

# Chapter 1. Introduction

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## PURPOSE AND USE OF THE EIR

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that all state and local government agencies consider the environmental consequences of programs and projects over which they have discretionary authority before taking action on them. The purposes of this environmental impact report (EIR) are to inform agencies and the public of significant environmental effects associated with the proposed projects, identify ways to minimize the significant effects of the project, and describe reasonable alternatives to the project that would avoid or reduce the project's significant effects (State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15121[a]).

This draft EIR assess the environmental impacts associated with two related projects. The first project is the City of Davis' (City's) General Plan update. As described below, this EIR has been designed to function as a program-level EIR for this project. For environmental review of the General Plan update, the City will be the CEQA lead agency. The second project covered by this EIR is the establishment of a new junior high school site by the Davis Joint Unified School District (DJUSD). As described below, this EIR has been designed to function as a project-level EIR for the impacts related to site selection and acquisition. Further environmental analysis will need to be conducted by the DJUSD once specific project design has been completed (see the section on "Establishment of a New Junior High School" for more details). For this project-level assessment, the DJUSD will be the CEQA lead agency.

The City and the DJUSD have decided to prepare a joint program/project EIR due to the interrelationship of these two projects. The City and the school district have been working together during site assessment and alternatives development. As described further in Chapter 3, "Project Description", the land use map alternatives being assessed for the General Plan update focus on uses proposed on nine project sites. One of these nine sites being evaluated in the General Plan update is the school district's proposed junior high school site. This site, referred to as the "Signature Site" in the General Plan update, is located adjacent to the Mace Ranch area.

## Davis General Plan Update

The General Plan update covers future land uses in an approximately 160-square-mile planning area. The planning area is bounded on the north by County Road 27 and the City of Woodland planning area, on the east by the easterly boundary of the Yolo Bypass, on the south by Tremont Road and the Pedrick Road-Interstate 80 interchange in Solano County, and on the west

by an extension of County Road 93. Because the City of Davis is located in the southeast corner of Yolo County, a portion of the City's planning area is within Solano County.

The planning horizon for the General Plan update is the year 2010. Projections within the General Plan update and this EIR are targeted at this year.

As stated in the General Plan update,

A general plan articulates a community's vision of its long-term physical form and development. The general plan is comprehensive in scope and represents the city's expression of quality of life and community values; it should include social and economic concerns, as well. General plans are prepared under a mandate from the State of California, which requires that each city and county prepare and adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan for its jurisdiction and any adjacent related lands. (Davis 1999)

The General Plan update prepared by the City provides a programmatic overview of the types of uses that may occur in and around the City that are under consideration in one or several of the proposed land use map alternatives that are evaluated in this EIR. These alternatives represent the full range of reasonable possibilities that will be used to craft the final land use plan for the City's planning area (see Chapter 3, "Project Description", for a full description of each land use map alternative). Although this document provides guidance on the types of uses that may occur in the planning area, in most cases, specific project plans have not been submitted to the City.

CEQA provides information on several types of environmental analysis that can be used to analyze a project, and one of these is a program EIR. According to the State CEQA Guidelines (Section 15168[a]), a local agency should prepare a program EIR, rather than a project EIR, when the agency proposes a program or series of related actions that are linked geographically; that are logical parts of a chain of contemplated events, rules, regulations, or plans that govern the conduct of a continuing program; or that are individual activities carried out under the same authorizing statutory or regulatory authority and have generally similar environmental effects that can be mitigated in similar ways. (Bass et al. 1996.)

Under CEQA, a program EIR is a first-tier environmental document that assesses and documents the broad environmental impacts of a program with the understanding that a more detailed site-specific review may be required to assess future projects implemented under the program. To assist in the review of future projects, this EIR contains recommendations related to some of the analysis that will be needed in the future based on the individual project's location or type.

## **Establishment of a New Junior High School**

The second project covered by this EIR is the establishment of a new junior high school site by the DJUSD. As part of the site selection and acquisition process, the DJUSD identified five alternative sites that could be used to meet the needs of the district. As a result of the siting and environmental assessment of these alternatives (the environmental assessment of these alternatives is presented in Chapter 6, "School Site Alternatives"), the district decided to proceed with a site at the intersection of Mace and Covell Boulevards as their preferred site alternative. Within this EIR, the preferred site alternative is referred to as the "Signature Site." A detailed comparison of impacts related to the various sites evaluated is contained in Chapter 6 of this EIR.

