

# Appendix A

---

## Notice of Preparation and Comments Received





## **City of Chico Community Development Department**

# **NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT AND NOTICE OF SCOPING MEETING**

**August 14, 2019**

### **PROJECT TITLE: Valley's Edge Specific Plan**

The City of Chico (City) is the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the Valley's Edge Specific Plan project (proposed project or Specific Plan) and is preparing an environmental impact report (EIR) to evaluate the potential effects of implementing the proposed Specific Plan. This Notice of Preparation (NOP) initiates the environmental review process in accordance with CEQA. The purpose of an NOP is to provide sufficient information about the proposed project and its potential environmental impacts to allow agencies and interested parties to provide a meaningful response regarding the scope and contents of the EIR, including potential impacts and alternatives that should be considered. The City would like to know the views of your agency or organization concerning the scope and content of the EIR that are germane to the statutory responsibilities of your agency or organization. If you do not belong to an agency or organization, this notice invites you to submit comments on the scope of the environmental review and to identify important issues you believe should be evaluated in the EIR. The EIR will evaluate the project-specific and cumulative impacts, identify feasible mitigation measures to reduce or avoid significant project impacts, and identify a reasonable range of potentially feasible alternatives to the proposed project and describe their comparative environmental effects.

**NOP COMMENT PERIOD: August 14, 2019 through September 13, 2019**

### **PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING**

A public scoping meeting will be held by the City to inform agencies and interested parties about the proposed project, and to provide an opportunity to learn more about the project and to submit written comments on the scope of the environmental analysis. Following a brief presentation of the proposed project and an overview of the CEQA process, City staff, representatives from the project applicant team and the EIR team will be available in an "open house" format to answer questions to assist in identifying issues regarding the scope of the EIR. Comment cards will be available at the meeting to provide written comments on the scope of the EIR. Comments will be accepted through the end of the 30-day NOP comment period.

The scoping meeting will be held on Thursday, August 29, 2019, from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at Marsh Junior High School, in the Student Union, 2253 Humboldt Road, Chico, CA 95928. There will be a brief project overview between 6:00 and 6:30 p.m. for anyone interested in attending. Otherwise, the format of the meeting will be an open house setting where City staff and City consultants will be available to discuss specific aspects of the project and receive comments on the scope of analysis. The project applicant will also be available to provide more detailed project information.

## PROJECT LOCATION

The Specific Plan area (plan area) is located within Butte County and the City's Sphere of Influence, adjacent to the southeast quadrant of the City at the transition of the valley floor and lower foothill region (see Figure 1, Vicinity Map). The plan area consists of approximately 1,448 acres and is located roughly 1.25 miles east of State Route 99. Access to the plan area is currently from the Skyway and East 20th Street, as shown on Figure 2, Project Location.

The northern portion of the plan area is characterized by gradual slopes atop an elevated plateau overlooking rural Stilson Canyon, a developed area in the unincorporated county of estate lot single-family homes. The northwest portion of the plan area abuts existing single-family development within city limits. The western boundary is adjacent to the Steve Harrison Memorial Bike Trail (also known as Potter Road). The southern boundary is adjacent to Skyway Road and Honey Run Road.

## PROJECT BACKGROUND

The City of Chico 2030 General Plan, adopted in April of 2011 and last updated in March 2017, outlines community priorities for growth and preservation of the City and provides a comprehensive policy framework for decisions about how the City will change over time. The General Plan's Land Use Element designates five Special Planning Areas (SPA's) based on criteria such as proximity to services, land use compatibility and geologic features. These planned growth areas are to be developed as complete neighborhoods with a mix of housing, services, employment, parks, and open space. The plan area, referred to as the 'Doe Mill/Honey Run SPA' in the General Plan, is part of the City's growth plan to meet the City's future housing and employment needs. The Specific Plan will be designed consistent with the City's vision for future development of this area as a mixed-use community.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Specific Plan will be the blueprint for a mixed-use community that includes a range of housing types, commercial uses, parks, trails and recreation and open space areas, as shown on Figure 3, Conceptual Land Use Plan. A circulation plan and an infrastructure and public facilities plan will also be included. The Specific Plan will include goals and policies for development along with Design Guidelines that establish architectural, streetscape, landscaping, and lighting standards. A description of the proposed land use designations is provided below, and shown in Table 1.

### ***Residential***

The residential component would consist of approximately 670 acres, and provide for approximately 1,392 market rate residential units and 1,385 age-restricted (55+) residential units. The market rate units would include a range of single-family detached or attached homes, apartments, and estate lots for custom homes. The market-rate units would occupy approximately 400-acres generally in the northern portion of the plan area with an average density of 3.5 dwelling units per acre (du/ac).

The age-restricted or senior housing component would include a combination of attached and detached for sale and rental units. These units would primarily be located in the central/southern portion of the plan area and would occupy approximately 270 acres. There would also be an area designated for independent senior housing with small units grouped around common amenities. The average density of the age-restricted housing would be 5.1 du/ac.

Residential land uses would include VLDR, LDR, Medium Density Residential (MDR), and Medium High Density Residential (MHDR). The project's overall residential density would be approximately 4.1 du/ac.

**Table 1 Land Use Summary Table**

Land Use	Applied Zoning Districts	Acres	Approximate Density/Comm SF	Approximate Dwelling Units
<b><i>Residential</i></b>				
VLDR – Very Low Density Residential	RS-VE	234.7	1.6	368
LDR – Low Density Residential	R1-VE	333.6	4.1	1,371
MDR – Medium Density Residential	R2-VE	91.2	9.6	876
MHDR – Medium-High Density Residential	R3-VE	9.0	18.0	162
<b>SUBTOTAL/AVG.</b>		<b>668.5</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>2,777</b>
<b><i>Commercial and Office</i></b>				
V-CORE – Village Core	CN-VE	12.6	77,000	
V-COMM – Village Commercial	CC-VE	43.7	370,155	
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>		<b>56.3</b>	<b>447,155</b>	
<b><i>Special Purpose</i></b>				
V-PG – Public Quasi Public	PQ-VE	18.8		
V-OS1 – Primary Open Space	OS1-VE	46.3		
V-OS2 – Valley Open Space	OS2-VE	246.7		
R-OS – Regional Open Space	OS2-VE	371.2		
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>		<b>683</b>		
<b><i>Roads</i></b>				
Project Roadways (Right-of-Way)		40.4		
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>		<b>40.4</b>		
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1,448.3</b>	<b>447,155</b>	<b>2,777</b>

Source: Draft Valley's Edge Specific Plan, June 2019.

## ***Commercial***

The commercial portion of the plan area would consist of roughly 60 acres, divided into two land uses Village Core (V-CORE) and Village Commercial (V-COMM). Approximately 13 acres in two areas would be designated Village Core in the southwest portion of the plan area. It is anticipated that these areas would include uses such as professional and medical offices, neighborhood retail shops and services, and a community clubhouse to serve project residents. An outdoor amphitheater is also envisioned in the Village Core to serve as a gathering place for events including a farmers market, art exhibits, and dance and music events. Build-out of the Village Core is anticipated to be less than 77,000 sf. Approximately 44 acres would be designated Village Commercial, and could include such uses as medical and professional office, multi-family apartments, day care, hospitality uses and limited retail establishments.

## ***Parks, Open Space, and Public Uses***

Approximately 675 acres would be designated as parks, trails, open space and preservation, including a large regional park, a community park, neighborhood parks, mini parks and tot lots, and an active adult park. The largest park would be a Regional Park of over 370 acres surrounding the northern, eastern, and southern perimeter of the plan area. This park would provide for lower impact recreational uses, such as hiking and running trails, disc golf, horseback riding, and mountain biking, as well as preservation of upper Comanche Creek and surrounding woodlands. It would also serve as a buffer between residential development and adjoining areas of the county. An approximately 35-acre Community Park would provide active park uses (e.g., multi-use fields, stadium, sports/tennis courts, child's spray park, restrooms). There would be three Neighborhood parks ranging from 1.1-acre to 7-acres, which would provide a range of recreation amenities including play areas, trails, a fitness circuit, and picnic areas. Parks designated for seniors and active adults would also be provided.

Approximately 175 acres of linear parks, creeks, and open space corridors would be provided, along with over 15 miles in trails that would range from paved, Class I multipurpose trails to single-track dirt trails. In addition, approximately 46 acres would be set aside in open space designated for the protection of wetland resources and protected plant species.

An approximately 19-acre site would be dedicated for an elementary school. This site would be adjacent to the Community Park and it is anticipated that a portion of the school site could provide active park uses and be managed as a joint use facility between the Chico Unified School District and the Chico Area Recreation District. Middle and high school age students would attend schools off-site in the city.

Throughout the plan area there are historic-era rock walls that date back to the mid and late 1800s when the land was actively used for ranching. The proposed project anticipates that large segments of the rock walls would be preserved or incorporated into parks or open space. There are also distinctive bands of oak woodlands that traverse east-west through the plan area. Preparation of an Oak Woodland Mitigation and Management Plan is proposed to provide goals and implementation measures designed to protect oak woodlands to the extent possible.

## ***Circulation and Site Access***

The circulation system consists of a network of connected streets, paths, and trails for both vehicle and pedestrian transit. Skyway Road would serve as the primary access to the plan area, and the extension of East 20th Street would serve as a secondary entry. Both Skyway Road and 20th Street have full freeway interchanges at State Route 99, approximately 1.5 miles to the west. Collector roads would typically have two vehicle lanes, Class II bike/Neighborhood Electric Vehicles (NEVs) lanes, sidewalks and, in some case, landscape medians.

## ***Utilities and Service Systems***

The City of Chico would provide sanitary sewer disposal services for the plan area, and the California Water Service Company (Cal Water) would provide water service. Water infrastructure components include conventional underground piping and underground wells, as well as a permanent water storage tank. Natural gas and electricity for the proposed project would be provided by Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E). The plan area would be served by an extension of the City's existing facilities and services, including police and fire protection, and solid waste disposal. As stated above, one

elementary school site would be provided within the plan area, and middle and high school students would attend schools outside of the plan area.

### ***Wildland/Urban Interface***

To address concerns related to wildfire and the wildland/urban interface, the proposed project includes fire protection standards and vegetation management requirements. The fire protection standards and vegetation management guidelines include requirements for ensuring defensible space is maintained in residential areas adjacent to open space areas or are in areas designated VLDR. The proposed project includes Design Guidelines that specify planting of fire-resistant species and use of building materials that are fire-resistant (e.g., asphalt, tile, concrete, metal roofs; stucco, brick, fiber-cement siding material; dual pane/tempered glass windows; attic fire sprinklers). In addition, a Fire Management and Response Plan would be prepared that addresses evacuation procedures, and, possibly sheltering in place, in the event of a wildfire.

## **POSSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS AND SCOPE OF THE EIR**

### ***Environmental Topics that will not be Evaluated in the EIR***

Pursuant to CEQA and California Code of Regulations (CCR) section 15064, the discussion of potential effects on the environment in the EIR will be focused on those impacts that the City has determined may be potentially significant. Additionally, CEQA allows a lead agency to limit the detail of discussion of the environmental effects that are not considered potentially significant. (Pub. Resources Code, § 21100; CCR §§ 15126.2(a), 15128.) CEQA requires that the discussion of any significant effect on the environment be limited to substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse changes in physical conditions that exist within the affected area, as defined in Public Resources Code section 21060.5.

The City has determined that the project would result in either no impact or a less-than-significant impact on agriculture and forestry resources, mineral resources, and population and housing, as explained below. These issue areas will not be further evaluated in the EIR.

### **Agriculture and Forestry Resources**

Butte County and the City of Chico contain land designated by the California Department of Conservation (DOC) Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) as Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, and grazing land. Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance and Unique farmland are considered “Important Farmland” under CEQA. Areas of Prime Farmland are primarily located in Butte County with only a few areas of Prime Farmland located in the City itself. Land within the boundaries of the plan area is designated grazing land by the DOC. The plan area does not include any land under a Williamson Act contract, but is located adjacent to parcels under active Williamson Act contracts. The City’s 2030 General Plan Policy LU-2.6 (Agricultural Buffers) requires buffering for new urban uses along the City’s Sphere of Influence adjacent to commercial crop production. The plan area is not located in or near an area that supports crop production

The proposed project would not convert any Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Unique Farmland to developed uses, and would not encroach on any other protected resource lands such as those under Williamson Act contracts. Thus, the proposed project would not result in a potentially significant impact on agricultural resources, and this topic will not be addressed in the EIR.

The City of Chico Zoning Map does not contain zoning districts designated for forest or timberland, and the project site does not contain forest lands or timberland. The trees on the project site do not meet the definition of forestland<sup>1</sup>, Timber, Timberland, or a Timberland Production Zone<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with forestland zoning or result in the loss or conversion of forestland to non-forest uses and would result in no impacts to these resources. This topic will not be addressed in the EIR.

### **Mineral Resources**

There are two designated mineral resource zones within Butte County. The Green Rock Quarries Oroville Plant No.1, located about 7 miles north of the City of Oroville, has been classified as MRZ-2a for railroad ballast for part of the property, and either MRZ-2b or MRZ-1 for railroad ballast for the remainder. The Power House Aggregate project site, located about 7 miles southwest of the City of Oroville, has been classified as MRZ-2 for construction aggregate. There are no active mines or known mineral resource zones occurring within the city limits or within the plan area. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in the loss or availability of a known mineral resource or mineral resource recovery site and would result in no impacts to these resources. This topic will not be addressed in the EIR.

### **Population and Housing**

The proposed project would not induce any unplanned population growth, as the area is included in the City's Sphere of Influence and was planned for and identified as an SPA in the City's 2030 General Plan. These planned growth areas are to be developed with a mix of housing, services, employment, parks, and open space. The proposed project would be consistent with the City's plans for development and growth in the SPA. Additionally, the proposed project would not displace any people or housing, as the area is currently undeveloped with the exception of an old farmstead that has previously been abandoned. Therefore, the proposed project would not have any potentially significant impacts related to Population and Housing and this topic will not be addressed in the EIR.

### ***Environmental Topics to be Addressed in the EIR***

The Draft EIR will address the following environmental topics:

---

<sup>1</sup> PRC Section 12220(g) defines "forest land" for the purposes of CEQA as land that can support 10% native tree cover of any species, including hardwoods, under natural conditions, and that allows for management of one or more forest resources, including timber, aesthetics, fish and wildlife, biodiversity, water quality, recreation, and other public benefits.

<sup>2</sup> California Government Code Section 51104(g) defines "Timber," "Timberland," and "Timberland Production Zone" for the purposes of CEQA as either trees of any species maintained for eventual harvest for forest production purposes ("Timber"); privately owned land, or land acquired for State forest purposes, used for growing and harvesting timber ("Timberland"); or "Timberland Production Zone" which means an area zoned and used for growing and harvesting timber.



- ▶ Aesthetics
- ▶ Air Quality
- ▶ Biological Resources
- ▶ Cultural Resources
- ▶ Energy
- ▶ Geology and Soils
- ▶ Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- ▶ Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- ▶ Hydrology, Water Quality, Drainage
- ▶ Noise and Vibration
- ▶ Public Services and Recreation
- ▶ Public Utilities and Service Systems
- ▶ Transportation and Circulation
- ▶ Wildfire
- ▶ Tribal Cultural Resources

In addition, the Draft EIR will include a chapter that addresses consistency with applicable plans, policies or regulations adopted to avoid or mitigate an environmental effect.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS**

Comments as to the appropriate scope of analysis to be evaluated in the EIR are invited from all interested parties. Written comments or questions concerning the scope of the EIR for the proposed Valley's Edge Specific Plan should be directed to the contact listed below no later than 5:00 p.m. on September 13, 2019.

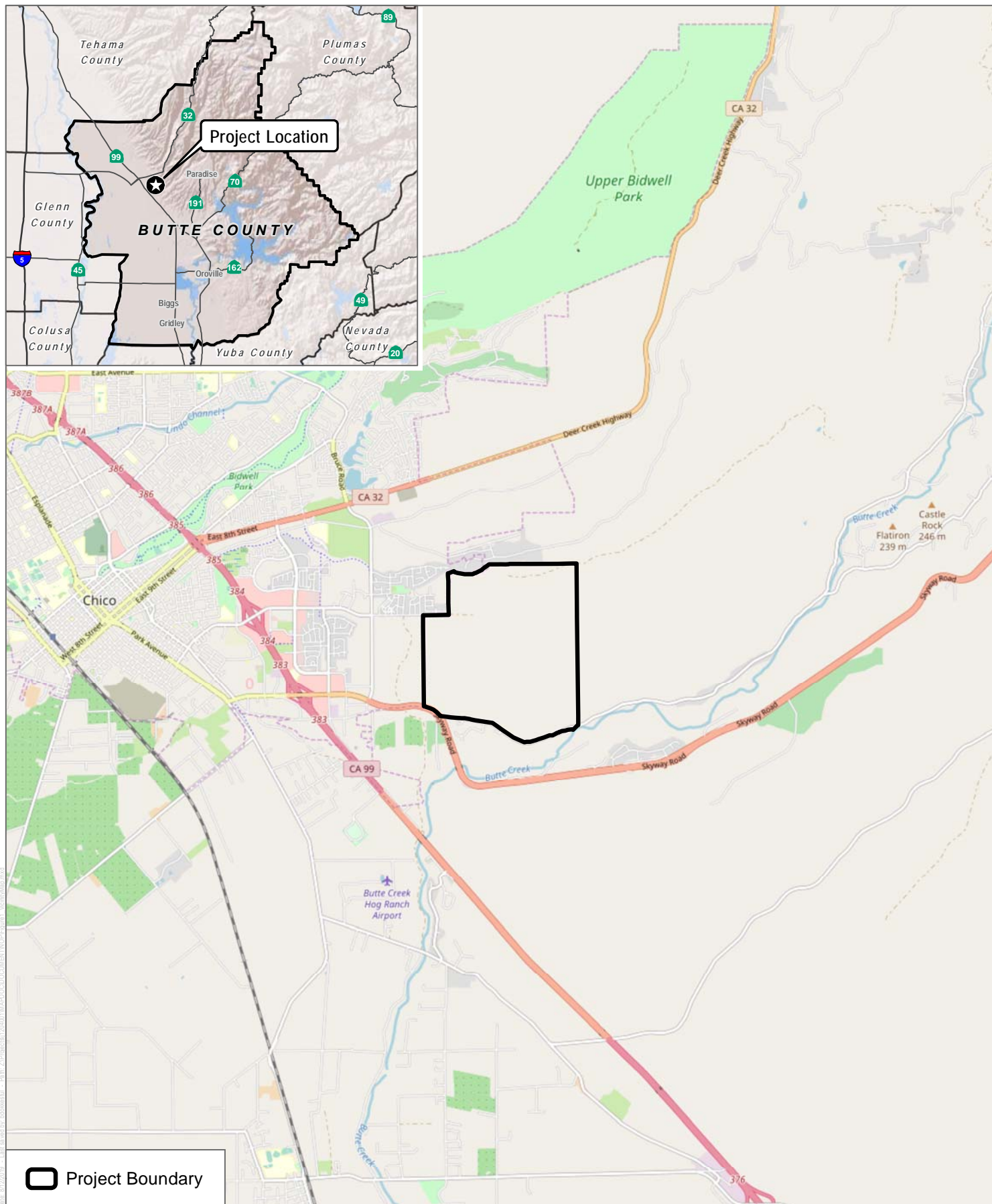
Please address comments, questions, and responses to the contact listed below:

City of Chico Community Development Department  
Mike Sawley, Senior Planner  
411 Main Street, P.O. Box 3420  
Chico, CA 95927  
mike.sawley@chicoca.gov  
(530) 879-6812

Once completed, the Draft EIR will be made available for a 45-day public review and comment period in accordance with CEQA. Responses will be prepared for all substantial comments on the Draft EIR. These comments and responses, along with revisions made to the Draft EIR, if any, will be included in the Final EIR to be presented to the City for review and certification prior to consideration of the approval of the Specific Plan.

