

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Ronald Whisenand, Community Development Director

SUBJECT: Public Scoping Meeting for the  
River Oaks: The Next Chapter Environmental Impact Report

DATE: January 27, 2009

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NEEDS: For the Planning Commission to conduct a public Scoping Meeting concerning the preparation of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the River Oaks: The Next Chapter development proposal. Applicant: Estrella Associates, Inc. (Willhoit)

FACTS:

1. Estrella Associates has submitted an application to expand the River Oaks master-planned community which includes the following components:
  - General Plan Amendment and Rezone to redesignate 249 acres located on the west side of Buena Vista Road from Agriculture (AG) to residential and mixed use designations;
  - General Plan Amendment, Prezone, and Annexation of 21 acres located on the east side of Buena Vista Road from Residential Rural (City General Plan and County General Plan/Zoning) to single and/or multiple family residential designations;
  - Develop a Specific Plan (and amend the existing Borkey Area Specific Plan) to specify how the following planned development of the property will occur:
    - 13 Residential Villages containing a maximum of 1,755 units and including a variety of housing types such as estate lots, an active adult community, and attached condos/townhomes.
    - 150-room hotel, golf course expansion, restaurant, hot springs spa, health and fitness center, recreational community center, aquatics, tennis, hiking and recreational trails, sports practice fields, and approximately 73 acres of Open Space including 25 acres of sustainable vineyards.
2. The River Oaks application is subject to environmental review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The character, size, and location of this project will necessitate the preparation of an EIR.
3. The City Council authorized, at their January 6, 2009 meeting, the hiring of the environmental planning firm EMC Planning Group, Inc. of Monterey to prepare the EIR.
4. The Notice of Preparation of an EIR for this project was mailed out to responsible agencies on January 8, 2009 with the response period ending February 10, 2009. A copy of the Notice of Preparation is attached.
5. The Notice of Preparation identifies a broad range of issues to be addressed in the EIR. The most salient issues include: traffic, water supply, population, agricultural resources, aesthetics, and drainage.

6. A scoping meeting provides an opportunity to the and other agencies with an interest in, or whose facilities or resources may be affected by, the project to ask questions about the nature and scope of the project and to provide comment regarding the range of actions, alternatives, mitigation measures, and significant effects to be analyzed in depth in the EIR.
7. At the scoping meeting, the applicant will provide a brief summary of the project; EMC Planning Group will provide a brief presentation to summarize the EIR process and the issues to be addressed. Following EMC's presentation, the public will be allowed to ask questions and provide comment on the project and the EIR.

#### ANALYSIS &

#### CONCLUSION: EIR Process

This Scoping Meeting is one of the beginning steps in the preparation of the EIR and provides the first opportunity for the public to provide comment. Upon completion of the Draft EIR, the public will be able to review the document and provide comment during the official "review period." The City will then provide Response to Comments and incorporate them into the Final EIR, the adoption of which will then be up for consideration by the Planning Commission and City Council along with the project entitlement requests.

#### Tentative Schedule

The timeline for the completion of this EIR could be as soon as the Fall of this year. However, it is important to note that this is contingent upon the completion of the City's Update to the Circulation Element. This Specific Plan proposal is subject to the same requirements as other Specific Plan applications currently in process with the City, all of which cannot "complete" their EIR's until this Update is completed. The Circulation Element Update is anticipated to be ready for consideration by the Planning Commission and City Council this summer.

#### Peer Review EIR

As mentioned above, as part of the application submittal, the applicant has prepared a number of technical studies assembled as an "Environmental Analysis Report" (EAR). The EAR stopped short, however, of recommending mitigation strategies, leaving that decision to the City. The applicant's studies can be used as the basis for the EIR and potentially save what would otherwise be duplicative work. With what is being called a "Peer Review EIR," the City (with the assistance of the selected environmental firm) will be entirely responsible for the legal contents of the EIR and will verify the adequacy and accuracy of all information submitted by the applicant. EMC Planning Group's Scope of Work assumes that they will provide any analysis necessary to supplement the EAR.

