

Appendix A

Notice of Preparation and
Comment Letters



CITY OF ELK GROVE
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NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

DATE: December 6, 2024

TO: Responsible and Trustee Agencies, Organizations, and Interested Parties

LEAD AGENCY: City of Elk Grove
Contact: Carrie Whitlock, Strategic Planning and Innovation Program Manager
8401 Laguna Palms Way
Elk Grove, CA 95758

PROJECT: Climate Compass Project

APPLICANT: City of Elk Grove

COMMENT PERIOD: December 6, 2024 to January 15, 2025

In discharging its duties under Section 15021 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, the City of Elk Grove (hereinafter "City" or "Elk Grove"), as lead agency, intends to prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) to the General Plan Update Environmental Impact Report (GPU EIR) (SCH No. 2017062058), as updated by the General Plan Amendments and Update to Vehicle Miles Traveled Standards Subsequent EIR (State Clearinghouse No. 2022020463) (hereinafter referred to collectively as the GPU EIR), for the update to its 2019 Climate Action Plan (CAP), referred to now as the Climate Compass (the "Project"). Since the City made the determination that a SEIR would be appropriate based on a preliminary review of the Project, an initial study has not been prepared pursuant with CEQA Guidelines Section 15063(a). In accordance with Section 15082 of the CEQA Guidelines, this Notice of Preparation (NOP) provides a Project Description, location, and the probable environmental effects of implementation of the proposed Project.

The NOP will be circulated for a 30-day public review and comment period, which extends from **December 6, 2024 to January 15, 2025**. The City is soliciting comments regarding the scope and content of the SEIR as they relate to other agencies' statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed Project, as well as comments from interested members of the public. The City will rely on responsible and trustee agencies to provide information relevant to the analysis of resources falling within the jurisdiction of such agencies. The City welcomes public input during the review period. If the City has not received either a response or a well-justified request for additional time by a responsible agency or the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (formerly known as the Office of Planning and Research) by the end of the review period, the City may presume that each responsible and trustee agency and the Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation had no response to make (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15082(b)(2)).

Comments may be submitted in writing during the review period and addressed to:

City of Elk Grove
Office of Strategic Planning and Innovation
c/o Carrie Whitlock
8401 Laguna Palms Way
Elk Grove, CA 95758
cwhitlock@elkgrovecity.org

This NOP is also posted at: <https://www.elkgrovecity.org/planning/environmental-review>

CEQA provides for a lead agency to facilitate one or more scoping meetings, which provide additional opportunity for determining the scope and content of the SEIR. The City will host a scoping meeting on **January 9, 2025**, from **6 pm** at City of Elk Grove, Council Chambers, 8400 Laguna Palms Way, Elk Grove, CA 95758. Information related to the proposed Project, including how to access Project documents and how to participate in the public review process will be provided at the scoping meeting.

PROJECT LOCATION AND SETTING

The Climate Compass is intended to serve as the long-term climate action plan for the City of Elk Grove. The City is approximately 43 square miles and is generally bounded by Interstate 5 (I-5) on the west; Calvine Road and the City of Sacramento on the north; Grant Line Road on the east; and Kammerer Road on the south. State Route (SR) 99 runs north-south, bisecting the City near its center (refer to Figure 1). Existing land uses include a mix of agriculture, residential, nonresidential (commercial, office, and industrial), parks and open space, civic/institutional, public and quasi-public spaces, roadways, and other infrastructure, and vacant land.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The City prioritizes climate action in both communitywide and in City operations. In 2013, the City adopted its first CAP as a citywide plan to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The 2013 CAP was updated in 2019 to incorporate state-recommended targets and monitor progress from its previous iteration. The Climate Compass is proposed as an update to the 2019 CAP.

The Climate Compass establishes a roadmap for the City to achieve its GHG emission reduction targets and includes actions and strategies to adapt to anticipated climate-related impacts. The plan intends to enhance the quality of life for all residents, promote equity, and strengthen community resilience in the face of a changing climate. In addition, the Project aligns local efforts with Assembly Bill (AB) 1279, which requires California to achieve net-zero GHG emissions by 2045 and an 85 percent reduction in anthropogenic GHG emissions by 2045.

The Climate Compass is comprised of the following six chapters and appendices:

- **Chapter 1, Introduction:** this chapter provides an introduction to the Climate Compass as well as to the overall climate action planning process and key methodologies and terms. This chapter also provides an overview of the development of the Climate Compass to date, including summarizing public and agency input, as well as how the plan fits in with the State's larger climate planning efforts.
- **Chapter 2, GHG Inventory and Targets:** this chapter provides the foundation for the Climate Compass, presenting the City's GHG emissions inventory, emissions forecasts, and the targets for reducing emissions in line with State and local goals.
- **Chapter 3, Climate Action Strategies:** this chapter addresses the comprehensive strategies and actions the City would implement to reduce GHG emissions across various sectors, such as energy, transportation, land use, and waste management, while also promoting community resilience and adaptation to climate change impacts.
- **Chapter 4, City Operations:** this chapter focuses on the strategies and actions the City would adopt to reduce GHG emissions from government operations.
- **Chapter 5, Implementation and Monitoring:** this chapter details the implementation framework for the Climate Compass, including timelines, funding strategies, partnerships, and the monitoring and reporting processes to ensure the plan's success.
- **Chapter 6, Work Cited:** this chapter provides the sources used in the development of the plan.
- **Appendices** include more detailed information on GHG emissions inventories and forecasts, strategy quantification, and supporting documents, such as a cost analysis and funding and financing roadmap.

As detailed within Chapter 3, the Climate Compass includes various strategies and actions that aid in mitigating GHG emissions and promote adapting to climate impacts in the community. The strategies are centered around six focus areas and are further supported with specific actions defining activities, programs, policies, community partnerships, or projects the City would implement to achieve GHG mitigation and adaptation goals. The six focus areas and proposed strategies include:

1) Building Energy

- Strategy BE-1: Electrify and Decarbonize Buildings
- Strategy BE-2: Increase Density and Expand Affordable Housing
- Strategy BE-3: Increase Local Renewable Energy Use and Storage
- Strategy BE-4: Reduce Energy Consumption and Energy Burden

2) Transportation

- Strategy TR-1: Decrease Vehicle Miles Traveled
- Strategy TR-2: Increase Zero-Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Adoption
- Strategy TR-3: Reduce Off-Road Transportation Emissions

3) Resilience and Adaptation

- Strategy RA-1: Improve Climate and Emergency Preparedness
- Strategy RA-2: Building Capacity for Current and Future Flooding
- Strategy RA-3: Protect Populations from Wildfire Smoke
- Strategy RA-4: Reduce Exposure to Extreme Heat and Mitigate the Urban Heat Island Effect
- Strategy RA-5: Expand the Tree Canopy
- Strategy RA-6: Expand Nature-Based Solutions

4) Resource Consumption

- Strategy RC-1: Increase Organic Waste Diversion
- Strategy RC-2: Promote Circular Economy
- Strategy RC-3: Reduce Water Use

5) Green Economy

- Strategy GE-1: Support Green Businesses
- Strategy GE-2: Develop a Green Workforce

6) Climate Action Commitment

- Strategy CA-1: Conduct Meaningful Community Outreach
- Strategy CA-4: Provide Community Education on Public Health and Wellbeing
- Strategy CA-5: Provide Community Education on Water Efficiency
- Strategy CA-6: Identify Metrics for Success

While the strategies and actions included in the Climate Compass are primarily intended to mitigate GHG emissions and promote adaptation, many of them would also result in one or more co-benefits related to community resilience, economic diversity, equity, air pollution reduction, health and wellbeing, infrastructure reliability, and resource preservation.

