

Date: August 19, 2011

To: Interested Parties

From: Danelle Stylos, Community Development Director, City of Oakdale  
Community Development Department

**SUBJECT: NOTICE OF PREPARATION (NOP) FOR AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (EIR) FOR THE CITY OF OAKDALE 2030 GENERAL PLAN UPDATE/SPECIFIC PLANS/CLIMATE ACTION PLAN (CAP) AND PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING**

**PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD: AUGUST 19, 2011 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 19, 2011**

## **INTRODUCTION**

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The City of Oakdale is the Lead Agency for preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the City of Oakdale 2030 General Plan Update, two specific plan projects (Crane Crossing Specific Plan [CCSP] and Sierra Pointe Specific Plan [SPSP]), and a Climate Action Plan (CAP) (proposed project).

The 2030 General Plan creates a framework to plan for and guide residential and non-residential growth and conservation over the next 20 years in Oakdale. This framework is based on a set of comprehensive land use, economic, natural resource, mobility, public facilities and services, noise, and public health and safety goals and policies that support a broad continuation of the current land use pattern within the City, while accommodating new growth in the proposed specific plan areas. The CCSP and the SPSP areas are located in unincorporated Stanislaus County and were identified in the City's current 2015 General Plan as future growth areas. These areas are currently located within the City's existing and future Sphere of Influence and will need to be annexed into the City of Oakdale. The CAP is an implementation tool of the General Plan Update that establishes targets for greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reductions, develops a methodology for tracking and reporting GHG emissions in the future, and provides recommendations for GHG reduction strategies. The EIR will analyze the 2030 General Plan and CAP at a program-level and the two specific plans at a project-level. The program EIR will be designed to streamline future City development and public works projects that are consistent with the General Plan. The project specific analysis of the specific plans will provide the environmental clearance necessary for approval of development entitlements. Additional information on these project components are described herein.

## *Notice of Preparation*

The EIR is being prepared in compliance with the requirements set forth in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Pursuant to CEQA, the Lead Agency must issue a Notice of Preparation (NOP) to inform trustee and local agencies, as well as the public, that an EIR is being prepared. The EIR will evaluate the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project and recommend mitigation measures for any significant impact, as required. The purpose of the NOP is to provide information describing the proposed project and its potential environmental effects to enable comments regarding the scope and content of the information to be addressed in the EIR. Agencies should comment on such information as it relates to their statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project.