OPTIONS: The purpose of the scoping meeting is to provide a forum for asking questions and receiving comments. The Planning Commission will not be taking any action at the scoping meeting.

#### Attachments:

1. Notice of Preparation
2. Newspaper Notice of Scoping Meeting

**NOTICE OF PREPARATION**  
**OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT**  
**RIVER OAKS – THE NEXT CHAPTER**  
*Borkey Area Specific Plan Amendment*

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In compliance with the State guidelines for implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines, this Notice of Preparation (NOP) is hereby sent to you to inform you that the City of Paso Robles is preparing an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed River Oaks – The Next Chapter Specific Plan project.

As Lead Agency, the City of Paso Robles needs to know the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information which is germane to your agency’s statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. Your agency will need to use the EIR prepared by our agency when considering your permit or other approval for the project.

Written comments may be submitted via mail to:

Lynn Azevedo, Contract Project Manager  
Ed Gallagher, City Planner  
City of Paso Robles  
1000 Spring Street  
Paso Robles, CA 93446

Or via email to Lynn Azevedo at [lazevedo@charter.net](mailto:lazevedo@charter.net) and Ed Gallagher at [ed@prcity.com](mailto:ed@prcity.com)

Please indicate a contact person in your response. Additionally, the City will be hosting a scoping meeting for this project on January 27, 2009 at 7:30 p.m. at City Hall, 1000 Spring Street in Paso Robles. Please check the project website at [www.prcity.com](http://www.prcity.com) for updated information. Due to time limits mandated by State Law, responses on the NOP must be sent at the earliest possible date, but no later than 30 days after receipt of this notice dated December 31, 2008. The public review period for the NOP will close February 5, 2009 at 5:00 pm. For any additional information, please call Lynn Azevedo at (805) 909-7567.

The project description, location, and the potential environmental effects are contained in the attached materials. An Initial Study is not attached.

Project Title: River Oaks: The Next Chapter  
Project Applicant: Estrella Associates, Inc.  
  
Date: January 5, 2009  
Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Title: Contract Project Manager  
Telephone: (805) 909-7567

## **River Oaks: The Next Chapter**

### **Project Location**

The project is located in the northeastern portion of the City of Paso Robles, in San Luis Obispo County, California, generally north of State Highway 46 East along a portion of Buena Vista Drive. See Figure 1. Approximately 249 acres of the project area is within the current City limits with an additional, adjacent 21 acres proposed for annexation.

### **Project Description**

The proposed development includes 13 Residential Villages including single-family homes, ranging from estate lots to an active adult community, and a variety of attached housing types, ranging from lofts to condos to townhomes (1,219 targeted homes total, with a maximum of 1,755). Also proposed are a hotel (130 rooms targeted with a maximum of 150 rooms), golf course expansion and shop, restaurant, hot springs spa, health and fitness center, recreational community center and community conference center, aquatics and tennis facility, an amphitheater, 4.5 miles of hiking and recreational trails, sports practice fields, and approximately 73 acres of passive Open Space including 25 acres of vineyards. See Table 1 and Figures 2 and 3. Note that while the applicant identifies a “target” density, the applicant is seeking approval to build to the maximum density if so desired. Maximum density is not just an alternative to be studied.

Specific entitlements or components of this application include:

- Certification of a Final EIR
- Water Supply Assessment per SB 610 (not an entitlement but a prerequisite to the above item);
- A general plan amendment to revise the Borkey Area Specific Plan, including:
  - o Re-designation of 249 acres located on the west side of Buena Vista Road from Agriculture to a variety of residential and mixed use designations;
  - o Re-designation of 21 acres located on the east side of Buena Vista Road (the College Station site) from Residential Rural to appropriate single and/or multiple family residential designations;
  - o Address and/or adjust the planning population threshold of 44,000 for the year 2025;
  - o Other changes as necessary to bring the plan into conformance with the City’s General Plan;
- Re-zoning consistent with the revised land use designations and pre-zoning of the 21-acre College Station site consistent with the proposed general plan designations;
- Execution of a development agreement (not an entitlement, but may be required);
- Initiation of proceedings with the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) for an amendment of the City’s spheres of influence and service, and a reorganization to annex the 21 acre College Station site to the City;
- Approval of the “Planned Development” application;
- Subsequent approval of tentative and final subdivision maps;

