



Community Development Department

130 South Main Street
Lake Elsinore, CA 92530
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NOTICE OF PREPARATION

July 28, 2025

TO: Responsible Agencies, Trustee Agencies, and Interested Parties

FROM: City of Lake Elsinore, Community Development Department
130 South Main Street
Lake Elsinore, CA 92530

SUBJECT: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the City of Lake Elsinore General Plan Update, Zoning Code and Map Amendment, and Climate Action and Adaptation Plan

The City of Lake Elsinore (City) will be the Lead Agency and will prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the proposed **Lake Elsinore General Plan Update (GPU), Zoning Code and Map Amendment (ZCA), and Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP)** (“project”). We are interested in your agency’s views as to the appropriate scope and content of the DEIR’s environmental information relevant to your agency’s statutory responsibilities related to the project. Please include the name of a contact person for your agency in your response. For interested individuals, we would like to be informed of environmental topics or issues that you believe should be included in the DEIR. The City has already determined that an EIR is required for the proposed project and, as permitted by CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(d) (Preliminary Review), the City will not prepare an Initial Study for the project. The proposed project, its location, and its probable environmental effects are described below. The City welcomes public input during the Notice of Preparation (NOP) review period. Due to the time limits mandated by the CEQA Guidelines, your written response must be sent not later than 30 days after your receipt of this notice. If no response is received by the end of the review period, the City will presume that you have no response.

NOP REVIEW PERIOD: Thursday July 31, 2025 to Tuesday September 2, 2025

Please send your comments to:

Damaris Abraham, Community Development Director
City of Lake Elsinore, Community Development Department
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Scoping Meeting:

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15082(c) (Notice of Preparation and Determination of Scope of EIR), the City will conduct a scoping meeting for the purpose of soliciting comments of adjacent cities and counties, responsible agencies, trustee agencies, and interested parties requesting notice as to the appropriate scope and content of the Draft EIR.

The purpose of the meeting is to present the project and environmental topics in a public setting and provide an opportunity for the City to hear from the community and interested agencies on what potential environmental issues are important to them. The meeting will include a brief presentation of the proposed project, the EIR process, and the topics to be analyzed in the EIR. Following the presentation, interested agencies, organizations, and members of the public will be encouraged to offer their views concerning what environmental issues should be included in the DEIR.

The Public Scoping Meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 20, 2025, at 6:00 PM at the following location:

Cultural Center
183 N. Main Street
Lake Elsinore, CA 92530

To allow for mailing, receipt, and 30-day review of this NOP, the comment period closes at 5 PM on September 2, 2025.


Damaris Abraham, Comm. Dev. Director

July 28, 2025
Date

PROJECT TITLE: Lake Elsinore General Plan Update, Zoning Code and Map Amendment, and Climate Action and Adaptation Plan

APPLICANT: City of Lake Elsinore, Community Development Department

PROJECT LOCATION:

Located in southwest Riverside County, approximately 24 miles south of downtown Riverside, the City of Lake Elsinore is bordered by the City of Wildomar to the south and east, the City of Menifee to the East, the City of Canyon Lake to the east and north, and unincorporated portions of Riverside County to the north, west and south. The Planning Area encompasses all properties within the incorporated City limits, as well as unincorporated properties within the City's sphere of influence (see Figure 1).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The DEIR will evaluate the General Plan Update (GPU), as well as associated zoning code and map amendments (ZCA), and a new Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP), which will facilitate the implementation of the General Plan Update.

The comprehensive update of the Lake Elsinore General Plan serves as the guide for the City's future growth and development over the course of the next 20 years (2025-2045). The General Plan contains goals, policies, and programs that provide City staff and decision makers with a foundation for decisions for long-range planning related to physical development and public services. The GPU also establishes the objectives listed below for long-term growth and community enhancement.

1. Lake Elsinore facilitates a healthy and diverse economy that retains and attracts traditional and new industries, creates jobs, supports the local tax base, and sustains the ability to provide important services for existing and future residents, including expanded housing opportunities.
2. Lake Elsinore encourages attractive neighborhood villages that provide residents with a diverse range of distinctive destinations, such as shopping areas, entertainment venues, dining experiences, and cultural spaces. These places may include small centers near established neighborhoods, more vibrant and dense centers in Downtown and Launch Pointe, and mixed-use villages along key corridors such as Lakeshore Drive or SR-74.
3. Lake Elsinore maintains and increases the variety of high quality open and recreational spaces. It embraces its "Dream Extreme" identity of extreme action sports, while also providing opportunities for locally scaled recreational opportunities, such as small neighborhood parks, plazas, and community centers.
4. Lake Elsinore fosters healthy communities for all residents by providing safe and convenient access to community services such as healthy food stores, health care, parks and open spaces, jobs, and educational opportunities.
5. Lake Elsinore values and is committed to enhancing the environmental health and economic vitality of the Lake. Lake Elsinore ensures that the Lake is well maintained, attractive, and provides residents and visitors with opportunities for lakeside interaction.
6. Lake Elsinore recognizes Downtown as its historic core with civic institutions, historic landmarks, and local businesses. The vitality of Downtown is supported by an increase in