## **PROJECT LOCATION**

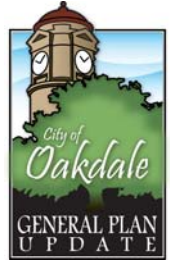
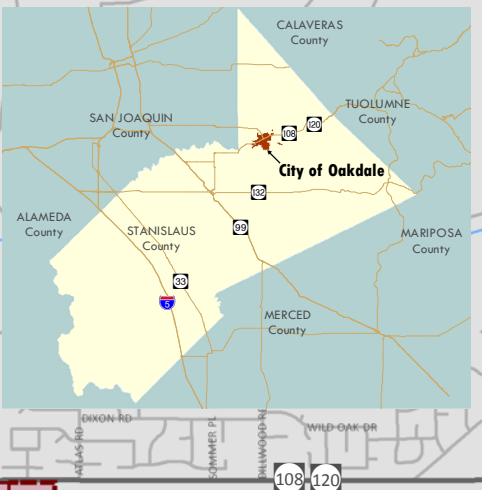
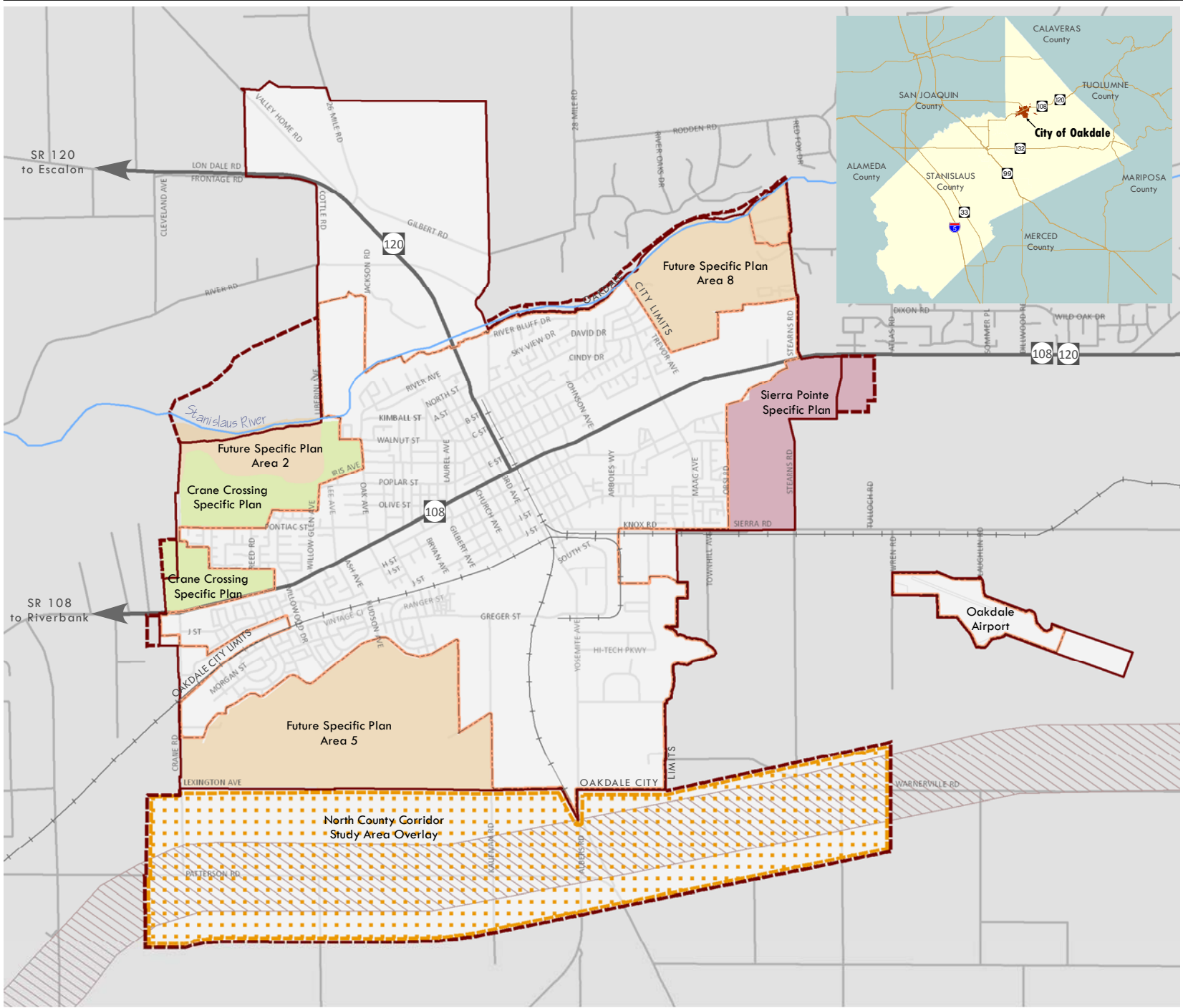
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The City of Oakdale is located at the base of the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains in eastern Stanislaus County, California. Oakdale is approximately 15 miles northeast of Modesto and 30 miles southeast of Stockton. Other smaller cities surrounding Oakdale include Escalon (9 miles northwest), Riverbank (5 miles west), Waterford (10 miles southeast), Hughson (13 miles south), and Ceres (18 miles southwest). The geographic extent of environmental analysis included in the EIR for the proposed project is the Policy Area (see Figure 1). This area is over 14 square miles or approximately 9,089 acres and includes the current Oakdale City limits and the City's existing and future sphere of influence (SOI), which encompass the City's two proposed specific plan areas and other potential new growth areas (i.e., Future Specific Plan Areas 2, 5, and 8, and the North County Corridor Study Area).