In meeting the requirements of CEQA related to the selection and proposed acquisition of a new junior high school site, this EIR has been designed to also function as a project-level EIR. The environmental assessment of the Signature Site included in this EIR as part of Alternatives 4 and 5, as well as the information on this project presented throughout this EIR, comprises a project-level EIR for purposes of site selection and acquisition by the DJUSD. Since the design of the proposed junior high school has not been established (pending site selection and acquisition), additional site-specific environmental work will be required in the future to assess impacts related to project design.

Once a site has been selected, the DJUSD will complete project design and will prepare an initial study to evaluate the potential impacts associated with construction and operation of the proposed junior high school. This initial study will build on (or tier from) the environmental information contained in this document. Impacts that are found to be new or substantially different from those presented in this EIR may require additional CEQA compliance before project approval, funding, or construction. This environmental review will likely focus on topics related to facility placement and circulation, such as traffic, noise, lighting, and flood control.

## **Future Use of this EIR**

### **City of Davis**

The permits and approvals that are required for future projects within the urban development portions of the planning area would vary depending on the site. Required approvals may include zoning, subdivision, and design review. Environmental evaluation of future projects is expected to be based on (i.e., "tiered off of") the EIR for the General Plan update. To aid in the evaluation of future projects, the EIR contains required mitigation measures (on a general plan level) and parameters to be followed in developing more detailed project-specific mitigation. Since detailed project descriptions are not currently available for many of the project sites being evaluated, it is likely that additional project-specific environmental assessment will be necessary prior to consideration of future projects. City staff will review individual projects as they are submitted, and

determine the level of additional or revised analysis that will be necessary in order to meet the requirements of CEQA and the City.

### **Davis Joint Unified School District**

The DJUSD plans to use this document to make a final decision on a new junior high school site and associated property acquisition. Further actions related to project design, construction, and operation will be subject to further CEQA review that may be tiered off of the information presented in this EIR (as discussed above).

### **Yolo County Local Agency Formation Commission**

The Yolo County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) reviews any proposed annexation and has the discretion to determine whether this EIR is considered adequate for the annexation and pre-zoning of a specific site being studied within the planning area.

### **Other Agencies**

Other agencies may use some or all of the analysis presented in this document for purposes of project review and permits required. For instance, the Regional Water Quality Control Board may use some or all of the analysis in this document prior to issuing permits for ground disturbance.

## **SCOPE OF THE EIR**

In accordance with Sections 15063 and 15082 of the State CEQA Guidelines, the City (as lead agency) prepared an initial study and notice of preparation (NOP) of a draft EIR. The initial study was prepared based on a review of the City's General Plan and other related technical documents provided by the City of Davis Planning and Building Department.

The initial study and NOP were circulated to appropriate public agencies, organizations, and interested groups and individuals for a 30-day comment period that ran from June 28, 1999, to July 28, 1999. Appendix A contains a copy of the initial study and NOP; a list of the agencies, organizations, and interested groups and individuals receiving these documents for review; and copies of the responses received during the comment period.

On the basis of the initial study and public input, the scope of environmental resources and issues to be addressed in the General Plan update EIR was established. Under CEQA, the analysis in the EIR may be focused on issues determined in the initial study to be potentially significant, whereas issues found in the initial study to have less-than-significant impacts or no impact potential do not require further evaluation. On the basis of the analysis contained in the initial study, this EIR

analyzes in detail the potential impacts of the proposed project on the environmental resources and issues listed in Table 1-1.