**Table 1. Proposed Land Uses and Development Parameters**

Village Designation	Acreage	Zone	Permitted Density	Target /Max Units	Square Footage
Neighborhood 1	32.4	T-3 NG	8 du/ac	165/295	--
Neighborhood 2	3.7	T-4 NG-1	12 du/ac	32/44	--
Neighborhood 3	2.7	T-4 NG-1	12 du/ac	28/32	--
Neighborhood 4	2.3	T-4 NC	20 du/ac	31/46	--
Neighborhood 5	7.8	T-4 NG-1	12 du/ac	66/93	--
Neighborhood 6	33.6	T-4 NC	20 du/ac	457/672	--
Neighborhood 7	3.5	T-4 NG-1	12 du/ac	39/45	--
Neighborhood 8	19.8	T-4 NC	20 du/ac	295/410	--
Neighborhood 9	2.6	T-4 NG-1	12 du/ac	26/31	--
Neighborhood 10	1.9	T-4 NG-1	12 du/ac	19/22	--
Neighborhood 11	3.5	T-3 NG	8 du/ac	24/28	--
Neighborhood 12	7.4	T-3 NE	5 du/ac	25/37	--
Neighborhood 13	7.3	T-3 NE	5 du/ac	12/36	--
<i>Residential Total</i>	<i>128.5</i>	<i>--</i>	<i>--</i>	<i>1,219/1,755</i>	<i>--</i>
Community Plaza and Conference Center	4.2	T-2 SD	--	--	20,000
Community Facilities	3.4	T-2 SD	--	--	14,000
Hospitality/Restaurant/Gift Shop	7.4	T-2 SD	--	130/150 rooms	60,500
Hot Springs Spa/Fitness/Wellness Center	5.9	T-2 SD	--	--	15,000
Streets	15.6	T-2 SD	--	--	--
<i>Non-Residential Total</i>	<i>36.5</i>	<i>--</i>	<i>--</i>	<i>--</i>	<i>109,500</i>
Passive Open Space	73.6	T-2 OS	--	--	--
Active Open Space	21.4	T-2 SD	--	--	--
Neighborhood Recreation	5.4	T-2 SD	--	--	2,000
Lake	3.9	T-2 OS	--	--	--
<i>Open Space &amp; Recreation Total</i>	<i>104.3</i>	<i>--</i>	<i>--</i>	<i>--</i>	<i>2,000</i>
<b>RIVER OAKS TOTAL</b>	<b>269.3</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>1,349/1,905</b>	<b>111,500</b>

**Environmental Issues to be Analyzed**

The Draft EIR will examine the following environmental issues:

- **Aesthetics**, including visual character and light and glare impacts.
- **Agricultural Resources**, including agricultural land use conflicts, conversion of agricultural resources, including prime farmland, and development of a vineyard and agricultural buffer.
- **Air Quality**, including Clean Air Plan consistency, construction emissions, long-term operations emissions, and global climate change.
- **Biological Resources**, including grasslands, oak trees, riparian and wetland habitat, wildlife impacts, and special-status animal and plant species
- **Cultural Resources**, including archaeological resources and paleontological resources
- **Geology and Soils**, including grading, seismic impacts, on-site geohazards and slope stability
- **Hazards and Hazardous Materials**, including soil contaminants
- **Hydrology and Water Quality**, including erosion-related pollutant discharges, stormwater-related pollutant discharges, and groundwater impacts to the Paso

Robles Groundwater Basin, including reduction in aquifer volume or lowering of the groundwater table