Notices associated with the project's CEQA review are available at:

[http://www.chico.ca.us/planning\\_services/OtherPlanningDocumentsandReports.asp](http://www.chico.ca.us/planning_services/OtherPlanningDocumentsandReports.asp)



SOURCE: ESRI/OpenStreetMap 2019



FIGURE 1

Valley's Edge Specific Plan Project



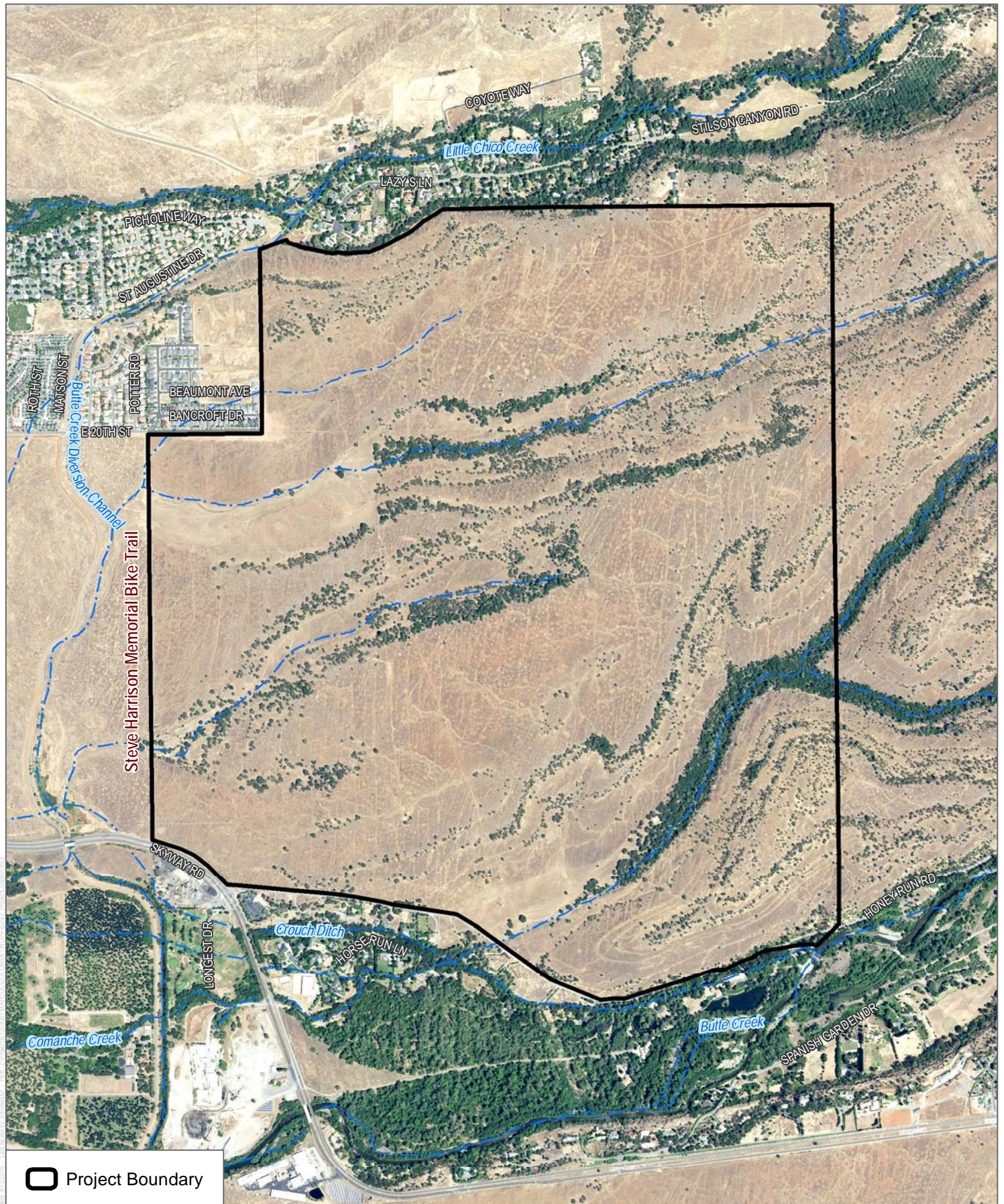
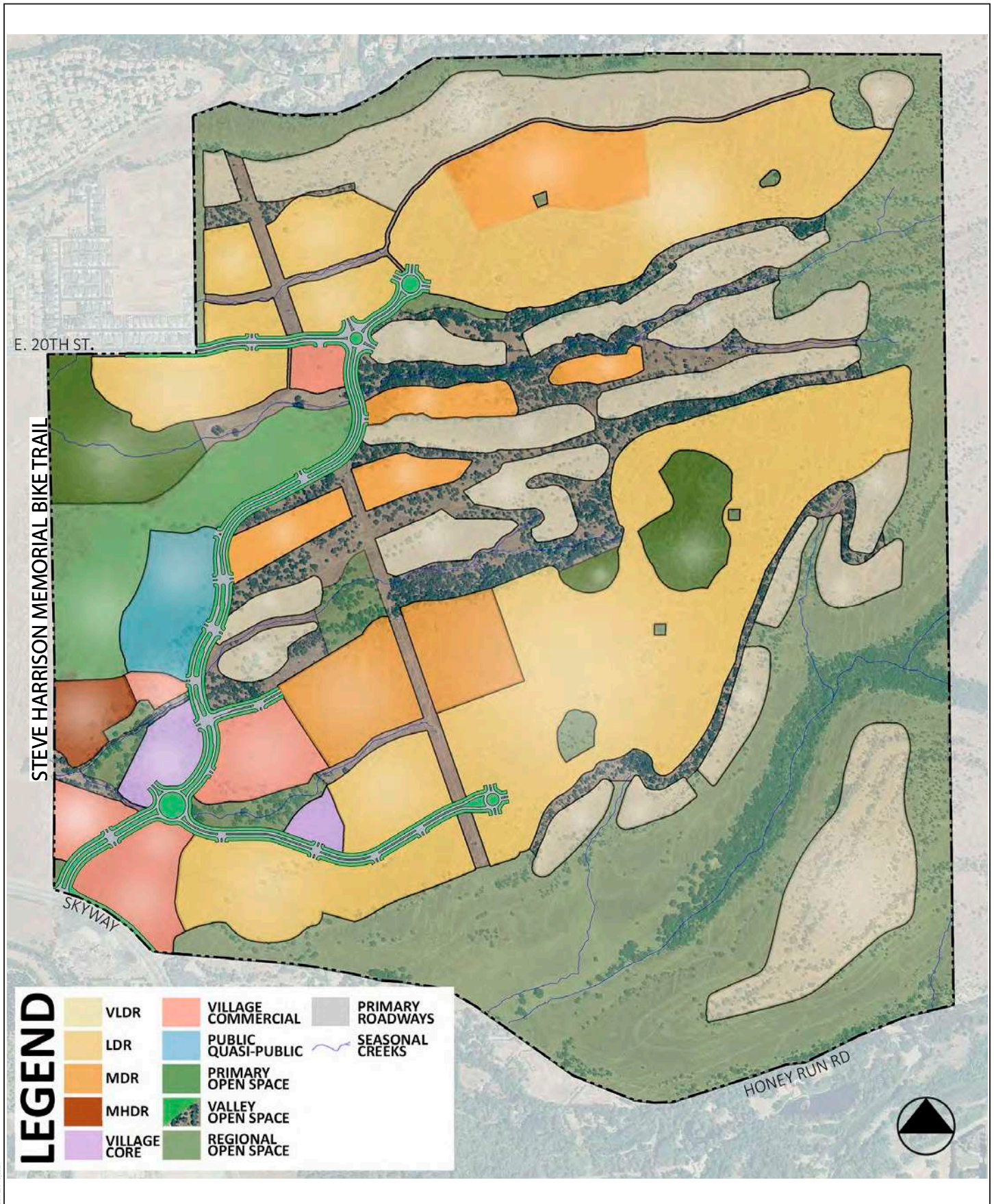


FIGURE 2

## Project Location

Valley's Edge Specific Plan Project





SOURCE: City of Chico, 2019

**FIGURE 3**

**Land Use Plan**

Valley's Edge Specific Plan Project

## Mike Sawley

---

**From:** Lia Comcast <lialou@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 21, 2019 4:05 PM  
**To:** Mike Sawley  
**Subject:** Valley's Edge SP 19-01, RZ 19-01

Mike Sawley

Community Development Dept-

With regards to this project.

As part of the continuing traffic impacts, it would be helpful if Cal Trans and LAFCO could look at the traffic patterns to decrease impact to the existing residential roads.

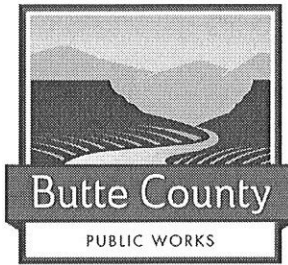
Some options are to complete the bypass from the Skyway to Hwy 99 via the proposed bypass to Estates Drive—South of Sunset Moulding.

Additionally, the plan should include access to this new project via Bruce Road which is proposed to be widened to 4 full lanes.

Finally, due to the historical significance of the existing rock walls on Honey Run Road, consideration should be given to preserve this archeological resource and treasure and only widen and improve Honey Run Road on the North Side or not allow access onto the historical Honey Run Road preserving it's character and history.

Thank you

Lia White  
94 Horse Run Lane  
Chico, CA. 95928



**Department of Public Works**

Dennis Schmidt, Director  
Radley Ott, Assistant Director

7 County Center Drive  
Oroville, California 95965

T: 530.538.7681  
F: 530.538.7171

[buttecounty.net/publicworks](http://buttecounty.net/publicworks)

August 23, 2019

City of Chico Community Development Dept.  
Attn: Mike Sawley, Senior Planner  
P.O. Box 3420  
Chico, CA 95927-3420

**RE: Valley's Edge Specific Plan, APN 017-210-005, 006, 018-390-005, 007**

Dear Mr. Sawley:

Reference is made to your request for comments dated August 14, 2019 on the above noted development.

1. Development of this subdivision will increase flows into the Comanche Creek watershed. The storm drain system should be designed to not exacerbate existing flooding problems on this system.
2. Provide a permanent solution for drainage designed to not allow peak flows from the site to exceed current undeveloped levels.
3. Annex parcels and road frontage to City of Chico prior to recording map.

If you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact this office at (530) 538-7266, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Sincerely,

Eric Schroth, P.E.  
Associate Civil Engineer  
Butte County Public Works



## Mike Sawley

---

**From:** Shively, Laura B CIV USARMY CESPCK (USA) <Laura.B.Shively@usace.army.mil>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 26, 2019 4:45 PM  
**To:** Mike Sawley  
**Subject:** USACE Comments on NOP for Valley's Edge Specific Plan (UNCLASSIFIED)

CLASSIFICATION: UNCLASSIFIED

Good afternoon Mr. Sawley,

This email is in regards to the August 14, 2019, Notice of preparation of an EIR and notice of scoping meeting for the Valley's Edge Specific Plan. The Figure 3, Land Use Plan for the project identifies several streams that occur within the project area. Additional aquatic resources may exist within the project area. An aquatic resources delineation should be conducted on the property to ascertain impacts to wetlands and other waters.

If the project would result in a discharge of fill material into waters of the U.S., including wetlands, a permit may be required pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. If the project would result in substantial impacts to waters of the U.S., including wetlands, I would recommend that the developer contact the Corps to discuss the appropriate Section 404 permitting for the project and the information necessary to . If you or the project proponent have any questions regarding the matter, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Laura Shively  
Senior Project Manager  
California North Section  
Regulatory Division  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District  
Office: (916) 557-5258  
Cell: (916) 241-6165

We want your feedback! Take the survey: [http://corpsmapu.usace.army.mil/cm\\_apex/f?p=regulatory\\_survey](http://corpsmapu.usace.army.mil/cm_apex/f?p=regulatory_survey)  
<[http://corpsmapu.usace.army.mil/cm\\_apex/f?p=regulatory\\_survey](http://corpsmapu.usace.army.mil/cm_apex/f?p=regulatory_survey)>

CLASSIFICATION: UNCLASSIFIED

**NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE COMMISSION**  
Cultural and Environmental Department  
1550 Harbor Blvd., Suite 100  
West Sacramento, CA 95691 Phone: (916) 373-3710  
Email: [nahc@nahc.ca.gov](mailto:nahc@nahc.ca.gov)  
Website: <http://www.nahc.ca.gov>



August 21, 2019

Mike Sawley  
Chico, City of  
411 Main Street  
P.O. Box 3420  
Chico, CA 95927

RE: SCH# 2019089041, Valley's Edge Specific Plan Project, Butte County

Dear Mr. Sawley:

The Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) has received the Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the project referenced above. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Pub. Resources Code §21000 et seq.), specifically Public Resources Code §21084.1, states that a project that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource, is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment. (Pub. Resources Code § 21084.1; Cal. Code Regs., tit.14, §15064.5 (b) (CEQA Guidelines §15064.5 (b)). If there is substantial evidence, in light of the whole record before a lead agency, that a project may have a significant effect on the environment, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) shall be prepared. (Pub. Resources Code §21080 (d); Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 5064 subd.(a)(1) (CEQA Guidelines §15064 (a)(1)). In order to determine whether a project will cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource, a lead agency will need to determine whether there are historical resources within the area of potential effect (APE).

CEQA was amended significantly in 2014. Assembly Bill 52 (Gatto, Chapter 532, Statutes of 2014) (AB 52) amended CEQA to create a separate category of cultural resources, "tribal cultural resources" (Pub. Resources Code §21074) and provides that a project with an effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment. (Pub. Resources Code §21084.2). Public agencies shall, when feasible, avoid damaging effects to any tribal cultural resource. (Pub. Resources Code §21084.3 (a)). **AB 52 applies to any project for which a notice of preparation, a notice of negative declaration, or a mitigated negative declaration is filed on or after July 1, 2015.** If your project involves the adoption of or amendment to a general plan or a specific plan, or the designation or proposed designation of open space, on or after March 1, 2005, it may also be subject to Senate Bill 18 (Burton, Chapter 905, Statutes of 2004) (SB 18). **Both SB 18 and AB 52 have tribal consultation requirements.** If your project is also subject to the federal National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. § 4321 et seq.) (NEPA), the tribal consultation requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (154 U.S.C. 300101, 36 C.F.R. §800 et seq.) may also apply.

The NAHC recommends consultation with California Native American tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of your proposed project as early as possible in order to avoid inadvertent discoveries of Native American human remains and best protect tribal cultural resources. Below is a brief summary of portions of AB 52 and SB 18 as well as the NAHC's recommendations for conducting cultural resources assessments.

**Consult your legal counsel about compliance with AB 52 and SB 18 as well as compliance with any other applicable laws.**



## AB 52

AB 52 has added to CEQA the additional requirements listed below, along with many other requirements:

1. Fourteen Day Period to Provide Notice of Completion of an Application/Decision to Undertake a Project: Within fourteen (14) days of determining that an application for a project is complete or of a decision by a public agency to undertake a project, a lead agency shall provide formal notification to a designated contact of, or tribal representative of, traditionally and culturally affiliated California Native American tribes that have requested notice, to be accomplished by at least one written notice that includes:
  - a. A brief description of the project.
  - b. The lead agency contact information.
  - c. Notification that the California Native American tribe has 30 days to request consultation. (Pub. Resources Code §21080.3.1 (d)).
  - d. A "California Native American tribe" is defined as a Native American tribe located in California that is on the contact list maintained by the NAHC for the purposes of Chapter 905 of Statutes of 2004 (SB 18). (Pub. Resources Code §21073).
2. Begin Consultation Within 30 Days of Receiving a Tribe's Request for Consultation and Before Releasing a Negative Declaration, Mitigated Negative Declaration, or Environmental Impact Report: A lead agency shall begin the consultation process within 30 days of receiving a request for consultation from a California Native American tribe that is traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of the proposed project. (Pub. Resources Code §21080.3.1, subds. (d) and (e)) and prior to the release of a negative declaration, mitigated negative declaration or Environmental Impact Report. (Pub. Resources Code §21080.3.1(b)).
  - a. For purposes of AB 52, "consultation shall have the same meaning as provided in Gov. Code §65352.4 (SB 18). (Pub. Resources Code §21080.3.1 (b)).
3. Mandatory Topics of Consultation If Requested by a Tribe: The following topics of consultation, if a tribe requests to discuss them, are mandatory topics of consultation:
  - a. Alternatives to the project.
  - b. Recommended mitigation measures.
  - c. Significant effects. (Pub. Resources Code §21080.3.2 (a)).
4. Discretionary Topics of Consultation: The following topics are discretionary topics of consultation:
  - a. Type of environmental review necessary.
  - b. Significance of the tribal cultural resources.
  - c. Significance of the project's impacts on tribal cultural resources.
  - d. If necessary, project alternatives or appropriate measures for preservation or mitigation that the tribe may recommend to the lead agency. (Pub. Resources Code §21080.3.2 (a)).
5. Confidentiality of Information Submitted by a Tribe During the Environmental Review Process: With some exceptions, any information, including but not limited to, the location, description, and use of tribal cultural resources submitted by a California Native American tribe during the environmental review process shall not be included in the environmental document or otherwise disclosed by the lead agency or any other public agency to the public, consistent with Government Code §6254 (r) and §6254.10. Any information submitted by a California Native American tribe during the consultation or environmental review process shall be published in a confidential appendix to the environmental document unless the tribe that provided the information consents, in writing, to the disclosure of some or all of the information to the public. (Pub. Resources Code §21082.3 (c)(1)).
6. Discussion of Impacts to Tribal Cultural Resources in the Environmental Document: If a project may have a significant impact on a tribal cultural resource, the lead agency's environmental document shall discuss both of the following:
  - a. Whether the proposed project has a significant impact on an identified tribal cultural resource.
  - b. Whether feasible alternatives or mitigation measures, including those measures that may be agreed to pursuant to Public Resources Code §21082.3, subdivision (a), avoid or substantially lessen the impact on the identified tribal cultural resource. (Pub. Resources Code §21082.3 (b)).