appropriately scaled housing and people-oriented streetscapes.

7. Lake Elsinore offers attractive, convenient transportation options and provides walkable, bikeable, safer, and livable streets while continuing to strengthen access to the greater region. Community amenities are accessible by all residents.

General Plan Elements

The City of Lake Elsinore GPU succeeds the last comprehensive general plan adopted in 2011, with the Housing Element updated in 2022. The GPU incorporates statutory requirements for general plans and guidance provided in the 2023 General Plan Guidelines; coordinates future development and policies with regional planning efforts and serves as the city's fundamental guide in developing strategies to address greenhouse gas reduction, climate change, and climate planning. The DEIR analysis will consider each of the elements' goals, policies, and programs of the following chapters (or elements) in the General Plan Update:

- Land Use and Community Character Element
- Mobility and Infrastructure Element
- Housing Element (2021-2029)
- Conservation, Open Space, and Parks Element
- Public Safety, Noise, Air Quality Element
- Historical and Cultural Resources
- Environmental Justice Element

Zoning Code and Map Amendments

The ZCA is a revision to the City's zoning regulations and zoning map to implement the proposed General Plan. The revisions will include:

- reorganizing to facilitate clarity and ease of use;
- creating new land use zoning categories to implement General Plan land use policy, including Mixed Use and Medium High Density Residential;
- updating development standards, including parking, setbacks, signs, etc.;
- revising allowed uses in zoning districts, including removing required conditional use permits for certain uses to streamline approvals;
- updating nonconforming provisions;
- creating new procedures and processes to streamline development and implement General Plan direction, including creating a community benefits program; and
- updating standards and processes to reflect recent State legislation.

Climate Action and Adaptation Plan

The CAAP is a strategic policy framework that outlines how the City of Lake Elsinore will address climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and prepare for climate change impacts. The CAAP implements the General Plan. In addition, the CAAP will include a baseline assessment of GHG emissions as well as the climate change hazards experienced in the city. Emissions will be forecasted for future years based on anticipated growth to assess trends and establish GHG reduction targets and strategies. Additionally, climate adaptation strategies will be developed to address climate hazards in the city. Contents of the CAAP will be informed by input from members

of the public and internal and external stakeholders. The range of strategies to be analyzed in the CAAP include:

- energy efficiency measures (improving building and transportation energy efficiency);
- renewable energy (transitioning to renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, etc.);
- sustainable transportation measures (promoting public transit, electric vehicles, active transportation infrastructure);
- waste reduction measures (reducing waste generation and increasing recycling and composting);
- water conservation measures;
- urban greening measures to enhance carbon sequestration and reduce extreme heat impacts);
- community resiliency (enhancing the ability of the community to withstand climate impacts); and
- infrastructure resiliency (strengthening infrastructure to withstand climate impacts).

Existing Conditions

The Planning Area comprises a total of 115 square miles within western Riverside County. The City of Lake Elsinore encompasses 43 square miles some of which is developed with urban land uses. The remaining 72 square miles are within the City's unincorporated Sphere of Influence and use City services and community facilities. Two freeways and highways provide regional access to the Planning Area. Interstate 15 (I-15), also known as the Corona Freeway, runs northwest/southeast through Lake Elsinore connecting with nearby Corona and Murrieta. Ortega Highway (State Route 74 or SR074) runs northeast/southwest connecting Lake Elsinore to Perris and Rancho Mission Viejo.

Lake Elsinore is served by regional transit, Riverside Transit Agency, which provides three routes to the City: Routes 8, 9, and 205/206. These routes may, as they stand, present a constraint in terms of attracting a larger audience of ridership, but also present an opportunity to partner with RTA to develop routes that may better serve the community.

