



Fact Sheet: Yuba Highlands Area Plan Environmental Impact Report

The Community Development Department of Yuba County is currently processing an application for a major land development called the Yuba Highlands Area Plan.

As part of the development process, Yuba County has prepared an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Yuba Highlands Area Plan. The EIR is an assessment of the impacts the project is expected to have on several specific areas:

- **Aesthetics:** Will there be visual impacts caused by the proposed development?
- **Air Quality:** Will the proposed development have negative impacts on air quality?
- **Agricultural Resources:** Will there be impacts on existing agricultural land, farming, grazing, etc?
- **Biological Resources:** Will the proposed development have negative impacts on fish and wildlife habitats, and/or endangered species in the proposed project area?
- **Cultural Resources:** Will the project negatively affect historical and archaeological sites or potential sites within the proposed development areas?
- **Human Health or Hazards:** Does the potential for earthquakes or other seismic activity, flooding, landslides and/or other natural disasters exist in the project area? Will the project introduce hazardous materials and or waste into the area?
- **Land Use:** Is this project consistent with the County General Plan?
- **Noise:** Will the project create a substantial increase in noise level within the project area?
- **Population and Housing:** Will the proposed development provide a balance of housing and commercial development?
- **Public Services:** Will adequate public services exist to support the development?
- **Soils:** Will the project contribute to erosion? Are the proposed building sites appropriate based on quality of the soil?
- **Traffic:** Will this development affect traffic and will it require new roads or other infrastructure improvements?
- **Water Quality:** Will there be an adequate supply of water for the project? Will the proposed plan have negative impacts on existing waterways including streams and creeks?

The EIR addresses each of these areas and makes specific recommendations regarding the need for mitigation for each area.

What is Mitigation?

Mitigation ensures that significant impacts of the project will be offset through appropriate counterbalancing measures.

The EIR may require a mitigation effort or suggest alternatives to the project plan that would yield less impacting results. In some cases, an EIR may determine that a specific impact may not be feasibly mitigated, but may make a recommendation based on an overriding benefit to the community. Those benefits may include economic growth, infrastructure development, housing availability and/or job creation.

The Draft EIR was published and underwent a 90-day public review period, which ended May 2, 2005. This phase of the development process considered the factual basis of the Draft EIR analysis and not the merits of the proposed development.

The environmental consultant has finished the Final EIR, which documents and responds to more than 60 comments and correspondences received during the Draft EIR's circulation. The Final EIR also presents and describes changes made to the project documents as a result of those comment letters.

Questions and Project Updates

For information about the environmental review process, questions about the Yuba Highlands Area Plan EIR or to be added to a mailing list to receive project updates, call the YH EIR information Line at (530) 632-9632 or visit www.yubacomdev.org/planning/specific_plans/yhsp/default.asp

Here is a brief history of the project to date:

March 2001: Notice of Preparation

Yuba County officially notified the community and the applicant that an EIR would be prepared for the Yuba Highlands Area Plan. The County notified the public as well as local, state and federal agencies, and other interested parties. The Notice of Preparation's purpose was to encourage comments on the proposed scope of the EIR. Those comments, collected from the public at a Scoping Meeting and via written request, were considered during the Draft EIR's preparation.

2002-04: Draft EIR Preparation

As lead agency, Yuba County supervised the development of the Draft Environmental Impact Report. This process included a variety of studies, reviewed by staff, which guided the development of the Draft EIR and dictated the level of study in specific relevant areas related to the proposed development. This process involved comprehensive analysis by staff.

January 31, 2005: Notice of Completion

Yuba County issued the Draft EIR for the Yuba Highlands Area Plan. The County formally began the public review period and invited the community, agencies, organizations and other interested parties to comment on the adequacy and completeness of the Draft EIR.

February 23, 2005: Public Hearing

The Yuba County Planning Commission held a public hearing to accept verbal and written comments on the Draft EIR. This meeting offered the public its only opportunity to provide verbal comments on the environmental document. At the hearing, the Planning Commission extended the deadline for written comments an additional 45 days per a joint recommendation by County staff and the applicant.

May 2, 2005: Draft EIR Comment Period Ended

The public review process lasted 90 days, until May 2, 2005. The County received more than 50 comment letters on the Yuba Highlands Draft EIR. Many focused on more than one aspect of the Draft EIR.

August 7, 2006: Hydrology Analysis Recirculated

The County issued for public review additional water supply information. This technical analysis addressed water supply projections, sources and potential impacts on existing water resources. It provided supplementary detail that supported the Draft EIR's conclusions and discussed some issues raised during the public review process.

September 22, 2006: Hydrology Analysis Public Comment Period Closed

The public review period for the additional hydrology analysis ended. The County received 10 comment letters.

October 26, 2006: Final EIR Released

The County held a joint Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors workshop to receive the Environmental Impact Report and plan for the Yuba Highlands project. At the workshop, County staff, the Yuba Highlands project applicant and the County's environmental consultant provided an overview of the proposed project, planning and environmental analysis documents, requested entitlements, public outreach process, upcoming opportunities for community input and next steps. No action was taken.

Also at the meeting, staff discussed the project's name change from the Yuba Highlands Specific Plan to the Yuba Highlands Area Plan and presented the reasons for and implications of the change. The planning document itself remains fundamentally unchanged.

Planning Commission Review

Wednesday, November 29, 2006, 6 p.m.

The community is invited to provide comments on the Area Plan and the adequacy and completeness of the EIR. However, the Planning Commission will address only comments related to the EIR at this meeting. No action will be taken at this meeting.

Thursday, December 14, 2006, 6 p.m.

County Community Development staff will present the project and their recommendation on certification of the EIR and the project itself. The Planning Commission will hear and address public comment on the project and consider the EIR. The Commission will forward their recommendation about the project and project documents to the Board of Supervisors for their consideration.

Next Steps: EIR Certification and Area Plan Consideration

The Yuba County Planning Commission is scheduled to consider the proposed Area Plan and EIR on November 29 and December 13. Both meetings will take place at 6 p.m. at the Yuba County Government Center.

If the Commission finds the EIR to be an adequate and complete analysis of the project, they may recommend it for certification by resolution and forward it to the County Board of Supervisors for their consideration when making a decision about the project.

Board of Supervisors Review

The Board of Supervisors will hold a separate public hearing on the Yuba Highlands Area Plan and consider the EIR. The board will have five choices:

- Deny the project.
- Approve an environmentally preferable alternative to the project, as identified in the EIR.
- Approve the Area Plan EIR, but only if “mitigation measures” are adopted. Mitigation measures are designed to eliminate, avoid, rectify, compensate for or reduce environmental effects. Approval of actual project(s) within the Area Plan will be considered at future meetings.
- Approve the Area Plan in spite of environmental effects and state in writing the overriding reasons for granting approval. The Board must also explain how impacts will be addressed and enact a program for monitoring the implementation of mitigation measures. Approval of actual project(s) within the Area Plan will be considered at future meetings.
- Return the project to the Planning Commission for further consideration and recommendation to the Board.

Yuba Highlands Area Plan, Draft EIR and Final EIR Available for Review

- Electronic copies of the project documents are available on CD-ROM from the Community Development Department at 915 8th Street, Suite 123 in Marysville or via the project Web site at http://www.yubacomdev.org/planning/specific_plans/yhsp/default.asp.
- Printed copies are available for in-person review at the Community Development Department or the Yuba County Library at 303 2nd Street in Marysville.
- Also, printed copies can be purchased at Copy City, 515 D Street in Marysville (530-743-8200).

Contact Information

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Information Line for the
Yuba Highlands Area Plan EIR:
(530) 632-9632

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