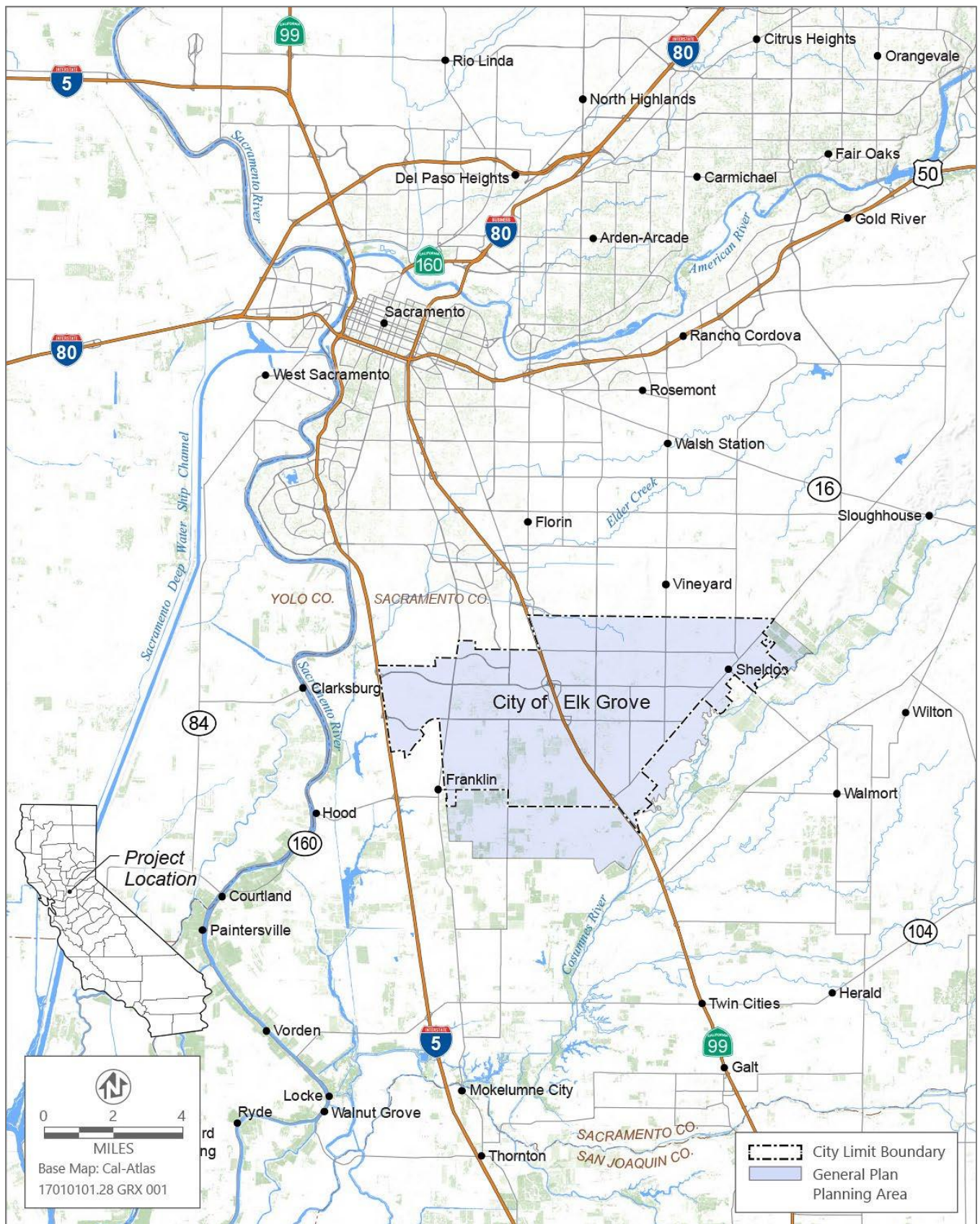
PROBABLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

The Draft SEIR to the City's GPU EIR will evaluate whether implementing the proposed Project would potentially result in one or more significant environmental effects. Due to the nature of the proposed Project, the following issue areas will be addressed in detail within the Draft SEIR:

- ▶ energy, and
- ▶ greenhouse gases emissions and climate change.

In regard to all other environmental issue areas, the Project is not anticipated to result in new significant impacts or substantially increase the severity of significant environmental impacts evaluated in the GPU EIR. For this reason, the following environmental issue areas will be briefly discussed within the Draft SEIR to disclose the rationale why the proposed Project would not result in foreseeable significant environmental impacts from those disclosed in the GPU EIR:

- ▶ aesthetics;
- ▶ agricultural resources;
- ▶ air quality;
- ▶ biological resources;
- ▶ archaeological, historical, and tribal cultural resources;
- ▶ geology, soils, mineral resources, and paleontology;
- ▶ hazards and hazardous materials;
- ▶ hydrology and water quality;
- ▶ noise and vibration;
- ▶ population and housing;
- ▶ public services and recreation;
- ▶ utilities and service systems;
- ▶ transportation; and
- ▶ wildfire.



Source: adapted by Ascent in 2024.

Figure 1 Project Location



State of California – Natural Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
North Central Region
1701 Nimbus Road, Suite A
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670-4599
(916) 358-2900
www.wildlife.ca.gov

GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor
CHARLTON H. BONHAM, Director



January 14, 2025

Carrie Whitlock
Strategic Planning and Innovation Program Manager
City of Elk Grove
Office of Strategic Planning and Innovation
8401 Laguna Palms Way
Elk Grove, CA 95758
cwhitlock@elkgrovecity.org

Subject: CLIMATE COMPASS PROJECT
DRAFT SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (DSEIR)
SCH No. 2017062058

Dear Carrie Whitlock:

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) received and reviewed the Notice of Preparation of a Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (DSEIR) from the City of Elk Grove for the Climate Compass Project (Project) in Sacramento County pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) statute and guidelines.¹

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments and recommendations regarding those activities involved in the Project that may affect California fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats. Likewise, CDFW appreciates the opportunity to provide comments regarding those aspects of the Project that it, by law, may need to exercise its own regulatory authority under the Fish and Game Code (Fish & G. Code).

CDFW ROLE

CDFW is California's Trustee Agency for fish and wildlife resources and holds those resources in trust by statute for all the people of the State (Fish & G. Code, §§ 711.7, subd. (a) & 1802; Pub. Resources Code, § 21070; CEQA Guidelines § 15386, subd. (a).). CDFW, in its trustee capacity, has jurisdiction over the conservation, protection, and management of fish, wildlife, native plants, and habitat necessary for biologically sustainable populations of those species (Fish & G. Code, § 1802.). Similarly, for purposes of CEQA, CDFW provides, as available, biological expertise during public agency

¹ CEQA is codified in the California Public Resources Code in section 21000 et seq. The "CEQA Guidelines" are found in Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, commencing with section 15000.

environmental review efforts, focusing specifically on projects and related activities that have the potential to adversely affect fish and wildlife resources.

CDFW may also act as a Responsible Agency under CEQA. (Pub. Resources Code, § 21069; CEQA Guidelines, § 15381.) CDFW expects that it may need to exercise regulatory authority as provided by the Fish and Game Code. As proposed, for example, the Project may be subject to CDFW's lake and streambed alteration regulatory authority. (Fish & G. Code, § 1600 et seq.) Likewise, to the extent implementation of the Project as proposed may result in "take" as defined by State law of any species protected under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) (Fish & G. Code, § 2050 et seq.), the project proponent may seek related take authorization as provided by the Fish and Game Code.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

The Project site is located within the boundaries of the City of Elk Grove (the City) which is generally bounded by Interstate 5 (I-5) on the west; Calvine Road and the City of Sacramento on the north; Grant Line Road on the east; and Kammerer Road on the south. State Route (SR) 99 runs north-south, bisecting the City near its center.

The Project consists of updating the 2019 Climate Action Plan (CAP) to establish a roadmap for the City to achieve its greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction targets and includes actions and strategies to adapt to anticipated climate-related impacts. The plan intends to enhance the quality of life for all residents, promote equity, and strengthen community resilience in the face of a changing climate. In addition, the Project aligns local efforts with Assembly Bill (AB) 1279, which requires California to achieve net-zero GHG emissions by 2045 and an 85 percent reduction in anthropogenic GHG emissions by 2045.

COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CDFW offers the comments and recommendations presented below to assist the City in adequately identifying and/or mitigating the Project's significant, or potentially significant, impacts on biological resources. The comments and recommendations are also offered to enable CDFW to adequately review and comment on the proposed Project with respect to impacts on biological resources. CDFW recommends that the forthcoming DSEIR address the following:

Project Description

The Project description should include the whole action as defined in the CEQA Guidelines § 15378. As required by § 15126.6 of the CEQA Guidelines, the DSEIR should include an appropriate range of reasonable and feasible alternatives that would attain most of the basic Project objectives and avoid or minimize significant impacts to resources under CDFW's jurisdiction.

