

## ***1.0 INTRODUCTION***

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This Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) describes the potential environmental effects that could result from implementation of the proposed *Wolf House Inn* project.

The *State CEQA Guidelines* charge public agencies with the responsibility of avoiding or minimizing environmental damage where feasible. As part of this responsibility, public agencies are required to balance various public objectives, including economic, environmental, and social issues. An EIR is integral to that process, informing decision-makers and the general public what significant effects might result from a proposed project. In addition, the document identifies possible means of minimizing any significant effects and presents reasonable alternatives to the project. In making its decision about the project, the lead agency, in this case Sonoma County, must consider the information in this EIR along with any other available information.

### 1.1 EIR REQUIREMENT

Environmental review in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is required as part of the County's consideration of the *Wolf House Inn*. An Initial Study, completed by Sonoma County in September 2004 and revised in February 2005, confirmed the need for an EIR and determined the topics for analysis (also called impact areas).<sup>1</sup> A copy of the Initial Study is in *Appendix A*.<sup>2</sup> The Initial Study identified the following areas could be significantly impacted by the project:

- Aesthetics
- Biological Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Public Services
- Transportation / Traffic
- Utilities and Service Systems

In compliance with CEQA, Sonoma County sent a Notice of Preparation (NOP) on October 26, 2004 to government agencies, organizations, and individuals with an interest in or jurisdiction over the project. This step ensured early consultation on the scope of the EIR. The Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department held a public scoping meeting for the project on November 16, 2004 at the Glen Ellen Fire Station. The NOP, NOP responses, and notes of the public scoping meeting are part of the public record for the project. They are on file and available for public review during normal business hours at the Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department, 2550 Ventura Avenue, Santa Rosa, California, as are other environmental and planning documents compiled for the project.

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<sup>1</sup> *Environmental Checklist Form Wolf House Inn*, County of Sonoma, September 23, 2004, revised February 24, 2005.

<sup>2</sup> Refer to the Initial Study for a complete analysis of impacts and mitigation measures for topics areas required by CEQA and not included in this focused EIR.

The Draft EIR has been prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act, including the *CEQA Statutes* (Public Resources Code §§ 21000-21178.1), *State CEQA Guidelines*, and relevant court decisions.

## 1.2 EIR OBJECTIVITY

EIRs are informational documents intended to:

- Identify all potentially significant effects of a project on the physical environment;
- Determine the significance of impact;
- Assess the extent to which the significant effects could be reduced or avoided; and
- Identify and evaluate feasible alternatives to the project.

When an EIR determines that a project would result in a significant impact, agencies with authority over the project must take one or more of the following actions:

- Require changes to the project which would avoid or substantially reduce the significant impact;
- Approve one of the project alternatives rather than the project;
- Adopt a written statement of overriding considerations which finds that specific economic, social, or other considerations make the EIR's mitigation measures or project alternative(s) infeasible; or
- Deny the project.

This Draft EIR is a factual objective public disclosure document that takes no position on the merits of the project, but provides information from which decisions about the project can be based. The Draft EIR has been prepared according to the professional standards and practices of the Draft EIR consultants' individual disciplines and in conformance with the legal requirements and informational expectations of CEQA and the State and local guidelines to implement it. The Draft EIR authors are listed in *Section 8.1 Report Preparers*.

## 1.3 PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT

Sonoma County will circulate this Draft EIR widely for review and comment by public agencies, interested individuals, and organizations and will accept comments in writing. Comments should address the adequacy and completeness of the Draft EIR or contain questions about the environmental consequences of approving and implementing the project, not on the merits of the project itself. (The County will invite comments on the project itself as part of its normal public review process, separate from considering the Draft EIR.) *Adequacy* refers to the EIR's completeness in disclosing significant environmental effects, identifying measures to mitigate those significant impacts, and providing sufficient information for officials to make decisions about the merits of the project. The *State CEQA Guidelines* direct EIRs to focus on a project's significant impacts and not to dwell on all conceivable less-than-significant effects, so that reports can be succinct disclosure documents and effective decision-making tools.

Written comments on the Draft EIR must be made before the close of the 45-day public review period, November 21, 2008, and mailed to or delivered to the following address:

Melinda Grosch  
Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management  
2550 Ventura Avenue  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403  
Comments can be sent by email to: mgrosch@sonoma-county.org

Comments also can be provided at the public hearing held by the Sonoma County Planning Commission regarding the adequacy of the Draft EIR. The public hearing will be held during the public review period.

A Final EIR will be prepared after the close of the public review period. The Final EIR will include all comments received by the County during the public review period and responses to those comments. The Final EIR will be distributed to the public and to public agencies commenting on the Draft EIR for review before the County considers certifying the Final EIR as complete.