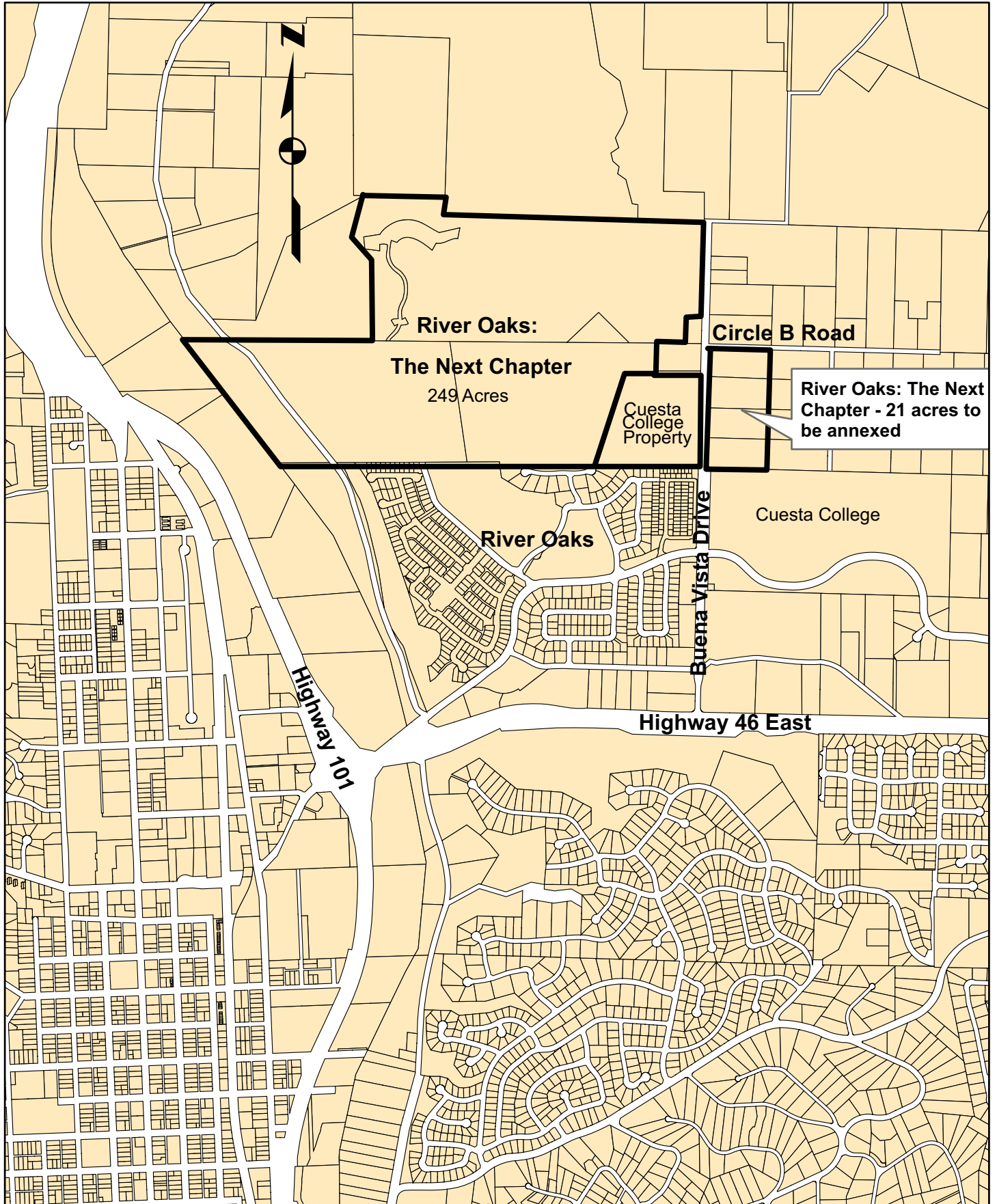
- **Land Use**
- **Mineral Resources**
- **Noise**, including short-term construction
- **Population and Housing**, including increasing the City's population planning threshold of 44,000 for the year 2025
- **Public Services**, including fire protection, law enforcement, and schools, and solid waste
- **Recreation**, including park demand
- **Transportation and Circulation**, including roadway and intersection operations and alternative modes of transportation
- **Utilities and Service Systems**, including water supply, use of reclaimed water, wastewater service, construction of infrastructure, and solid waste. This would include participation in the Nacimiento Water Project.