Assessment of Biological Resources

Section 15125(c) of the CEQA Guidelines states that knowledge of the regional setting of a project is critical to the assessment of environmental impacts and that special emphasis should be placed on environmental resources that are rare or unique to the region. To enable CDFW staff to adequately review and comment on the Project, the DSEIR should include a complete assessment of the flora and fauna within and adjacent to the Project footprint, with emphasis on identifying rare, threatened, endangered, and other sensitive species and their associated habitats. CDFW recommends the DSEIR specifically include:

1. A general assessment of all habitat types located within the Project footprint, and a generalized map that identifies the location of each habitat type. CDFW recommends that floristic, alliance- and/or association-based mapping and assessment be completed following, *The Manual of California Vegetation*, second edition (Sawyer 2009). Adjoining habitat areas should also be included in this assessment where site activities could lead to direct or indirect impacts offsite. Habitat mapping at the alliance level will help establish baseline vegetation conditions.
2. A general biological inventory of the fish, amphibian, reptile, bird, and mammal species that are present or have the potential to be present within each habitat type onsite and within adjacent areas that could be affected by the Project. CDFW recommends that the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB), as well as previous studies performed in the area, be consulted to assess the potential presence of sensitive species and habitats. A nine United States Geologic Survey 7.5-minute quadrangle search is recommended to determine what may occur in the region, larger if the Project area extends past one quad (see *Data Use Guidelines* on the CDFW webpage www.wildlife.ca.gov/Data/CNDDDB/Maps-and-Data). Please review the webpage for information on how to access the database to obtain current information on any previously reported sensitive species and habitat, including Significant Natural Areas identified under Chapter 12 of the Fish and Game Code, in the vicinity of the Project. CDFW recommends that CNDDDB Field Survey Forms be completed and submitted to CNDDDB to document survey results. Online forms can be obtained and submitted at: <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Data/CNDDDB/Submitting-Data>.

Please note that CDFW's CNDDDB is not exhaustive in terms of the data it houses, nor is it an absence database. CDFW recommends that it be used as a starting point in gathering information about the *potential presence* of species within the general area of the Project site. Other sources for identification of species and habitats near or adjacent to the Project area should include, but may not be limited to, State and federal resource agency lists, California Wildlife Habitat Relationship System, California Native Plant Society Inventory, agency contacts, environmental documents for other projects in the vicinity, academics, and professional or scientific organizations.

3. An inventory of rare, threatened, endangered, and other sensitive species potentially located within the Project footprint and within offsite areas with the potential to be affected, including California Species of Special Concern and California Fully Protected Species (Fish & G. Code § § 3511, 4700, 5050, and 5515). Species to be addressed should include all those which meet the CEQA definition (CEQA Guidelines § 15380). The inventory should address seasonal variations in use of the Project area and should not be limited to resident species. CDFW recommends the City rely on survey and monitoring protocols and guidelines available at: www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Survey-Protocols. Alternative survey protocols may be warranted; justification should be provided to substantiate why an alternative protocol is necessary. Acceptable species-specific survey procedures should be developed in consultation with CDFW and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, where necessary. Some aspects of the Project may warrant periodic updated surveys for certain sensitive taxa, particularly if the Project is proposed to occur over a protracted time frame, or in phases, or if surveys are completed during periods of drought or deluge.
4. Information on the regional setting that is critical to an assessment of environmental impacts, with special emphasis on resources that are rare or unique to the region (CEQA Guidelines § 15125[c]).

Analysis of Direct, Indirect, and Cumulative Impacts to Biological Resources

The DSEIR should provide a thorough discussion of the Project's potential direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts on biological resources. To ensure that Project impacts on biological resources are fully analyzed, the following information should be included in the DSEIR:

1. The DSEIR should define the threshold of significance for each impact and describe the criteria used to determine whether the impacts are significant (CEQA Guidelines, § 15064, subd. (f)). The DSEIR must demonstrate that the significant environmental impacts of the Project were adequately investigated and discussed, and it must permit the significant effects of the Project to be considered in the full environmental context.
2. A discussion of potential impacts from lighting, noise, human activity, and wildlife-human interactions created by Project activities especially those adjacent to natural areas, exotic and/or invasive species occurrences, and drainages. The DSEIR should address Project-related changes to drainage patterns and water quality within, upstream, and downstream of the Project site, including: volume, velocity, and frequency of existing and post-Project surface flows; polluted runoff; soil erosion and/or sedimentation in streams and water bodies; and post-Project fate of runoff from the Project site.
3. A discussion of potential indirect Project impacts on biological resources, including resources in areas adjacent to the Project footprint, such as nearby public lands (e.g., National Forests, State Parks, etc.), open space, adjacent

natural habitats, riparian ecosystems, wildlife corridors, and any designated and/or proposed reserve or mitigation lands (e.g., preserved lands associated with a Conservation or Recovery Plan, or other conserved lands).

4. A cumulative effects analysis developed as described under CEQA Guidelines section 15130. The DSEIR should discuss the Project's cumulative impacts on natural resources and determine if that contribution would result in a significant impact. The DSEIR should include a list of present, past, and probable future projects producing related impacts to biological resources or shall include a summary of the projections contained in an adopted local, regional, or statewide plan, that consider conditions contributing to a cumulative effect. The cumulative analysis shall include impact analysis of vegetation and habitat reductions within the area and their potential cumulative effects. Please include all potential direct and indirect Project-related impacts to riparian areas, wetlands, wildlife corridors or wildlife movement areas, aquatic habitats, sensitive species and/or special-status species, open space, and adjacent natural habitats in the cumulative effects analysis.

CDFW supports Project activities that help reduce GHG emissions to reduce climate change, especially if the Project activities avoid or minimize impacts to sensitive biological resources and effectively conserve wetlands, riparian forests, oak woodlands, streams, and other sensitive habitats.

Mitigation Measures for Project Impacts on Biological Resources

The DSEIR should include appropriate and adequate avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures for all direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts that are expected to occur as a result of the Project. CDFW also recommends the environmental documentation provide scientifically supported discussion regarding adequate avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures to address the Project's significant impacts upon fish and wildlife and their habitat. In order for mitigation measures to be effective, they must be specific, enforceable, and feasible actions that will improve environmental conditions. When proposing measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts, CDFW recommends consideration of the following:

1. *Fully Protected Species*: Several Fully Protected Species (Fish & G. Code § 3511 and 4700) have the potential to occur within or adjacent to the Project area, including, but not limited to: California black rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis coturniculus*), golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), white-tailed kite (*Elanus leucurus*), ringtail (*Genus Bassariscus*), and wolverine (*Gulo luscus*). Project activities described in the DSEIR should be designed to completely avoid any fully protected species. CDFW recommends that the City include in the analysis how appropriate avoidance, minimization and mitigation measures will reduce indirect impacts to fully protected species.
2. *Species of Special Concern*: Several Species of Special Concern (SSC) have the potential to occur within or adjacent to the Project area, including, but not limited to: western spadefoot (*Spea hammondi*), burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*),

western pond turtle (*Emys marmorata*), and loggerhead shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*). Project activities described in the DSEIR should be designed to avoid any SSC. CDFW recommends the City include in the analysis how appropriate avoidance, minimization and mitigation measures will reduce impacts to SSC.

3. *Sensitive Plant Communities*: CDFW considers sensitive plant communities to be imperiled habitats having both local and regional significance. Plant communities, alliances, and associations with a statewide ranking of S-1, S-2, S-3, and S-4 should be considered sensitive and declining at the local and regional level. These ranks can be obtained by querying the CNDDDB and are included in *The Manual of California Vegetation* (Sawyer 2009). The DSEIR should include measures to fully avoid and otherwise protect sensitive plant communities from Project-related direct and indirect impacts.
4. *Mitigation*: CDFW considers adverse Project-related impacts to sensitive species and habitats to be significant to both local and regional ecosystems, and the DSEIR should include mitigation measures for adverse Project-related impacts to these resources. Mitigation measures should emphasize avoidance and reduction of Project impacts. For unavoidable impacts, onsite habitat restoration, enhancement, or permanent protection should be evaluated and discussed in detail. If onsite mitigation is not feasible or would not be biologically viable and therefore would not adequately mitigate the loss of biological functions and values, offsite mitigation through habitat creation and/or acquisition and preservation in perpetuity should be addressed.

The DSEIR should include measures to perpetually protect the targeted habitat values within mitigation areas from direct and indirect adverse impacts in order to meet mitigation objectives to offset Project-induced qualitative and quantitative losses of biological values. Specific issues that should be addressed include restrictions on access, proposed land dedications, long-term monitoring and management programs, control of illegal dumping, water pollution, increased human intrusion, etc.

