBLIC IN MAKING EFFECTIVE COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT EIR**

The public should be aware that the CEQA process encourages public involvement. Comments on a project can be submitted verbally or in writing. Written comments can be submitted during the DEIR review period, as discussed below.

Written comments are often the most effective method of commenting. They accurately describe the commenter's concerns and can be accompanied by specific references. Whereas the opportunity for verbal comments may be limited to a few minutes at a public hearing, a written comment can be more extensive.

The Final EIR will include written responses to all of the comments received during the DEIR's public review period. Written comments can also be submitted after the end of the DEIR review period, but they may not be responded to in writing. Although a written response isn't required, the County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors are required to consider any late comments prior to acting on the project.

The Draft EIR differs from the proposed project in that the Draft EIR analyzes the potential impacts of those proposals.

- The EIR is an informational document.
- It does not approve the project.

Comments or opinions about the content of the project should be clearly distinguished from comments on the adequacy of the Draft EIR, and the Public Comment Meeting is not the appropriate venue for these comments.

In commenting on the Draft EIR, commenters should address whether it adequately identifies and analyzes significant environmental impacts and how they may be avoided or reduced. Comments are most helpful when they specifically address impact conclusions, alternatives, or mitigation measures, or the methods of analysis used by the lead agency (the County) to evaluate these issues. Commenters should explain the basis for their comments and include supporting evidence such as data, expert opinion, or other facts. This includes providing the County with copies of any references used as the basis for the comments. If the reference is available on a website, commenters should provide the County with the specific web address where the reference can be accessed.

Commenters are free to express their opinions about the project, but these are not necessarily helpful to the County in preparing an adequate EIR. Effective CEQA-related comments focus on the EIR and its adequacy as an informational document. Commenters should be aware that the adequacy of an EIR is determined in terms of what is reasonably feasible. CEQA does not require a lead agency to conduct every test or perform all research, study, and experimentation recommended by commenters. Disagreement among experts does not make an EIR inadequate, but the EIR should summarize the main points of disagreement among the experts.

I. **PURPOSE OF THE PUBLIC COMMENT MEETING**

The purpose of the Public Comment Meeting is to collect input from the public and agencies on the EIR.

To assist in accomplishing this purpose, the project applicants will make a presentation about the proposed project, and the County's environmental consultants will explain EIR process and present key findings from the EIR.

No responses to comments will be provided at the Public Comment Meeting, as responses to comments made at the Public Comment Meeting will be provided in writing in the Final EIR as required by CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.