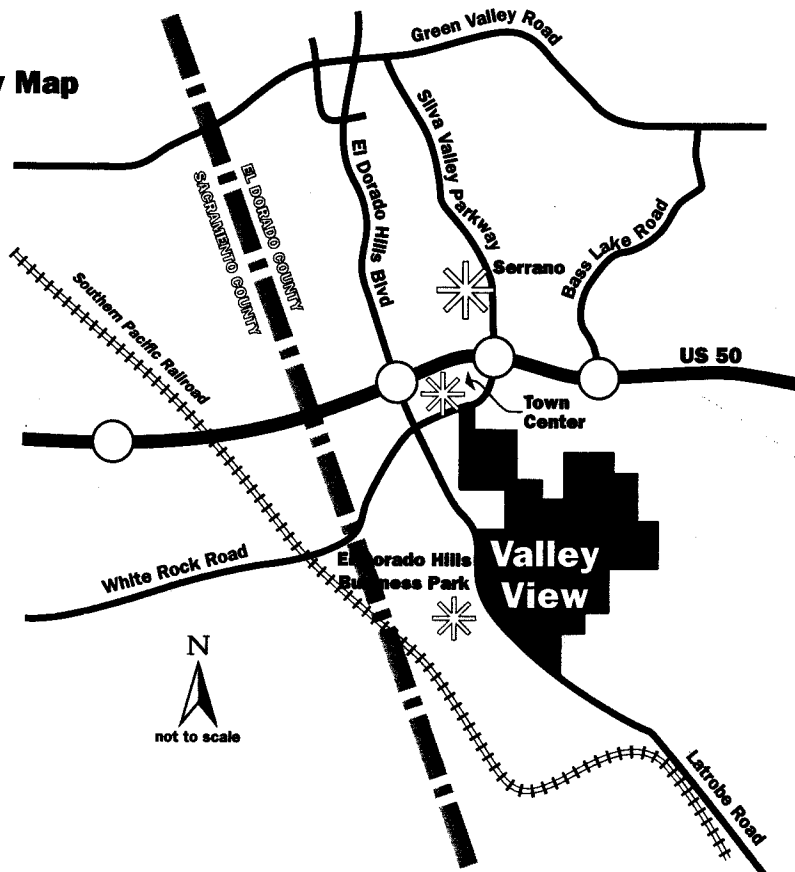




2 Setting

Valley View represents the largest remaining site within the original El Dorado Hills Community which is undeveloped. Its approximately 2,037 acres lie east of Latrobe Road and south of the Town Center commercial area in the southern part of the Community. Valley View's regional location near Highway 50 at the foot of the Sierra foothills, places it within a major economic and transportation activity corridor of the Sacramento region. This strategic location means that Valley View is an important part of not only the economic and social community of El Dorado County, but also of the economic and housing market of greater Sacramento.

Figure 2.1
Vicinity Map



Physical Context

The majority of the Plan area occupies the eastern side of an open valley containing the El Dorado Hills Business Park, the Town Center, the planned Carson Creek Specific Plan and an existing residential area commonly known as Springfield Meadows. North of Valley View can also be found the historic town site of Clarksville, one of the early mining and supply centers of the gold rush era.

Geology, Land Form and Vegetation

Within the valley portion of the Plan are the proposed villages of White Rock and West Valley. Beyond the eastern ridge of the valley lies an additional 600 acres of the Plan area which is planned as East Ridge Village. The ridge, itself, is the dominant land form of the site. From relatively flat and rolling terrain at the Latrobe Road edge, it rises approximately 500 feet from the valley floor. Maximum slopes averaging 20% to 30% are found nearest the ridge. Actual elevations across the Plan area range from 530 feet to a little over 1100 feet above sea level at the eastern edge of East Ridge Village.

Geologically, the Plan area lies within the western belt of metamorphic rocks of the Sierra Nevada. This area has undergone several complex stages of geologic change which has resulted in a generally northwest trending structural fabric of rock units and fault zones. The western branch of the Bear Mountain Fault Zone runs through the Plan area at the base of the dominant ridge. This fault, considered to be potentially active with a recurrence interval of 65,000 years, has not been historically active within the Plan area.