Table 1-1. Environmental Resources and Impacts Covered in This EIR

Chapter in EIR	Environmental Resource	Impact Issues Addressed in EIR
5A	Land Use, Aesthetics, and Hazardous Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- LU-1. Consistency with General Plan policies</li> <li>- LU-2. Compatibility with surrounding land uses</li> <li>- LU-3. Conversion of agricultural land to urban use</li> <li>- LU-4. Change in views</li> <li>- LU-5. Potential increase in daytime/nighttime light and glare</li> <li>- LU-6. Exposure to hazardous materials</li> </ul>
5B	Population and Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- PH-1. Consistency with General Plan policies</li> <li>- PH-2. Ability to provide housing to meet fair-share requirements</li> <li>- PH-3. Ability to comply with the City/County pass-through agreement</li> </ul>
5C	Public Services and Utilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- PS-1. Consistency with General Plan policies</li> <li>- PS-2. Increased demand for law enforcement services</li> <li>- PS-3A. Increased demand for fire protection services</li> <li>- PS-3B. Adequacy of fire protection infrastructure</li> <li>- PS-4. Impacts on existing school system</li> <li>- PS-5. Impacts on library system</li> <li>- PS-6. Impacts on park and recreation facilities</li> <li>- PS-7. Impacts on water supply and distribution facilities</li> <li>- PS-8. Impacts on sewer mains and capacity, and expansion of treatment facilities</li> <li>- PS-9. Impacts on solid waste landfill capacity</li> </ul>
5D	Traffic and Circulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- TC-1. Consistency with General Plan policies</li> <li>- TC-2. Impacts on the roadway system</li> <li>- TC-3. Impacts to bicyclists and pedestrians</li> <li>- TC-4. Impacts to transit services</li> <li>- TC-5. Impacts to truck routes</li> <li>- TC-6. Impacts to rail and air services</li> </ul>
5E	Air Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- AQ-1. Consistency with General Plan policies</li> <li>- AQ-2. Increase in PM<sub>10</sub>, ROG, and NO<sub>x</sub> emissions during construction and operation phases</li> <li>- AQ-3. Increase in local CO emissions resulting from project-related traffic increases</li> </ul>
5F	Noise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- NOI-1. Consistency with General Plan policies</li> <li>- NOI-2. Exposure of noise-sensitive land uses to construction-related noise</li> <li>- NOI-3. Exposure of noise-sensitive land uses to operations-related noise</li> </ul>
5G	Hydrology and Water Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- HYD-1. Consistency with General Plan policies</li> <li>- HYD-2. Changes to existing drainage patterns and amounts of surface runoff</li> <li>- HYD-3. Exposure of people and property to flooding hazards</li> </ul>

Table 1-1. Environmental Resources and Impacts Covered in This EIR

Chapter in EIR	Environmental Resource	Impact Issues Addressed in EIR
		- HYD-4. Construction-related, short-term water quality degradation
		- HYD-5. Long-term water quality degradation associated with urban runoff
		- HYD-6. Long-term changes in groundwater supply and quality
5H	Biological Resources	- BIO-1. Consistency with General Plan policies
		- BIO-2. Loss or temporary disturbance of riparian woodland and scrub
		- BIO-3. Loss or temporary disturbance of non-native grassland, ruderal, or agricultural areas
		- BIO-4. Loss or temporary disturbance of alkali grassland, meadow, or scrub
		- BIO-5. Loss or temporary disturbance of wetlands and other waters of the U.S.
		- BIO-6. Impacts to special-status species
		- BIO-7. Impacts from noxious weeds
		- BIO-8. Impacts to landmark trees and other existing trees
5I	Soils, Geology, and Mineral Resources	- GEO-1. Consistency with General Plan policies
		- GEO-2. Exposure of people and property to possible seismic hazards
		- GEO-3. Potential property damage as a result of building on expansive soils
5J	Cultural Resources	- CR-1. Consistency with General Plan policies
		- CR-2. Potential damage to or destruction of known and/or unknown cultural resources

In addition to addressing the environmental resources identified in Table 1-1, the EIR includes all the sections required by CEQA. Table 1-2 lists the contents required under CEQA and the chapter in this EIR where they can be found.

Table 1-2. Required EIR Contents

<b>Requirement (CEQA Section)</b>	<b>Location in EIR</b>
Table of contents (Section 15122)	Table of contents
Summary (Section 15123)	
- Significant effects and proposed mitigation measures	Chapter 2
- Areas of controversy	
- Issues to be resolved	
Project description (Section 15124)	Chapter 3
Environmental setting (Section 15125)	Chapters 5A-5J
Significant environmental effects of the proposed project (Sections 15126[a], 15126.2)	Chapters 2 and 5A-5J
Unavoidable significant environmental effects (Section 15126[b])	Chapters 2 and 5A-5J
Significant irreversible environmental changes (Section 15126[c])	Chapters 2 and 5A-5J
Growth-inducing impacts of the proposed project (Section 15126[d])	Chapter 7
Mitigation measures (Sections 15126[e], 15126.4)	Chapters 2 and 5A-5J
Discussion of cumulative impacts (Section 15130)	Chapter 7
Alternatives to the proposed project (Section 15126.6)	Chapters 3, 6, and 5A-5J
Effects found not to be significant (Section 15128)	Chapters 2 and 5A-5J
Organizations and persons consulted (Section 15129)	Chapters 8
List of preparers (Section 15129)	Chapter 9