The City identified expanding the tree canopy in the 2019 CAP as a sustainability planning strategy which sequesters carbon dioxide from the atmosphere by focusing on habitat preservation, increasing urban forest, and creating air quality improvements through pollutant sequestration. CDFW supports Project activities that provide carbon storage in natural and working lands to mitigate GHG emissions. CDFW recommends that carbon storage involves the usage of native trees and shrubs to restore the natural habitats of special-status species such as riparian forests and oak woodlands. CDFW recognizes potential City's concerns about the increased risk of wildfires from the plantings due to climate change, so CDFW recommends that native fire-resistant species be considered as part of the planting palette suchlike California buckeyes (*Aesculus californica*).

The NOP also discussed preparation for increased flooding resulting from climate change involving building capacity for current and future flooding. CDFW recommends that some of the improvements be focused on improvement of fish habitats. Project activities that benefit fish species, such as restoring degraded channels and floodplains to original form and function, removing natural barriers to increase spawning habitat, and protecting and improving wetland-fed streams that maintain higher summer flows can also create new flood capacity and increase water retention. In addition, restoring and replanting concrete lined channels and bared disturbed areas (around streams) to act as flood protection, improve water quality, and prevent erosion/sedimentation would help deal with climate change effects. CDFW strongly supports these Project activities as they increase stream habitat resiliency as well as provide restored habitat for local native species.

5. *Habitat Revegetation/Restoration Plans*: Plans for restoration and revegetation should be prepared by persons with expertise in the regional ecosystems and native plant restoration techniques. Plans should identify the assumptions used to develop the proposed restoration strategy. Each plan should include the following parameters: (a) the location of restoration sites and assessment of appropriate reference sites; (b) the plant species to be used, sources of local propagules, container sizes, and seeding rates; (c) a schematic depicting the mitigation area; (d) a local seed and cuttings and planting schedule; (e) a description of the irrigation methodology; (f) measures to control exotic vegetation on site; (g) specific success criteria; (h) a detailed monitoring program; (i) contingency measures should the success criteria not be met; and (j) identification of the party responsible for meeting the success criteria and providing for conservation of the mitigation site in perpetuity. Monitoring of restoration areas should extend across a sufficient time frame to ensure that the new habitat is established, self-sustaining, and capable of surviving drought.

CDFW recommends that local onsite propagules from the Project area and nearby vicinity be collected and used for restoration purposes. Onsite seed collection should be appropriately timed to ensure the viability of the seeds when planted. Onsite vegetation mapping at the alliance and/or association level should be used to develop appropriate restoration goals and local plant palettes. Reference areas should be identified to help guide restoration efforts. Specific restoration plans should be developed for various Project components as appropriate. Restoration objectives should include protecting special habitat elements or re-creating them in areas affected by the Project. Examples may include retention of woody material, logs, snags, rocks, and brush piles. Fish and Game Code sections 1002, 1002.5 and 1003 authorize CDFW to issue permits for the take or possession of plants and wildlife for scientific, educational, and propagation purposes. Please see our website for more information on Scientific Collecting Permits at www.wildlife.ca.gov/Licensing/Scientific-Collecting#53949678-regulations-.

Another area of restoration mitigation opportunity is invasive plant species

management. Many rare, threatened, and endangered native plants are more susceptible to extinction caused by climate change due principally to small population sizes and limited suitable habitat types. While some animals have the ability to move when conditions become unfavorable, plants are immobile and thus cannot as easily adapt to a quickly changing environment. Climate change may alter plant life stages such as leaf emergence or flowering period which may hinder survival and reproduction. Some studies estimate that endemic plant species' ranges may shift up to 90 miles under intense climate change, but this shift may be a slow process relative to a rapidly changing climate. Furthermore, plants that are restricted to extremely specific habitats are especially at risk because while the climatic environment may shift, the soil and nutrient environment will not. Invasive plant species pose a threat to native plants because invasives tend to do well in the changing conditions that climate change is thought to promote, and those invasives may then out-compete rare plants for vital resources. Invasive species management should aim to conserve and manage large areas of protected habitat for plants, which may rely on dispersal and a variety of habitat gradients and varied microsites to cope with the changing environment. Efforts should focus on reducing the negative effects of non-native invasive plant species like preventing the introduction of these species into the natural habitats of the City, detecting and responding to introductions when they occur, and preventing the spread of invasive plant species that have become established.

6. *Nesting Birds*: Please note that it is the City responsibility to comply with all applicable laws related to nesting birds and birds of prey. Migratory non-game native bird species are protected by international treaty under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) of 1918, as amended (16 U.S.C. 703 *et seq.*). CDFW implemented the MBTA by adopting the Fish and Game Code section 3513. Fish and Game Code sections 3503, 3503.5 and 3800 provide additional protection to nongame birds, birds of prey, their nests and eggs. Sections 3503, 3503.5, and 3513 of the Fish and Game Code afford protective measures as follows: section 3503 states that it is unlawful to take, possess, or needlessly destroy the nest or eggs of any bird, except as otherwise provided by the Fish and Game Code or any regulation made pursuant thereto; section 3503.5 states that it is unlawful to take, possess, or destroy any birds in the orders Falconiformes or Strigiformes (birds-of-prey) or to take, possess, or destroy the nest or eggs of any such bird except as otherwise provided by the Fish and Game Code or any regulation adopted pursuant thereto; and section 3513 states that it is unlawful to take or possess any migratory nongame bird as designated in the MBTA or any part of such migratory nongame bird except as provided by rules and regulations adopted by the Secretary of the Interior under provisions of the MBTA.

Potential habitat for nesting birds and birds of prey is present within the Project area. The Project should disclose all potential activities that may incur a direct or indirect take to nongame nesting birds within the Project footprint and its vicinity. Appropriate avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures to avoid take must be included in the DSEIR.

CDFW recommends the DSEIR include specific avoidance and minimization measures to ensure that impacts to nesting birds or their nests do not occur. Project-specific avoidance and minimization measures may include, but not be limited to: Project phasing and timing, monitoring of Project-related noise (where applicable), sound walls, and buffers, where appropriate. The DSEIR should also include specific avoidance and minimization measures that will be implemented should a nest be located within the Project site. In addition to larger, protocol level survey efforts (e.g., Swainson's hawk surveys) and scientific assessments, CDFW recommends a final preconstruction survey be required no more than three (3) days prior to vegetation clearing or ground disturbance activities, as instances of nesting could be missed if surveys are conducted earlier.

7. *Moving out of Harm's Way*: The Project is anticipated to result in the clearing of natural habitats that support native species. To avoid direct mortality, the City should state in the DSEIR a requirement for a qualified biologist with the proper handling permits, which will be retained to be onsite prior to and during all ground- and habitat-disturbing activities. Furthermore, the DSEIR should describe that the qualified biologist with the proper permits may move out of harm's way special-status species or other wildlife of low or limited mobility that would otherwise be injured or killed from Project-related activities, as needed. The DSEIR should also describe qualified biologist qualifications and authorities to stop work to prevent direct mortality of special-status species. CDFW recommends fish and wildlife species be allowed to move out of harm's way on their own volition, if possible, and to assist their relocation as a last resort. It should be noted that the temporary relocation of onsite wildlife does not constitute effective mitigation for habitat loss.
8. *Translocation of Species*: CDFW generally does not support the use of relocation, salvage, and/or transplantation as the sole mitigation for impacts to rare, threatened, or endangered species as these efforts are generally experimental in nature and largely unsuccessful. Therefore, the DSEIR should describe additional mitigation measures utilizing habitat restoration, conservation, and/or preservation, in addition to avoidance and minimization measures, if it is determined that there may be impacts to rare, threatened, or endangered species.

The DSEIR should incorporate mitigation performance standards that would ensure that impacts are reduced to a less-than-significant level. Mitigation measures proposed in the DSEIR should be made a condition of approval of the Project. Please note that obtaining a permit from CDFW by itself with no other mitigation proposal may constitute mitigation deferral. CEQA Guidelines section 15126.4, subdivision (a)(1)(B) states that formulation of mitigation measures should not be deferred until some future time. To avoid deferring mitigation in this way, the DSEIR should describe avoidance, minimization and mitigation measures that would be implemented should the impact occur.

California Endangered Species Act

CDFW is responsible for ensuring appropriate conservation of fish and wildlife resources including threatened, endangered, and/or candidate plant and animal species, pursuant to CESA. CDFW recommends that a CESA Incidental Take Permit (ITP) be obtained if the Project has the potential to result in “take” (Fish & G. Code § 86 defines “take” as “hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill, or attempt to hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill”) of State-listed CESA species, either through construction or over the life of the Project.