7. Conclusion of Consultation: Consultation with a tribe shall be considered concluded when either of the following occurs:
  - a. The parties agree to measures to mitigate or avoid a significant effect, if a significant effect exists, on a tribal cultural resource; or
  - b. A party, acting in good faith and after reasonable effort, concludes that mutual agreement cannot be reached. (Pub. Resources Code §21080.3.2 (b)).
8. Recommending Mitigation Measures Agreed Upon in Consultation in the Environmental Document: Any mitigation measures agreed upon in the consultation conducted pursuant to Public Resources Code §21080.3.2 shall be recommended for inclusion in the environmental document and in an adopted mitigation monitoring and reporting program, if determined to avoid or lessen the impact pursuant to Public Resources Code §21082.3, subdivision (b), paragraph 2, and shall be fully enforceable. (Pub. Resources Code §21082.3 (a)).
9. Required Consideration of Feasible Mitigation: If mitigation measures recommended by the staff of the lead agency as a result of the consultation process are not included in the environmental document or if there are no agreed upon mitigation measures at the conclusion of consultation, or if consultation does not occur, and if substantial evidence demonstrates that a project will cause a significant effect to a tribal cultural resource, the lead agency shall consider feasible mitigation pursuant to Public Resources Code §21084.3 (b). (Pub. Resources Code §21082.3 (e)).
10. Examples of Mitigation Measures That, If Feasible, May Be Considered to Avoid or Minimize Significant Adverse Impacts to Tribal Cultural Resources:
  - a. Avoidance and preservation of the resources in place, including, but not limited to:
    - i. Planning and construction to avoid the resources and protect the cultural and natural context.
    - ii. Planning greenspace, parks, or other open space, to incorporate the resources with culturally appropriate protection and management criteria.
  - b. Treating the resource with culturally appropriate dignity, taking into account the tribal cultural values and meaning of the resource, including, but not limited to, the following:
    - i. Protecting the cultural character and integrity of the resource.
    - ii. Protecting the traditional use of the resource.
    - iii. Protecting the confidentiality of the resource.
  - c. Permanent conservation easements or other interests in real property, with culturally appropriate management criteria for the purposes of preserving or utilizing the resources or places.
  - d. Protecting the resource. (Pub. Resource Code §21084.3 (b)).
  - e. Please note that a federally recognized California Native American tribe or a non-federally recognized California Native American tribe that is on the contact list maintained by the NAHC to protect a California prehistoric, archaeological, cultural, spiritual, or ceremonial place may acquire and hold conservation easements if the conservation easement is voluntarily conveyed. (Civ. Code §815.3 (c)).
  - f. Please note that it is the policy of the state that Native American remains and associated grave artifacts shall be repatriated. (Pub. Resources Code §5097.991).
11. Prerequisites for Certifying an Environmental Impact Report or Adopting a Mitigated Negative Declaration or Negative Declaration with a Significant Impact on an Identified Tribal Cultural Resource: An Environmental Impact Report may not be certified, nor may a mitigated negative declaration or a negative declaration be adopted unless one of the following occurs:
  - a. The consultation process between the tribes and the lead agency has occurred as provided in Public Resources Code §21080.3.1 and §21080.3.2 and concluded pursuant to Public Resources Code §21080.3.2.
  - b. The tribe that requested consultation failed to provide comments to the lead agency or otherwise failed to engage in the consultation process.
  - c. The lead agency provided notice of the project to the tribe in compliance with Public Resources Code §21080.3.1 (d) and the tribe failed to request consultation within 30 days. (Pub. Resources Code §21082.3 (d)).

The NAHC's PowerPoint presentation titled, "Tribal Consultation Under AB 52: Requirements and Best Practices" may be found online at: [http://nahc.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/AB52TribalConsultation\\_CalEPAPDF.pdf](http://nahc.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/AB52TribalConsultation_CalEPAPDF.pdf)

## SB 18

SB 18 applies to local governments and requires local governments to contact, provide notice to, refer plans to, and consult with tribes prior to the adoption or amendment of a general plan or a specific plan, or the designation of open space. (Gov. Code §65352.3). Local governments should consult the Governor's Office of Planning and Research's "Tribal Consultation Guidelines," which can be found online at: [https://www.opr.ca.gov/docs/09\\_14\\_05\\_Updated\\_Guidelines\\_922.pdf](https://www.opr.ca.gov/docs/09_14_05_Updated_Guidelines_922.pdf).

Some of SB 18's provisions include:

1. **Tribal Consultation**: If a local government considers a proposal to adopt or amend a general plan or a specific plan, or to designate open space it is required to contact the appropriate tribes identified by the NAHC by requesting a "Tribal Consultation List." If a tribe, once contacted, requests consultation the local government must consult with the tribe on the plan proposal. **A tribe has 90 days from the date of receipt of notification to request consultation unless a shorter timeframe has been agreed to by the tribe.** (Gov. Code §65352.3 (a)(2)).
2. **No Statutory Time Limit on SB 18 Tribal Consultation**. There is no statutory time limit on SB 18 tribal consultation.
3. **Confidentiality**: Consistent with the guidelines developed and adopted by the Office of Planning and Research pursuant to Gov. Code §65040.2, the city or county shall protect the confidentiality of the information concerning the specific identity, location, character, and use of places, features and objects described in Public Resources Code §5097.9 and §5097.993 that are within the city's or county's jurisdiction. (Gov. Code §65352.3 (b)).
4. **Conclusion of SB 18 Tribal Consultation**: Consultation should be concluded at the point in which:
  - a. The parties to the consultation come to a mutual agreement concerning the appropriate measures for preservation or mitigation; or
  - b. Either the local government or the tribe, acting in good faith and after reasonable effort, concludes that mutual agreement cannot be reached concerning the appropriate measures of preservation or mitigation. (Tribal Consultation Guidelines, Governor's Office of Planning and Research (2005) at p. 18).

Agencies should be aware that neither AB 52 nor SB 18 precludes agencies from initiating tribal consultation with tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with their jurisdictions before the timeframes provided in AB 52 and SB 18. For that reason, we urge you to continue to request Native American Tribal Contact Lists and "Sacred Lands File" searches from the NAHC. The request forms can be found online at: <http://nahc.ca.gov/resources/forms/>

## NAHC Recommendations for Cultural Resources Assessments

To adequately assess the existence and significance of tribal cultural resources and plan for avoidance, preservation in place, or barring both, mitigation of project-related impacts to tribal cultural resources, the NAHC recommends the following actions:

1. Contact the appropriate regional California Historical Research Information System (CHRIS) Center ([http://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=1068](http://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=1068)) for an archaeological records search. The records search will determine:
  - a. If part or all of the APE has been previously surveyed for cultural resources.
  - b. If any known cultural resources have already been recorded on or adjacent to the APE.
  - c. If the probability is low, moderate, or high that cultural resources are located in the APE.
  - d. If a survey is required to determine whether previously unrecorded cultural resources are present.
2. If an archaeological inventory survey is required, the final stage is the preparation of a professional report detailing the findings and recommendations of the records search and field survey.
  - a. The final report containing site forms, site significance, and mitigation measures should be submitted immediately to the planning department. All information regarding site locations, Native American human remains, and associated funerary objects should be in a separate confidential addendum and not be made available for public disclosure.
  - b. The final written report should be submitted within 3 months after work has been completed to the appropriate regional CHRIS center.

3. Contact the NAHC for:
  - a. A Sacred Lands File search. Remember that tribes do not always record their sacred sites in the Sacred Lands File, nor are they required to do so. A Sacred Lands File search is not a substitute for consultation with tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of the project's APE.
  - b. A Native American Tribal Consultation List of appropriate tribes for consultation concerning the project site and to assist in planning for avoidance, preservation in place, or, failing both, mitigation measures.
4. Remember that the lack of surface evidence of archaeological resources (including tribal cultural resources) does not preclude their subsurface existence.
  - a. Lead agencies should include in their mitigation and monitoring reporting program plan provisions for the identification and evaluation of inadvertently discovered archaeological resources per Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, §15064.5(f) (CEQA Guidelines §15064.5(f)). In areas of identified archaeological sensitivity, a certified archaeologist and a culturally affiliated Native American with knowledge of cultural resources should monitor all ground-disturbing activities.
  - b. Lead agencies should include in their mitigation and monitoring reporting program plans provisions for the disposition of recovered cultural items that are not burial associated in consultation with culturally affiliated Native Americans.
  - c. Lead agencies should include in their mitigation and monitoring reporting program plans provisions for the treatment and disposition of inadvertently discovered Native American human remains. Health and Safety Code §7050.5, Public Resources Code §5097.98, and Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, §15064.5, subdivisions (d) and (e) (CEQA Guidelines §15064.5, subds. (d) and (e)) address the processes to be followed in the event of an inadvertent discovery of any Native American human remains and associated grave goods in a location other than a dedicated cemetery.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at my email address:

[Andrew.Green@nahc.ca.gov](mailto:Andrew.Green@nahc.ca.gov).

Sincerely,



Andrew Green  
Staff Services Analyst

cc: State Clearinghouse

629 Entler Avenue, Suite 15  
Chico, CA 95928

(530) 332-9400  
(530) 332-9417 Fax



W. JAMES WAGONER  
Air Pollution Control Officer

STEPHEN ERTLE  
Assistant Air Pollution Control Officer

August 29, 2019

City of Chico Community Development Department  
Attn: Mike Sawley, Senior Planner  
411 Main Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Chico, CA 95928

RE: Valley's Edge Specific Plan

Dear Mr. Sawley:

The Butte County Air Quality Management District (District) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the project listed above. Based on the information reviewed, the District has the following comments:

1. Screening for criteria air pollutants: Based on the District's 2014 CEQA Air Quality Handbook (Handbook), this project exceeds the size provided by the screening criteria table in Section 4.3 *Screening for Criteria Air Pollutants*. The District recommends using the latest version of CalEEMod to perform modeling and quantification of pollutants created by construction and operational activities to estimate impacts of criteria air pollutants as well as greenhouse gases.
2. The District recognizes that Air Quality is an environmental topic that will be addressed in the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

If you have any questions, please contact me at 530-332-9400 x108.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jason Mandly", is written over a horizontal line.

Jason Mandly  
Senior Air Quality Planner

## Mike Sawley

---

**From:** j. scott Baxter <mickymaggie@icloud.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, August 30, 2019 11:36 AM  
**To:** Mike Sawley  
**Subject:** Housing development

I currently live in Paradise in a wounded house that survived the fire. We are in our upper 70's. We are hoping to be able to live in this house until the Senior part of the area gets finished. Any chance of building that part first? We live in isolation because all of the homes in our area burned and are not planning to rebuild. It would be nice to have neighbors and an ambulance nearby if we need one.

...

Dibs on the first house! Let's get started.. I know it is zoned Agricultural but I've lived here 3 1/2 yrs and not seen anything but grass and weeds in the area.

Sent from my iPad

Another topic, maybe not related, is that we may lose our insurance while living here and I'm not sure what we will do. So far finding a house that is affordable in Chico is impossible due to rising prices. I do hope that these homes will be priced in a realistic way according to cost of construction, not related to shortage of properties.

Karen Baxter  
6678 Evergreen Lane  
Paradise, Ca. 95969

## Mike Sawley

---

**From:** jimb@aqualliance.net  
**Sent:** Friday, August 30, 2019 12:19 PM  
**To:** Mike Sawley; barbarav@aqualliance.net  
**Subject:** Valley's Edge scoping

Mike,

Thanks for hosting the scoping meeting yesterday. You presented the CEQA process clearly to us. Will you send us links to the material you have on the project? You mentioned that you could provide a topographical overlay to the project. That would be helpful as I suggest the scope of Review. A soil map overlay that would indicate vernal pools and landscape potential is another important item. The amount of irrigation needed to maintain mature urban trees is of interest. Does the developer have an idea of how much groundwater will be needed during the dry season to keep their "lake" topped off? I look forward to examining the available material and identifying gaps as we suggest the scope of review.

Jim Brobeck, Water Policy Analyst, AquAlliance

## Mike Sawley

---

**From:** Steve <steveinchico@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, August 30, 2019 12:44 PM  
**To:** Mike Sawley  
**Subject:** Valley Edge comments

Hi Mike- I was at the meeting last night, at Marsh Jr. High, that was sponsored by the City of Chico. Thank you for having the presentation.

I, along with many others, was interested in the proposed roundabout on the Skyway. I'm curious whether it's rational to believe that a roundabout will be able to handle all the commuter traffic from Paradise, when the town is rebuilt, plus traffic from Butte Creek Canyon, plus the amount of traffic that would come from the Valley Edge project. It was said by one person that there may be relief from the Paradise traffic flow if, and when, the Skyway is redirected to Highway 99 just above the Butte Creek bridge (near the Knife River Construction site). I'm sure your office knows what plans CalTrans has for the Skyway and 99. Anyway, first impressions are that the roundabout won't work well for the volume of drivers.

Next up- the lake at the project (Big Meadow Lake?). I heard conflicting stories about the lake. Greg Melton gave me the impression, and I did ask a leading question, that the lake would be a retention pond for recharging the aquifer. Water run-off from hard surfaces would flow to a "cleaning" facility and then discharged into the lake. Also, the lake bed might be dry at times. No water was to be pumped out of the ground and into the lake. Contrary to Melton's idea for the lake were words reportedly spoken by Bill Brouhard. I was not present when Bill spoke these words so I'm repeating what I was told. Bill stated that water would be pumped from the ground and into the lake. It would be good if the lake water issue was clarified.

That's all I have for now. Steve Miller



## Mike Sawley

---

**From:** Stephen Crump <stephen.crumper@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, August 30, 2019 2:36 PM  
**To:** Mike Sawley  
**Subject:** New Development along Honey Run

Hi Mike,

My biggest concern is for the wildlife that exists on that land. It's one of the few places in Nor Cal where the Greater Roadrunner (*Geococcyx californianus*) exists. Not to mention being a corridor for coyotes and other wildlife.

Sincerely

Sent from my iPad

## Mike Sawley

---

**From:** Christina Grassmyer <cgmyer3@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, August 30, 2019 10:07 PM  
**To:** Mike Sawley  
**Subject:** Housing

I think it's a great idea! Love how it sounds. There are hundreds of miles of agriculture around us and I hope a neighborhood like this will keep our quality people here. I want this community to be enticing to others who care about our city.

Christina

--

Christina Grassmyer

## Mike Sawley

---

**From:** Alicia Anderson <aliciaa3@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Saturday, August 31, 2019 11:28 AM  
**To:** Mike Sawley  
**Subject:** Valley's Edge EIR

I am glad the City and Mr. Brouhard made the presentation above Valley's edge on Thursday. I do think a one month comment period for the public is pretty brief. I apologize for the length of the following, but planning is important stuff.

So I guess my first question is: Where should I go to get current planning and proposed projects for Chico, other than having to catch the news in the ER or CNR? The General Plan is, regrettably, out of date.

Opinion: I am very interested in seeing Chico grow. I am delighted by the activism and commitment to the town by Mr. Grossman and Mr. Gonzalez, and others I have not heard of. But I do wonder if the growth is being managed so integrate what we want with what we have. It dismayed me a LOT to see Miriam Park begun without solid funding sources for the Bruce road infrastructure. I am glad that may have eased if Sacramento agrees to fund. I don't understand why the City would agree to a project (before the fire) that did not get corollary public improvements. I am aware that some of those improvements (e.g., curb, gutter, sidewalks and streets within the development) are paid by the developers as a condition of their permits, but something as impactful as the Bruce Road project seems important enough to warrant inclusion—and knowing at the time of approval who will pay for it. So my questions focus more on the bigger picture of the entire area around Bruce Road/Skyway/32 /Forest Ave.

Questions: I do not know if there is a similar plan for the Valley edge project. It is huge and it is not clear, at least to me, that the access roads are going to be adequate to handle the resulting traffic, especially in conjunction with the increased housing in Meriam Park and in the proposed project for the area bounded by 20<sup>th</sup>, Bruce, and Skyway.

- Is that site likely to be developed before the Valley Edge site(s)?
- Is that site intended to be MF/high density?
- Wouldn't the impact of all of these projects be taken together to determine long term planning for the infrastructure in Chico for the long term? I don't know if these projects taken together as a portion of the impact study(ies). Are the EIRs based on solely the individual projects or as a portion of the overall growth of Chico.

Question: Will there be a fire substation or other first responder facility within this developing area?

Question: I also gather that the housing being developed on the north side of Meriam Park is likely to be SFRs in the mid-range of affordability. The Meriam Park apartments appear to be

mid-range as well. Is it the case that the majority of the demand for housing, especially as a result of the fire, is for a low and very low income population.