## EIR ORGANIZATION

The content and format of this EIR are designed to meet the current requirements of CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines. This EIR is organized into the following chapters so that the reader can easily obtain information about the project and its specific issues:

- Chapter 1, “Introduction”, provides a brief overview of the proposed project and organization of the EIR.
- Chapter 2, “Summary”, presents a summary of the proposed land use map alternatives, potential impacts and mitigation measures, impact conclusions regarding growth

inducement and cumulative impacts, and known areas of controversy and issues to be resolved.

- Chapter 3, “Project Description”, describes the objectives of the City and the DJUSD related to this project and provides a detailed description of the components of the proposed General Plan update and establishment of a new junior high school site.
- Chapter 4, “EIR Assumptions and Methods”, provides a guide to the reader of this EIR on the approach used to analyze the various proposed land use map alternatives. The chapter also provides a summary of the information sources used in the analysis.
- Chapter 5, “Environmental Analysis”, describes for each resource topic the existing conditions, or setting, before project implementation and the applicable regulatory environment. This chapter also describes the methods and assumptions used in impact analysis, thresholds of significance, impacts that would result from the proposed land use map alternative and the sites being studied, and mitigation measures that would eliminate or reduce significant impacts.
- Chapter 6, “School Site Alternatives”, provides an environmental assessment of the alternative junior high school sites being considered by the DJUSD.
- Chapter 7, “Cumulative Impacts and Other CEQA-Required Analyses”, includes a discussion of issues required by CEQA that are not covered in other chapters. This discussion addresses unavoidable adverse impacts, irreversible environmental changes, growth inducement, and cumulative impacts.
- Chapter 8, “Citations”, identifies the documents (printed references) and individuals (personal communications) consulted in preparation of this EIR.
- Chapter 9, “List of Preparers”, lists the individuals involved in preparing this EIR.
- Appendices. The appendices of this document contain reference and technical information that may be useful in the review of this EIR.
  - Appendix A, “Notice of Preparation, Initial Study, and Comments on Initial Study”, provides a copy of the Notice of Preparation and Initial Study as circulated for public review. This appendix also contains copies of the comment letters received in response to the Notice of Preparation.
  - Appendix B, “Traffic Study”. Appendix B-1 provides detailed information on the model prepared to assess the General Plan update and the results found for each alternative. Appendix B-2 provides an assessment of access points for the proposed new junior high school site.



- Appendix C, "Air Quality Technical Information", provides details on the modeling performed, the assumptions used, and the calculations performed to assess impacts related to each alternative.
- Appendix D, "Background Information on Acoustics", provides information on the terms used in the assessment of noise impacts.
- Appendix E, "Biological Technical Information", provides information on species that may occur within the planning area, including a listing of special status species.

## **AVAILABILITY OF THE DRAFT EIR**

The draft EIR for the General Plan update and establishment of a new junior high school site is being distributed directly to numerous agencies, organizations, and interested groups and individuals for comment during the formal review period for the draft EIR. The draft EIR is available for review at the Yolo County (County), Davis Branch Library, which is located at 315 East 14th Street, Davis. The City can be contacted at:

Planning and Building Department  
City of Davis  
23 Russell Boulevard  
Davis, CA 95616

The City of Davis Planning and Building Department will receive public input on the General Plan update and EIR at a hearing before making a recommendation to the City of Davis City Council on this project. Public comment is encouraged at all public hearings before the City Council. Information concerning the public review schedule for the EIR and the City Council agendas can be obtained by calling the City of Davis Planning and Building Department at 530/757-5610.

## **EIR PREPARATION**

This EIR has been prepared by Jones & Stokes under contract to the City. This EIR has been prepared for the City in accordance with CEQA (Pub. Res. Code, Section 21000 et seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines (14 California Code of Regulations [CCR], Section 15000 et seq.). The content and form of this EIR has been reviewed and approved by City and DJUSD staff prior to circulation for public review. Staff members from the City of Davis, the DJUSD, and Jones & Stokes who helped prepare this EIR are identified in Chapter 9, "List of Preparers".

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