State-listed species with the potential to occur in the area include, but are not limited to: bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), bank swallow (*Riparia riparia*), Boggs Lake hedge-hyssop (*Gratiola heterosepala*), California tiger salamander - central California DPS (*Ambystoma californiense pop. 1*), giant garter snake (*Thamnophis gigas*), least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*), Mason's lilaepsis (*Lilaepsis masonii*), Sacramento Orcutt grass (*Orcuttia viscida*), slender Orcutt grass (*Orcuttia tenuis*), Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*), tricolored blackbird (*Agelaius tricolor*), and western yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus occidentalis*). Candidate state-listed species with the potential to occur in the area includes burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*) and Crotch's bumble bee (*Bombus crotchii*).

The DSEIR should disclose the potential of the Project to take State-listed species and how the impacts will be avoided, minimized, and mitigated. Please note that mitigation measures that are adequate to reduce impacts to a less-than significant level to meet CEQA requirements may not be enough for the issuance of an ITP. To facilitate the issuance of an ITP, if applicable, CDFW recommends the DSEIR include measures to minimize and fully mitigate the impacts to any State-listed species the Project has potential to take. CDFW encourages early consultation with staff to determine appropriate measures to facilitate future permitting processes and to engage with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and/or National Marine Fisheries Service to coordinate specific measures if both State and federally listed species may be present within the Project vicinity.

Native Plant Protection Act

The Native Plant Protection Act (Fish & G. Code §1900 *et seq.*) prohibits the take or possession of State-listed rare and endangered plants, including any part or product thereof, unless authorized by CDFW or in certain limited circumstances. Take of State-listed rare and/or endangered plants due to Project activities may only be permitted through an ITP or other authorization issued by CDFW pursuant to California Code of Regulations, Title 14, section 786.9 subdivision (b).

Lake and Streambed Alteration Program

The DSEIR should generally identify all perennial, intermittent, and ephemeral rivers, streams, lakes, other hydrologically connected aquatic features, and any associated biological resources/habitats present within the entire Project footprint (including utilities, access and staging areas). The environmental document should analyze all potential temporary, permanent, direct, indirect and/or cumulative impacts to the above-

mentioned features and associated biological resources/habitats that may occur because of the Project. If it is determined the Project will result in significant impacts to these resources the DSEIR shall propose appropriate avoidance, minimization and/or mitigation measures to reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Section 1602 of the Fish and Game Code requires an entity to notify CDFW prior to commencing any activity that may do one or more of the following:

1. Substantially divert or obstruct the natural flow of any river, stream or lake;
2. Substantially change or use any material from the bed, channel or bank of any river, stream, or lake; or
3. Deposit debris, waste or other materials where it may pass into any river, stream or lake.

Please note that "any river, stream or lake" includes those that are episodic (i.e., those that are dry for periods of time) as well as those that are perennial (i.e., those that flow year-round). This includes ephemeral streams and watercourses with a subsurface flow. It may also apply to work undertaken within the flood plain of a body of water.

If upon review of an entity's notification, CDFW determines that the Project activities may substantially adversely affect an existing fish or wildlife resource, a Lake and Streambed Alteration (LSA) Agreement will be issued which will include reasonable measures necessary to protect the resource. CDFW's issuance of an LSA Agreement is a "project" subject to CEQA (see Pub. Resources Code 21065). To facilitate issuance of an LSA Agreement, if one is necessary, the DSEIR should fully identify the potential impacts to the lake, stream, or riparian resources, and provide adequate avoidance, mitigation, and monitoring and reporting commitments. Early consultation with CDFW is recommended, since modification of the Project may avoid or reduce impacts on fish and wildlife resources. All LSA Notification types must be submitted online through CDFW's Environmental Permit Information Management System (EPIMS). For more information about EPIMS, please visit <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Environmental-Review/EPIMS>. More information about LSA Notifications, paper forms and fees may be found at <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Environmental-Review/LSA>.

Please note that other agencies may use specific methods and definitions to determine impacts to areas subject to their authorities. These methods and definitions often do not include all needed information for CDFW to determine the extent of fish and wildlife resources affected by activities subject to Notification under Fish and Game Code section 1602. Therefore, CDFW does not recommend relying solely on methods developed specifically for delineating areas subject to other agencies' jurisdiction (such as United States Army Corps of Engineers) when mapping lakes, streams, wetlands, floodplains, riparian areas, etc. in preparation for submitting a Notification of an LSA.

CDFW relies on the lead agency environmental document analysis when acting as a responsible agency issuing an LSA Agreement. CDFW recommends lead agencies coordinate with us as early as possible, since potential modification of the proposed Project may avoid or reduce impacts to fish and wildlife resources and expedite the Project approval process.

The following information will be required for the processing of an LSA Notification and CDFW recommends incorporating this information into any forthcoming CEQA document(s) to avoid subsequent documentation and Project delays:

1. Mapping and quantification of lakes, streams, and associated fish and wildlife habitat (e.g., riparian habitat, freshwater wetlands, etc.) that will be temporarily and/or permanently impacted by the Project, including impacts from access and staging areas. Please include an estimate of impact to each habitat type.
2. Discussion of specific avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures to reduce Project impacts to fish and wildlife resources to a less-than-significant level. Please refer to section 15370 of the CEQA Guidelines.

Based on review of Project materials, aerial photography and observation of the site from public roadways, the Project site supports streams (Elk Grove/Laguna Creek, Deer Creek, Franklin Creek, and their tributaries), lakes, and their associated tributaries and riparian habitat. CDFW recommends the DSEIR fully identify the Project's potential impacts to the stream and/or its associated vegetation and wetlands.

ENVIRONMENTAL DATA

CEQA requires that information developed in environmental impact reports and negative declarations be incorporated into a database, which may be used to make subsequent or supplemental environmental determinations (Pub. Resources Code, § 21003, subd. (e)). Accordingly, please report any special-status species and natural communities detected during Project surveys to CNDDDB. The CNDDDB field survey form can be found at the following link: <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Data/CNDDDB/Submitting-Data>. The completed form can be submitted online or mailed electronically to CNDDDB at the following email address: CNDDDB@wildlife.ca.gov.

FILING FEES

The Project, as proposed, would have an effect on fish and wildlife, and assessment of filing fees is necessary. Fees are payable upon filing of the Notice of Determination by the City and serve to help defray the cost of environmental review by CDFW. Payment of the fee is required in order for the underlying project approval to be operative, vested, and final. (Cal. Code Regs, tit. 14, § 753.5; Fish & G. Code § 711.4; Pub. Resources Code, § 21089.)

CONCLUSION

Pursuant to Public Resources Code sections 21092 and 21092.2, CDFW requests written notification of proposed actions and pending decisions regarding the Project. Written notifications shall be directed to: California Department of Fish and Wildlife North Central Region, 1701 Nimbus Road, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670 or emailed to R2CEQA@wildlife.ca.gov.

CDFW appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Notice of Preparation of the DSEIR for the Climate Compass Project and recommends that the City address CDFW's comments and concerns in the forthcoming DSEIR. CDFW personnel are available for consultation regarding biological resources and strategies to minimize impacts.

If you have any questions regarding the comments provided in this letter, or wish to schedule a meeting and/or site visit, please contact Harvey Tran, Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist) at (916) 358-4035 or harvey.tran@wildlife.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Tanya Sheya
Environmental Program Manager

ec: Dylan Wood, Senior Environmental Scientist (Supervisory)
Harvey Tran, Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist)
California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Office of Planning and Research, State Clearinghouse, Sacramento

REFERENCES

Sawyer, J. O., T. Keeler-Wolf, and J. M. Evens. 2009. A Manual of California Vegetation, 2nd ed. California Native Plant Society Press, Sacramento, California.
<http://vegetation.cnps.org/>



Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board

14 January 2025

Carrie Whitlock
City of Elk Grove
8401 Laguna Palms Way
Elk Grove, CA 95758
cwhitlock@elkgrovecity.org

COMMENTS TO REQUEST FOR REVIEW FOR THE NOTICE OF PREPARATION FOR THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT, CLIMATE COMPASS PROJECT, SCH#2017062058, SACRAMENTO COUNTY

Pursuant to the State Clearinghouse's 6 December 2024 request, the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Valley Water Board) has reviewed the *Request for Review for the Notice of Preparation for the Draft Environmental Impact Report* for the Climate Compass Project, located in Sacramento County.

