

**NOTICE OF PREPARATION (NOP) OF
A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (EIR)
AND NOTICE OF PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING
FOR THE
DIAMOND SPRINGS PARKWAY**

Date: December 12, 2007
To: Interested Parties
From: El Dorado County Department of Transportation

The El Dorado County Department of Transportation (DOT) is preparing an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed Diamond Springs Parkway Project (formerly referred to as the Missouri Flat/Pleasant Valley Road Connector Project). DOT is soliciting the view of interested persons and agencies on the scope and content of the information included in the EIR.

Location: The Project is located within unincorporated El Dorado County, California, south of the Missouri Flat Road/U. S. 50 Interchange, west of the City of Placerville, and north of the town of Diamond Springs (see Exhibit 1, Regional Locator). As illustrated in Exhibit 2, the principle roadway network in the vicinity of the Project includes Missouri Flat Road, Pleasant Valley Road (State Route (SR) 49), Diamond Road (SR 49), Lime Kiln Road, and China Garden Road. The Project crosses portions of multiple assessors parcel numbers (APNs). The specific APNs include the following:

- 051-461-02, 04, 11, 12, 37;
- 051-250-06, 04, 07, 08, 11, 12, 13, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 31, 39, 46, 54, 55;
- 054-342-15, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26;
- 054-351-04, 05, 14, 15; 097-150-26, 22;
- 327-010-03, 04, 05, 06;
- 327-260-06, 25, 28, 39;
- 327-270-02, 03, 04, 08, 11, 12, 18, 26, 27, 43, 46, 48, 49, 50;
- 990-645-79;
- 990-659-49; and
- 327-270-50.

Project Description

DOT is proposing the construction of the Diamond Springs Parkway (Parkway or Project) to improve traffic circulation along Pleasant Valley Road and Missouri Flat Road, north of Diamond Springs. The Project is identified in the County General Plan (2004) Circulation Map as a planned four-lane divided road and is part of DOT's 5-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). As shown in Exhibit 2, the preliminary roadway design depicts a new Parkway from Missouri Flat Road near its intersection with the Sacramento-Placerville Transportation Corridor (SPTC), north of China Garden Road eastward to Diamond Road, State Route (SR) 49. The Parkway would require roadway improvements to Diamond Road (SR 49), from north of its intersection with the Parkway, and continuing south to Pleasant Valley Road. The Parkway improvements would also require minor realignment of China Garden Road (see Exhibit 2).

DOT currently anticipates phasing construction of the Parkway in two major phases. Under the first phase, the Parkway would be constructed as a 2-Lane Arterial. The first phase would involve the acquisition of the necessary rights-of-way (ROW) for the roadway improvements, grading and construction of supporting infrastructure (e. g. drainage), and construction of the new Parkway. In advance of future traffic volumes exceeding the proposed Phase 1 improvements, DOT expects construction of the Parkway to a four-lane, divided arterial with an ultimate ROW of 100 feet. For the purposes of the EIR, DOT will evaluate a larger

Study Area as depicted in Exhibit 2, which includes a 150-foot corridor to account for additional slope and/or drainage easements.

The Parkway would require improvements to Diamond Road (SR 49), from approximately 1,500 north of the new Parkway to Pleasant Valley Road. Improvements to Diamond Road would update the roadway's classification to a major 2-Lane highway. The second phase would involve the construction of a four-lane, multilane highway within a 150-foot ROW consistent with Caltran's standards. For the purposes of the EIR, DOT will evaluate a 200-foot corridor to account for additional slope and/or drainage easements.

Project Objectives

The specific objectives of the County DOT for constructing the Parkway include the following:

- Objective 1a. Improve traffic safety and operations on portions of Missouri Flat Road south of U. S. Highway 50 and on Pleasant Valley Road (SR 49) in the vicinity of Diamond Springs.
- Objective 1b. Implement the Parkway Project as part of the County's 5-year CIP and per direction provided in the County's 2004 General Plan (Policy 10.2.7.3).
- Objective 1c. Improve roadway and intersection capacities along Missouri Flat Road, south of U. S. Highway 50, to encourage the creation of additional commercial/retail square footage.
- Objective 1d. Provide opportunities for improved bicycle and pedestrian facilities consistent with the 2004 El Dorado County General Plan and coordinate the construction of the Parkway with the planned El Dorado Multi-Use Trail.
- Objective 1e. Protect natural resources, including local wetlands, riparian features, and oak woodlands by siting the Project alignment to avoid these features, to the extent feasible.

Level of Detail for the Environmental Analysis in the Draft EIR

In preparing the EIR for the project, the County will review the existing certified Final EIR (State Clearinghouse No. 97092074) for the Master Circulation and Funding Plan (MC&FP) and the Sundance Plaza and El Dorado Villages Shopping Center projects, which included a program-level analysis of impacts associated with the Pleasant Valley Road Connector, to determine whether any of the analysis therein remains accurate and up-to-date. To the extent the County answers this inquiry in the affirmative, the new, project-specific EIR for the Parkway may rely to some degree on the prior analysis. The project-level analysis will focus on reasonably foreseeable physical environmental effects that could result from the planning, construction, and operation of the Project.