- Do you expect Meriam Park, the to-be-built project at Bruce and Skyway and Valley's Edge (which appears to be mostly mid to high range housing) to absorb the huge population spike from the fire, **or**
- Do you think (as I do) that by the time those units come on line, the excess population that can afford to buy will have moved to areas that have housing stock---leaving the largest demand remaining in Chico in the very low/low income range.
  - If I am right, what do we assume will be driving demand in 7-10 years? Is there enough income-appropriate demand, putting aside the fire relocations, to fill the current and proposed residential plans? I understand that developers take on the risk as assessing future demand before they make an investment, but this issue absolutely affects City services.
- Is there a plan to revise the General Plan in light of the impact of the Camp Fire?

Opinion: I am in favor of tiny houses and other programs to house the homeless, and recognize they will demand City resources –disproportionally in the view of many citizens. But if we do not manage/house these folks, the quality of life in Chico/Durham/Gridley will only worsen, which in turns affects the desirability of these new projects and therefore the success of those projects. In other words, approval of the very attractive and forward looking Meriam Park and Valley's Edge should not be considered without balancing it to the needs and available resources to manage the under-housed. It seems unavoidable to have a resulting impact on taxes, but if we are smart enough to attract the higher end housing and related property taxes and some industry the net effect on city resources may be at least partially offset. Painfully, though, probably not in the short run. This is a real problem.

Question: I also don't know if you are required to consider the impact on the commercial space downtown. Chios downtown is very attractive, but needs its shops and restaurants, trees and public art to maintain its charming character. Does Meriam Park or, prospectively, Valley's Edge, threaten the viability of the downtown? Is it part of your consideration?

Chico is, in my opinion, very well located to respond to the overcrowded Bay Area and I would love to see the town take the initiative to make smart growth moves. I want Chico to attract new industry and improve training availability so the new businesses will have a larger skilled labor pool, and encourage CSU grads to settle in the area. I don't think those efforts are actually within your purview. To my mind, City Planning is the most important function in a City, right after basic health and safety, and is impossible to separate from the entire community. I don't envy your challenges.

If you prefer, just refer me to online documents that would answer my questions. That is tougher than it sounds: I tried to find out why Bruce Road/Skyway is a "constrained area" as it appears on the General Plan map. I could not figure it out, but I could easily be missing something. I do wish the map keys were more informative. But I am very grateful for whatever insights you can provide.

Thank you for your time...and patience.

## Mike Sawley

---

**From:** Betty Volker <bettyinchico@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, September 1, 2019 6:11 PM  
**To:** Mike Sawley  
**Subject:** Fwd: Valley Edge EIR

### **Subject: valleys edge**

First is thanks for public meeting and a chance to speak to city staff and project planners.

My EIR concerns on Valley Edge.

1. Hydrology-In 2019 there was flooding on the Valley Edge property. Steve Harrison bike trail was covered with water and debris a few times.

Are the flood maps current enough?

Since the Paradise Fire is there increased risk of flooding.?

I live near downtown. In 2019 my sump pump kicked on for the first time in 10 years and ran non stop for 3 weeks. Do flooding maps need further evaluation?

### 2. Water use concerns:

Lake creation. Where is the water supply coming from.

Is the foothills water recharge being paved over?

Much of the land is dry, hot, and treeless-residents will plant grass, trees. Causing Increase water use and demands.

### 3. WUI-Fire :

This area was on fire in 2019. How many times were the neighbors were evacuated?

Where is a barrier?

4. Not a compact urban plan:Sprawl like. Fire and police covering greater distance. Longer response times is increase risk to all residents.

5. Exits - only 2 for 2777 units. How many trips per day on already impacted roads? Traffic problems.

6. Air quality is suffering before this proposed development.

7. Wildlife corridor would be destroyed to designated open spaces and preserves.

Concern for flora and fauna in the area.

Betty Volker  
470 e.

Sent from my iPad

## Mike Sawley

---

**From:** Susan Tchudi <susantchudi@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, September 2, 2019 12:42 PM  
**To:** Mike Sawley  
**Subject:** Comments on Valley's Edge

Dear Mike Sawley,

I would like to raise several concerns about the Valley's Edge project that I think need to be addressed in the EIR.

1. I am concerned about where the water will come from, especially for the areas of low density and very low density. This is section that seems to have little shade. Where will the water come from to plant trees and gardens? We are already suffering from overdrawing of ground water, and our aquifer will not always be recharged in winter. Also, where are there flooding concerns in this area?
2. I think as a wildland/urban interface area, there is huge concern about fire. Although fire is addressed NOP, I don't find it convincing or reassuring. One cannot assure that residents will create cleared areas and plant fire resistant plants. And in looking at the maps and reading the information about roads, I think evacuating almost 3,000 homes seems really difficult.
3. Are there vernal pools on this land? Is there Butte County Meadow Foam?
4. With a project on the edges of Chico with 2,777 dwellings, there will be a large increase in VMIs and GHG. As I understand it, this is an impact that cannot be mitigated. These Green House Gasses contribute to our global climate change. Build an electric bus system?

Thank you.

Susan Tchudi  
10846 Nelson Bar Road  
Yankee Hill, CA 95965  
[susantchudi@gmail.com](mailto:susantchudi@gmail.com)  
530-781-4122

## Mike Sawley

---

**From:** Fidel Chavez <fchavez@nccrc.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 3, 2019 8:41 AM  
**To:** Mike Sawley  
**Subject:** Valley's Edge

Hi Mike,

Could you please email me the Conceptual Review application as well as the Planning application for the Valley's Edge Project. Thank you for your time and help.

All the best.

Fidel Chavez  
Field Representative  
**Carpenters Local 180**  
404 Nebraska Street  
Vallejo, CA 94590  
Office: 707- 644-1040  
Cell: 510- 932-5601  
Fax: 707- 644-8406





**Department of Development Services**

Tim Snellings, Director  
Pete Calarco, Assistant Director

7 County Center Drive  
Oroville, California 95965

T: 530.552.3700  
F: 530.538.7785

[buttecounty.net/dds](http://buttecounty.net/dds)

September 3, 2019

City of Chico Community Development Department  
Mike Sawley, Senior Planner  
411 Main Street, P.O. Box 3420  
Chico, CA 95927

**RE: Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report for Valley's Edge Specific Plan**

Dear Mr. Sawley:

The Butte County General Plan recognizes this unincorporated area as a future specific plan as follows:

**Doe Mill/Honey Run Specific Plan**

The Doe Mill/Honey Run Specific Plan will determine the mix of uses that will occur in a 1,444-acre area located east of the City of Chico. The Specific Plan will allow mixed residential development and some commercial uses. If the City of Chico pursues annexation of the Specific Plan area, the County will negotiate an agreement to maintain adequate revenues to provide countywide services that will serve new development that is annexed into Chico.

According to the Butte County General Plan 2030 EIR (April 8, 2010), preliminary information indicates that approximately 1,500 new dwelling units could be constructed and 30 acres could be used for retail or office uses at a maximum floor area ratio of 0.4.

The property is currently zoned AG-20 (Agriculture, 20-acre minimum parcel size). A portion of the northeast corner of the project is located in the Migratory Deer Herd Overlay Zone wintering area, which also requires a 20-acre minimum parcel size. Based upon a general review of the conceptual development plan, this area appears to be left as open space.

Extensive grazing lands adjacent to the east and north are zoned AG-160 (Agriculture, 160-acre minimum parcel size), and are under contract pursuant to the Land Conservation Act (Williamson Act). Appropriate setbacks should be included in the development to minimize land use conflicts between the development and these important grazing lands. The Butte County Zoning Ordinance and Butte County General Plan Agriculture Element Policy AG-P5.3

requires a 300-foot residential development setback from lands designated Agriculture by the General Plan:

**AG-P5.3**

The Zoning Ordinance shall require that a buffer be established on property proposed for residential development in order to protect lands designated Agriculture by the General Plan and zoned Agriculture under the Zoning Ordinance from incompatible use conflicts. The desired standard shall be 300 feet, but may be adjusted to address unusual circumstances.

A general review of the conceptual layout of the development appears to indicate the provision of the necessary 300-foot agricultural buffer setback from the adjacent grazing lands. Future subdivision design should take this agricultural setback into account.

Please include the Butte County Department of Development Services in the circulation of all environmental documents related to this proposal.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the NOP. Should you have any questions concerning this information feel free to contact me at 530.552.3682.

Sincerely,



Dan Breedon, AICP, Principal Planner



**VALLEY'S EDGE SPECIFIC PLAN PROJECT  
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (EIR) NOTICE OF PREPARATION (NOP)**

**COMMENT FORM**

Please provide the following information if you wish to receive a Notice of Availability of the Draft EIR and to document the author of comments received. Thank you.

Name: TERRY O'SUEA

Email: OSUEA@CUC.COM

Address: 2867 BACROFT DR.

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I would like to receive future environmental notices via email.

Please provide us with your written comments on the NOP no later than 5:00 p.m. on **Friday, September 13, 2019**. Comments on the NOP may be sent to:

City of Chico Community Development Department  
Mike Sawley, Senior Planner  
411 Main Street, P.O. Box 3420  
Chico, CA 95927  
mike.sawley@chicoca.gov  
(530) 879-6812

You may attach additional pages to this form and/or you may submit your written comments separately. Written comments on the scope of the EIR will be acknowledged in the Draft EIR and will be considered in preparation of the document.

OUR HOUSE FLOODED IN 2014 DUE TO  
POOR PLANNING WITH REGARDS TO STORM  
DRAINS  
~~NOT A MAINTENANCE~~ - 1  
ONE AREA IN PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT  
CONTINUES TO FLOOD. WILL SAFEGUARDS  
BE PUT IN PLACE TO ELIMINATE PERENNIAL  
FLOODING?

## Mike Sawley

---

**From:** Jim Stevens <jstevens@northstareng.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 4, 2019 2:27 PM  
**To:** Mike Sawley  
**Subject:** FW: Valley's Edge

Mr. Sawley:

I would like to comment on the anticipated Draft EIR for the Valley's Edge project. My interest is with the arguments opposing the project, which I have heard both at the Open House held at Marsh Elementary School last Thursday evening and from conversations I have heard around town. The most common of these arguments is that the project is "too far out" from the City center and that as a result we will experience significant Greenhouse Gas (GHG) accumulation as a result of residents commuting for work, goods and services. I believe this mis-represents the reality in which we are now living.

As we all know, the housing market in Chico is extremely challenging, with very, very few available rental units, and a limited supply of for-sale units. Many of these for-sale units are priced above recent historical values, and are as a result, are out of reach based upon AMI, of a great many of the locals searching for housing. What we also all know is that Chico is the most predominate employment center in Butte County and the immediate region.

My fear is twofold:

In the short term: without the necessary inventory for local employees, there will be a strong demand/need to find housing elsewhere (Red Bluff, Orland, Corning, Biggs, Gridley, and Oroville) and commute in to Chico for work. This would be an order of magnitude increase in GHG loading above that from Valley's Edge.

In the long term: without that inventory, and with the perimeter communities housing Chico employees, there will be additional demand for goods and services in those communities, which has the potential of draining future revenue and jobs from Chico.

Will there be an analysis performed to review the alternative to no additional housing and its economic impact on local employees and businesses?

To say Valley's Edge is too far out is simply disingenuous.

Chico needs this development, and others like it.  
thanks

**James A. Stevens, PLS, LEED AP**  
Principal



*Celebrating 35 Years*

111 Mission Ranch Blvd, Ste. 100  
Chico, CA 95926  
(530) 893-1600 ext. 211

## Mike Sawley

---

**From:** Brent Silberbauer <brentcalvin220@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 5, 2019 8:56 AM  
**To:** Mike Sawley  
**Subject:** Re: Valley's Edge Specific Plan Notice of EIR Preparation - Interested Parties

Hi Mike,

Thank you for the email. I just want to say that I believe that the developer has done an amazing job "listening to the land" and developing this piece of property very well. To respect the walls, the bike trails, having a school connected to a park, close to food, beverage, and entertainment is the type of walkable/bikable development our community needs. As an environmentalist I put a high priority on protecting and maintaining the environment while developing cities, especially in special planning areas that advance our city limits. I give it two thumbs up. I think the developer has an excellent plan that will respect the environment and bring much new housing to our hurting community.

Please let me know if I need to do anything else with my public comment on the development.

Thank you for all your hard work.

Best,

On Wed, Sep 4, 2019 at 1:01 PM Mike Sawley <[mike.sawley@chicoca.gov](mailto:mike.sawley@chicoca.gov)> wrote:

Hello Interested Parties, I am sending you this brief email today letting you know that you have been added to the City's list of interested parties for the subject project. This email list will be used periodically to notify you of available documents and public hearings for the project. If you do not desire to receive these email notifications in the future then please send a one word reply "Stop" and I'll take you off the Interested Parties List.

Some of you have emailed comments, those will be forwarded to the consultant preparing the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Valley's Edge Specific Plan Project. You still have until next Friday, **9/13/19 at 5 p.m.** to submit comments on the scope of analysis to be considered for inclusion in the EIR.

For those who seek additional information about the project, please refer to the following web page created for the project: [http://www.ci.chico.ca.us/planning\\_services/ValleysEdgeSpecificPlan.asp](http://www.ci.chico.ca.us/planning_services/ValleysEdgeSpecificPlan.asp)

You might want to keep that link handy, as we will place additional documents on that page throughout the course of the project process.

Best Regards,

Mike Sawley, AICP

Senior Planner

City of Chico Community Development Dept.

P.O. Box 3420, Chico, CA 95927

(530) 879-6812



<http://www.ci.chico.ca.us/>

<http://chico.facilitiesmap.com/>

--

Brent Silberbauer

Cell - 530-864-2404

Email- [Brentcalvin220@gmail.com](mailto:Brentcalvin220@gmail.com)

## Mike Sawley

---

**From:** jimb@aqualliance.net  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 5, 2019 11:02 AM  
**To:** Mike Sawley  
**Subject:** Re: Valley's Edge Specific Plan Notice of EIR Preparation - Interested Parties

Scoping

Mike,

Thanks for adding me to the VESP EIR notification list. I am sure that the EIR will cover a long list of impacts, mitigations and benefits associated with the project. Please ask the consultants to consider these issues:

1. Water demand associated with tree landscape in this dry zone considering the fact that the project is not located in the predominantly sub-irrigated urban forest of the Chico Urban Area.

2. Groundwater demand associated with maintaining the artificial "lake".

Will the groundwater come from CAL WATER or from project wells?

3. The wildfire evacuation history and projections of Chico's foothill projects.

4. The value of maintaining a backfire burnable buffer between the wildfire-prone foothills and the Chico Urban Area vs developing an urban area in the WUI.

5. The topographical influence to fire behavior.

6. The topographical impediments to non-motorized transportation.

7. The elimination of grazing as a vegetation management tool for wildland fuel management in the primary and secondary open space zones.

Thanks,

Jim Brobeck

Hildi L. Strandberg  
P.O. Box 955  
Chico, CA 95927

September 9, 2019

To Whom it May Concern;

Reading the article in the Enterprise Record on Friday, September 6, 2019 regarding Bill Brouhard and his housing vision, I noticed at the end it said that comments can be made to the city. Here is my comment:

At first glance the plan makes it seem like a nice lay-out with keeping open spaces. A concern is that, state wide, scientists are observing a large scale reduction in wildlife and in important insects due to over development.

An article from the Enterprise Record on Thursday, Sept. 5, 2019 under the title, "Wildlife Day brings conservation awareness" gives a list of endangered wildlife in our area. Bald Eagle, grey wolf and California Tiger Salamander are listed as well as several threatened species. Another article in the Enterprise Record on Friday, Sept. 6, 2019 with the title of, "To help bees through lean times, plant a variety of blooms" states that due to increasing urbanization, there is reduction in diversity and abundance of flowering plant species which is adversely effecting bees, other pollinators and butterflies.

Also, according to another article in the E.R. on Friday, Sept. 6, 2019 with the title of, "A step closer to brining water from Paradise to Chico" says that Chico is looking into getting water from PID since our water table is declining. This trend of declining water in the aquifers will continue as Chico grows.

Careful thought must be put into any development consideration. How far should Chico go with building and encroaching on our open land? There are those of us who enjoy the wide open spaces, wildlife and wild flowers and feel that development is best left for in-fill and not spreading out. Perhaps Mr. Brouhard could use his vision for in-fill purposes. I am sure he can up with a plan that would make for a nice place for an in-fill development.

There is too much at stake concerning nature and the adverse effects urbanization has on it. Once these areas are developed there is no going back and what's lost cannot be reclaimed.

It is my hope that this letter written in vain. Chico needs to mean more than a worker with a chainsaw in one hand, hammer in the other and dollar signs in his eyes.

Thank you for your time and consideration. If you have any questions, please call me at (530) 591-2647.

Sincerely,  
Hildi L. Strandberg



## Mike Sawley

---

**From:** Alicia Anderson <aliciaa3@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 5, 2019 6:31 PM  
**To:** Mike Sawley  
**Subject:** RE: Valley's Edge EIR

I can't tell you how much I appreciate your detailed (and only slightly incomprehensible) reply. I will read it again – along with the attachments—so I understand it better before I say anything substantive.

I keep an eye on Next Door, the neighborhood website that ,among other things, foments distress and reaction before the issues that concern residents are researched. There is the usual drumbeat. (A gas station/mini-market at Bruce and 3??No, NO!) ) However, I understand their concerns. The quality of life in Chico is changing and, IMHO, has to change as years go by. But change is always terrifying. I still think you have the hardest job in the City because thoughtful growth has been, for many, many cities, an oxymoron.

Thank you for your invitation to get in touch. I may take you up on it. Best of luck-and good wishes.

---

**From:** Mike Sawley <mike.sawley@Chicoca.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 5, 2019 1:23 PM  
**To:** Alicia Anderson <aliciaa3@comcast.net>  
**Subject:** RE: Valley's Edge EIR

Ms. Anderson, I wanted to provide a brief reply to your email and provide some resources that might help you moving forward. (Well, brief was my intention going into this.)

The City maintains [“Active Development Maps” at this link](#) for projects that have been approved. The Planning Commission agendas are [posted online here](#) (they consider mostly subdivision projects), and Architectural Review and Historic Preservation Board agendas are [posted online here](#) (they consider mostly apartment projects and commercial developments). We also offer a subscription service where we will email you all agendas as they go out for \$20 per year.