Our agency is delegated with the responsibility of protecting the quality of surface and groundwaters of the state; therefore our comments will address concerns surrounding those issues.

I. Regulatory Setting

Basin Plan

The Central Valley Water Board is required to formulate and adopt Basin Plans for all areas within the Central Valley region under Section 13240 of the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act. Each Basin Plan must contain water quality objectives to ensure the reasonable protection of beneficial uses, as well as a program of implementation for achieving water quality objectives with the Basin Plans. Federal regulations require each state to adopt water quality standards to protect the public health or welfare, enhance the quality of water and serve the purposes of the Clean Water Act. In California, the beneficial uses, water quality objectives, and the Antidegradation Policy are the State's water quality standards. Water quality standards are also contained in the National Toxics Rule, 40 CFR Section 131.36, and the California Toxics Rule, 40 CFR Section 131.38.

The Basin Plan is subject to modification as necessary, considering applicable laws, policies, technologies, water quality conditions and priorities. The original Basin Plans were adopted in 1975, and have been updated and revised periodically as required, using Basin Plan amendments. Once the Central Valley Water Board has adopted a Basin Plan amendment in noticed public hearings, it must be approved by

the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board), Office of Administrative Law (OAL) and in some cases, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). Basin Plan amendments only become effective after they have been approved by the OAL and in some cases, the USEPA. Every three (3) years, a review of the Basin Plan is completed that assesses the appropriateness of existing standards and evaluates and prioritizes Basin Planning issues. For more information on the *Water Quality Control Plan for the Sacramento and San Joaquin River Basins*, please visit our website:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/basin_plans/

Antidegradation Considerations

All wastewater discharges must comply with the Antidegradation Policy (State Water Board Resolution 68-16) and the Antidegradation Implementation Policy contained in the Basin Plan. The Antidegradation Implementation Policy is available on page 74 at:

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/basin_plans/sacsjr_2018_05.pdf

In part it states:

Any discharge of waste to high quality waters must apply best practicable treatment or control not only to prevent a condition of pollution or nuisance from occurring, but also to maintain the highest water quality possible consistent with the maximum benefit to the people of the State.

This information must be presented as an analysis of the impacts and potential impacts of the discharge on water quality, as measured by background concentrations and applicable water quality objectives.

The antidegradation analysis is a mandatory element in the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System and land discharge Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) permitting processes. The environmental review document should evaluate potential impacts to both surface and groundwater quality.

II. Permitting Requirements

Construction Storm Water General Permit

Dischargers whose project disturb one or more acres of soil or where projects disturb less than one acre but are part of a larger common plan of development that in total disturbs one or more acres, are required to obtain coverage under the General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance Activities (Construction General Permit), Construction General Permit Order No. 2009-0009-DWQ. Construction activity subject to this permit includes clearing, grading, grubbing, disturbances to the ground, such as stockpiling, or excavation, but does not include regular maintenance activities performed to restore the original line, grade, or capacity of the facility. The Construction General Permit requires the development and implementation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). For more information on the Construction General Permit, visit the State Water Resources Control Board website at:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/stormwater/constpermits.shtml

Phase I and II Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permits¹

The Phase I and II MS4 permits require the Permittees reduce pollutants and runoff flows from new development and redevelopment using Best Management Practices (BMPs) to the maximum extent practicable (MEP). MS4 Permittees have their own development standards, also known as Low Impact Development (LID)/post-construction standards that include a hydromodification component. The MS4 permits also require specific design concepts for LID/post-construction BMPs in the early stages of a project during the entitlement and CEQA process and the development plan review process.

For more information on which Phase I MS4 Permit this project applies to, visit the Central Valley Water Board website at:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/storm_water/municipal_permits/

For more information on the Phase II MS4 permit and who it applies to, visit the State Water Resources Control Board at:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/stormwater/phase_ii_municipal.shtml

Industrial Storm Water General Permit

Storm water discharges associated with industrial sites must comply with the regulations contained in the Industrial Storm Water General Permit Order No. 2014-0057-DWQ. For more information on the Industrial Storm Water General Permit, visit the Central Valley Water Board website at:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/storm_water/industrial_general_permits/index.shtml

Clean Water Act Section 404 Permit

If the project will involve the discharge of dredged or fill material in navigable waters or wetlands, a permit pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act may be needed from the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). If a Section 404 permit is required by the USACE, the Central Valley Water Board will review the permit application to ensure that discharge will not violate water quality standards. If the project requires surface water drainage realignment, the applicant is advised to contact the Department of Fish and Game for information on Streambed Alteration Permit requirements. If you have any questions regarding the Clean Water Act Section 404 permits, please contact the Regulatory Division of the Sacramento District of USACE at (916) 557-5250.

¹ Municipal Permits = The Phase I Municipal Separate Storm Water System (MS4) Permit covers medium sized Municipalities (serving between 100,000 and 250,000 people) and large sized municipalities (serving over 250,000 people). The Phase II MS4 provides coverage for small municipalities, including non-traditional Small MS4s, which include military bases, public campuses, prisons and hospitals.

Clean Water Act Section 401 Permit – Water Quality Certification

If an USACE permit (e.g., Non-Reporting Nationwide Permit, Nationwide Permit, Letter of Permission, Individual Permit, Regional General Permit, Programmatic General Permit), or any other federal permit (e.g., Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act or Section 9 from the United States Coast Guard), is required for this project due to the disturbance of waters of the United States (such as streams and wetlands), then a Water Quality Certification must be obtained from the Central Valley Water Board prior to initiation of project activities. There are no waivers for 401 Water Quality Certifications. For more information on the Water Quality Certification, visit the Central Valley Water Board website at: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/water_quality_certification/

Waste Discharge Requirements – Discharges to Waters of the State

If USACE determines that only non-jurisdictional waters of the State (i.e., “non-federal” waters of the State) are present in the proposed project area, the proposed project may require a Waste Discharge Requirement (WDR) permit to be issued by Central Valley Water Board. Under the California Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act, discharges to all waters of the State, including all wetlands and other waters of the State including, but not limited to, isolated wetlands, are subject to State regulation. For more information on the Waste Discharges to Surface Water NPDES Program and WDR processes, visit the Central Valley Water Board website at: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/waste_to_surface_water/

Projects involving excavation or fill activities impacting less than 0.2 acre or 400 linear feet of non-jurisdictional waters of the state and projects involving dredging activities impacting less than 50 cubic yards of non-jurisdictional waters of the state may be eligible for coverage under the State Water Resources Control Board Water Quality Order No. 2004-0004-DWQ (General Order 2004-0004). For more information on the General Order 2004-0004, visit the State Water Resources Control Board website at: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board_decisions/adopted_orders/water_quality/2004/wqo/wqo2004-0004.pdf

Dewatering Permit

If the proposed project includes construction or groundwater dewatering to be discharged to land, the proponent may apply for coverage under State Water Board General Water Quality Order (Low Threat General Order) 2003-0003 or the Central Valley Water Board’s Waiver of Report of Waste Discharge and Waste Discharge Requirements (Low Threat Waiver) R5-2018-0085. Small temporary construction dewatering projects are projects that discharge groundwater to land from excavation activities or dewatering of underground utility vaults. Dischargers seeking coverage under the General Order or Waiver must file a Notice of Intent with the Central Valley Water Board prior to beginning discharge.

For more information regarding the Low Threat General Order and the application process, visit the Central Valley Water Board website at:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board_decisions/adopted_orders/water_quality/2003/wqo/wqo2003-0003.pdf

For more information regarding the Low Threat Waiver and the application process, visit the Central Valley Water Board website at:

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/board_decisions/adopted_orders/waivers/r5-2018-0085.pdf

Limited Threat General NPDES Permit

If the proposed project includes construction dewatering and it is necessary to discharge the groundwater to waters of the United States, the proposed project will require coverage under a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. Dewatering discharges are typically considered a low or limited threat to water quality and may be covered under the General Order for *Limited Threat Discharges to Surface Water* (Limited Threat General Order). A complete Notice of Intent must be submitted to the Central Valley Water Board to obtain coverage under the Limited Threat General Order. For more information regarding the Limited Threat General Order and the application process, visit the Central Valley Water Board website at:

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/board_decisions/adopted_orders/general_orders/r5-2016-0076-01.pdf

NPDES Permit

If the proposed project discharges waste that could affect the quality of surface waters of the State, other than into a community sewer system, the proposed project will require coverage under a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. A complete Report of Waste Discharge must be submitted with the Central Valley Water Board to obtain a NPDES Permit. For more information regarding the NPDES Permit and the application process, visit the Central Valley Water Board website at: <https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/help/permit/>

If you have questions regarding these comments, please contact me at (916) 464-4684 or Peter.Minkel2@waterboards.ca.gov.