## **PROJECT BACKGROUND**

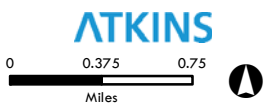
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The general plan is a state-required legal document (Government Code section 65300) that provides guidance to local elected officials when making determinations pertaining to the allocation of resources and the future physical form and character of development. The City of Oakdale's current 2015 General Plan was adopted in January of 1994. This plan has not been comprehensively updated since its adoption, although amendments have occurred as recently as December of 2003. Because much of the data, analyses, and policies in the 2015 General Plan do not reflect the current conditions in the City, a comprehensive update of the General Plan was necessary to accommodate future growth in Oakdale. In 2009, the City of Oakdale began the process of developing a new General Plan, which included outreach to the public through community workshops, stakeholder interviews, and project newsletters.



- Legend**
- Crane Crossing Specific Plan
  - Sierra Point Specific Plan
  - Future Specific Plan Area
  - North County Corridor
  - North County Corridor Study Area Overlay
  - Oakdale City Limits
  - Existing Sphere of Influence
  - Future Sphere of Influence

Source: Stanislaus County, 2009;  
 City of Oakdale, 2008  
 Date Revised: July 27, 2011  
 GP/Alternatives/Policy Area.mxd



The City of Oakdale has historically been an agricultural community with a rich rural ranching heritage. Over the years, the City has experienced a steady and healthy rate of growth, emerging as a distinct freestanding small urban community. Existing land uses within the City are generally characterized by residential, commercial, industrial, public/semi public, and parkland. The predominant existing land use in the existing and future SOI is agriculture, with some residential agricultural areas distinguished by large lot suburban or rural estate homes and active agricultural lands with field crops, orchards, dairy production, pastureland, and/or livestock grazing.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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### *Components to be Analyzed at a Program-Level*

The 2030 General Plan and CAP, as described below, will be analyzed at a program-level in the EIR.

#### **2030 General Plan**

The 2030 General Plan defines goals and policies for Oakdale that support a broad continuation of the current land use pattern within the City, while accommodating new growth within the proposed specific plan areas. It balances the City's vision to maintain a small town character and sense of community, with a commitment to promoting a vital downtown district and broad opportunities for industry and employment.

The 2030 General Plan provides guidance on the future growth and conservation of the City, as well the areas within the City's existing and future SOI. The Preferred Land Use Diagram can be found on the City's website at <http://www.ci.oakdale.ca.us/gp/>.

Specific components of the 2030 General Plan include the following:

#### Within City Limits

- An overall intensification of existing uses could occur under the 2030 General Plan, concentrated along Highways 108 and 120 and the Downtown Central Business District (CBD). A mix of land uses including retail, service commercial, entertainment, restaurant, lodging, office, civic, and residential would be allowed in the CBD. Additional residential units could also be added to existing neighborhoods, and an intensification of general commercial and office uses along the major commercial corridors. New industrial uses concentrated in the southern portion of the City could be built under the new plan.
- Refinements to and some consolidation of the City's current land use designations are included in the 2030 General Plan. A new Flex land use

designation has been added, which accommodates a potential mix of residential, commercial, employment or public use on a single property.