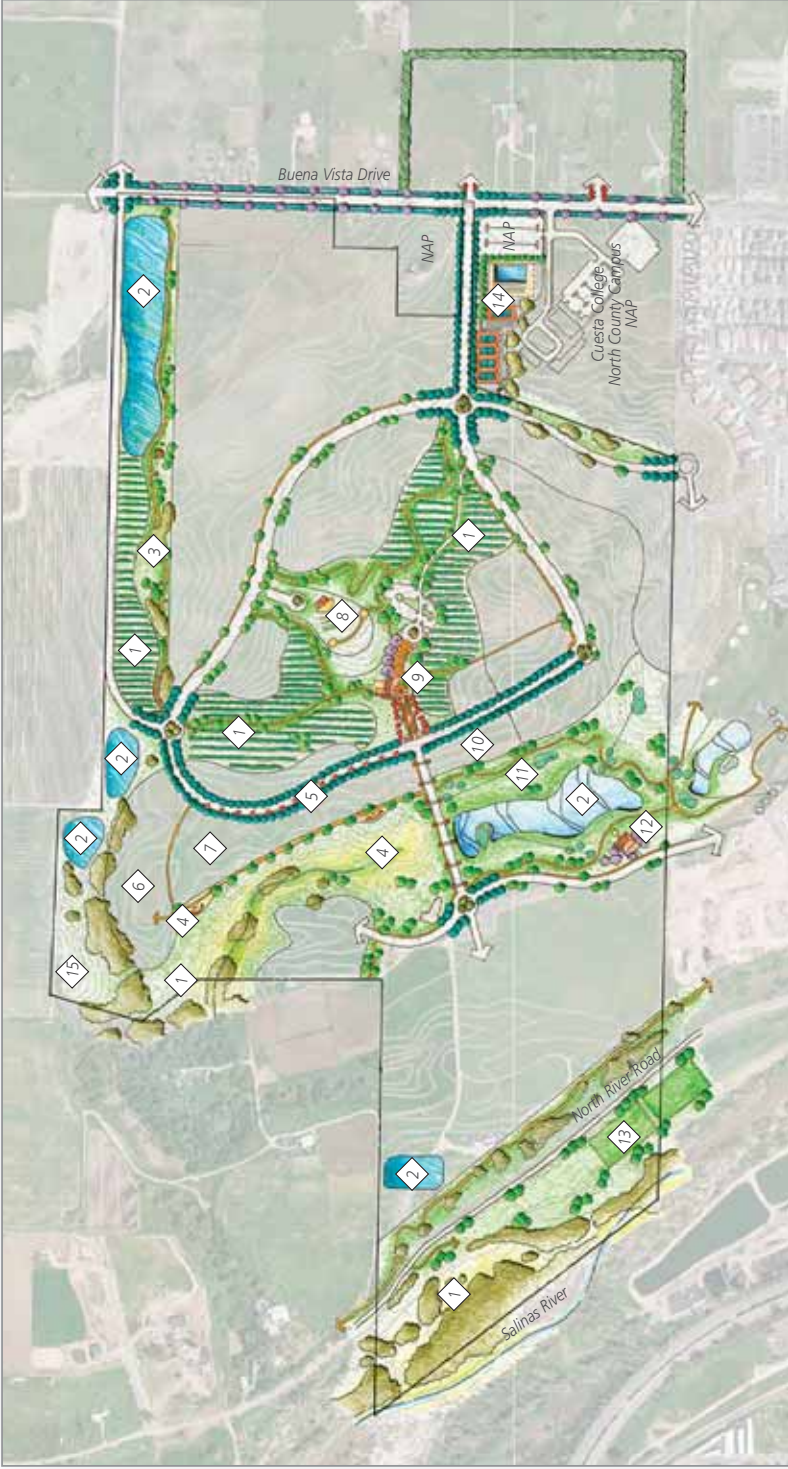
Other CEQA-required sections that will be addressed in the Draft EIR include:

