

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

This Initial Study evaluates the Revised Tentative Subdivision Maps for Neighborhoods I and J within the larger Mountain House community. Tentative Maps were approved for Neighborhoods I and J in 2005; however, changes are now proposed for these maps, and thus a new environmental review process has been undertaken to address the changes. The Revised I and J Map project includes the following components:

- San Joaquin County Community Development Department (SJCCDD) planning applications;
- Tentative Subdivision Maps for Neighborhoods I and J within the Specific Plan II area (Application No. PA-0600327);
- Amendments to Specific Plan II (text and land use maps that can be viewed at the County Community Development Department, 1810 E. Hazelton Avenue, Stockton) which would include: 1) rezoning of some parcels; 2) the removal of the age restriction for Medium-High Density housing in Neighborhood H; and 3) changes to Neighborhood K that include a minor relocation of land uses to accommodate a road alignment to serve the existing home sites on Old River (Application No. PA-0600337);
- Amendments to the Mountain House Master Plan (Application No. PA-0600335);
- Section 1602 agreements with the California Department of Fish and Game for road crossings of Dry Creek; and
- An Addendum to the Mountain House Storm Water Master Plan Update.

The Mountain House Master Plan land use map (Figure 3-5, Master Plan Designations) is the General Plan Community Plan 2010 map for Mountain House. Therefore, any amendments to the Mountain House Master Plan land use map would also amend the San Joaquin County General Plan. The Master Plan and Specific Plan II amendment application would accomplish the following:

- 1) The proposed reconfiguration of Neighborhoods I and J to conform to the new land use plans detailed in the Tentative Subdivision Maps for those areas. The proposed reconfigurations would maintain consistency with the planning principles contained in the Master Plan for size, densities, land uses, and circulation.
- 2) The avoidance of the Dry Creek wetlands and a drainage facility that are within the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Prior to the adoption of Specific Plan II, the Master Plan called for the portion of Dry Creek jurisdictional areas west of existing Kelso Road to be avoided and

those to the east to be relocated. Specific Plan II, as currently adopted, proposed that this policy be implemented through a restoration of Dry Creek in similar fashion to the Mountain House Creek restoration project. The Revised I and J Map is responsive to input from various resource protection agencies which hold that total avoidance is the least environmentally damaging alternative.

The jurisdictional watercourse would be designed to accommodate the 100-year event storm water flows from off-site sources. The existing pump that discharges the jurisdictional waterway over the levee into Old River would be rebuilt without increasing its pumping capacity.

- 3) The adoption of a new zoning map that introduces a Residential Medium-High Density product into the I and J neighborhoods and a removal of the age restriction requirement that currently exists on the Residential Medium-High Density parcel in Neighborhood H.
- 4) A minor re-balancing of the Residential Medium-High Density and Regional Park uses within Neighborhood K that maintains the same total acreages of those uses, but arranges them in a manner that will accommodate an access road to the existing and future Old River lots from an extension off Central Parkway. The new access road would allow residents of the Old River home sites to reach their lots without having to travel through local streets within Neighborhood I. This configuration would also allow Neighborhoods I and J to be developed as a gated community.
- 5) Enlargement of the recreation amenity area, which is operated by the homeowners association serving the I and J neighborhoods, to accommodate a broad range of amenities and activities.
- 6) Enhanced accessibility to the Golf Clubhouse from public roads without traveling through the gated entry to the residential community. The golf course would be accessible for public play.
- 7) Design of an integral storm water quality feature integrated into the golf course. Some of the urbanized areas within Neighborhoods I and J would drain to wet and dry water quality ponds and swales within the golf course area for purposes of desilting and removing contaminants. After being collected at detention basins at the north end of Neighborhood I, the water would be pumped to lakes in Neighborhood K before being discharged through permitted outfalls into Mountain House Creek. Portions of Neighborhood J would drain directly to Neighborhood K where water would be treated in swales and water quality ponds in that neighborhood before entering the lake in Neighborhood K.
- 8) Development of a linear narrow park system through Neighborhoods I and J through Neighborhoods I and J that creates a single continuous public connection between the North Community Park (on the east side of Central Parkway) and Old River Regional Park. This park/trail system abuts the unloaded collector road right-of-way, minimizing street