#### Within the Existing and Future SOI

- Buildout under the 2030 General Plan could accommodate a slightly reduced level of development when compared to the Adopted General Plan due to the elimination of Planning Area 6 as a Future Specific Plan area, and reverting back to agricultural uses.
- Future Specific Plan Areas 2, 5, and 8 are identified in the 2030 General Plan as potential new growth areas. The Oakdale City Council may, in the future, initiate a specific plan/annexation planning process and project-specific environmental analysis for one or more of these potential new growth areas based upon market demand, potential benefits and impacts to the City, capacity to provide and fund a full range of public infrastructure and services, and the ability to be consistent with all other General Plan policies. Agriculture is the predominant existing land use in these Future Specific Plan Areas, with smaller amounts of open space and residential uses. Under the 2030 General Plan, a mix of land uses could occur and include residential, commercial, office, parks, open space, and public.
- The 2030 General Plan includes the North County Corridor (NCC) Study Area Overlay designation that is applied to lands south of the City along potential alignments being considered for the future NCC. This designation does not denote any specific land uses but rather specifies future planning considerations. Upon reasonably foreseeable implementation of the NCC, the City Council may approve the comprehensive planning of this area for growth through one or more specific plans, or may choose to retain its existing land use.
- Under the 2030 General Plan, the Stanislaus River corridor is designated for open space and may incorporate passive recreation and trails.

#### General Plan Elements

The 2030 General Plan contains goals, policies, and implementation programs that will address the following topics:

- Land Use and Community Form
- Economic Vitality
- Natural Resources
  - Open Space
  - Biological Resources

- Water Resources and Quality
- Air Quality
- Visual Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Mineral Resources
- Mobility
- Public Facilities
  - Water Service
  - Wastewater Service
  - Storm Drainage
  - Solid Waste
  - Energy
  - Telecommunications
- Public Services
  - Police Protection
  - Fire Protection
  - Parks and Recreation
  - Schools
  - Libraries
- Public Health and Safety
  - Flood Protection
  - Geologic and Seismic Hazards
  - Hazardous Materials
  - Emergency Response and Disaster Preparedness
  - Noise

### **Climate Action Plan**

The Climate Action Plan (CAP) is an implementation tool of the General Plan Update that establishes targets for greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reductions to ensure that the impact of internal City operations and development on air quality is minimized, energy is conserved, and City land use decisions are made consistent with adopted State legislation (i.e., Assembly Bill 32). The CAP develops a baseline communitywide GHG emissions inventory, a methodology for tracking and reporting GHG emissions in the future, and recommendations for GHG reduction strategies. The CAP identifies a list of specific actions that will reduce GHG emissions, with the highest priority given to

actions that provide the greatest reduction in GHG emissions and benefits to the community at the least cost. The CAP will also establish a qualified reduction plan from which future development within the City of Oakdale can tier and streamline the environmental analysis necessary under CEQA.

### *Components to be Analyzed at a Project-Level*

The Crane Crossing and Sierra Pointe specific plans, as described below, will be analyzed at a project-level in the EIR.

#### **Crane Crossing Specific Plan (CCSP)**

The Crane Crossing Specific Plan (CCSP) is approximately 272 acres located approximately 2 miles west of Downtown along Highway 108/West F Street on the northwestern edge of the City in unincorporated Stanislaus County.

The CCSP is comprised of two separate existing land areas that were identified for future growth in Oakdale's 2015 General Plan—Planning Area 1 (North Area) and Planning Area 3 (South Area). Planning Area 1 is comprised of multiple parcels and is approximately 173 acres located to the north of Pontiac Street, east of its intersection with Crane Road. In general, the existing land use in Area 1 is predominately orchards. Planning Area 3 is approximately 99 acres and is located along the north side of Highway 108/West F Street, at the intersection with Crane Road. Area 3 is also comprised of multiple parcels and is bordered to the north and east by residential subdivisions, to the south by Highway 108, and to the west by agricultural land and a portion of Crane Road. Area 3 supports various types of existing land uses including ranch style homes, residential properties containing barn structures, fields, pastureland for animal grazing, and abandoned orchards.

Proposed land uses within the CCSP include residential, parks, and neighborhood-serving commercial and/or office uses. The CCSP area will need to be annexed into the City of Oakdale as part of the specific plan processes. At buildout, the CCSP is planned to provide for approximately 982 dwelling units, ultimately housing an estimated 2,659 residents, and adding approximately 710,000 square feet of neighborhood-serving commercial and/or office uses.