- **Cumulative Impacts**
- **Growth-Inducing Impacts**
- **Global Climate Change**
- **Policy Consistency Analysis**
- **Alternatives Analysis**

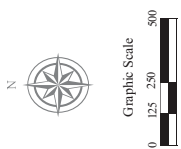
# River Oaks: The Next Chapter

## Location Map





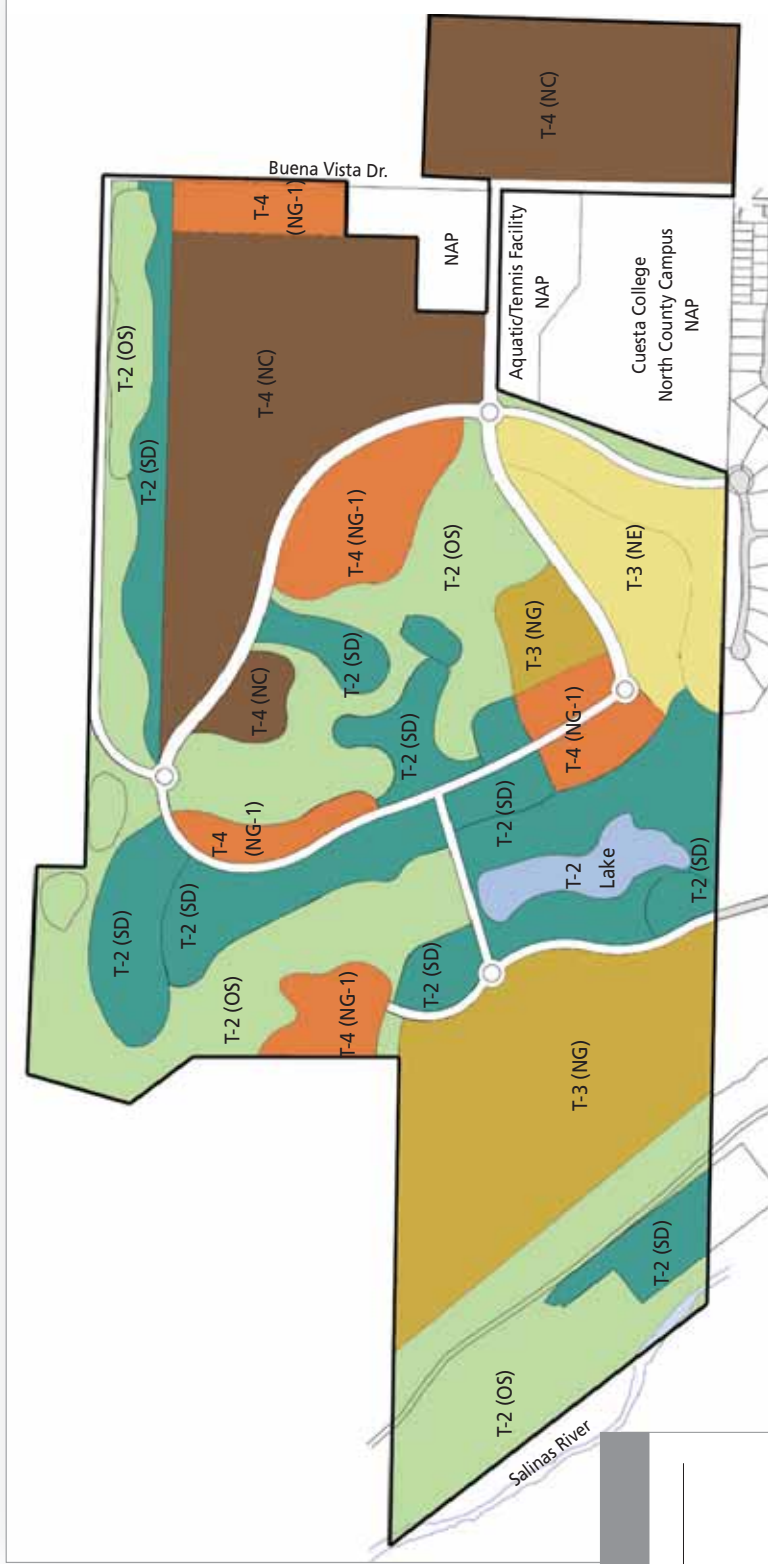
**Figure 1-1** — River Oaks Illustrative Plan