Scope of the EIR

Pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines section 15060, El Dorado County conducted a preliminary review of the proposed Project. Based on the potential for significant impacts, an EIR is deemed necessary and a separate Initial Study will not be prepared as provided in State CEQA Guidelines section 15060(d). Issues to be discussed in the EIR are provided below. Comments and suggestions are requested as to the following significant impacts that are proposed to be addressed in the EIR.

Less Than Significant Impacts Will Not Be Addressed in the EIR. Based on preliminary review of the project application, El Dorado County has determined that the proposed Project would have a less than significant impact or no impact on the CEQA issue areas identified below. The primary reasons for these preliminary determinations are as follows:

Agricultural Resources. No agricultural uses currently occur within the Project alignment. The Parkway includes generally disturbed industrial areas with much of the project area under existing industrial and/or commercial zoning. This factor in combination with unfavorable soils and variable topography render the Project unsuitable for agricultural purposes.

Mineral Resources. The Project is not located within a Mineral Resource Zone designated by the State or County, and does not affect resources that may be deemed to be a locally important mineral resource of value to the region and residents of the State.

Potentially Significant Impacts to be Addressed in the EIR. El Dorado County has determined that there is a reasonable possibility that aspects of the Project could have significant effects on the environment and is therefore preparing an EIR. The EIR will provide an evaluation of the Project based on "Significance Criteria" contained in the Initial Study Checklist included as Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines that could be applied to the resources listed below.

- General Plan Consistency and Land Use Compatibility
- Scenic Highways and Visual Resources
- Geologic and Soil-Related Hazards
- Displacement of Existing Housing and Structures
- Air Quality and Health Risk
- Noise and Acoustics
- Traffic, Circulation, and Alternative Transportation
- Biological Resources, Oak Woodland, and Wetlands
- Drainage and Water Quality
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Public Services and Utility Service Infrastructure
- Historic and Archaeological Resources

Alternatives to be Addressed in the EIR

In accordance with section 15126.6 of the State CEQA Guidelines, an EIR must "describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the Project, or to the location of the Project, which would feasibly attain most the basic objectives of the Project, but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the Project, and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives." The State CEQA Guidelines also require that a No Project Alternative be evaluated, and that under specific circumstances, an environmentally superior alternative be designated from among the remaining alternatives.

The alternatives analysis contained in the MC&FP EIR provides a summary of a technical memorandum prepared by DOT in 1997 that describes six alternatives for the current Project. Five of the six alternatives, which included alignments along China Garden Road, Chuck Wagon Way, and Pleasant Valley Road, were rejected from further consideration in the Program EIR based on community input. Since that time, the County has conducted further engineering evaluation on several variations of the Project alignment. The Project EIR will build off and summarize the prior analysis conducted to date and evaluate a reasonable range of alternatives that reduce or avoid significant impacts associated with the Project. The selected alternatives will be analyzed at a qualitative level of detail for comparison against the impacts identified for the proposed Project, consistent with the requirements of CEQA.

Purpose of Public Scoping Process

El Dorado County will be the Lead Agency under the CEQA and will prepare an EIR for the Project.

The purpose of this Notice of Preparation / Notice of Public Scoping Meeting is to obtain the views of agencies and the public as to the scope and content of the environmental information and analysis, including the significant environmental issues, reasonable alternatives and mitigation measures that should be included in the Draft EIR. Applicable agencies will need to use the EIR when considering related permits or other approvals.

The County has extended the NOP comment period a week beyond the 30-days mandated by State law with the **NOP review period beginning December 12, 2007 and ending on January 18, 2008**. Submittal of electronic copies of comments in MS Word format is also appreciated. Please send your comments or email to:

Jennifer Maxwell
County of El Dorado DOT
2850 Fairlane Court
Placerville, CA 95667
jmaxwell@edcgov.us.

The County will also conduct two public scoping meetings for the proposed Project to receive oral testimony on the scope and content of the Draft EIR. The format of the meeting will include a brief overview of the Project by the County and its consultant(s) followed by an informal, open forum where agencies and individuals will be able to provide the County with oral and written input on the Project. The scoping meetings will be held at the time and place listed below:

DATE: January 9, 2008
TIME: 2:00 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.
LOCATION: Firefighters Memorial Hall
501 Pleasant Valley Road
Diamond Springs, CA 95619

If you have any questions, please contact Jennifer Maxwell at the above address, by calling 530-621-5987, or by e-mail to jmaxwell@edcgov.us. Copies of this notice will also be available at the Public Scoping Meetings.

Signature: _____
Jennifer Maxwell, Project Manager
County of El Dorado DOT

Date: December 12, 2007