Peter G. Minkel
Engineering Geologist

cc: State Clearinghouse unit, Governor's Office of Planning and Research,
Sacramento



January 15, 2025

Carrie Whitlock, Strategic Planning and Innovation Program Manager
City of Elk Grove
8401 Laguna Palms Way
Elk Grove, CA 95758
cwhitlock@elkgrovecity.org

Subject: Notice of Preparation of a Supplemental Environmental Impact Report for the Elk Grove Climate Compass

Dear Ms. Whitlock:

Thank you for routing the Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Elk Grove Climate Action Plan (CAP) to the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (Sac Metro Air District) for review. The City is preparing a Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) to the General Plan Update EIR for the update to the 2019 CAP, now known as the Climate Compass. The Climate Compass is timely and provides an opportunity for the City to accelerate its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction efforts. For the first time, global temperatures in 2024 exceeded 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels – a limit set by the 2015 Paris Agreement to bolster the global response to the threat of climate change.¹ Moreover, the last 10 years have been the hottest on record, and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change projects more intense and frequent climate and weather extremes from global warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. This warming is continuing to cause drastic long-term changes that are affecting Californians all over the state. It is critical for the City to mitigate its GHG emissions and Sac Metro Air District intends to review the prepared SEIR for the Climate Compass with this frame of reference. Please accept the following comments which aim to strengthen the Climate Compass, maximize carbon sequestration, and increase the City's GHG reductions.

Building Energy

- Building energy represents 38 percent of the City's communitywide emissions and is the second largest emissions sector in the 2021 GHG inventory.
 - For Strategy BE-1: Electrify and Decarbonize Buildings, we recommend that the City analyze including requirements for cooking appliances, space heating, and water heating appliances as a pathway to unlocking full electrification. Natural gas infrastructure releases harmful pollutants directly into the home exposing residents to levels of pollution that in some cases are higher than the outdoor ambient air quality

¹ World Meteorological Organization, WMO Confirms 2024 as Warmest Year on Record at About 1.55°C Above Pre-industrial Level, January 10, 2025, <https://wmo.int/media/news/wmo-confirms-2024-warmest-year-record-about-155degc-above-pre-industrial-level>

standards. Additional air emission reductions could be achieved through the transition to induction cooktops which improve indoor air quality. We recommend that the City explore all feasible options to eliminate natural gas infrastructure in residential and commercial buildings to improve public health and increase emissions reduction.

- Sac Metro Air District suggests that the City focus on electrifying its New Growth Areas at an accelerated rate by requiring new construction to be pre-wired for full electrification. California's 2022 Scoping Plan for Achieving Carbon Neutrality relies on local governments to rapidly electrify development to address GHG emissions associated with the built environment. In addition to the Scoping Plan calling for electrification as a method of achieving statewide climate goals, by not electrifying New Growth Areas, the City would be inconsistent with the Scoping Plan. Additionally, all-electric development is a cost-effective way to meet building electrification goals as new all-electric construction typically results in energy savings for building owners and residents.
- For Strategy BE-3: Increase Local Renewable Energy Use and Storage, the City should analyze requiring the addition of solar photovoltaic canopies over new parking lots as a new design standard. Combining shade with electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure increases EV charging efficiency and reduces battery degradation. In addition to providing a renewable source of energy for EV charging, solar photovoltaic shade structures over parking lots are a heat mitigation strategy since less heat is absorbed by the pavement and the parked vehicles. The shade that is provided can also reduce the evaporation of volatile organic compounds from the fuel tanks of conventional cars and reduce the amount of energy that is spent on air conditioning within the vehicle.²

Transportation

- On-road transportation represents the largest emissions sector in the City's 2021 GHG inventory.
 - Strategy TR-1: Decrease Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) would improve walkability and pedestrian access to public transit. Sac Metro Air District recommends that the City investigate the addition of a new measure that installs pedestrian-friendly infrastructure throughout Elk Grove to support active transportation. Studies show that higher temperatures increase VMT and GHGs as travelers forgo active transportation in favor of driving. In Fresno, CA, transit ridership decreased as temperatures increased, with some potential riders avoiding travel or switching to single-occupancy vehicle use.³ Sac Metro Air District recommends incorporating infrastructure for heat mitigation such as tree shading, solar canopies, shade structures, and the installation of cool pavements and cool walls at transit stops to improve rider comfort, safety, and accessibility. As pedestrians walk, bike, or skate to public transit stations, a pedestrian-friendly active modes measure that creates safe and welcoming environments for active transportation would bolster their use of transit services and reduce the reliance on single-occupancy vehicles.

² Sac Metro Air District, CivicWell, Capital Region Urban Heat Island Mitigation Plan, 2019, <https://www.airquality.org/LandUseTransportation/Documents/UHI%20Mitigation%20Plan.pdf>

³ Sac Metro Air District, CivicWell, Capital Region Urban Heat Island Mitigation Project Summary Report, 2020, <https://www.airquality.org/LandUseTransportation/Documents/UHI%20Project%20Summary%20Report.pdf>

- The City could further reduce communitywide VMT and GHG emissions by incorporating the “Land Use Improvements” measure from Sacramento’s Capital Region Climate Priorities Plan (CRCPP)⁴ into the Climate Compass. This measure reduces the dependency on single-occupancy vehicle use by increasing residential density through infill housing and mixed-use development. Living near jobs, schools, supermarkets, and medical care facilities decreases travel distances and results in fewer or shorter vehicle trips.
- As Elk Grove expands its city limits, a continued focus on smart growth would allow it to deepen GHG reductions and reach its climate goals within its New Growth Areas. Smart growth is the use of development strategies that preserve community health, the surrounding natural environment, air and water quality, and other resources by reusing developed land, designing compact and walkable neighborhoods, preserving open space, supporting community involvement in design, and providing multiple transportation options. Smart growth policies can reduce VMT and emissions from passenger vehicles as key destinations are sited near public transit and are within walking and biking distance from residences. Smart growth also has the added benefit of reducing the urban heat island effect in cities.

Resilience and Adaptation

- Sac Metro Air District’s Urban Heat Island Project⁵ modeled urban heat islands in the Sacramento region and evaluated various strategies to combat the effects of heat on urban populations. Along with increasing tree canopy, the project found that strategies such as installing cool roofs and cool pavements deployed at the local and regional scale provide effective heat mitigation for neighborhoods impacted by urban heat islands. By increasing the albedo/solar reflectance of existing surfaces using high albedo materials like sealants and coatings in combination with increased vegetation cover, neighborhoods can experience cooler temperatures.⁶ Urban heat islands can cause substantial adverse effects on humans, both directly and indirectly, but by mitigating the impacts of urban heat islands, the City can create a more livable and sustainable urban environment for its residents. The following recommendations would boost the efficacy of Strategy RA-4: Reduce Exposure to Extreme Heat and Mitigate the Urban Heat Island Effect.
 - Extreme heat is deadlier than other natural hazards making it crucial for local jurisdictions to provide heat mitigation for new and existing infrastructure in areas impacted by urban heat islands. The City should encourage cool roof adoption by exploring the implementation of a local ordinance that requires the installation of roofs with a solar reflectance index (SRI) of either 78 for low-rise or high-rise residential buildings with a roof slope of $\leq 2:12$, or an SRI of 20 for low-rise or high-rise residential

⁴ Sac Metro Air District, Capital Region Climate Priorities Plan, March 2024, <https://www.airquality.org/residents/climate-change/climate-pollution-reduction-grants>

⁵ Sac Metro Air District, Urban Heat Island Project, 2020 <https://www.airquality.org/businesses/climate-change/urban-heat-island>

⁶ Sac Metro Air District, Atmospheric Modeling for the Development of a Regional Heat Pollution Reduction Plan – Technical Project Report, February 2020, https://www.airquality.org/LandUseTransportation/Documents/Altostratus_Final_Report.pdf

