



City of Calistoga

Notice of Preparation – Environmental Impact Report

Kortum Ranch Development Project

Date: September 15, 2023

To: State Clearinghouse
State Trustee Agencies
Other Public Agencies
Interested Organizations and Individuals

From: Jeff Mitchem, Planning & Building Director
City of Calistoga, Planning & Building Department
1232 Washington Street
Calistoga, CA 94515

Subject: Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Kortum Ranch Development Project and Scheduling of Scoping Meeting

Lead Agency: City of Calistoga Planning & Building Department

Project Title: Kortum Ranch Development Project

Project Location: 500 Kortum Canyon Road (APNs 011-290-007; -038; -039; remainder lot (formerly 011-310-023))

Public Comment Period: September 15, 2023, through October 16, 2023 (comments due by 5:00 PM)

INTRODUCTION

Notice is hereby given that the City of Calistoga (City), as the Lead Agency, will prepare a project-level Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Kortum Ranch Development project (proposed project) pursuant to and in accordance with Title 14, Section 15060(d) of the California Code of Regulations, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and the State of California CEQA Guidelines. The purpose of the Notice of Preparation (NOP) is to solicit input and feedback from the public and regulatory agencies on the project, including project alternatives and environmental impacts. An Initial Study is included as Attachment A to this NOP.

The purpose of an EIR is to inform decision-makers and the public of the environmental effects of a project that an agency may implement or approve. The EIR process is intended to provide information sufficient to evaluate a project and its potential for significant impacts on the environment, to examine methods of reducing adverse impacts, and to consider alternatives to the project. In accordance with the requirements of CEQA, the EIR will include the following:

- Project summary;
- Project description;
- Description of the existing environmental setting and potential environmental impacts for each environmental topic, except for effects not found to be significant (CEQA Guidelines Section 15128);
- Mitigation measures proposed to minimize significant effects;
- Alternatives to the proposed project; and
- Environmental consequences, including any significant environmental effects which cannot be avoided if the project is implemented; significant irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources; growth inducing impacts of the proposed project; and cumulative impacts.

PROJECT LOCATION

The project site is approximately 29.46 acres located in the southeast portion of the City of Calistoga at 500 Kortum Canyon Road on four parcels (APNs 011-290-007; -038; -039; and a remainder lot (formerly 011-310-023)). Areas south, east, and west of the project site are primarily developed with rural residences that are characterized by their large, heavily wooded lots. Commercial uses along Foothill Boulevard are located north of the site.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background

The project site was previously developed as the Busk Estate, which contained 15 buildings and structures including a single-family home, apartment building, pool and cabana, four detached garages, outbuildings, and sheds. The Busk Estate served as a storage facility for construction materials, debris, reinforced concrete pipes, piles of creosote-soaked railroad ties, and telephone poles. In December 2020, the property was purchased by Kortum Ranch, LLC who obtained a permit from the City to demolish all structures and remove remaining debris. At present, the subject property contains retaining walls, trees, a well, and utilities currently on the site, some of which will be removed and replaced to accommodate the project. Cleared areas with limited vegetation and trees are planned for development of single-family residences. Kortum Canyon Road and Terrace Drive provide primary and secondary access to the site, respectively.

Overview

The project proposes to subdivide the existing site into 22 individual lots to accommodate development of single-family residences. Based on the CEQA guidelines, a “project” is any activity that may cause a direct physical change in the environment or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment. Since the reasonably foreseeable change from approving the Tentative Map includes the development of 22 new single-family residences, the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) will examine the potential environmental impacts of such development. The project site is zoned Rural Residential – Hillside (RR-H), which allows one single-family dwelling unit per lot, subject to approval of a Conditional Use Permit. The project is subject to review and approval of a Tentative Subdivision Map for division of land into five or more parcels. Future development of the single-family residences and associated site improvements will require approval of a Conditional Use Permit, Preliminary, and Final Development Plan.

Proposed Plan

The project proposes to subdivide the four existing parcels (APNs 011-290-007; -038; -039; and a remainder lot (formerly APN 011-310-023)) into 22 individual lots to accommodate single-family residences. The eastern portion of parcel 011-310-023 (18.69 acres) was divided through a separate lot line adjustment and will be preserved as open space. The remaining approximately 29.46 acres will be subdivided into 22 lots ranging from 0.38 acres to 6.1 acres. The project also includes the reconstruction of the site’s access roads, installation of utilities, and offsite improvements to Kortum Canyon Road.