Bedrock consisting of volcanics and metavolcanics are covered generally by rocky soils typically 1.8 to 7 feet in depth. Some deeper loams can be found on the site along with isolated instances of disturbed creek beds containing the deposited tailings of historic placer mining.

These soils support a number of plant communities including open grassland dominated by introduced pasture grasses and weeds, and open woodland. The latter community is particularly characteristic of the upper portion of the Plan area where East Ridge Village is located. Isolated micro systems associated with wet swales and other wetland and riparian locations can also be found on the site.

Climate is mild and relatively dry with an annual rainfall of 20 to 30 inches concentrated in the cooler months of the year. This hot summer-cool winter cycle typical of the lower Sierra foothills, tends to favor annual grasses, nonnative herbs and drought adapted species such as blue oaks, interior live oaks and foothill pine. Species of willow and cottonwood predominate in isolated locations along creek beds. No commercially significant timber or mineral resources exist on the site.

2 **Setting**

The major surface hydrological features of the Plan area are Carson Creek in the north-west portion of the site, Screech Owl Creek, a tributary of Carson Creek, in the northern part of the Plan, and Plunkett Creek in the eastern upland area. All three are identified as "intermittent" streams. In the western portion of the Plan area runoff flows generally westerly of the dominant ridge and into any one of a number of small seasonal drainages leading to the named creeks. Stormwaters leave the site rapidly.

In general, the physical setting of Valley View is fairly typical of the lower foothill region. Major physical conditions affecting the design of this Plan are slope, the presence or absence and quality of oak woodland cover, and the limited and isolated presence of such special environments as wetlands or riparian zones.

Surrounding Land Uses

The Valley View Specific plan area lies at the southeast corner of the El Dorado Hills community. To the north is the major commercial center known as Town Center, a part of the El Dorado Hills Specific Plan. West of the site lies the 800 acre El Dorado Hills Business Park. Both of these uses represent major, long term sites of expanding employment and economic growth.

Also lying immediately west of a portion of the Plan area is the existing El Dorado Hills Wastewater Treatment Plant operated by the El Dorado Irrigation District. This facility is, at the time of preparation of this Plan, undergoing improvements designed to provide higher levels of treatment. Modifications will have the effect of reducing odor emissions and other environmental risks.

To the south and east of the Plan area are more rural uses including portions of the rural subdivisions of Marble Mountain, Marble Ridge and Ryan Ranch. The Plan area also has about one half mile of common boundary with the proposed Marble Valley Specific Plan. These areas are generally not served by public water and sewer services. Valley View represents the planned limits of these public services in this portion of the county.

Historical Context

Valley View lies near the southern extent of prehistoric occupation of the Southern Maidu or Nisenan people who generally occupied the lower reaches of the Yuba, Bear and American Rivers. It is also likely that the site was familiar to the Northern Sierra Miwok, a people generally occupying the lands south of the Cosumnes River. The Nisenan people living in the foothill belt were organized in small groups, often referred to as "tribelets" of 15 to several hundred people living in permanent villages or small outlying "winter villages". These habitation sites were typically found along streams or on knolls or ridges having southern exposure and available water and food supplies. Villages might include dwellings, acorn granaries, a sweat house and dance



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house. Acorns, nuts, herbs and berries along with deer, fish and small game made up the typical diet.

While largely unaffected by the early European occupation of California, the foothill Nisenan population was devastated by epidemics in the 1830's and their territory was overrun by miners in the 1850's and 1860's. Some evidence exists in anthropological literature of a major village site known as Po lun kit in the Clarksville area near Valley View.

Early Historic Period

The Gold Rush period of the late 1840's and 1850's brought a number of changes and a rapid increase in population to the foothill area. Placer mining was carried out on most of the streams and drainages of the area including Carson Creek and its tributaries adjoining the Plan area. The town of Clarksville was established at an early time as a supply center, waystop and transportation hub. A number of businesses including taverns, stores and, briefly, a pony express stop and Wells Fargo station were established. The townsite of Clarksville is immediately east and north of the Plan area.

Following the decline of major mining activity, the Clarksville area was home to a number of settlers engaged in farming and livestock. Descendants of some of these early residents remain in the area and the family names of Tong, Euer, Cothrin and Ryan remain prominent in the area. A *Clarksville Heritage Society* was informally organized in the 1980's by descendants of some of these early pioneers and is comprised today of approximately 60 members.