- buildings with a roof slope of > 2:12. If adopted at scale, cool roofs can reduce peak energy demand and increase grid stability.
- In areas with low albedo, installing cool pavements or covering traditional pavements with sealants that have an albedo between 0.30 or 0.35 can reduce the amount of heat that the pavement absorbs and reflects. The City should consider requiring road repair and new roadway improvement projects to install cool pavements with an albedo between 0.30 to 0.35 to avoid glare for drivers and pedestrians. To assist with community planning, the City could look to the CRCPP and the 2024 CAPCOA Handbook which includes the “Install Cool Pavement” measure.⁷ The implementation of this quantified measure could reduce energy use for cooling in surrounding buildings thus reducing the GHG emissions associated with electricity consumption. Tracking the replacement of traditional pavement with highly reflective pavement could be a key performance indicator for this measure.
 - Under the communitywide business-as-usual scenario and the communitywide legislative-adjusted business-as-usual scenario for the GHG emissions forecast, agricultural emissions are expected to decrease from 2021 levels through 2050 as the agricultural production acreage within city limits declines over the coming decades.
 - Although the City has plans to continue to develop agricultural lands, it should consider the benefits of keeping agricultural lands viable using sustainable farming practices that can sequester more carbon than developed land. The City could implement a carbon stock program that assesses the amount of carbon that could be sequestered through the year 2050 on these preserved agricultural lands. A carbon stock program that monitors the amount of carbon that is sequestered and how much has historically been sequestered would justify the preservation of agricultural lands. Furthermore, incentivizing sustainable farming practices in rural areas of the city could reduce VMT by keeping crops local. The addition of the Carbon Sequestration Program/Carbon Farming measure from the CRCPP could reduce GHG emissions through the conservation, maintenance, and restoration of natural resources on ranches and farmland. Sac Metro Air District recommends integrating these suggestions into a broadened Strategy RA-6: Expand Nature-Based Solutions in the Climate Compass. If the City continues to develop agricultural lands, it should consider doing so through smart growth that increases the density of all-electric housing near public transit and other sustainable transportation options to reduce GHG emissions.

Sac Metro Air District looks forward to reviewing the draft SEIR and the Climate Compass. We hope that our recommendations assist the City in its development of a robust plan to mitigate GHG emissions and address the current and future impacts of climate change in the Sacramento region.

If you have questions regarding these comments, please contact Brianna Moland, Climate Coordinator, at bmoland@airquality.org or (916) 317-0821.

⁷ California Air Pollution Control Officers Association, 2024 Handbook for Analyzing Greenhouse Gas Emission Reductions, Assessing Climate Vulnerabilities, and Advancing Health and Equity, 2024, https://www.airquality.org/ClimateChange/Documents/2024%20Handbook%20Update_AB434.pdf

Sincerely,

Brianna Moland

Brianna Moland
Climate Coordinator, CEQA and Land Use Section
Sac Metro Air District

cc: Paul Philley, AICP, Program Manager
Carolyn Tran, Air Quality Planner/Analyst



CALIFORNIA
NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

2707 K Street, Suite 1, Sacramento, CA 95816-5130 (916) 447.2677 www.cnps.org

Protecting
California's native
flora since 1965

January 15, 2025

City of Elk Grove
Attn: Carrie Whitlock
8401 Laguna Palms Way
Elk Grove, CA, 95758

Submitted via email to: cwhitlock@elkgrovecity.org

Re: Sacramento Valley Chapter of the California Native Plant Society Comments on Climate Compass Project

Dear Ms. Whitlock,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Climate Compass Project. The following comments are submitted on behalf of the California Native Plant Society (CNPS), Sacramento Chapter. CNPS's mission is to protect California's native plant heritage and preserve it for future generations through the application of science, research, education, and conservation. The Sacramento Valley Chapter focuses on these issues within the Greater Sacramento Valley.

We applaud the City of Elk Grove for creating a roadmap for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing resilience within the City of Elk Grove through the development of the Climate Compass Project. It is our understanding that the Climate Compass Project will address Resilience and Adaptation, and Resource Consumption in addition to traditional topics such as Transportation and Green Energy.

Building Capacity for Current and Future Flooding

We strongly support efforts that integrate increased floodwater storage capacity and conveyance with natural systems. Wetlands, healthy connected floodplains, and wide riparian corridors provide space for fragile habitats which host numerous native plant and animal species while functioning as green infrastructure which can help protect built infrastructure during storm events. Floodwater storage basins are an underutilized opportunity to support seasonal wetland species while creating greenspace while simultaneously serving as infrastructure.

Expand the Tree Canopy

We strongly encourage the use of native tree species to expand the canopy with the City. Native tree species are adapted to the local climate and do not require supplemental irrigation once established. Use of the correct species and cultivars can create a win-win by creating space for native birds and insects while establishing a robust and aesthetically pleasing canopy for the

community. The Sacramento Valley Chapter could assist in recommending appropriate species that would be successful based on the planting location and maintenance level.

Expand Nature-Based Solutions

We commend the City of Elk Grove on seeking to expand the use of Nature Based Solutions. Nature Based Solutions have the potential to create more resilient infrastructure that can recover function following storm damage resulting in reduced costs in the long term. Natural and Nature Based Solutions also create opportunities for recreation and habitat opportunities for native plants.

Reduce Water Use

California native plants can be an effective option for waterwise landscaping while remaining aesthetically pleasing and helping to re-establish the heritage presence lost to development. With the right combination of native plants, landscaping that uses little to no supplemental irrigation can be achieved which can result in substantial cost savings in the long-term. The Sacramento Valley Chapter has a wealth of information and experience designing and maintaining native plant landscapes, including in urban environments.

In conclusion, the Sacramento Valley Chapter is offering to collaborate with the City of Elk Grove where possible and remain engaged in this project by providing local knowledge to incorporate California native plants as fully as possible. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this project and please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Lorena Guerrero
Chair, Conservation Committee
California Native Plants Society, Sacramento Valley Chapter
volunteersvcnps@gmail.com

From: Katie McCammon <katie.mccammon@350sacramento.org>

Sent: Thursday, January 16, 2025 2:16 PM

To: Carrie Whitlock <cwhitlock@elkgrovecity.org>

Cc: Rosie Yacoub <rayacoub@yahoo.com>; Oscar Balaguer <oscarbal@hotmail.com>

Subject: Re: NOP comments

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Hi Carrie,

Apologies, it has been a back and forth on this and I misunderstood what Rosie was providing. It sounds like she shared comments on "strategy" but the only comment from 350 Sac CAP team at this point is *concern that the CAP will exclude land use and transportation from the final document*. Our team strongly supports including these items in the final CAP.

This is all I have from our team at this time. I am still in the learning stages of CAP and won't try to make any technical comments on behalf of the organization.

We look forward to talking more on the EG CAP as it develops! _____

Thank you,

Katie

On Wed, Jan 15, 2025 at 3:27 PM Carrie Whitlock <cwhitlock@elkgrovecity.org> wrote:

Hi Katie,

I just wanted to reach out and see if we should still expect some NOP comments today from you all.

Thanks,
CW



Carrie Whitlock, AICP (she/her)

*Strategic Planning & Innovation Program Manager / Strategic Planning & Innovation
City Manager's Office*

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Phone: 916.478.2238
TTY/TDD 888.435.6092
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From: Eugene Lee <eugeneenergy22@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 15, 2025 10:09 PM
To: Carrie Whitlock <cwhitlock@elkgrovecity.org>
Subject: NOP Comments

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

To: Carrie Whitlock

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments to the NOP.

As an Elk Grove resident, I strongly support the Climate Compass. Elk Grove is an active growing community requiring intentional actions to mitigate climate change effects in our city.

I support the proposed Compass chapters and the six focus areas. Specifically,

Building Energy

I support Idea Res-New-1, Idea Res-Ex-1, Idea Non-Res-New-1, and Idea NonRes-Ex-1 as proposed in the Agenda Item No. 9.1 - Staff Report dated August 14, 2024.

Transportation

I support the Concept Strategies 1-3 and Actions as presented in the Agenda Item No. 9.3 - Staff Report dated August 28, 2024.

Resilience and Adaptation

With respect to climate and emergency preparedness, I recommend the specific strategies reflect sufficient communication infrastructure and methods to address the needs and safety of all residents, particularly the aged, low-income, and non-English speaking. I also recommend actions to mitigate negative effects on low-income and disadvantaged neighborhoods.

Resource Consumption and Green Economy

I strongly support the proposed strategies.

Climate Action Commitment

I recommend that the strategy incorporate a commitment to promote climate justice and equity. The Compass should benefit all residents and businesses regardless of location and economic condition.

Thank you for your consideration.

--

Eugene Lee

Commissioner

[Sacramento Environmental Commission](#)

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