As proposed, building pad areas are located on areas with a slope of 30 percent or less and range from 3,500 square feet to over 20,000 square feet. The lots will accommodate single-family residences that are anticipated to range from 2,500 to 4,500 square feet and will be located within the building pad areas shown in the project plans.

Construction activities are limited to demolition of retaining walls, removal and trimming of trees, grading, improvements to accommodate the access road, paving of the access road, installation of utilities and stormwater controls, and offsite improvements. The existing access road that runs through the project site will be re-aligned, paved, and widened to 20 feet with inclusion of a downslope bioswale. The existing retaining wall located at the site entrance from Kortum Canyon Road will be removed and a new fifty-five (55) foot long retaining wall will be constructed. A 12-foot-wide emergency vehicle access (EVA) is proposed to connect to Terrace Drive and Foothill Blvd. and a new 10-foot wide vehicle turnout and retaining wall is proposed between Lots 15 and 16. Offsite improvements include the widening of Kortum Canyon Road to between 24 and 25 feet, demolition of an existing residential structure, re-alignment of the intersection of Foothill Boulevard and Kortum Canyon Road, and offsite utility improvements.

Section 2.0 (Project Description) of the Initial Study, included as Attachment A contains a detailed description of the project.

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

The EIR will evaluate the proposed project for potential impacts on the environment and analyze the potential environmental consequences of project implementation. The attached Initial Study prepared for the project identifies the following resource areas where potentially significant environmental impacts could occur and will be addressed in the EIR:

- Biological Resources
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards/Hazardous Materials
- Land Use and Planning
- Wildfire

Based on the analysis contained in the attached Initial Study, the following environmental factors are expected to be scoped out from further review as part of the DEIR:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Agricultural and Forestry Resources
- Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Transportation and Circulation
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Recreation

The EIR will also include a discussion of cumulative impacts of relevant projects in and around the project area combined with those of the project. An evaluation of project alternatives that could reduce significant impacts will also be evaluated in the EIR, including identification of an environmentally superior alternative consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6.

To ensure that the EIR for the project is thorough and adequate and to ensure that the issues of concern to the public and public agencies are addressed, the City is requesting comments and guidance on the scope and content of the EIR from interested public agencies, organizations, and individuals. Public comments on the scope of environmental issues to be evaluated in the EIR are encouraged and should be focused on environmental concerns rather than the merits of the project. With respect to the views of Responsible and Trustee Agencies as to significant environmental issues, the City is seeking information related to reasonable alternatives and mitigation measures that are relevant to each agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the project.

PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING

A public Scoping Meeting will be held via **Zoom** on **September 28, 2023 between 6:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.** Public agencies, organizations, and interested members of the public are invited to participate in this meeting and provide verbal or written comments on the proposed project. Please find the instructions for meeting participation below:

Option 1: Join from a PC, Mac, iPad, iPhone or Android device:

Please click this URL to join:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87066247715?pwd=ZlhULzM1WG5YakRlb1QzWVVOcTJwUT09&from=addon>

Option 2: Join by phone:

US: (669) 900-6833

Meeting ID: 870 6624 7715

Passcode: 341404

COMMENTS REQUESTED

If you wish to comment during the NOP comment period, the City is accepting written comments beginning **September 15, 2023** until the close of the NOP comment period at **5:00 p.m. on October 16, 2023**. Comments on the NOP are due no later than the close of the 30-day review period.

Please send all written comments to Lauren Clark, Permit Technician, with the City of Calistoga, at the address shown above or email to lclark@ci.calistoga.ca.us. with the subject "Kortum Ranch Development Project EIR". Public

agencies providing comments are asked to include a contact person for the agency. Please direct questions about the proposed project to Lauren Clark at the email provided above.

ATTACHMENT

- A. Kortum Ranch Development Initial Study and all Appendices available online at <https://www.ci.calistoga.ca.us/city-hall/departments-services/planning-building-department/planning-division>