Later History

In the late 1950's and early 1960's most of the land which is today commonly known as El Dorado Hills was assembled by an early area developer, Mr. Alan Lindsay. Lindsay commissioned a master plan for the long term development of over 10,000 acres which stretched from north of Green Valley Road to what is today the southern portion of the Valley View Plan. This master plan was prepared by the firm of Victor Gruen & Associates, a prominent planning and architecture firm of the time. The Gruen plan formed the basis of the original "village concept" which has guided planning and urban form in the community since that day even though comprehensive planning of that type was not commonly practiced by public agencies of that period. The Gruen Plan was never officially proposed for adoption by El Dorado County but its essential concept became embodied later in the El Dorado Hills Area Plan.

Net densities within the single family villages were designed to be typically 2 to slightly over 3 dwelling units per acre (du's/ac). A number of Multi-family areas were also planned which were designed to be built to up to 40 du's/ac. The early villages of Park Village, Governors Village, Crown Village and St. Andrews village were direct products of that original planning process.

2 **Setting**

The John Hancock Life Insurance Co. became the owner of the undeveloped acreage from Lindsay's holdings in the late 1960's, with less than 10% of the plan developed up to that date. Little further development occurred until 1981 when a partnership formed by Mr. Anthony Mansour, now known as El Dorado Hills Investors (EDHI), acquired approximately 7,000 acres of the original property and began the work of replanning and developing the community in a comprehensive fashion. The first major product of this work was the El Dorado Hills Specific Plan, a project under construction today and commonly known as the *Serrano* project. The last major piece of the community is this Valley View Specific Plan.

Supporting infrastructure in the El Dorado Hills area has necessarily followed a pattern of phased construction, designed for concurrency of improvements with development. In the early 1980's a private-public partnership between EDHI, other land owners and the El Dorado Irrigation District (EID) was forged which created the first process for the financing of expanded water and wastewater treatment and collection systems designed to serve expanding demands. Assessment District #3 was formed to assign the cost of needed improvements to undeveloped lands so that as they developed, funds would be made available to finance the costs of infrastructure by EID. Development Agreements were approved by the County, including one for the Valley View Plan area, which linked the commitment to fund infrastructure to the ability to develop properties to planned densities. The policy of assigning the costs of needed public improvements to the developing properties which they serve is today formally embodied in the El Dorado County General Plan. Although the actual mechanisms employed to create financing are more diverse today and include such things as special development fees, Mello-Roos Community Facility Districts as well as traditional assessment districts, the policy remains a cornerstone of the economic growth of the community.

Governmental Context

Equally important to the physical setting of the Plan area from a planning perspective, is the governmental context of public agencies providing services and the environment of government regulation which affects land use.

Public Agencies Providing Services to the Plan Area

As an unincorporated community, a number of local agencies provide services to the El Dorado Hills and Valley View areas. The County, itself, provides police protection, primarily from the Sheriff's Department. Other services are provided by line departments such as the Planning and Building Departments, Environmental Management, Health, the Department of Social Services, and the Probation Department and Court system. To the extent that all planned roadways for Valley View are proposed to be public, the County Department of Transportation will assume responsibility for maintenance.



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Water for both domestic use and irrigation is provided by the El Dorado Irrigation (EID) District and the planned wastewater collection and water storage and distribution systems are proposed to be owned and operated by this agency. Public education is provided by Buckeye School District for both elementary and intermediate levels and the El Dorado Unified High School District for secondary education. Public parks and recreation needs are met by the El Dorado Hills Community Services District. Fire protection is provided primarily by the El Dorado Hills County Water District which at one time also operated community water systems until their acquisition by EID.

The plans, programs and service capabilities of these agencies are discussed in more detail in later sections of this Specific Plan and in the EIR. In many cases this Plan provides for improvements to the service capabilities of these agencies either through payment of fees, provision of land or facilities, or through separate negotiated agreements to be entered into prior to development. In all cases, it is the intention of this Plan to implement the General Plan policy which requires that new development provide for improvements to existing infrastructure or new public services systems at no net cost to existing residents (Policy 10.2.1.5 of the El Dorado County General Plan). Furthermore, all necessary public facilities shall be provided concurrent with demand (Policy 5.1.2.1 of the El Dorado County General Plan).