I should clarify that there is a solid funding source for the Bruce Road Widening Project through the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP), it's just a matter of prioritizing the various road projects in town and leveraging local funds to the maximum extent by obtaining grants or demonstrating that the road project qualifies for certain State or Federal infrastructure programs. Meriam Park is required to complete portions of surrounding roadways, including Bruce Road, as adjacent development occurs or when project trips hit certain thresholds (see attached Development Agreement, PDF pages 33-34). There are also requirements for the developer of the Stonegate project to improve adjacent portions of Bruce Road between E. 20<sup>th</sup> Street and Skyway. The City cannot require these developers to widen streets or upgrade intersections beyond their project sites, those improvements are only done through the City's CIP. This dynamic incentivizes the City to prioritize improvements elsewhere, where they're also needed but there is no adjacent development to build it, while the developers along Bruce construct portions of that CIP project and reduce the City's burden of finishing the job. Gosh, there's so much I could say about this... If you are interested in knowing more, please feel free to give me a call or stop by sometime.

Quickly, on to your questions:

- Adequacy of the two entry/exit points for the Valley's Edge Specific Plan project will be evaluated in the traffic study, along with estimates of average vehicle miles traveled for the future residents. I can point you to [the Stonegate project for an example](#) of how we considered the cumulative impacts of that project in short term and long range future scenarios where other projects in the area, including development of the Valley's Edge site (aka Special Planning Area 5), were modeled to contribute traffic to the roadway network (specifically see Stonegate's Draft EIR chapter "[O. Transportation Traffic](#)", and skip down to PDF page 45 of 58). See attached Stonegate map for reference. Again, there is a lot I could add about this. I be happy to guide you to the more interesting parts of that analysis if you'd like.
- There is no fire substation or other first responder facility currently planned with the VESP site, however the EIR will look at existing public services and characterize the impact the project will have on them.
- Your multi-part question about housing projects in the area failing to fill an affordability need exacerbated by the Camp Fire is a doozy! Since it's also an invitation for me to speculate, please accept my polite decline to do so. Tying together parts of this discussion, the required provision of affordable housing in Meriam Park (see attached DA pages 10-13) is precisely what qualifies the City for the state infrastructure grant that we are seeking to build the CIP's Bruce Road Widening Project.
- There is no current plan to revise the 2030 General Plan in response to the Camp Fire, though many have commented that the influx of population will compel the City to begin the update process sooner than would otherwise be the case.
- Downtown impacts: the short answer is no, it is not likely that commercial development in Meriam Park or Valley's Edge threatens to suck the vitality out of Downtown Chico. We did an in depth urban decay study for the Walmart Expansion project and documented that even the largest of vacated commercial buildings (the most difficult to refill) in Chico over the years have proven very resilient at becoming re-tenanted. Downtown Chico is special in many ways with which these newer developments simply cannot compete.
- The Stonegate site along Bruce Road and Skyway is considered "constrained" in the General Plan due to the presence of an endangered vernal pool flower called Butte County Meadowfoam (BCM). If you look closely at the attached map of the Stonegate project you will notice that about half of the site is set aside as an open space preserve. That's to avoid and minimize impacts of development upon BCM. When we did the General Plan we knew there were patches of BCM out there, but lacked the detailed studies to understand exactly where they occurred, so the Resource Constraint Overlay was placed on the entire site as a reminder to study and develop around the BCM.

Again, if you'd like to follow up on any of these issues with more discussion feel free to call me at the number below or stop by the front counter.

Best Regards,

Mike Sawley, AICP  
Senior Planner  
City of Chico Community Development Dept.  
P.O. Box 3420, Chico, CA 95927  
(530) 879-6812



<http://www.ci.chico.ca.us/>

**From:** Alicia Anderson <[aliciaa3@comcast.net](mailto:aliciaa3@comcast.net)>

**Sent:** Saturday, August 31, 2019 11:28 AM

**To:** Mike Sawley <[mike.sawley@Chicoca.gov](mailto:mike.sawley@Chicoca.gov)>

**Subject:** Valley's Edge EIR

I am glad the City and Mr. Brouhard made the presentation above Valley's edge on Thursday. I do think a one month comment period for the public is pretty brief. I apologize for the length of the following, but planning is important stuff.

So I guess my first question is: Where should I go to get current planning and proposed projects for Chico, other than having to catch the news in the ER or CNR? The General Plan is, regrettably, out of date.

Opinion: I am very interested in seeing Chico grow. I am delighted by the activism and commitment to the town by Mr. Grossman and Mr. Gonzalez, and others I have not heard of. But I do wonder if the growth is being managed so integrate what we want with what we have. It dismayed me a LOT to see Meriam Park begun without solid funding sources for the Bruce road infrastructure. I am glad that may have eased if Sacramento agrees to fund. I don't understand why the City would agree to a project (before the fire) that did not get corollary public improvements. I am aware that some of those improvements (e.g., curb, gutter, sidewalks and streets within the development) are paid by the developers as a condition of their permits, but something as impactful as the Bruce Road project seems important enough to warrant inclusion—and knowing at the time of approval who will pay for it. So my questions focus more on the bigger picture of the entire area around Bruce Road/Skyway/32 /Forest Ave.

Questions: I do not know if there is a similar plan for the Valley edge project. It is huge and it is not clear, at least to me, that the access roads are going to be adequate to handle the resulting traffic, especially in conjunction with the increased housing in Meriam Park and in the proposed project for the area bounded by 20<sup>th</sup>, Bruce, and Skyway.

- Is that site likely to be developed before the Valley Edge site(s)?
- Is that site intended to be MF/high density?
- Wouldn't the impact of all of these projects be taken together to determine long term planning for the infrastructure in Chico for the long term? I don't know if these projects taken together as a portion of the impact study(ies). Are the EIRs based on solely the individual projects or as a portion of the overall growth of Chico.

Question: Will there be a fire substation or other first responder facility within this developing area?

Question: I also gather that the housing being developed on the north side of Meriam Park is likely to be SFRs in the mid-range of affordability. The Meriam Park apartments appear to be mid-range as well. Is it the case that the majority of the demand for housing, especially as a result of the fire, is for a low and very low income population.

- Do you expect Meriam Park, the to-be-built project at Bruce and Skyway and Valley's Edge (which appears to be mostly mid to high range housing) to absorb the huge population spike from the fire, **or**
- Do you think (as I do) that by the time those units come on line, the excess population that can afford to buy will have moved to areas that have housing stock---leaving the largest demand remaining in Chico in the very low/low income range.
  - If I am right, what do we assume will be driving demand in 7-10 years? Is there enough income-appropriate demand, putting aside the fire relocations, to fill the current and proposed residential plans? I understand that developers take on the risk as assessing future demand before they make an investment, but this issue absolutely affects City services.
- Is there a plan to revise the General Plan in light of the impact of the Camp Fire?

Opinion: I am in favor of tiny houses and other programs to house the homeless, and recognize they will demand City resources –disproportionally in the view of many citizens. But if we do not manage/house these folks, the quality of life in Chico/Durham/Gridley will only worsen, which in turns affects the desirability of these new projects and therefore the success of those projects. In other words, approval of the very attractive and forward looking Meriam Park and Valley's Edge should not be considered without balancing it to the needs and available resources to manage the under-housed. It seems unavoidable to have a resulting impact on taxes, but if we are smart enough to attract the higher end housing and related property taxes and some industry the net effect on city resources may be at least partially offset. Painfully, though, probably not in the short run. This is a real problem.

Question: I also don't know if you are required to consider the impact on the commercial space downtown. Chios downtown is very attractive, but needs its shops and restaurants, trees and public art to maintain its charming character. Does Meriam Park or, prospectively, Valley's Edge, threaten the viability of the downtown? Is it part of your consideration?

Chico is, in my opinion, very well located to respond to the overcrowded Bay Area and I would love to see the town take the initiative to make smart growth moves. I want Chico to attract new industry and improve training availability so the new businesses will have a larger skilled labor pool, and encourage CSU grads to settle in the area. I don't think those efforts are actually within your purview. To my mind, City Planning is the most important function in a City, right after basic health and safety, and is impossible to separate from the entire community. I don't envy your challenges.

If you prefer, just refer me to online documents that would answer my questions. That is tougher than it sounds: I tried to find out why Bruce Road/Skyway is a "constrained area" as it appears on the General Plan map. I could not figure it out, but I could easily be missing something. I do wish the map keys were more informative. But I am very grateful for whatever insights you can provide.

Thank you for your time...and patience.

## Mike Sawley

---

**From:** Marcella Seay <cellaseay@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 6, 2019 1:30 PM  
**To:** Mike Sawley  
**Subject:** Valley's Edge

Hooray for a unified vision of a mixed housing project that encourages community interaction! I didn't notice, however, any mention of a senior apartment or living arrangement in the mix. We seniors that are not ready for assisted living would enjoy housing that is low in square footage, low maintenance, and fairly quiet—maybe just an apartment building. That way, we would still be interacting with multi generations when we are outside our apartment which benefits everyone.

Nonetheless, I really like the thought of working within the natural landscape and history of the land instead of bulldozing it all under and "starting from scratch." Kudos to Bill Brouhard.

Marcella Seay, Magalia

## Mike Sawley

---

**From:** Brad sellers <bsellers1183@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, September 7, 2019 6:42 PM  
**To:** Mike Sawley  
**Subject:** Valley edge project

I am very opposed to the Valley Edge project. Bill Blowhard and his cronies are just looking to make MONEY! Why not place their project upon the old Tuscan Ridge property? A development on the Skyway and Honey Run Road would ruin the beauty of that area of Chico. Bill Blowhard paints a nice picture of their grand project with no concern of the beauty of that sight. Let them build on the old golf course and leave Chico's heritage alone. No telling how many trees they will cut down or stone walls they will destroy or Indian sites they would uproot. Have they filed a EIR report yet? The developers want to have acorn pick up and use oak from the property for a bar in their clubhouse. Give me a break. How cute is that. Chico deserves better than that. Please look at this project carefully.  
Sincerely, Bradley Sellers

## Mike Sawley

---

**From:** Merlyn Newlin <mjn1944@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, September 9, 2019 5:01 PM  
**To:** Mike Sawley  
**Subject:** RE: Valley's Edge Specific Plan Notice of EIR Preparation - Interested Parties

Hi Mike,

I spoke with you briefly regarding the increased traffic 20<sup>th</sup> street will experience as a result of the Valley Edge development. I want to reiterate that concern in writing!

In addition, to the general increase in traffic, the development will be in what the state considers a "high risk fire area." Communities with only two points of entry/exit (the Skyway and 20<sup>th</sup> street) are considered at even greater in high risk fire areas. Limited exit routes from Paradise created havoc for people trying to escape the Paradise fire.

Another concern is fire insurance. Will fire insurance be affordable for new homeowners since the area is considered high fire risk?

Merlyn Newlin  
1995 Potter Rd

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

---

**From:** Mike Sawley <mike.sawley@Chicoca.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 4, 2019 1:01:26 PM  
**To:** Mike Sawley <mike.sawley@Chicoca.gov>  
**Subject:** Valley's Edge Specific Plan Notice of EIR Preparation - Interested Parties

Hello Interested Parties, I am sending you this brief email today letting you know that you have been added to the City's list of interested parties for the subject project. This email list will be used periodically to notify you of available documents and public hearings for the project. If you do not desire to receive these email notifications in the future then please send a one word reply "Stop" and I'll take you off the Interested Parties List.

Some of you have emailed comments, those will be forwarded to the consultant preparing the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Valley's Edge Specific Plan Project. You still have until next Friday, **9/13/19 at 5 p.m.** to submit comments on the scope of analysis to be considered for inclusion in the EIR.

For those who seek additional information about the project, please refer to the following web page created for the project: [http://www.ci.chico.ca.us/planning\\_services/ValleysEdgeSpecificPlan.asp](http://www.ci.chico.ca.us/planning_services/ValleysEdgeSpecificPlan.asp)  
You might want to keep that link handy, as we will place additional documents on that page throughout the course of the project process.

Best Regards,

Mike Sawley, AICP  
Senior Planner  
City of Chico Community Development Dept.  
P.O. Box 3420, Chico, CA 95927  
(530) 879-6812



<http://www.ci.chico.ca.us/>

<http://chico.facilitiesmap.com/>





Mike Sawley, Senior Planner

September 10, 2019

City of Chico Community Dev. Dept.

P.O. Box 3420

Chico, CA 95927

Sent via email w. attachments

Dear Mr. Sawley,

These comments are being made specific to the proposed new development, Valley's Edge, along the Skyway and Honey Run Road, Chico, CA. It was reported at the public hearing the drain water from this project will either flow directly to the Little Chico Creek Diversion Channel LCCDC or Comanche Creek. The drain water that flows to Comanche Creek will either flow under the LCCDC in 2-48" culverts or if those culvert gates are closed, which is very likely during rainfall events, the drain water will flow through and around the State Department of Water Resources, DWR installed cement structure built to handle runoff events. This structure is under-designed for today's flows and drain water from storm events that flows down Comanche Creek from the east side of the LCCDC flows right over and around the structure and has eroded the soil surrounding it where the soil ends up in the LCCDC. This will lead to less surrounding support for the structure. Over time this could cause the structure to fail in its purpose to siphon water under the LCCDC in the 2-48" culverts or to direct high flow storm events through the structure to the LCCDC. Please see attached photos of the structure.

The Valley's Edge project could add higher storm flow runoff events over a shorter period-of-time due to development, thus impacting the DWR bypass structure and the surrounding soil that maintains and supports it. This structure needs to be modified to handle higher flow events to the LCCDC.

Thank you for your consideration of this very important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Les Heringer', written over a circular stamp or seal.

Les Heringer

M&T Ranch Manager







9-2019





9-2019





1107-6





6102-6





9-2019





6107-1



## Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board

12 September 2019

Mike Sawley  
City of Chico  
411 Main Street  
Chico, CA 95927

### **COMMENTS ON THE NOTICE OF PREPARATION FOR THE VALLEY'S EDGE SPECIFIC PLAN, STATE CLEARINGHOUSE NUMBER 2019089041, CHICO, BUTTE COUNTY**

The Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Valley Water Board) is a responsible agency for this project, as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). On 19 August 2019, we received your request for comments on the Notice of Preparation for the Valley's Edge Specific Plan (Project).

The project consists of a blueprint for a mixed-use community that includes a range of housing types, commercial uses, parks, trails and recreation and open space areas. A circulation plan and an infrastructure and public facilities plan will also be included. The Specific Plan will include goals and policies for development along with Design Guidelines that establish architectural, streetscape, landscaping, and lighting standards. The Project site is located roughly 1.25 miles east of State Route 99 on approximately 1,448 acres of land. Access to the plan area is currently from the Skyway and East 20<sup>th</sup> Street.

Based on our review of the information submitted for the proposed project, we have the following comments:

#### Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 401, Water Quality Certification

The Central Valley Water Board has regulatory authority over wetlands and waterways under the Federal Clean Water Act (CWA) and the California Water Code, Division 7 (CWC). Discharge of dredged or fill material to waters of the United States requires a CWA Section 401 Water Quality Certification from the Central Valley Water Board. Typical activities include any modifications to these waters, such as stream crossings, stream bank modifications, filling of wetlands, etc. 401 Certifications are issued in combination with CWA Section 404 Permits issued by the Army Corps of Engineers. The proposed project must be evaluated for the presence of jurisdictional waters,



including wetlands and other waters of the State. Steps must be taken to first avoid and minimize impacts to these waters, and then mitigate for unavoidable impacts. Both the Section 404 Permit and Section 401 Water Quality Certification must be obtained prior to site disturbance. Any person discharging dredge or fill materials to waters of the State must file a report of waste discharge pursuant to Sections 13376 and 13260 of the California Water Code. Both the requirements to submit a report of waste discharge and apply for a Water Quality Certification may be met using the same application form, found at [Water Boards 401 Water Quality Certification Application](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/water_quality_certification/wqc_application.pdf) ([http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water\\_issues/water\\_quality\\_certification/wqc\\_application.pdf](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/water_quality_certification/wqc_application.pdf))

General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance Activities (CGP)

Construction activity, including demolition, resulting in a land disturbance of one acre or more must obtain coverage under the CGP. Valley's Edge Specific Plan Project must be conditioned to implement storm water pollution controls during construction and post-construction as required by the CGP. To apply for coverage under the CGP the property owner must submit Permit Registration Documents electronically prior to construction. Detailed information on the CGP can be found on the State Water Board website [Water Boards Stormwater Construction Permits](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/stormwater/constpermits.shtml) ([https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/stormwater/constpermits.shtml](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/stormwater/constpermits.shtml))

Isolated wetlands and other waters not covered by the Federal Clean Water Act

Some wetlands and other waters are considered "geographically isolated" from navigable waters and are not within the jurisdiction of the Clean Water Act. (e.g., isolated wetlands, vernal pools, or stream banks above the ordinary high-water mark). Discharge of dredged or fill material to these waters may require either individual or general waste discharge requirements from the Central Valley Water Board. If the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers determine that isolated wetlands or other waters exist at the project site, and the project impacts or has potential to impact these non-jurisdictional waters, a Report of Waste Discharge and filing fee must be submitted to the Central Valley Water Board. The Central Valley Water Board will consider the information provided and either issue or waive Waste Discharge Requirements. Failure to obtain waste discharge requirements or a waiver may result in enforcement action.

Any person discharging dredge or fill materials to waters of the State must file a report of waste discharge pursuant to Sections 13376 and 13260 of the CWC. Both the requirements to submit a report of waste discharge and apply for a Water Quality Certification may be met using the same application form, found at [Water Boards Adopted Orders for Water Quality](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board_decisions/adopted_orders/water_quality/2004/wqo/wqo2004-0004.pdf) ([http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board\\_decisions/adopted\\_orders/water\\_quality/2004/wqo/wqo2004-0004.pdf](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board_decisions/adopted_orders/water_quality/2004/wqo/wqo2004-0004.pdf))

### Post-Construction Storm Water Requirements

Studies have found the amount of impervious surface in a community is strongly correlated with the impacts on community's water quality. New development and redevelopment result in increased impervious surfaces in a community. Post-construction programs and design standards are most efficient when they involve (i) low impact design; (ii) source controls; and (iii) treatment controls. To comply with Phase II Municipal Storm Water Permit requirements the City of Chico must ensure that new developments comply with specific design strategies and standards to provide source and treatment controls to minimize the short and long-term impacts on receiving water quality. The design standards include minimum sizing criteria for treatment controls and established maintenance requirements. The proposed project must be conditioned to comply with post-construction standards adopted by the City of Chico in compliance with their Phase II Municipal Storm Water Permit.