#### **Sierra Pointe Specific Plan (SPSP)**

The Sierra Pointe Specific Plan (SPSP) is approximately 297 acres located approximately 1.5 miles east of the downtown district along Highway 120/East F Street on the eastern edge of the City, in unincorporated Stanislaus County.

The SPSP is generally bounded by Highway 120 to the north, South Stearns Road to the east, Orsi Road to the west, and Sierra Avenue to the south. Identified in Oakdale's 2015 General Plan as Planning Area 9, this area has been targeted to accommodate

future growth in the City. Area 9 is comprised of numerous existing parcels and is bordered to the north by rural residences and to the south by agricultural land. Area 9 supports various types of existing land uses including rural homes, modular homes, single-family homes, agricultural land, orchards, pasture land, and barns.

Proposed land uses within the SPSP include residential, parks, commercial, office, and educational. The SPSP area will need to be annexed into the City of Oakdale as part of the specific plan processes. At buildout, the SPSP is planned to accommodate approximately 897 dwelling units, ultimately housing an estimated 2,378 residents, and adds about 1.1-million square feet of commercial, office, and educational uses.

## **GROWTH ASSUMPTIONS**

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The City of Oakdale continues to experience growth and the California Department of Finance (DOF) projects Oakdale will grow at a rate of approximately 2.5 percent per year through 2030. This growth reflects the City's desirable qualities as a livable community and its success in determining the pace, location, and character of new development. Future growth will result in significant opportunities and challenges for the City resulting in the need to carefully manage this growth.

Table 1 summarizes the growth assumptions for the proposed project including the number of new residential units, non-residential square feet, and increase in population. To estimate the amount of new growth that is anticipated to occur within the City over the next 20 years, City staff considered a range of factors including existing infrastructure constraints, physical or environmental limitations, and socioeconomic trends. Based on this analysis, the City developed its preferred 2030 General Plan, CCSP, and SPSP land use plans and allocated specific land uses and densities/intensities to the new growth areas. The preferred land use plans represent the desired type, amount, and arrangement of future land uses within the City and the specific plan areas. These land use plans form the basis for the General Plan and specific plan policies and the environmental documentation.

Due to current market conditions and growth projections for the region, the City used density/intensity assumptions and persons per household estimates for new growth that are expected to occur within the timeframe of the General Plan, reflecting a foreseeable buildout scenario. The EIR analysis will focus on the 2030 General Plan buildout assumptions included in Table 1.