El Dorado County General Plan

In 1989, the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors initiated work on a new County General Plan. The new Plan was ultimately adopted on January 23, 1996. This Plan superseded a program of Area Plans covering most of the County which had suffered from a lack of a consistent policy basis and internal conflicts. For the first time, the General Plan contained a comprehensive policy framework derived from a county-wide vision statement developed at a number of community workshops near the end of 1990. The vision centered around a concept of protection of the county's considerable natural and environmental values through coordinated land use and transportation planning and encouragement of clustered development and economic balance.

Conceptually, the General Plan identifies three primary types of environments where future growth is to be accommodated and more intense development directed. These are: *Community Regions* making up the majority of existing urban communities; *Rural Centers* which serve as the commercial and service core of outlying rural communities; and *Planned Communities* of which four are specifically identified in the new General Plan. Although Valley View lies within a Community Region and is not required to be developed under the provisions of a Specific Plan, a Specific Plan has been prepared by the project proponent in order to allow the County and the project proponent the opportunity to take advantage of the many benefits offered by the specific plan process, including comprehensive planning, greater design controls and the coordination of necessary public facilities and services.

2 Setting

A Specific Plan is a subordinate, though more detailed, level of planning than a general plan and is required under state law to be consistent with the General Plan of the County. The determination of consistency is a decision calling for a judgement by the County Planning Commission and ultimately by the Board of Supervisors. The Land Use Element of the El Dorado County General Plan currently designates Valley View by a number of high and low intensity uses including the following:

Table 2.1 General Plan Bulldout

LU Designation	Acreage	Density	Yield ²	
MFR	272	5-24	6528	Multi-family Residential
HDR	1453	1-5	7265	High Density Residential
LDR	84	0.1-0.2	16	Low Density Residential
R&D	195	.25 FAR	2.1M sf	Research & Development
PF	2	n.a.	n.a.	Public Facilities
Total	2006¹	-	13,809 (du's)	

¹Acreage total based upon Planning Department records which varies from surveyed acreage.

²Maximum theoretical yield in dwelling units or Millions of square feet of floor area for R&D.

The El Dorado County General Plan and each of its elements contain a great many policy statements. In many cases these policies are not relevant to the setting or nature of the Valley View Specific Plan area, while in others, the relevancy is quite clear. In still others, the relevancy is indirect or even ambiguous and must be interpreted by decision makers in a reasonable fashion with regard to the overall aims of the General Plan. The exercise of reasonable judgement is also involved in the future in the consideration of amendments to this Plan.

No exhaustive attempt is made within the body of this Specific Plan to reference all relevant sections of the County General Plan. But some of those policies which directly provide a foundation to this Plan and have guided its preparation are cited below for reference.

Land Use Element

2.1.1.2 Establish Community Regions to define those areas which are appropriate for the highest intensity of self-sustaining compact urban-type development or suburban type development within the County based upon the municipal spheres of influence, availability of infrastructure, public services, major transportation corridors and travel patterns, the location of major topographic patterns and features, and the ability to provide

and ~~to~~ maintain appropriate transitions at Community Region boundaries. These ~~same~~ boundaries shall be shown on the General Plan land use map.

2.1.1.3 ~~to~~ ~~be~~ Mixed Use developments which combine commercial, research and development, and residential uses on a single parcel are permissible and encouraged within Community Regions provided the commercial use is the ~~the~~ primary and dominant use of the land. Within Community Regions, the ~~the~~ mixed uses may occur vertically. In mixed use projects, the maximum residential density shall be 10 dwelling units per acre within Community Regions.

2.1.1.5 ~~to~~ Pursuant to Objective 3.5.1 and Policies 3.5.1.1 and 3.5.1.6, roadways with ~~which~~ or serving the Community Regions may experience temporary congestion during peak periods. Such congestion is considered acceptable in light ~~of~~ of the economic benefits of development and the costs of sizing roads to ~~deal~~ deal solely with peak periods.