### Dewatering Alternative 1: Discharge to Storm Drains or Waters of the United States

A dewatering permit, *General Order for Limited Threat Discharges to Surface Waters* (Central Valley Water Board Order No. R5-2016-0076-01, adopted 14 October 2016 and amended on 1 February 2018), may be required for pump testing, pipeline dewatering and/or construction activities. This general NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) permit has three tiers covering the discharge to waters of the United States with tier 1 being for clean or relatively pollutant-free wastewater that poses little or no threat to water quality. The following categories are covered by the dewatering permit: well development water; construction dewatering; pump/well testing; pipeline/tank pressure testing; pipeline/tank flushing or dewatering; condensate discharges; water supply system discharges; miscellaneous dewatering/limited threat discharges. The dewatering permit applies only to direct discharges to waters of the United States. Failure to obtain a dewatering permit, when required, may result in enforcement action. An application form and a copy of the permit are available at this office.

#### [Water Boards Adopted Order R5-2016-0076-01](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/board_decisions/adopted_orders/general_orders/r5-2016-0076-01.pdf)

([https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/board\\_decisions/adopted\\_orders/general\\_orders/r5-2016-0076-01.pdf](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/board_decisions/adopted_orders/general_orders/r5-2016-0076-01.pdf))

#### [Water Boards Notice of Intent for Adopted Order R5-2016-0076-01](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/board_decisions/adopted_orders/general_orders/r5-2016-0076-01/r5-2016-0076-01_noi.pdf)

([https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/board\\_decisions/adopted\\_orders/general\\_orders/r5-2016-0076-01/r5-2016-0076-01\\_noi.pdf](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/board_decisions/adopted_orders/general_orders/r5-2016-0076-01/r5-2016-0076-01_noi.pdf))

### Dewatering Alternative 2: Discharges to Land

Construction and system test dewatering discharges that are contained to land (i.e., will not enter waters of the United States) may require permit coverage under either the State Board General Order 2003-003-DWQ or the Central Valley Water Board Waiver R5-2013-0145 as long as the following conditions can be met: (1) the dewatering discharge is of a quality as good as or better than underlying groundwater; and (2) there is a low risk of nuisance. Examples of dewatering discharges to land include a terminal basin, irrigation (with no return to waters of the United States), and dust control. You

may request written confirmation from this office that the waiver is applicable. More specific information pertaining to the proposed discharges may be required to determine the appropriate permitting that may be required for proposed discharges to land.

[Water Boards Water Quality Order 2003](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board_decisions/adopted_orders/water_quality/2003/wqo/wqo2003-0003.pdf)

([https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board\\_decisions/adopted\\_orders/water\\_quality/2003/wqo/wqo2003-0003.pdf](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board_decisions/adopted_orders/water_quality/2003/wqo/wqo2003-0003.pdf))

[Water Board Waiver for Adopted Order R5-2013-0145](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/board_decisions/adopted_orders/waivers/r5-2013-0145_res.pdf)

([https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/board\\_decisions/adopted\\_orders/waivers/r5-2013-0145\\_res.pdf](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/board_decisions/adopted_orders/waivers/r5-2013-0145_res.pdf))

If you have any questions or comments regarding this matter, please contact me at (530) 224-4784 or by email at [Scott.Zaitz@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:Scott.Zaitz@waterboards.ca.gov).

*Scott A. Zaitz for*

Scott A. Zaitz, R.E.H.S  
Environmental Scientist  
Storm Water & Water Quality Certification Unit

SAZ: db

cc: Ms. Laura Shivley, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento  
Department of Fish and Wildlife, Region 2, Rancho Cordova

## Mike Sawley

---

**From:** Kathleen Faith <kathawow@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 12, 2019 2:14 PM  
**To:** Mike Sawley  
**Subject:** Stonegate/ Valley's Edge Development  
**Attachments:** 20181108\_170455.jpg

To Mr. Sawley and interested parties:

I could start my message to you expressing disapproval of the proposed Valley's Edge development project by citing concerns of the negative impacts of traffic, noise and air pollution and infrastructure over use.... that would be a mirror of the impact on this city as adding half of Paradise has been for Chico.

I could also agree that we need housing. I would, however, point to already existing developments in place and push for the efficiency and sustainability of infill for city services.

But I will start and end with this instead:

Last November we survived the Campfire as it burned through Butte Creek Canyon neighborhoods. We evacuated to a home in Chico on Forest Avenue at the same time as some of those Chico neighbors were evacuating that very area. These people were reacting to warnings about the fire racing down the hills towards Chico and the possibility of the fire using the vulnerable interface of development in the foothills along highway 32 and Bruce Road, to reach the city homes.

After we left the canyon packed for good, we stopped on East 20th St near the Doe Mill development to take control of ourselves. We looked back up at the canyon and the increasing black cloud over it and Paradise.

We were looking over the as yet unburned acreage of the proposed Valley's Edge development. Thank goodness it was defensible grassland and not a dense highly vulnerable "small town" of panicked people waiting in traffic to flee fire. Fire that could use their homes to continue directly into this city.

Thank you for listening.

Kathleen Faith



9/12/19

To: Planning Commission  
From: Terrence Hoffman, Chico resident

RE: Valley's Edge Development

In the 60 years that I have lived in the Chico/Paradise area I have watched the quality of our natural world and social-economic relationships deteriorate as we acquire more people, cars, shopping centers, box stores and simple urban sprawl.

I understand that people have to live somewhere, and that Chico is as good a place as any for new housing developments. However, the current Valley's Edge proposal seems like just one more housing development that exploits the natural resources of our area while encouraging a kind of consumerism that both adds to the deterioration of our social fabric as well as strains an already fragile infrastructure .

Specifically, I mean the presence of more cars and trucks in our valley, the worsening air quality as a result, more congestion and crowding on our roads, more crime, more strain on health and social service delivery systems, and weakening of community ties due to the more hectic pace of life that comes with overcrowding and increased population.

Ok, so continued growth for Chico is inevitable, and along with it will come all that I just mentioned. It has already happened.

**I would encourage future planning to place heavy emphasis on approval criteria which includes specific and thorough attention to making maximum use of existing spaces, like infilling, mitigation of potential air pollution, like utilization of public transport and alternative energy sources (with realistic proposals for the acquisition of funding for such), as well as a commitment to the discovery of funding sources for additional police, fire, and health and human service programs.**

**As we grow I would want Chico leaders to continue to recognize that the health of our community is not just a function of the increased financial successes of the building industry, bankers and national chain stores, but also the degree to which citizens can enjoy clean air, uncongested roads, and a more relaxed pace of life, with structures in place which support the health and safety needs of all.**

I realize this is a familiar refrain, but thanks for listening just the same.

Sincerely,



Terrence Hoffman  
5056 Hooper Lane  
Chico, CA 95928





VALLEY'S EDGE SPECIFIC PLAN PROJECT  
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (EIR) NOTICE OF PREPARATION (NOP)

COMMENT FORM

Please provide the following information if you wish to receive a Notice of Availability of the Draft EIR and to document the author of comments received. Thank you.

Name: JULIAN ZENER, M.D.

Email: JULIANZENER@comcast.net

Address: 1621 N. CHERRY ST, CHICO, CA 95926

Organization: SIERRA CLUB

☒ I would like to receive future environmental notices via email.

Please provide us with your written comments on the NOP no later than 5:00 p.m. on **Friday, September 13, 2019**. Comments on the NOP may be sent to:

City of Chico Community Development Department  
Mike Sawley, Senior Planner  
411 Main Street, P.O. Box 3420  
Chico, CA 95927  
mike.sawley@chicoca.gov  
(530) 879-6812

You may attach additional pages to this form and/or you may submit your written comments separately. Written comments on the scope of the EIR will be acknowledged in the Draft EIR and will be considered in preparation of the document.

My CONCERN IS ABOUT WATER  
WHAT ANALYSIS HAS BEEN DONE TO STUDY  
THE IMPACT ON GROUND WATER AND VIABILITY  
OF STREAMS WITH AN ADDITIONAL 5,000  
PEOPLE (AT BUILD-OUT) IN SOUTHEAST CHICO  
IN THIS ERA OF SCARCITY? (2) HOW AFFORDABLE  
WILL THE UNIT-HOMES BE FOR THE AVERAGE  
CHICO (AND PARADISE REFUGEE) RESIDENTS?

[Signature]



VALLEY'S EDGE SPECIFIC PLAN PROJECT  
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (EIR) NOTICE OF PREPARATION (NOP)

COMMENT FORM

Please provide the following information if you wish to receive a Notice of Availability of the Draft EIR and to document the author of comments received. Thank you.

Name: GRACE M. MARVIN

Email: G-MARVIN@COMCAST.net

Address: 1621 N. Cherry St., Chico 95926

Organization: Yuba Group of the Sierra Club,  
Conservation Chair

☒ I would like to receive future environmental notices via email.

Please provide us with your written comments on the NOP no later than 5:00 p.m. on **Friday, September 13, 2019**. Comments on the NOP may be sent to:

City of Chico Community Development Department  
Mike Sawley, Senior Planner  
411 Main Street, P.O. Box 3420  
Chico, CA 95927  
mike.sawley@chicoca.gov  
(530) 879-6812

You may attach additional pages to this form and/or you may submit your written comments separately. Written comments on the scope of the EIR will be acknowledged in the Draft EIR and will be considered in preparation of the document.

- Major concerns I have:
- ① Can you assure us that there will be <sup>(A)</sup> sufficient bus transportation <sup>(B)</sup> lanes to easily access downtown Chico? This is in accordance with the issue "of Vehicle Miles Travelled", which we must reduce in the interest of combatting Climate Change.
  - ② I also have much concern about the project not (yet?) having truly affordable housing for local people who need such housing. That is essential for home building in this area.
  - ③ What are your specific plans for water + sewage? We must manage our ground and surface water sustainably.
- Grace M. Marvin





Caroline J Burkett 364 Idyllwild Circle, Chico, California 95928

---

RECEIVED

September 10, 2019

SEP 13 2019

CITY OF CHICO  
PLANNING SERVICES

City of Chico Community Development  
Mike Sawley, Senior Planner  
411 Main Street  
PO Box 3420  
Chico, California 95927

RE: Valley's Edge  
Notice of Preparation of an EIR and Scoping Meeting

Dear Mr. Sawley,

I moved to Chico many years ago because it was and still is a friendly town where the residents love and respect the qualities of their community and natural habitats. I wish to express my concern for Valley's Edge's development because of its location, size, and its proximity to a fragile habitat. There is a great love and appreciation by residents of Chico for the creeks (year round and seasonal), and the floral and fauna habitats in the foothills that hopefully will be recognized in Chico's planning.

1,448 acres with 1,392 residential units, plus elementary school, businesses, stadium and, various kind and sizes of parks in an area where there are other developments in the planning stage, already in-progress and completed (from the Skyway along Bruce Road to Manzanita, and east and west on Hwy 32) is not good planning. The potential for a development this size to be detrimental to the environment, water resources, protection of wildlife and habitat, infrastructure (water, wells, roads, landscaping, etc.) is staggering.

I feel Valley's Edge is detrimental to Chico in its current proposed location.

Sincerely yours,

Caroline J. Burkett

September 13, 2019

FROM:

Paul & Kathy Coots  
2646 E 20<sup>th</sup> Street  
Chico, CA 95928  
[pkcoots@comcast.net](mailto:pkcoots@comcast.net)  
(530) 898-1799

TO:

City of Chico Community Development Dept  
Mike Sawley, Senior Planner  
411 Main Street  
PO Box 3420  
Chico, CA 95927  
[mike.sawley@chicoca.gov](mailto:mike.sawley@chicoca.gov)  
(530) 879-6812

RE: VALLEY'S EDGE SPECIFIC PLAN PROJECT

Dear Mr. Sawley,

We are pleased to submit our written comments on the scope of the environmental analysis for the *Valley's Edge Specific Plan Project* as detailed in the *Notice of Preparation* dated August 14, 2019. We have reviewed nearly every page (over 600) of the various related documents currently posted at the city's website, and Kathy attended the Scoping Meeting on August 29, 2019. We have many concerns regarding the project. We are hopeful that the specialists involved in the analysis of the impact to our environment are able to closely examine the various issues, provide their expert insight, and suggest alternatives or resolutions to our various concerns.

This letter addresses our environmental concerns in alphabetical order for ease of the preparers of the Draft EIR and staff at the City Community Development Department.

### **Aesthetics**

Quotes from 'city' documents:

*"Publicly accessible views, such as those from streets, sidewalks, parks, scenic roads and vista points are the subject of CEQA analysis. A negative change in the visual character of an area, or the obstruction of existing scenic vista which has typically been available to the general public would be considered an impact. Visual impact at nighttime are evaluated by considering sources of additional light and glare from the project."* (Stonegate Draft EIR, page IV.B.-1)

*"...at the transition of the valley floor and lower foothill region."* (VE Notice of Preparation, page 2)

*"Policy OS-2.4 (Foothill Viewshed)-Preserve the foothills as a natural backdrop to the urban form."* (City General Plan 2030)

*"Preliminary Studies, Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment elevation profiles on PDF page 249 Target Property Topography"*

Our perspective is that the foothill viewshed, from this southeastern portion of Chico, will be essentially ruined by the development of Valley's Edge. No more grazing cattle seen along the horizon. Instead, the views currently enjoyed from Bruce Road, the Steve Harrison Bike Path or the Skyway will be cluttered with houses, apartments, and commercial development. At night, there will be lights shining down toward the city from the Sports Fields located along the most western border. It seems that virtually the entire property is above the 270' elevation deemed the boundary for development in order to protect the foothill viewshed for all residents and visitors to Chico. We realize that in the City of Chico General Plan 2030, this area was designated as a "Special Planning Area" as a prospect for future growth. Part of the reasoning it would seem is due to the fact that the adjacent property, now known as Stonegate, was in a Resource Constraint Overlay, and could only be built out at approximately 15% if at all. Now in 2019, things have changed.

Protect the viewshed for all travelers along Skyway and Bruce. Please provide an analysis for this aesthetic feature that once gone is lost forever.

### **Air Quality**

Because Valley's Edge Specific Plan includes an elementary school and significant recreational property (outdoor activities), it will be especially important to ensure the cleanest of air during the build out. Please include an analysis that details air pollutants during the various phases of construction. Consider, please depicting this information in an easy-to-consume manner. Tables, graphs, charts that are color-coded for easy analysis. Much of the area of proposed development of Valley's Edge burned on November 8, 2018. Will any of the dirt need to be removed? Although no buildings burned, the area would have been saturated with the soot and ash raining down during that catastrophic event.

Elderly (over 65) and children are especially sensitive to air pollutants. The property is slated to have about 50% of its housing for 'seniors' and a significant portion for an Elementary school. Proposing a Phase-in model to protect these populations from poor air quality may be of service to the developers and to homebuyers. The project lifespan for Stonegate's 450 plus home is 25 years. How long will air quality be impacted by 2,777 home buildout?

We also want to know about the air quality related to the nearby Franklin Construction paving and asphalt yard and its impact to the Senior Living area. Seniors are particularly sensitive to air pollutants and it just seems that air quality here may be an issue.

### **Biological Resources**

While Valley's Edge does not appear to host the numbers of endangered or threatened species as the adjacent Stonegate property, however, we are very much concerned about the detriment to sensitive species that may depend on this property, especially given very recent

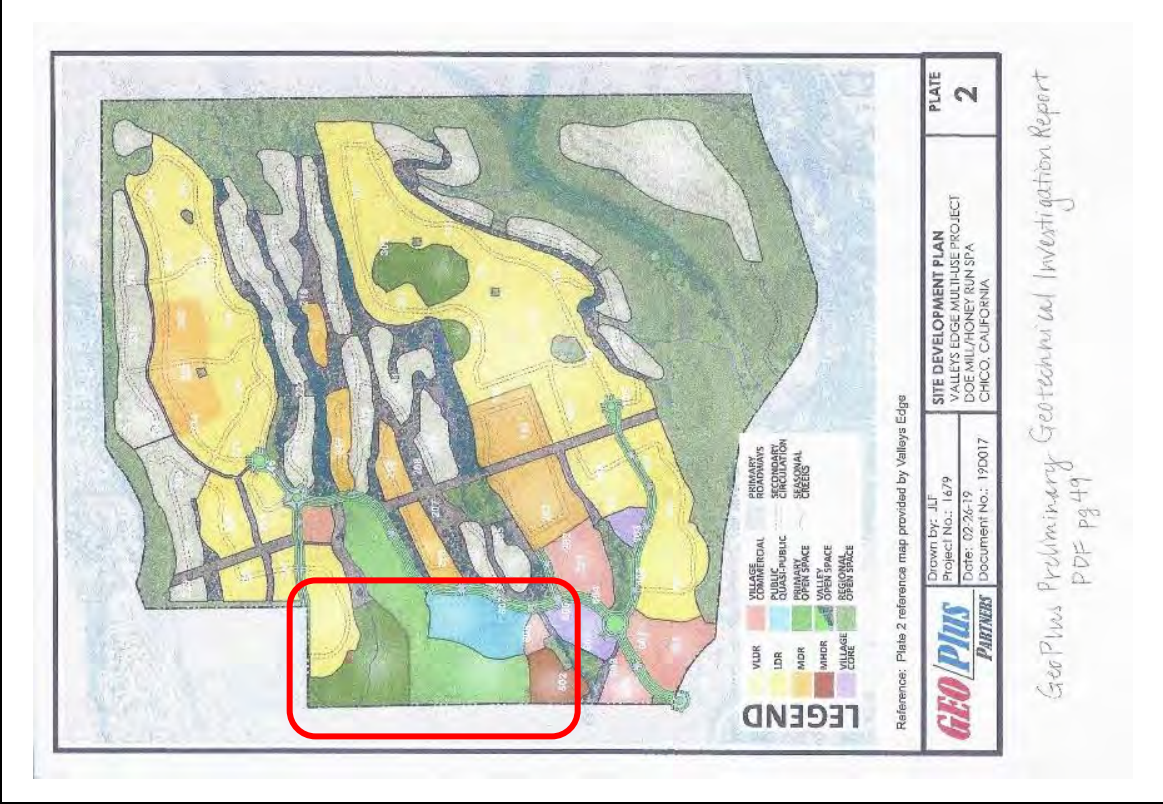
fire events. Of course on November 8, 2018 the devastating Camp Fire burned through Valley's Edge property, right up to the Steve Harrison Bike Path on the most western property line. The Biological Resource Assessment states on page 16:

*"Multiple years of protocol-level botanical survey have been conducted within the BSA with the most recent survey occurring in 2017."*

Therefore any 'protocol-level surveys' would need to be repeated in order to determine current populations. The immediately adjacent Stonegate property just endured a 26-acre fire, burning a very significant portion of the property that was set aside as a preserve for Butte County Meadowfoam (BCM is a federally-listed endangered species). We realize that Valley's Edge EIR is not about the Stonegate preserve fire, but wanted to make note of the fact that both properties have recently endured fire and the resulting impact to biologically sensitive resources is unknown or at the very least quite hazy.