No action can be taken to approve or conditionally approve the project until the Final EIR is certified. County acceptance of the EIR upon certification does not require approval of the project studied in the EIR.

In addition to preparation of the Final EIR, a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) will be prepared. Public Resources Code Section 21081.6 requires a public agency to adopt a reporting or monitoring program when approving a project or changes to a project, in order to mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment. The program is based on the findings and the required mitigation measures presented in the EIR that has been prepared on the project and certified by the lead agency. The reporting or monitoring program must be designed to ensure compliance during project implementation.

As per the *State CEQA Guidelines*, the MMRP must cover the following:

- The MMRP must identify the entity that is responsible for each monitoring and reporting task, be it Sonoma County (as Lead Agency), other agency (Responsible or Trustee Agency), or a private entity (i.e., the project sponsor).
- The MMRP must be based on the project description and the required mitigation measures presented in the environmental document prepared for the project and certified by the Lead Agency.
- The MMRP must be approved by the Lead Agency at the same time of project entitlement action or approvals.

## **1.4 REPORT ORGANIZATION**

After this *Introduction*, the Draft EIR is organized as follows:

- **Chapter 2.0 – Summary of Findings**, identifies areas of controversy, highlights the important effects of implementing the project, and identifies some of the measures available to mitigate significant adverse impacts.

- **Chapter 3.0 – Description of the Proposed Project**, describes the location of the project site, existing land uses on and near the project site, all aspects of the project as proposed, cumulative assumptions used throughout the analyses, and the approvals and permits required before the project could be implemented, if approved.
- **Chapter 4.0 – Consistency with Public Plans and Zoning**, describes the consistency of the project with the *Sonoma County General Plan*, *North Sonoma Valley Specific Plan*, *Glen Ellen Development and Design Guidelines* and the *Sonoma County Zoning Code*.
- **Chapter 5.0 – Environmental Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures**, describes existing environmental conditions on the site and within the study area, identifies probable impacts from implementing the project, and describes mitigation measures required to substantially reduce or eliminate potentially significant adverse impacts.
- **Chapter 6.0 – Alternatives to the Proposed Project**, describes and assesses the difference in outcome between the project and three on-site alternatives: the No Project / No Build alternative, a No Project / Reasonably Foreseeable Development alternative, and a Mitigated alternative (i.e., including mitigation measures recommended in this EIR). This chapter also identifies an environmentally superior alternative among the alternatives.
- **Chapter 7.0 – Impact Overview**, discusses growth inducing impacts and cumulative impacts, significant unavoidable impacts and effects of no significance.
- **Chapter 8.0 – Report Preparation** includes: the report preparers; the people and organizations consulted; and the bibliography.
- **Appendices** include the Initial Study and technical background material supporting the Draft EIR text.

## **1.5 INFORMATION USED TO PREPARE THE DRAFT EIR**

The *State CEQA Guidelines* permit any person, including the applicant, to submit information to assist in the preparation of an EIR but require independent review of the information to ensure that it accurately reflects the Lead Agency's judgment about the environmental impacts of the project. The Draft EIR consultants conducted peer reviews of the background reports and documents submitted to the County as part of the project application. Applicant-prepared information was only used in the Draft EIR after the validity of the data was verified and, where required, updated by the EIR consultants. Documents prepared by the applicant's consultants and examined in the Draft EIR's environmental analyses are listed below, identified in the relevant report sections, and referenced in **Chapter 8.0 Report Preparation**.

- *Amended Project Description, Wolf House Inn Jack London Village PLP02-0045*, The Jack London Group, Updated March 9, 2007.

This is the amended project description for the *Wolf House Inn* project analyzed in this Draft EIR.

- *Geotechnical Investigation Jack London Village Inn*, Bauer Associates, October 25, 1990.

This report presents the results of the geotechnical investigation conducted by Bauer Associates in 1990 on the project site. Four test borings were conducted on the project site. In addition two bulk samples were obtained at selected locations along Arnold Drive.

- *Wolf House Inn, Glen Ellen, CA Environmental Noise Assessment*, (letter report), Illingworth & Rodkin, Inc., September 17, 2002.

This letter report presents the results of the sound study and analysis of noise impacts on development on the project site plus potential noise impacts produced by a project on the site on nearby residences. As a part of the analyses one long-term (24 hours) and two short-term noise measurements were conducted.

- *Traffic Impact Study for Jack London Village Inn*, TJKM Transportation Consultants, August 2002.

This report presents an analysis of traffic impacts resulting from development of a 65-room inn on the project site. Existing conditions and existing plus proposed project conditions are discussed. Parking impacts are also discussed.

These documents are available for public review at the Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department, 2550 Ventura Avenue, Santa Rosa, CA 95403.