The City of Lake Elsinore contains nearly 30,849 parcels encompassing almost 22,052.4 acres (excluding street rights-of-way). The Sphere of Influence adds an additional 17,971.9 acres to the Planning Area. Like many cities in the Inland Empire, large portions of Lake Elsinore are undeveloped, where 20 percent of land is vacant. Park and open space uses make up nearly one-third of the Planning Area (31.2 percent). Approximately 19 percent of the Planning Area is residential, the majority of which is single-family residential. Commercial, industrial, and agricultural/rural uses total 3.2 percent, 1.3 percent, and 23 percent, respectively.

Residential use makes up 19 percent (7,679 acres) of the Planning Area; residential uses are found throughout Lake Elsinore. Single-family (one unit) residential uses make up the bulk of the residential category (5,727 acres). Multi-family residential uses (more than one unit per development/lot) can also be found in various parts of the City. Senior housing and manufactured (mobile home) developments make up less than one percent of all uses.

Commercial areas in the incorporated areas make up 4.5 percent of all land uses (992 acres) and 1.6 percent in the Planning Area land uses. Most commercial uses are located along Central Avenue, Collier Avenue, Main Street, Riverside Drive, and Auto Center Drive. Commercial and office clusters are also found at major intersections. Most industrial land is located south of Collier Avenue near 3rd and Minthorn Streets and on Corydon Street/Ceral Street. Industrial uses comprise 505 acres and are primarily dedicated to light manufacturing and warehouse/distribution/storage.

Parks and open space comprise over 30 percent of the Planning Area land use acreage. Parks and open space areas include State and City parks, Bureau of Land Management lands, Cleveland National Forest, Links at Summerly Golf Course, Canyon Lake Golf and Country Club, Elsinore Valley Cemetery, and Pioneer Cemetery. Much of the Planning Area's open space is designated for conservation under the Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP).

Approximately two percent of the Planning Area's total land area is devoted to public facilities and institutional uses. The Public Facilities and Institutional land use primarily include educational facilities, emergency services, and religious institutions. The Public Facilities and Institutional land uses are generally found in and adjacent to low-density residential areas and in Lake Elsinore's civic hub, the Historic District. Some educational uses are also located near industrial and commercial uses in the Business District, such as Ortega High School.

Land used for agriculture and natural resource extraction is found throughout the Planning Area and makes up 23 percent of all land uses. Agricultural and natural resources extraction uses include raising of livestock and crop production, gravel pits and mineral resources extraction. Agriculture and natural resource extraction uses are mostly concentrated in the northern City and Sphere of Influence such as North Peak, Alberhill, Meadowbrook, and Northwest. Significant clay resources are associated with the Alberhill area in the north portion of the City and classified by the State Department of Conservation, Division of Mines and Geology. The mining activity is being phased out in accordance with the permits approved, and the continued use and ultimate reclamation of these lands has been or will be addressed in the specific plans prepared for these areas.

The Skylark Field Airport is in the East Lake District and totals 73 acres (less than one percent of the Planning Area's land use). It is privately owned/operated; Skylark Field Airport is home to Skydive Elsinore, one of Lake Elsinore's main recreational attractions.

Vacant land comprises 20 percent of the Planning Area (8,113 acres). Vacant properties are distributed throughout the Planning Area, many of which include steep slopes that impact development feasibility. Adopted specific plans call for the conversion of vacant land into mostly residential development or for the preservation of open space.

Proposed Land Use Plan

The proposed General Plan, if fully implemented, may result in:

Development Indicators	Existing (2025) Conditions			Future (2045) Conditions			Difference		
	City	SOI	Total	City	SOI	Total	City	SOI	Total
Dwelling Units	18,946 ¹	N/A	18,946	40,623	5,987	46,610	21,677	5,987	27,664
Population	70,435 ²	N/A	70,435	132,382	19,509	151,891	61,947	19,509	81,456
Non-Residential Building Square Feet ³	9.5M	0.8M	10.3M	21.2M	5.2M	26.4M	11.7M	4.4M	16.1M
Employees	33,800 ²	N/A	33,800	32,741	8,054	40,795	-1,059	8,054	6,995

Note:

M = Million; Non-Residential Building Square Feet rounded to nearest 100,000.