BCM is known to occupy both Stonegate and Valley's Edge properties. There are other threatened, sensitive species. This is one that is perhaps most dependent on this particular area of land in Chico. To our knowledge an updated biological opinion has not been issued by the US Fish and Wildlife Service regarding BCM. This is a requirement of the Stonegate permitting, we believe.

We noticed from the documents posted related to Valley's Edge an issue with that greatly concerns us. There are two maps displaying the concern. From the Biological Resource Assessment completed by Gallaway Enterprises, on PDF page 72 there is a map showing white cross hairs noting the area NOT surveyed for biological resources. Yet on the GeoPlus Preliminary Geotechnical Investigation Report on PDF page 49, there is a map clearly depicting homes to be built on the area known to host BCM. In addition to homes, this area is to be a part of the regional park and even perhaps the apartment complex. Please detail and investigate all instances of the species at risk known to inhabit this property.



GeoPlus Preliminary Geotechnical Investigation Report  
 PDF pg 49



PDF Pg 72 from Biological Resource Assessment

We certainly appreciate all we have heard from Brouhard regarding the planning involved to create a design that flows with land. We are just not convinced anything should be built on this property. The waters here flow into the current Doe Mill BCM Preserve and the proposed Stonegate Preserve. Stonegate's EIR was approved by the City of Chico about 10 weeks before the Camp Fire. Valley's Edge preliminary biological studies were completed before the Camp Fire and the more recent Stonegate Preserve fire. Additionally, Dave Derby, a CalFire forester was quoted in Chico ER on September 13, 2019 that it takes "2 to 5 years for full shock of fire to play out in tree health." Many trees certainly burned the night of the Camp Fire. This one glowed at its base the entire 2 weeks.



Valley Oak locate just east of Steve Harrison Bike Path, gate for Doe Mill Preserve in foreground. The true health of this tree seems questionable as at its base there existed the entire 2 weeks a red smoldering glow. Picture taken Nov. 11, 2018.

We are confident that within the EIR process, the California Native Plant Society and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and others will be consulted for expert advice regarding the biological resources threatened by Valley's Edge development.

### **Cultural Resources**

Because we can view only a small portion of the document detailing some new historic and prehistoric sites located on the property, along with previously noted ones, we have few significant issues. Given that so much of this property is considered open space, with trails and access to so many recreational users, we are curious to learn how these sites will be protected from tampering without clearly delineating where they are located. We are confident that the City, the developer(s), and interested parties will work together to protect these sites and the information they hold. We have heard horror stories of sensitive areas disturbed by a sub-contractor in other places. Of course, it appears from plans that the land use plan protects most all of the rock walls—and Chico does love its rock walls. And we are also curious to learn how the wagon wheel ruts will be preserved, yet showcased for area students to visit.



## Energy

We are excited to learn of a travel lane designated for Neighborhood Electric Vehicles is in the planning. We see that PG&E is to provide natural gas and electricity to the area. We also understand that State requires all homes to have solar beginning in 2020. Given the large area for a regional park recreational fields (sprinklers) as well as the Frontier Lakes planned, at what cost in energy is it pump the water to supply these larger features? What other sustainable features are possible besides solar? With so many 'estate' size lots, it seems the costs to supply energy is considerably higher than a denser buildout. It also seems that to reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions, consideration of NOT providing natural gas to the area is warranted. We believe we've heard that Chico has a goal of 100% renewable energy by 2025.

## Geology and Soils

From the geologic study done by GeoPlus dated February 27, 2019, PDF page 24:

*"...this site does present several significant development planning and design challenges from a geotechnical perspective. These factors include:*

- *Excavatability of the strong lahar bedrock;*
- *Suitability of on-site materials for use as engineered fill, select material or landscape soil;*
- *Seepage through lahar fractures/cracks and coarse fill material;*
- *Limited amount of on-site soil for fill construction and/or landscape activities;*
- *Cut-fill transitions and differential settlement within deeper fills; and*
- *Foundation resistance to lateral and uplift loads."*

And from PDF Page 25:

*"The use of mechanical rock breaking equipment, blasting and/or chemical rock breaking may be necessary. Rock trenchers can typically move through the lahar; however, they do have more trouble in portions of the lahar with higher concentrations of andesite boulders, which the local contractors sometimes call 'blue rock'."*

We have a vivid memory of the trenching involved to create a storm drainage option for the Belvedere Heights neighborhood. The trenching occurred along Dawn Crest and E. 20<sup>th</sup> Street within the boundary of the Valley's Edge property. The trenching was required to move the storm water from an unnamed creek. The required equipment was noisy to say the least, and required a very significant amount of time to completion. The pictures used in the GeoPlus report include some from the drain system. This area is known to have incredibly strong bedrock. Water collects and moves quickly down the watershed. Creation of storm drains, sewer pipelines, and underground utilities seems to come at a very high cost given the geology of the area. There's a reason it has been historically pasture and not farm land.

We are interested in learning about how the geology of this property affects the hydrology and the implementation of storm water drainage and pollution prevention plans given the hard bedrock.

### **Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

We are very concerned about the effects of GHG Emissions on our climate and what the future holds for our children, our grandchildren, and our great grandchildren. We request that the EIR include a comprehensive analysis of GHG Emissions associated with this proposal and the cumulative effects when coupled with the wide variety of construction projects already approved, and tentatively approved. We also want to see an analysis for various levels of build out, i.e. perhaps Phase 1, Phase 2, etc. As a society, we need to be considering how to reduce GHGs, not increase them to build a neighborhood community with HOAs to maintain the expenses as a big part of the financial plan. We live in Chico because: *"The City strives to improve and protect its air quality, climate, and human health by reducing harmful emissions, such as greenhouse gases. Chico will lead the way to a healthy environment...."* (from page 1-3 of the Chico General Plan 2030). Stonegate's GHG emissions predict in 2035 a total annual GHG Emissions in Metric Tons as 13,680, the Threshold is merely 1,100 MT. That's for an area of 216 acres. What does nearly 700 acres pencil out to?

How will bicycle travel be encouraged? Skyway is NOT a corridor for bikes, so E. 20<sup>th</sup> becomes key. How will E. 20<sup>th</sup> be redesigned to ensure cyclist safety? How will the City and County transit systems be incorporated? Not only incorporated, but how will mass transit be encouraged for use by residents of Valley's Edge?

The EIR process for Valley's Edge may want to examine the spreadsheet found at this link:

<https://www.sierraclub.org/california/cnrcc/ecc-support-climate-emergency-actions>

Of particular interest is the Toolbox, Item 2: ECC's compilation of ordinances, agency rules, and practices to accelerate GHG reductions. While considering the various environmental impacts for Valley's Edge, in addition to the Planning Commission review, it seems pertinent that the new Climate Action Committee provides its insight and recommendations to the City Council as well.

### **Hazards and Hazardous Materials**

We have no immediate concerns or questions regarding hazardous materials for the Valley's Edge Proposal. The only 'hazard' condition that we are curious about is evacuation plans in the event of a wildfire for those working on the property, or for the first few residents, given only E 20<sup>th</sup> Street as the first road to be developed into the area, what is the response time for fire or other emergency, what is the evacuation plan and timing in event of emergency? Remember we've had two fires in this immediate area within the year.



## Hydrology and Water Quality

We believe stormwater runoff and drainage may be pretty big issues for the proposed development and for adjacent watersheds, both eventually flowing to Butte Creek. We have photos taken from the Steve Harrison Bike Path showing fairly typical water runoff after rains. And more recent photos taken since the Camp Fire. Because all plant material was incinerated, it appears that the water runs differently. Plus that water now runs differently onto and into the proposed Stonegate Preserve, which is intended to protect BCM.

See photos below. We are happy to share all that we have taken, these are just representative.

Photos from Oct 29, 2016 Valley Edge side	Directly across bike path to Stonegate same date
	
We use this bike path often. We have many pictures taken through different seasons and weather. The two photos above show what the typical storm runoff used to look like and the drains that helped to move the water under the bike path. The Camp Fire appears to have changed all that. The two photos below help to demonstrate how rain water now flows across the property and onto the adjacent proposed Stonegate 'Preserve.' The waters in the right photo below went up and over the bike path.	
Photo taken on Nov 29, 2018	Photo from December 18, 2018
	

As our home is in a flood zone, we are curious to know if a permit from the Central Valley Flood Protection Agency will be required. While the Valley's Edge property may never experience flooding, the watershed area may be inundated beyond its capacity to handle the storm drainage dependent on the storm drainage design. This very well may impact the current flood control design.

Given a very recent newspaper article in the Chico Enterprise Record regarding the use of Paradise Irrigation District water 'in the short term,' we are curious about long-term plans for water for the proposed Valley's Edge plan. *"Chico gets all its water from wells. A law passed a couple of years back will effectively restrict the use of groundwater. Chico is the biggest straw stuck down into the aquifer underground in these parts...California Water Service will need a new source of surface water."* (Chico, Paradise problems may have a single solution, Sept. 10, 2019) A lasting solution must be determined before any development occurs. An aquifer study using very recent data must be used to understand the impact to hydrology. The significance of understanding our underground aquifer is gaining so much more clarity. Find the best information to report here. Without water, there is no Chico. In a related article in the Chico ER published on September 11, 2019 titled Supervisors OK study on pipeline feasibility, a county supervisor is quoted as saying, "I am concerned this project (a pipeline between Paradise and Chico) would cause more unneeded sprawl between Chico and Paradise. That is not congruent with our general plan in terms of growth." So are we. Urban sprawl is NOT something we want, nor do we believe most Chico or Butte County residents want. With leads us to Land Use.

### **Land Use and Planning/Population and Housing**

We understand that the EIR will not involve an examination of this project's impact to 'population and housing.' We do want to state that the City General Plan for Chico 2030 and the Land Absorption Report that came out in 2018, were both pre-Camp Fire and conditions are now quite different. According to a City of Chico Memorandum dated May 7, 2019, BCAG received State Funding to answer current and long-term forecasts for population, housing, land use and traffic. The study is estimated to take about 2 years. Giving a green light to Valley's Edge before knowing whether Stonegate is fully permitted, whether we have a 'need' for the housing that the Valley's Edge plan proposes—is putting the cart before the horse.

### **Noise and Vibration**

Our comments here are mostly in regard to traffic noise and construction noise. With plans for over 2500 dwellings, and an elementary school all located on hardpan, the constant rock-breaking and rock-hauling could easily be an issue for many local neighborhoods and for the residents who buy homes first in the proposed development. How can this rock-pounding noise be solved? The traffic noise must also be considered for the entire area.

### **Public Service and Recreation**

The recreational plans for the area are impressive; but at what costs? If the area is to be Homeowner's Association governed, then was access will others in the City of Chico have to the recreational settings available, and who pays for maintenance? Valley's Edge is located in the Wildland-Urban Interface and as such is at higher risk for fire. Although it is located reasonably near a City Fire Station, what will the response time be for fire, ambulance, or police?

Is it possible to determine where children from the Valley's Edge neighborhood might attend preschool? Will there be sufficient space at the middle and high schools for those children?

### **Public Utilities and Service Systems**

How is Chico increasing its ability to manage the increase in sewage and sewage treatment?

### **Transportation and Circulation**

Because our front door faces E. 20<sup>th</sup> Street and E 20<sup>th</sup> Street will be one of only two exits from Valley's Edge, we have serious concern to the amount of traffic, during construction and of course once the area is fully developed. We already have a lot of traffic and with the Camp Fire and the build out of Meriam Park, the E. 20<sup>th</sup> St at Bruce Road intersection is worse. During the Stonegate EIR a traffic study indicated with the buildout of Stonegate and Valley's Edge (with only about 2000 homes, rather than 2777) that intersection would go from a rating of 'B' to 'F.' Of course that traffic study was pre-Camp Fire and it makes sense that a renewal of the information is warranted.

We have serious concerns about the speed of some drivers along E. 20<sup>th</sup>, as do most of our neighbors. With an extension of E. 20<sup>th</sup> at a nearly straight line into the Valley's Edge property as a key collector, the speeding is likely to increase along with the volume, especially if folks know they are going to have to wait at the traffic light for prolonged periods during commute. We are looking for a redesign of the E 20<sup>th</sup> extension into Valley's Edge in an effort to calm speeding. The sheer volume of vehicles is huge. The road would be a straight downhill slope.



Current 'dead-end' at far eastern end of E. 20<sup>th</sup> Street looking downhill (westward) toward Bruce Road. Homes only along northern edge. Redesign of this portion of E. 20<sup>th</sup> Street along with financing for improvements should be considered along with the Valley's Edge Proposal as this roadway will receive a ***dramatic*** rise in the numbers of vehicles per day.

Which brings safety to mind for cyclists, pedestrians, and kids walking to and from school as well as drivers. How will children who live in Doe Mill safely walk to school if they must cross E 20<sup>th</sup>? How will drivers exiting either Belvedere Heights or Doe Mill get a chance to hop into the flow down the street? How will E 20<sup>th</sup> Street in its current configuration safely serve the huge increase in traffic? We also see issues with a round-a-bout entrance on the Skyway to Valley's Edge, but as we do not use the Skyway often, we do not have clarity over issues, although cyclists' safety comes to mind. Please consider consulting with our area's cycling clubs, Chico VELO and Chico Corsa for input regarding how they currently use the Steve Harrison Bike Path connector and best safety options for cyclists traveling along Valley's Edge.

At one point during a traffic study for our neighborhood we were shown the future street design that would be right outside our front door. A lane for parked cars, a lane for bicyclists, a lane for westbound cars, an eastbound left turn lane, a lane for eastbound cars, a bicycle lane, a sidewalk immediately adjacent to the backyards of Stonegate homes. What funds are designated for this improvement to E. 20th? This is not included in the plans for Valley's Edge, but without this planning all homes built on that property, all homes currently in Belvedere Heights and Doe Mill are at increased risk for disaster in case of fire. E. 20<sup>th</sup> is the ONLY way out for Belvedere Heights. A plan for a bridge over the diversion channel connecting Potter Road never came to fruition. Only one way out is not an evacuation plan.

This is about improving the current roadways before the construction trucks start arriving—not after. Looking around at many Chico streets, there is no funding for road improvement. So

what is the plan? In talking to neighbors, we would like to be consulted during the EIR process regarding plans for E. 20<sup>th</sup> Street traffic and street re-design.

### **Wildfire**

Traffic is secondary to wildfire. Regarding what we can see in the current map for Valley's Edge, it appears that most streets are dead-ends. I (Kathy) lived at the end of the dead end street during a small wildfire that broke out mid-day in July in the foothills of Oroville back in 1984. Kathy had to walk out carrying her 1-year-old and holding the hand of her 4-year-old, as the neighborhood had only one lane access, being used by fire fighting equipment.

A traffic snarl is a mess, perhaps an accident with injury to one or a few. Wildfire is of grave concern to us. In light of the Camp Fire, why are we even considering building in an area identified as a fire hazard severity zone? What are we learning about the Tubbs Fire, the Carr Fire and the lives and homes lost? Many homes were in the 'foothills' of the larger cities of Santa Rosa and Redding. Santa Rosa's upscale Fountaingrove neighborhood followed all recommended fire-mitigation tactics. Vegetation was cleared, homes were built with fire-resistant materials, and it even had an entire second road system for firefighters. The neighborhood was leveled during the Tubbs fire.

What are the best practices for a mass notification system (especially with an elementary school within the project proposal), or evacuation procedures? Over the past 50 years, human beings have expanded increasingly into the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI). We encourage the City and the EIR consultants to investigate the ease and expense of finding fire insurance for any 'estate-style' home in the Valley's Edge footprint, which incidentally is also the footprint of the Camp Fire. At what costs to property, investments, and lives will we continue to build in the 'transition of the valley floor and lower foothill region'? The Camp Fire already burned in the area, so what are the chances it would burn again anytime soon? Ask anyone in Concow, on Neal Road, over in the east foothills of Oroville, or Bangor if an area might burn again anytime soon.

Ask any parent of any child at any school in Chico, would you want your child to 'shelter in place' in the event of a fire? The area of Valley's Edge could easily be surrounded by fire given its topography...and only 2 exits, both on the western edges. Shelter in place would be the only option.

Virtually all the upcoming photos were taken from our balcony, facing east on November 8, 2018. The trees seen on the horizon are the trees on Valley's Edge property. Our neighborhoods were evacuated about 10 hours after the initial start of the Camp Fire. Just a few weeks later, we were advised to evacuate due to flooding.



Nov 8,  
2018  
8:03 a.m.



9:23 a.m.



11:06  
a.m.



3:34 p.m.