crossings. This predominantly linear feature also provides access to small parks and focal points along its alignment. The park system through the I and J neighborhoods would be maintained by the homeowners association (or a financing/maintenance entity acceptable to the Mountain House Community Services District), but would be accessible to the public via a dedicated easement, and would be owned by the Mountain House Community Services District.

The above listed planning applications have been submitted to the San Joaquin County Community Development Department (SJCCDD), the lead agency for the approval of this project. This project would be part of Specific Plan II, the second major phase of the development identified in the Mountain House Master Plan Final EIR, which is a Master EIR (adopted in 1994 by the San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors and referred to hereinafter as the "1994 MEIR"). Specific Plan II was approved in 2005. The 1994 MEIR, incorporated herein by reference, can be reviewed at the San Joaquin County Community Development Department, 1810 East Hazelton Avenue, Stockton, California. A copy of Specific Plan II can also be reviewed at this County office.

Mountain House is a new community planned on a 4,780-acre site near San Joaquin County's border with Alameda County, northwest of the City of Tracy (see Figure 2-1). Ultimate buildout of the community is projected to include a resident population of about 42,000 persons and jobs for about 22,000. Buildout of Specific Plan II would accommodate about 24,900 of the projected total Mountain House population of 42,000.

The purpose of this Initial Study is to determine whether the proposed project is "within the scope" of the 1994 MEIR and to examine the continued adequacy of the 1994 MEIR. This Initial Study assesses whether 1) there are any additional significant environmental effects not previously examined in the 1994 MEIR, 2) any new mitigation measures are required, and 3) any substantial changes have occurred with respect to the circumstances under which the 1994 MEIR was certified or whether there is new available information that was not known and could not have been known at the time the 1994 MEIR was certified such that major revisions of the previous 1994 MEIR would be required (CEQA Guidelines Sections 15176, 15177, and 15179). A "substantial change" must involve new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects (CEQA Guidelines Section 15162). The Initial Study also assesses whether there are any additional environmental impacts that may require further mitigation that were not previously addressed in the 1994 MEIR.

Earlier environmental documents addressing Mountain House community development include the following:

1. *Final Environmental Impact Report* (State Clearinghouse [SCH] No. 90020776) for the *Mountain House New Town General Plan Amendment*, March 1992.

2. *Supplemental Environmental Impact Report* (SCH No. 90020776) for the *Mountain House New Town General Plan Amendment*, 1993.
3. *Final Environmental Impact Report* (SCH No. 90020776) for the *Mountain House Master Plan and Specific Plan I (MEIR)*, September 1994.
4. *Expanded Initial Study for the Mountain House Community Services District* (SCH No. 98032047), January 1999.
5. *Mountain House Neighborhood "F" Project Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration* (SCH No. 90020776), July 2000.
6. *Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Report for the Delta College Center at Mountain House* (SCH 2001062043), June 2002.
7. *Expanded Initial Study for Mountain House Villages E and G Project*, April 2003.
8. *Draft Expanded Initial Study for the Mountain House Community Services District* (SCH #98032047) (for wastewater treatment plant), 1999.
9. *Initial Study and Negative Declaration for Wastewater Treatment Plant at Mountain House* (Use Permit 98-16), 1991.
10. *Initial Study and Negative Declaration for Mountain House New Community Water Treatment Plant Use Permit*, January 5 (Use Permit 97-13).
11. *Final EIR for Mountain House Specific Plan III*, November 22, 2005.
12. *Initial Study for Specific Plan II*, December 2004.

All of the above documents can be viewed at the San Joaquin County Community Development Department, 1810 East Hazelton Avenue, Stockton, California.