	Existing (2009)				2009-2030 Net New Growth				2030 General Plan Buildout			
	City	CCSP	SPSP	NGA <sup>1</sup>	City	CCSP	SPSP	NGA <sup>1</sup>	City	CCSP	SPSP	NGA <sup>1</sup>
<b>Single-Family Units<sup>2</sup></b>	5,984	64	81	559	1,823	812	643	3,527	7,807	876	724	4,086
<b>Multi-Family Units<sup>3</sup></b>	1,532	--	--	--	(810)	106	173	1,013	722 <sup>4</sup>	106	173	1,013
<i>Subtotal Units</i>	<i>7,516</i>	<i>64</i>	<i>81</i>	<i>559</i>	<i>1,013</i>	<i>918</i>	<i>816</i>	<i>4,540</i>	<i>8,529</i>	<i>982</i>	<i>897</i>	<i>5,099</i>
<b>Total Dwelling Units</b>	<b>8,220 units</b>				<b>7,287 units</b>				<b>15,507 units</b>			
<i>Subtotal Population</i>	<i>19,882</i>	<i>177</i>	<i>225</i>	<i>1,554</i>	<i>3,350</i>	<i>2,481</i>	<i>2,153</i>	<i>11,952</i>	<i>23,233</i>	<i>2,659</i>	<i>2,378</i>	<i>13,506</i>
<b>Total Population<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>21,838 residents</b>				<b>19,938 residents</b>				<b>41,776 residents</b>			
<i>Subtotal Non-Residential Square Feet</i>	<i>10 M</i>	<i>--</i>	<i>--</i>	<i>10,900</i>	<i>5.1 M</i>	<i>710,000</i>	<i>1.1 M</i>	<i>1.09 M</i>	<i>15.1 M</i>	<i>710,000</i>	<i>1.1 M</i>	<i>1.1 M</i>
<b>Total Non-Residential Square Feet</b>	<b>10 million square feet</b>				<b>8 million square feet</b>				<b>18 million square feet</b>			
Source: City of Oakdale, 2011.												
Notes:												
<sup>1</sup> For purposes of General Plan growth assumptions, the new growth areas (NGA) include Future Specific Plan Areas 2, 5, and 8; but exclude the North County Corridor Study Area. The North County Corridor Study Area Overlay land use designation does not denote any specific land uses, but rather specifies future planning considerations.												
<sup>2</sup> Includes low and medium density residential.												
<sup>3</sup> Includes high density residential.												
<sup>4</sup> Includes 95 units of Flex/General Commercial (30% residential/70% commercial) within the East F Street Specific Plan at a density of 12 dwelling units/acre.												
<sup>5</sup> Assumes 2.78 persons per single-family unit and 2.12 persons per multi-family unit (source: City of Oakdale General Plan Update Fiscal Impact Analysis Technical Memorandum [April 15, 2011], Willdan Financial Services).												

## POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

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The environmental analyses and technical sections presented in the Draft EIR will describe the existing conditions in the Policy Area. Relevant federal, State, and local laws and regulations, including the current City of Oakdale 2015 General Plan goals and policies will be summarized.

The methods of analysis and any assumptions that are important to understand the conclusions of the analysis will be described along with the standards of significance used to determine impacts of the project. The standards for determining impact significance will be based on existing State and federal rules, regulations, and laws; City ordinances and policies; and past practices. The standards will be used to determine whether an impact is significant and for the effectiveness of recommended mitigation. Feasible mitigation measures will be identified for each significant impact. The description of mitigation measures will identify the specific actions to be taken, the timing of the action, and the parties responsible for implementation of the measure.

At this time, it is anticipated that the following issue/technical sections will be addressed in the EIR:

- Aesthetics and Visual Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Climate Change
- Cultural Resources (Archeological/Historical)
- Geology/Soils and Seismicity
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology, Flooding, Storm Drainage, and Water Quality
- Land Use and Agricultural Resources
- Noise
- Population, Housing, and Employment
- Public Services (law enforcement, fire, emergency services, parks and recreation, schools, solid waste)
- Public Utilities (water supply, wastewater, energy, telecommunications)
- Transportation/Circulation

## ALTERNATIVES

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In order to provide a "range of reasonable alternatives" to the General Plan, as required by CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6, the EIR will examine up to three project alternatives including the required No Project or existing General Plan Alternative. The alternatives analysis will qualitatively compare the environmental effects of the General Plan alternatives (including the proposed specific plans) to the City's preferred land use plan.

## PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING

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The City of Oakdale is hosting one public scoping meeting during the EIR public comment period on **September 15, 2011 from 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm** at the Gene Bianchi Community Center, 110 South Second Avenue, Oakdale, California. All interested parties are invited to attend and provide input on the scope of the EIR. Forms will be available at the meeting for attendees to provide written comments.

## SUBMITTING COMMENTS

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Comments regarding the scope of the EIR analysis are invited from all interested parties to ensure the full range of project issues of interest are addressed. Written comments (emails are acceptable) concerning the EIR for the proposed project should be directed to Danelle Stylos, Community Development & Services Director (address below) no later than **5:00 pm on September 19, 2011**. All comments must include a full name and address in order to respond appropriately.

If you have any questions regarding the proposed 2030 General Plan, specific plans, or EIR process, please contact Danelle Stylos at the contact information listed below.

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