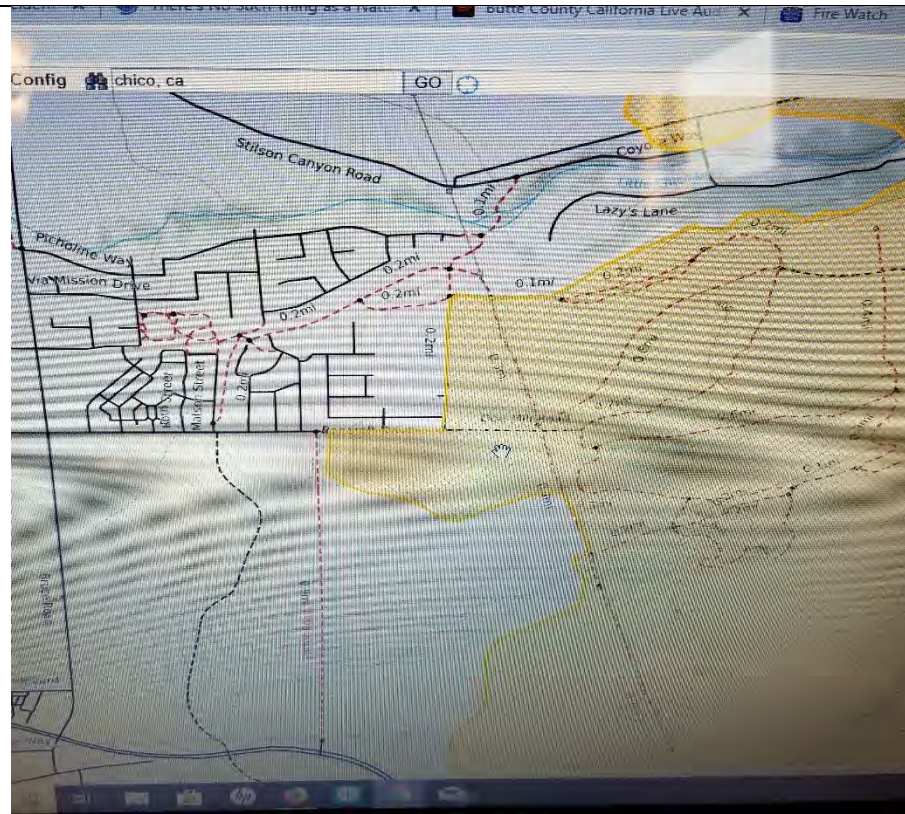


7:40 p.m.





Fire footprint, most western boundary is Steve Harrison Bike Path. One home in Stilson Canyon was lost.







Nov 11,  
2018



Along E.  
20<sup>th</sup> at  
bike path,  
photo  
taken  
Nov. 25th





<p>Nov 25<sup>th</sup> Valley's Edge left, Doe Mill Preserve near right, distance is Stonegate preserve.</p>	
<p>A very recent fire, August 12, 2019 on adjacent Stonegate property.</p>	

Perhaps we need to think of a defensible space for Chico, rather than just each home having a defensible space. That is exactly how the Valley's Edge property served to protect perhaps quite a lot of Chico the night of November 8, 2018. Chico has a Greenline to protect its agricultural assets, perhaps Chico needs a Fire-boundary to protect Chico from fires heading into its residential areas from the fire-prone foothills.

In conclusion, while some may view this letter as a response from 'NIMBYs,' we would hope that it will be viewed as a letter from Chico residents who have specific concerns and questions regarding the build out of Valley's Edge into a large-scale development. While we can see the heart and soul that has gone into the planning to date, we hope that the City of Chico and the developer examine this proposal with very new eyes, and keep the impact of the Camp Fire sitting on their shoulders as decisions are made. The future of residential construction given the high need for housing—affordable housing at that—means we must consider full build-out within Opportunity Sites *in* Chico first, not on the outskirts of Chico. Few in Chico would be able to afford the housing to be built in Valley's Edge, and our guess is the apartments and senior living options will also be well-above the financial means of those looking at those options.

Please feel free to contact us at any time regarding clarification of any comment made herein or for assistance organizing a neighborhood gathering for Doe Mill an/and Belvedere Heights residents for their feedback, especially regarding traffic concerns and wildfire safety.

Sincerely,



Paul Coots



Kathy Coots

**Law Offices of  
Richard L. Harriman  
1078 Via Verona Drive  
Chico, California 95973-1031  
Telephone: (530) 343-1386  
Email: harrimanlaw1@sbcglobal.net**

September 13, 2019

**VIA EMAIL TRANSMISSION ONLY**  
**[mike.sawley@chicoca.gov]**

Mike Sawley, Senior Planner  
Community Development Department  
City of Chico  
411 Main Street  
Chico, CA 95926

Re: Valley's Edge Specific Plan  
Comments re Scope of Environmental Impact Report (EIR)  
By Northern California Environmental Defense Center

Dear Mr. Sawley:

As indicated to you at the Scoping Meeting regarding the above-referenced project, I am submitting the following comments on behalf of the Northern California Environmental Defense Center and the residents and other members of the City of Chico.

Although I have high personal regard for the Applicant and respect his and his team's efforts to prosecute this highly ambitious project, there are many aspects of this project which must be identified, analyzed, and addressed in a legally complete and adequate full Environmental Impact Report (EIR), as set forth below.

### **1. Climate Change and Carbon Emissions/Energy Analysis**

The EIR must identify, fully disclose, analyze, and consider all substantial impacts and potentially significant environmental effects caused by the proposed project, as required by State law and the City of Chico's Sustainability Element and Climate Action Plan, as amended. All direct, indirect, and secondary impacts must be disclosed, identified, quantified, and considered in the EIR.

In addition, all feasible and available measures to avoid and/or mitigate the carbon emissions generated and/or caused by this project must be identified, disclosed, and considered in the EIR, including, but not limited to, using renewable energy for all heating, lighting, and

transportation needs caused and/or created by this project, such as PV solar energy, electric vehicles, including cars, busses, gardening and maintenance vehicles and equipment. All housing, retail/commercial, office buildings, public schools and other government buildings, and industrial and business parks should be required to have renewable energy and state of the art energy storage equipment. Public transportation vehicles should also be required to be electric and non-fossil fueled engines.

Finally, the analysis and consideration of the Energy supply and use must be detailed and quantified, in order to evaluate and assess the adequacy of the analysis and the potential alternatives that may be readily available and feasible to avoid and/or reduce the unnecessary consumption of fossil fuel energy sources for heating and transportation.

## **2. Land Use and Transportation Related Impacts**

The EIR must include disclosure, identification, analysis, and consideration of all substantial environmental impacts and potentially significant effects from all land uses included in the Specific Plan and General Plan Amendment and Zoning and other entitlements proposed for the proposed project. Specifically, the EIR should include, without limitation, a “Jobs to Housing” analysis and proposed conditions and mitigation measures to avoid and/or mitigate the substantial adverse direct, indirect, and secondary impacts and significant environmental effects from such adverse impacts, as disclosed, analyzed, and considered in the EIR.

Based upon the disclosed number of dwelling units proposed for the 1,448 acre project site, it appears that there will be only a 2:1 dwelling unit per acre average for the overall project. The average dwelling unit per acre ratio recommended in the “Valley Blueprint” for the San Joaquin Valley is 8:1 du/ac. In fact, the City of Modesto had a du/ac ratio of 7.8:1 over five years ago. Thus, the jobs/housing balance will be a critical metric for a legally adequate EIR for this project, along with an emission-free public transportation system for both on-site residents who commute to on-site and off-site jobs and off-site commuters who travel to and from the Valley’s Edge employment sites.

## **3. Adverse Impacts to Air Quality and Significant Environmental Effects from Criterion Air Emissions**

Likewise, the EIR must include a detailed identification, disclosure, analysis, and discussion of the substantial direct, indirect, and secondary adverse impacts and potentially significant environmental effects from criterion emissions regulated by the Federal Clean Air Act (FCAA) and the California Clean Air Act (CCAA). Specifically, the EIR should identify and disclose, analyze, and consider a detailed quantification of all criterion emissions, such as Carbon Monoxide (CO), Precursors of Ozone (O<sub>2</sub>), Ozone, and Particulate Matter (2.5 and 10 ppm).

Also, included with the detailed quantification and assessment of these impacts, the EIR must include a specific and detailed identification, disclosure, analysis, and consideration of the reasonable available and feasible alternatives, along with measures to avoid and/or mitigate the

adverse impacts and potentially significant environmental effects, such as how to avoid and/or reduce cumulative impacts from smog or haze that may accumulate on the foothills on which the project is proposed to be located. [This impact is also referred to in the “Aesthetics” section below.]

Finally, the public health and safety impacts to “sensitive receptors” (senior adults, children, and persons with chronic respiratory diseases, such as Asthma, Bronchitis, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, and/or Valley Fever should be identified, disclosed, analyzed, and considered, along with measures to avoid and/or mitigate such adverse impacts.

#### **4. Wastewater Treatment and Treatment Facilities**

Currently available reliable data discloses that the existing overdraft of the groundwater supply in the Vina Sub-basin upon which California Water Service Company (CWSC) depends for its water supply proposed to be used by the proposed project, before the Stonegate aka “Stonehenge” development and the proposed project have been completed. Therefore, it is essential that the EIR for the proposed project disclose, identify, analyze, and consider the readily available and feasible alternatives for water conservation, on-site treatment of effluent produced by the on-site developed users to a tertiary level by specially engineered on-site treatment facilities, and the re-use of such treated effluent for on-site uses.

In addition, the analysis of use of on-site water treatment facilities should also include a detailed disclosure, analysis, and consideration of the cost/benefit analysis regarding the elimination of the capital expense of infrastructure construction and operation for the underground conveyance system necessary to transport untreated effluent to the City of Chico Wastewater Treatment Facility on River Road and the operating expenses to the on-site users of the off-site treatment facility, as compared with the on-site treatment facilities.

The cost/benefit analysis of off-site v. on-site treatment of effluent should also include a quantified analysis of the re-use and re-charge of the treated effluent on-site for landscaping and other non-potable uses---which would result in less groundwater use, as well as lower capital expense, operating costs, and lower costs to the ratepayers for potable water, conveyance of untreated effluent, and lower wastewater treatment expenses.

#### **5. Aesthetic Impacts**

The EIR for the proposed project should include a detailed identification, disclosure, analysis, and consideration of the substantial adverse impacts and potentially significant environmental effects to the Open Space and Aesthetic resources of the existing viewshed and scenic vistas of the foothills on which the project is proposed to be located. These adverse impacts and significant effects are both substantial and significant. Therefore, it is essential that the EIR identify, disclose, analyze, and consideration the avoidance and mitigation of such avoidable impacts and effects.

In the event that such adverse impacts and significant environmental effects are determined to be unavoidable and not able to be mitigated, these findings must be specifically set forth and quantified and the facts and evidence in support of any proposed Findings of

Overriding Consideration must be quantified and detailed, so that the mitigation measures may be weighed and balance in a quantified manner in order to accurately weigh and balance the costs and benefits set forth in the findings and analysis.

## **6. Public Health and Safety Impacts Analysis re Fire Safety**

After the Paradise Camp Fire Disaster, and the same disaster that was nearly experienced by the residents of the City of Chico, the EIR must include a detailed identification, disclosure, quantified analysis, and consideration of the serious risks of wild land fire hazards to the residents and employees who will live and work in the proposed project area. In fact, this substantial danger was specifically raised by this Commentator before the Butte County Local Agency Formation Commission at its hearing on October 10, 2018, regarding the approval of the Amendment of the Sphere of Influence for this Special Planning Area.

The Paradise Campfire demonstrated the reality of the high risk resulting from the issue of the Wildland Urban Interface (“WUI”) that was presented less than a month prior to the Campfire disaster on November 8, 2018. The EIR should cite and include the extensive and detailed Study that was prepared by the California Little Hoover Commission prior to the Paradise Campfire, during which a back-fire was set on the property that is the subject of this proposed project, in order to barely avoid an urban conflagration in the City of Chico. The Study is too voluminous to include in these comments, but it will should be included in the EIR prepared for this project.

## **7. Chico General Plan and General Plan EIR Consistency and Adequacy Issues**

Likewise, this Commentator has raised in public hearings before the Chico City Council and the Chico City Planning Commission, after the Paradise Camp Fire disaster, that the Chico 2030 General Plan and General Plan EIR adopted in 2011 are now legally inadequate, due to the fact that the environmental background of the City of Chico has been radically changed by the Paradise Camp Fire and the resulting diaspora of the residents of the Town of Paradise and other communities on the Paradise Ridge.

Therefore, the proposed project will require significant amendments to the baseline analysis of the City’s background environment and environmental setting, based on the substantially different baseline data concerning population growth assumptions, public health and safety assumptions in the the Land Use and Open Space Elements and the Final EIR that were adopted and certified, respectively, in 2011.

## **8. Hydrology, Drainage, and Endangered Species Act Issues**

Finally, other commentators will be commenting more extensively on the need to have a detailed and quantified identification, disclosure, analysis, and consideration of the hydrological, drainage, and interference with the natural surface water run-off that will be caused by the proposed project, with specific reference to the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) and



the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) and the Federal Clean Water Act, to update and correct the data and information presented in the Final EIR for the Stonegate project.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments for the record in this matter. My clients and I look forward to being given written notice of the preparation of the Draft EIR and EIS for this proposed project at the email address on the letterhead above.

Respectfully yours,

*/s/ Richard L. Harriman*  
RICHARD L. HARRIMAN

RLH/hr

cc: Clients  
AquAlliance  
Butte Environmental Council  
Smart Growth Advocates

City of Chico Community Development Department  
Mike Sawley, Senior Planner  
411 Main Street, P.O. Box 3420  
Chico CA 95927

September 13, 2019  
Suellen Rowlison  
1363 Woodland Ave.  
Chico, CA 95928

## **RE: Comments on Valley Edge Notice of Preparation for an Environmental Impact Report**

I attended the Valley Edge Scoping meeting on August 29, 2019 and would like my following comments addressed pertaining to the EIR for this project.

### Biological Resources

Butte County meadowfoam (*Limnanthes floccosa* subsp. *californica*) needs to be protected within the 250'-500' setbacks suggested in the Biological Resources Assessment of December 2018, p. 16. Upstream land needs to be protected so vernal pools/ swales are not cutoff from a water source. Other species will benefit from this protection. Adverse effects to vernal pools/swales and wetlands near the southwest corner of the project will add cumulative impacts if the Stonegate project develops their southeast corner. The two corners are in proximity and connected hydrologically, so their development could have adverse impacts on endangered species and hydrology of the vernal pools and swales.

These wetland habitats support not only state-endangered Butte County meadowfoam but federally listed invertebrates such as the vernal pool fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta lynchi*) and tadpole shrimp (*Lepidurus packardii*). These species are protected in the federal Recovery Plan for Vernal Pool Ecosystems of California and Southern Oregon (USFWS, 2005). The Recovery Plan indicates that Butte County meadowfoam which occurs on this or adjacent land is within the "Chico Core Recovery Unit" and subject to the USFWS guidance pertaining to protection measures necessary to recover this species. The meadowfoam and other vernal pool/swale species also depend on specialist pollinator insects which inhabit adjacent grasslands. Any EIR should cover these species and habitats, including avoidance and minimization of impacts; proposed mitigation should be a last resort and must be shown to be effective.

For other biological resource concerns for this project area, please refer to the comments submitted for the adjacent Stonegate development on July 20, 2016 by staff (Tina Bartlett, Jenny Marr) of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to the City of Chico (Bob Summerville).

### Geology and Soils

Since this project is situated on lava cap, at what point does development have an adverse effect on the Tuscan aquifer via surface recharge?

## Greenhouse Gas Emissions

A build out with 2,777 units at the edge of town will add to vehicle miles traveled and greatly increase Greenhouse Gas Emissions and degrade air quality. The project proposes alternative travel internally and service by public transit. Small electric carts and electric Smart cars would be a solution. How can the developer and many different builders be kept to mitigations required for GHG emissions?

## Hydrology/ Drainage

In a wet year the Butte Creek diversion channel may not be able handle all the water runoff at full build out. With the interaction of all the drainages on the property, Comanche Creek, Butte Creek and possible sheet flooding, as been experienced in two developments to the north, the system will be overwhelmed, causing flooding onsite and downstream.

## Transportation and Circulation

At full build out, the two entry ways into the project will be insufficient to handle traffic. The intersection of the south entrance with Skyway is problematic, even with a two lane roundabout. Unless the speed of west bound traffic on Skyway happens to be slowed by a red light at Honey Run Rd. vehicle speed may rise to 50 mph and **on a curve**. While listening to others at the Scoping meeting at the traffic kiosk, the reaction of others was that no way could the project accommodate the Skyway intersection, in such close proximity to the Honey Run Rd. signal, an accident waiting to happen. The 20<sup>th</sup> Street entrance would need to have two lanes in each direction, with land carved out of the Valley Edge project and Stonegate project (which would effect the habitat preserve on its NE corner). A four lane road is especially needed in case of wildfire evacuation.

Having an elementary school within the project would add traffic impact at the beginning and ending of the school day if students were enrolled from other areas besides Valley Edge.

## Wildfire

As housing development moves into the Wildland Urban Interface, there is more risk of wildfire. As was seen with the Camp Fire, fire came down the hill into the grasslands right to the Steve Harrison Memorial Bike Trail (extension of Potter Lane) with the fire department setting back fires to contain it. In fact many residents in developments east of Bruce Rd. evacuated. Consider extra fire safety fees for building in the WUI.

## Cumulative Impacts

Consider cumulative Impacts with the Stonegate housing project , especially on biological resources and traffic concerns, as noted above.

## Mike Sawley

---

**From:** K McHenry <kmchenry@mechoopda-nsn.gov>  
**Sent:** Monday, September 16, 2019 7:01 AM  
**To:** Mike Sawley  
**Subject:** Valley's Edge

Re: Notification of Forthcoming California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review of Valley's Edge Specific Plan Project

Dear Mike:

On Behalf of the Mechoopda Indian Tribe of the Chico Rancheria ("Tribe"), We hereby Submit the following comments to express the Tribe's concerns related to the impacts to sacred places, properties and features of religious, ceremonial and cultural significance to the Tribe with regard to the above-referenced project ("Project")

The Project site lies within the ancestral lands of the Tribe. The Project location and surrounding landscape have long been considered as having cultural, historical, and religious significance for the Tribe. It is undisputed that there is a high sensitivity to the Project site bases on recordings in the area and Tribal knowledge. The Tribe has a deep and abiding cultural and spiritual attachment to their ancestral landscape, which includes and extends beyond the Tribes formal boundaries, including the Project site.

We request a Mechoopda Indian monitor shall be present during all earth moving and grading activities to assure that any potential cultural resources, found during Project ground disturbance be protected.

The Tribe's goal is simple and Clear: ensure the careful and complete implementation of all statutory and regulatory mechanisms for protecting cultural and historical resources to protect tribal cultural and historical resources that may be impacted by the Project.

We look forward to working with you on this matter.

Sincerely,

**Kyle McHenry, Tribal Council**  
**Tribal Historic Preservation officer**  
**Mechoopda Tribe**  
**125 Mission Ranch Blvd, Chico, CA 95926**  
**530-899-8922 ext 203**