LEGEND	
1	Open Space
2	Lake & Basins
3	Par Course
4	View Overlook
5	Promenade
6	Spa / Fitness / Wellness Centers
7	Destination Resort
8	Amphitheater
9	Community Plaza & Conference Center
10	Neighborhood Recreation
11	Golf Course
12	AAC Center
13	Sports Field
14	Tennis & Aquatic Facility
15	Radio Transmission Tower







LEGEND	
<b>T-2</b>	Open Space (OS) Zone
	Lake
	Special District (SD) Zone
<b>T-3</b>	Neighborhood Edge (NE) Zone
	Neighborhood General (NG) Zone
<b>T-4</b>	Neighborhood General 1 (NG-1) Zone
	Neighborhood Core (NC) Zone

Figure 3-1 — Regulating Plan



PROOF OF PUBLICATION

LEGAL NEWSPAPER NOTICES

PLANNING COMMISSION/CITY COUNCIL  
PROJECT NOTICING

Newspaper: Tribune

Date of Publication: January 14, 2009

Hearing Date: January 27, 2009  
(Planning Commission)

Project: Scoping of Environmental  
Impact Report for River Oaks: The Next Chapter Gen-  
eral Plan Amendment and Specific Plan

I, Lonnie Dolan, employee of the Community  
Development Department, Planning Division, of the City  
of El Paso de Robles, do hereby certify that this notice is  
a true copy of a published legal newspaper notice for the  
above named project.

Signed: Lonnie Dolan  
Lonnie Dolan

forms/newsaffi.691

CITY OF EL PASO DE ROBLES  
NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING  
SCOPING OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR  
RIVER OAKS: THE NEXT CHAPTER GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT  
AND SPECIFIC PLAN

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City of El Paso de Robles will hold a Public Meeting to receive comments on the range and nature of environmental effects to be addressed in an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to be prepared for a proposed general plan amendment and specific plan as described below.

**Project Location**

The project is located in the northeastern portion of the City of Paso Robles, in San Luis Obispo County, California, generally north of State Highway 46 East along a portion of Buena Vista Drive. See the map below. Approximately 249 acres of the project area is within the current City limits with an additional, adjacent 21 acres proposed for annexation.

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- Either amend the Borkey Area Specific Plan or propose a new specific plan;
- Re-zoning consistent with the revised land use designations and pre-zoning of the 21-acre site on the east side of Buena Vista Road consistent with the proposed general plan designations;
- Execution of a development agreement (not an entitlement, but may be required);
- Initiation of proceedings with the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) for an amendment of the City's spheres of influence and service, and a reorganization to annex the 21-acre site to the City;
- Certification of a Final EIR;
- Water Supply Assessment per SB 610 (not an entitlement but a prerequisite to the above item);
- Subsequent approval of the "Planned Development" application;
- Subsequent approval of tentative and final subdivision maps.

The Public Meeting is scheduled to take place at a regular meeting of the Planning Commission scheduled for Tuesday, January 27, 2009, at the hour of 7:30 pm. **This meeting will be conducted in the Emergency Operations Center at the Paso Robles Public Safety Center, 900 Park Street, Paso Robles, California.**

All interested parties may appear and be heard at this meeting.

Questions about and comments on the proposed project and Negative Declaration may be mailed to the Community Development Department, 1000 Spring Street, Paso Robles, CA 93446 or e-mailed to CDdirector@prcity.com. Should you have any questions about this project, please call Ed Gallagher at (805) 237-3970 or send email to ed@prcity.com.

River Oaks: The Next Chapter  
Location Map