While ~~not~~ a Planned Community, itself, the Valley View Specific Plan has been developed in accordance with the following general policy adopted by El Dorado ~~County~~ County in regard to Specific Plans for Planned Communities:

2.2.2.6 ~~to~~ The purpose of the Planned Community (-PC) overlay designation is to ~~supersede~~ supersede underlying land use designations, as set forth in Policy 2.1.4.3, and ~~to~~ to:

- A. ~~to~~ Identify lands suitable for new communities that require a specific plan ~~in~~ in accordance with Government Code §65450-65457 and common plan ~~making~~ making and funding for infrastructure and life cycle costs.
- B. ~~to~~ Allow use of modern planning and development techniques, effect more efficient utilization of land, and to allow flexibility of development;
- C. ~~to~~ Aid in the reduction of development costs and provide for a combination ~~of~~ of different land uses which complement each other but which may not ~~in~~ in all aspects conform to the existing zoning regulations;
- D. ~~to~~ Encourage a more efficient use of public and/or private services;
- E. ~~to~~ Place the primary emphasis on clustering intensive uses to minimize impact ~~on~~ on various natural and man-made resources, minimize public health ~~and~~ concerns, minimize aesthetic concerns, and provide for the creation ~~of~~ of open space and other community land uses.
- F. ~~to~~ Provide for public benefit.

2 **Setting**

2.3.2.1 Disturbance of slopes of forty (40) percent or greater shall be discouraged to minimize the visual impacts of grading and vegetation control.

2.5.1.2 Greenbelts or other means of community separation shall be included within a specific plan and may include any of the following: preserved open space, parks, agricultural districts, wildlife habitat, rare plant preserves, riparian corridors, and designated Natural Resources areas.

Circulation Element

3.9.1.4 School and public bus stops and turnouts shall be considered for inclusion into new developments.

3.9.1.5 Project review shall take into account all forms of transportation and circulation systems including rail, bicycle trails, pedestrian paths, equestrian easements, off-site and on-site parking where appropriate.

3.9.2.3 Higher intensity land uses shall be encouraged adjacent to public transportation routes to ensure compatible and supportive relationships.

Housing Element

El Dorado County has adopted goals in its Housing Element which relate to the provision of low and moderate income housing. While applicable to the county as a whole, these goals are not required to be implemented in each project, in all areas of the county. The Valley View project, however, contains some of the elements which favor affordable housing and implement, in part, the County's adopted housing policies.

4.1.1.3 Specific Plans need to address and provide for affordable housing.

4.2.1.2 To further the County's regional share of lower income housing needs, those sites designated Multi-family Residential (MFR) on the General Plan land use map shall be further evaluated for application of a combining zone district which shall provide for a density range not to be less than 10 units per acre. The application of the combining zone district shall be based upon suitability to support the density. The County shall target 25% of the available MFR designated lands for application of said combining zone.

Public Services and Utilities Element

- 5.1.2.2 ... Provision of public services to new discretionary development shall not result in a reduction of service below minimum established standards to current users...*
- 5.2.1.4 Rezoning and subdivision approvals in Community Regions or other areas dependent on public water supply shall be subject to the availability of a permanent and reliable water supply.*
- 5.2.1.8 The preparation and approval of specific plans may occur without the availability of water guarantees. The timing for water guarantees shall be established within the policies of each specific plan consistent with Policy 5.2.1.4.*
- 5.3.1.1 High density and Multi-family residential, commercial, and industrial projects shall be required to connect to public wastewater collection facilities as a condition of approval except in Rural Centers.*
- 5.4.1.1 Require storm drainage systems for discretionary development that protect public health and safety, preserve natural resources, prevent flooding, protect soils from erosion, and minimize impacts to existing facilities, meet the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) requirements, and preserve natural resources such as wetlands and riparian areas.*

Public Health, Safety and Noise Element

- 6.2.3.1 As a requirement for approving new development, the applicant shall demonstrate that, concurrent with development, adequate emergency water flow, fire access, and fire fighting personnel and equipment will be provided in accordance with applicable State and local fire district standards.*
- 6.5.1.2 ... Noise walls shall be discouraged... in favor of less intrusive noise mitigation (e.g., landscape berms, setbacks) along... high volume roadways.*
- 6.7.4.1 Reduce automobile dependency by permitting mixed land use patterns which locate services such as banks, child care facilities, schools, shopping centers, and restaurants in close proximity to employment centers and residential neighborhoods.*

2 **Setting**

Conservation and Open Space Element

7.3.5.5 Encourage water reuse programs to conserve raw or potable water supplies consistent with State law.

7.4.4.3 Utilize the clustering of development to retain the largest contiguous areas possible in wildland (undeveloped) status.

