
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

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This document includes all comments received during the public review period on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) for the Dixon Downs Horse Racetrack and Entertainment Center project as well as responses to comments and revisions to the text of the Draft EIR. This document and the Draft EIR together constitute the Final EIR (FEIR) for the project. The FEIR has been divided into two volumes: Volume I contains Chapters 1 through 4, and Volume II contains Chapters 5 through 7 and the Appendix. This document has been prepared by the City of Dixon in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Background

This EIR is an informational document intended to disclose to the City of Dixon City Council, other public agencies, and the public the environmental consequences of approving and implementing the Dixon Downs Horse Racetrack and Entertainment Center project.

All oral comments made at the Draft EIR special hearings held by the City of Dixon on November 2, 2005, November 3, 2005, and all written comments received during the public review period which ran from September 23 through November 30, 2005 are addressed in this FEIR. The many comments that were received that specifically referenced the project or other aspects of the project, are responded to in this FEIR even if they do not raise significant environmental points, per CEQA Guidelines Section 15132(d). Responses were prepared by the City's environmental consultant, other City consultants, City staff, and the project applicant. The comments and responses, in conjunction with the Draft EIR and the text changes, constitute the FEIR, which will be considered for certification by the City of Dixon City Council. In addition, a Mitigation Monitoring Plan (MMP) has been prepared for the project pursuant to the California Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21081.6, and appears in Chapter 7 of this FEIR. Chapter 2 includes a complete summary of all the text changes made to the Draft EIR based on responses to comments and staff initiated changes.

Project Description

The proposed Dixon Downs Horse Racetrack and Entertainment Center project (Proposed Project) includes development of a state-of-the-art thoroughbred horse racing and training facility, retail and office uses, along with a hotel/conference center on a total of 260 acres located in northeast portion of the City of Dixon in the Northeast Quadrant Specific Plan (NQSP) area. A total of approximately 182 acres would be developed under Phase 1 of the project with 78 acres developed under Phase 2.

The first phase of the project, Phase 1, would include construction of a horse racing/training facility, horse barns, the "Finish Line Pavilion" and grandstand, employee dining and temporary housing facilities for trainers, grooms and jockeys to stay for short periods of time, parking facilities, and service areas that

would include hay/feed storage, space for a veterinary clinic, a Manure Transfer building, and other maintenance uses. Preliminary plans for Phase 2 of the Proposed Project contemplate a 250,000 square foot (sf) hotel/conference center, 750,000 sf of retail uses and 200,000 sf of office uses, along with parking facilities to serve these land uses. The project applicant proposes to allow up to 200,000 sf of building floor area to be transferred between retail and office uses, provided certain transfer criteria have been met. Accordingly, if 200,000 sf of retail is developed as office, the project would buildout with 550,000 sf of retail and 400,000 sf of office; alternatively, if all 200,000 sf of office is developed as retail, the project would build out with 950,000 sf of retail and no office square footage.

Development of Phase 1 and Phase 2 land uses would require an application for design review approval. Such an application would be accompanied by a detailed site plan, elevations and perspective drawings for the land use that is the subject of the application.

Revisions to the Draft EIR

Chapter 2, Revisions to the Draft EIR Text, identifies all changes to the Draft EIR, including minor revisions to the project, staff-initiated changes, and revisions made in response to comments on the Draft EIR. The revisions contain clarification, amplification, and corrections that have been identified since publication of the Draft EIR and also reflect the revisions to the Proposed Project since circulation of the Draft EIR. None of the revisions change the conclusions of the Draft EIR regarding the significance of the impacts of the project.

Responses to Comments

Responses to comments appear in Chapter 4 of this FEIR. Comments and responses are identified by number for written comments and by letter for transcripts of oral comments. If the subject matter of one letter overlaps that of another letter, the reader may be referred to more than one group of comments and responses to review all information on a given subject. Where this occurs, cross-references are provided.

Each comment letter is presented with brackets indicating how the letter has been divided into individual comments. Each comment is given a binomial with the letter number appearing first, followed by the comment number. For example, comments in Letter 1 are numbered 1-1, 1-2, 1-3, and so on. Immediately following the letter are responses, each with binomials that correspond to the bracketed comments. Comments that do not raise significant environmental points are also referenced in this fashion.

Many of the comments on the Draft EIR addressed a discernible group of issues. In many cases comments on these issues were repetitive or even identical. To facilitate a better understanding of these issues, the FEIR includes a series of Master Responses, as provided in Chapter 5. Individual comments on these issues are then responded to by reference, as appropriate, to the relevant Master Response.

Chapter 6 includes the transcripts from the two special meetings held in November 2005 to hear comments from the Planning Commission, City Council, and the public. Responses were provided at the meetings and are included in the transcripts; however, in some instances additional information has been included to more fully respond to the comments.

Some comments on the Draft EIR do not pertain to physical environmental issues. Responses to such comments, though not required under CEQA, are included, where possible, to provide additional information.