- 1 City of Lake Elsinore Housing Element 2024-2029
- 2 Zoom Prospector.com/communities/ca/city/Lake-Elsinore, 7.24.25
- 3 MIG, Urban Footprint 2025

Programmatic EIR

The City is the Lead Agency for preparation of a Program Environmental Impact Report (Program EIR) for the proposed project. The Program EIR will evaluate the environmental impacts resulting from implementation of the project and will recommend mitigation measures to avoid or reduce significant impacts, where applicable. The Program EIR also is intended to help the City review future project proposals pursuant to section 15168 (Program EIR) of the CEQA Guidelines. The following environmental topics listed below will be evaluated in the Draft Program EIR:

- **Aesthetics:** The EIR will describe the aesthetic implications of the proposed project, including its visual relationships to the surrounding vicinity and the potential impacts of development (the proposed array of building masses, heights, view corridors etc.) on important surrounding vantage points.
- **Agriculture and Forestry:** The EIR will explain why these CEQA-defined environmental topics will not be adversely affected by implementation of the project.
- **Air Quality:** The EIR will describe the potential impacts of the proposed project on local and regional air quality based on methodologies defined by the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD). The project is likely to create significant impacts under this topic that may require mitigation and/or that may be significant and unavoidable. An air quality technical study will be included as part of the Draft program EIR to quantify and evaluate potential impacts.
- **Biological Resources:** The EIR will evaluate potential impacts on biological resources resulting from implementation of the proposed project.
- **Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources:** The EIR will describe any potential impacts and mitigation needs associated with historic and cultural (archaeological) resources, including potential impacts on Tribal Cultural Resources.

- **Energy:** The EIR will evaluate the impacts of implementation of the project on energy resources and implementation of state and local plans for renewable energy and energy efficiency.
- **Geology and Soils:** The EIR will analyze the potential paleontological impacts associated with implementation of the proposed project.
- **Greenhouse Gas Emissions:** The EIR will describe the impacts of implementation of the proposed project on greenhouse gas emissions and global climate change, following the latest approach and methodologies recommended by State and regional agencies. The project is likely to create significant impacts under this topic that may require mitigation and/or that may be significant and unavoidable. A greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions technical study will be included as part of the draft program EIR to quantify and evaluate GHG emissions.
- **Hazards and Hazardous Materials:** The EIR will describe the potential for hazardous material use or hazardous waste investigation and cleanup activities anticipated in the Planning Area and will describe any associated potential impacts and mitigation needs, if applicable. Potential construction period hazards and hazardous material impacts and mitigation needs will also be described.
- **Hydrology and Water Quality:** The EIR will evaluate potential impacts on hydrology and water quality resulting from implementation of the proposed project, including possible effects related to drainage and flooding.
- **Land Use and Planning:** The EIR will describe the potential effects of implementation of the proposed project on existing and planned land use characteristics in the City, including the General Plan's relationship to other adopted regional and local plans.
- **Mineral Resources:** The EIR will evaluate whether the project will have any significant impact on existing mineral resources in the Planning Area.
- **Noise:** The EIR will describe potential construction and long-term operational noise (traffic, mechanical systems etc.) impacts and related mitigation needs where applicable. The project may create significant impacts under this topic that may require mitigation and/or that may be significant and unavoidable. A noise and vibration technical study will be included as part of the draft program EIR to quantify and evaluate noise generated from the project.
- **Population and Housing:** The EIR will describe the anticipated effects of the projected population growth and subsequent increase in housing. This information will be used to forecast public service and utility needs in the General Plan area.
- **Public Services:** The EIR will describe potential impacts on public services (police and fire protection parks and recreation, and schools).
- **Transportation and Circulation:** The EIR will describe the transportation and circulation implications of the proposed project, including the contribution of Vehicle Miles Traveled to local and regional roadways. The evaluation will include roadway system impacts, transit implications, and effects on pedestrian and bicycle circulation. General Plan components to improve multimodal travel will also be considered. The project may create

significant impacts under this topic that may require mitigation and/or that may be significant and unavoidable. A transportation technical study will be included as part of the draft program EIR to quantify and evaluate VMT from the project.

- **Utilities and Service Systems:** The EIR will describe the impacts of implementation of the proposed project on local utility and service systems, including water supply, water and wastewater treatment, and solid waste and recycling.
- **Wildfire:** The EIR will evaluate if the proposed project will have any significant impacts related to wildfire. Such impacts are considered to be high since Lake Elsinore is located in close proximity to Wildland/Urban interfaces.
- **Alternatives:** Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6, the EIR will identify and compare a reasonable range of alternatives to the proposed project.

Required Approvals:

Implementation of the proposed project will require the following discretionary approvals by the City of Lake Elsinore City Council:

- Adoption of General Plan Update
- Adoption of Zoning Map and Code Amendment
- Adoption of Climate Action and Adaptation Plan
- Certification of Final Environmental Impact Report
- Adoption of a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program

**Figure 1
Planning Area Map**