7.4.4.4 The County shall apply tree canopy coverage standards to discretionary permit review applicable to oak woodland habitats. Parcels having tree canopy cover of at least 10%, as determined from base line aerial photography or by site survey performed by a qualified licensed arborist or botanist, are subject to canopy coverage retention or replacement standards:

<i>Existing Canopy Cover</i>	<i>Fraction of Canopy to be Retained</i>
<i>80-100%</i>	<i>.60</i>
<i>60-79%</i>	<i>.70</i>
<i>40-59%</i>	<i>.80</i>
<i>20-30%</i>	<i>.85</i>
<i>0-19%</i>	<i>.90</i>

Agriculture and Forestry Element

This element of the General Plan establishes a number of policies pertaining to the protection of agricultural and timber lands, particularly those protected under Williamson Act and Timber Preserve Zone (TPZ) statutes. Generally, the element recognizes the need for protecting the viability of such lands from encroachment of conflict where they are adjacent to existing or planned urban uses such as the Community Regions and Planned Communities.

Parks and Recreation Element

9.1.1.1 The County shall assist in the development of regional, community and neighborhood parks, ensure a diverse range of recreational opportunities at a regional, community, and neighborhood level, and provide park design guidelines and development standards for park development. The following national standards shall be used as guidelines for the acquisition and development of park facilities:

El Dorado Hills Community Services District..... 5ac/1,000 pop

Economic Development Element

10.1.9.2 Encourage specific plans and large planned developments in Community Regions and Rural Centers to include a mix of housing types and relate it to local wage structures to achieve balance with existing and forecasted resident household needs.

Other Applicable Standards and Regulations

The El Dorado County **Zoning Ordinance** (Chapter 17 of the El Dorado County Code) is the basic regulation affecting land use and development in the county. Its provisions may be affected by the presence of approved Development Agreements, such as the one approved for the Valley View Plan area. The Zoning Ordinance has been modified many times over the years and is today a collection of procedures and requirements that do not completely reflect the current concepts in the General Plan. As of 1996, it is a long term project of the Planning Department to completely rewrite the Zoning Ordinance to make it a more modern planning tool.

An attempt has been made to incorporate some of the more recent zoning and development standards in this Specific Plan such as the Hillside Development Standards, but for the most part the land use categories and development standards in this Plan have been derived directly from the new General Plan and are intended to replace the Zoning Ordinance as the primary regulatory mechanism for Valley View.

The **Land Division Ordinances** (Chapter 16 of the El Dorado County Code) locally implement the requirements of the State Subdivision Map Act (Government Code §66400 *et. seq.*) For the most part these requirements continue in effect for the Valley View Specific Plan area. However, this Plan deviates in some of the specific standards for road configuration and other improvements from general county practice as identified in the *Design Manual* adopted by reference in the Subdivision Ordinance. In most cases these standards are exceeded in this Plan or are modified to allow for certain public amenities such as landscaping which are not commonly required or are designed to minimize grading effect of road construction in hilly areas. All requirements for contents of maps filed, final maps, dedications and improvement security and enforcement remain in effect. This Specific Plan shall not be interpreted in any way to abridge or circumvent the requirements which are mandated under the State Subdivision Map Act.

Outside of local requirements, a number of state and federal regulatory requirements apply to Valley View. Paramount among these is **§404 of the Federal Clean Water Act** which requires that a permit be obtained from the Army Corps of Engineers for any fill in designated wetlands or waters of the United States. Valley View contains some of these wet environments which are subject to federal regulation.

2 **Setting**

Other agencies have special jurisdictional interest in the Plan area, though they may lack actual permit authority. These agencies are commonly referred to as *Responsible Agencies*. They include a number of State agencies such as the Department of Fish and Game, which issues permits for stream crossings as well as having general state jurisdiction for wildlife management; State agencies regulating public health and water resources; the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board which enforces certain provisions of the Clean Water Act and various state statutes related to water quality; the State Office of Historic Preservation; and local agencies mentioned previously. These agencies are involved in the review of this Specific Plan and EIR as to their specific areas of interest.



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