

FAQ

Walt Ranch Vineyard Conversion Project

The Walt Ranch Vineyard Conversion project has generated a great deal of community interest, and in response the County has prepared the following “**Frequently Asked Questions**” form. This **FAQ** is meant to answer questions regarding the Walt Ranch project review process and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) environmental document review process. If you still have unanswered questions, please direct them to Kelli Cahill by email at kelli.cahill@countyofnapa.org or by phone at (707) 265-2325. Please be aware that calls and emails received by other Planning, Building, & Environmental Services (“PBES”) Staff, Planning Commissioners, members of the Board of Supervisors, or other County Departments will be forwarded and responded to by Kelli Cahill.

Walt Ranch Vineyard Conversion Project Description

The following project description can also be found, along with public notices and a complete copy of the environmental documents including the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) on the County’s website at:

www.countyofnapa.org/PBES/WaltRanch/.

The Walt Ranch Erosion Control Plan Application (ECPA) #P11-00205-ECPA proposes earthmoving activities on slopes greater than five percent in connection with the development of 356 net acres of vineyard within 507 gross acres on the approximately 2,300-acre Walt Ranch Project (APNs 032-120-028; 032-480-007,-008, -011, -012, -013, -014, -015, -016, -017, -018, -019, -020, -021, -022,-023, -024, -027, -028; 032-490-004, -005, -006, -008, -009, -010, -011, -012,-013, -014, -015, -016, -017, -018, -019, and -020). A total of 65 vineyard blocks are proposed. The project site is located on the west side of Monticello Road, approximately one mile southwest of its intersection with Highway 128, and approximately one-half mile north of its intersection with Waters Road within the Atlas Peak Area of Napa County, California.

When does the public comment period close for the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR)?

A Draft EIR for the Walt Ranch Project has been prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The County invites comment on the Draft EIR during the comment period, which commenced on July 11, 2014 and concludes November 21, 2014 at 5:00 p.m.

Who do I direct my questions to regarding the Walt Ranch project?

Kelli Cahill by email at kelli.cahill@countyofnapa.org or by phone at (707) 265-2325

How do I comment on the document?

Only written comments will be accepted on or before November 21, 2014. You may mail, fax, email, or hand-deliver comments to Napa County Planning, Building and Environmental Services Department between the hours of 8 am and 5pm at 1195 Third Street, 2nd Floor, Napa CA. Please address all comments to Kelli Cahill, Planner III.

Who answers/addresses public questions about the Draft EIR?

The responses to comments are commonly addressed by both the applicant and PBES. For example, PBES may ask the applicant to provide additional information or clarification in order to respond to a given comment. However, the Draft EIR and its content is the responsibility of the Lead Agency, which is PBES.

Who makes changes to the Draft EIR?

As the Lead Agency, Napa County PBES would make any changes to the EIR if determined to be necessary.

After any changes to the Draft EIR, will there be another opportunity for public comment?

Immediately following the close of the public comment period regarding the Draft EIR on November 21, 2014, the County will review all comments received. The County will then respond to those comments by preparing a Final EIR. However, prior to release of the Final EIR, the County will determine if any significant new information has been provided during the public comment period which warrants recirculation of the Draft EIR as defined in CEQA Statute 15088.5. (Note: recirculation is not required for minor changes to the EIR or for clarification and/or expansion of existing information). If recirculation is required, then a new public comment period will be announced.

If it is determined that the Draft EIR does not require recirculation, the Final EIR will be circulated for at least a 10-day period prior to the Director of PBES making a decision on the Erosion Control Plan Application. Each individual or agency who commented on the Draft EIR will be notified of the Final EIRs availability. Written comments may continue to be

submitted regarding the project after the release of the Final EIR; however, a formal response will not be prepared.

Please be aware that based on the volume of comments the County has received, it is estimated that the Final EIR would likely be completed in Spring 2015.

Please see CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5 regarding the recirculation of EIRs: <http://resources.ca.gov/ceqa/guidelines/>

If no significant changes are needed or made to the draft EIR, who certifies the EIR as being adequate?

The Planning Director would consider both the EIR and the project. The EIR may be certified or not. The application may be approved, approved as modified, or denied. The decision is made solely by the Director. There is no public hearing required for administrative applications.

If the Final EIR is administratively certified, but the public wishes to appeal the approval - to whom is the appeal directed?

Any appeal to the project must be filed with the County Executive Office at 1195 Third Street, Suite 310.

Who hears the appeal? The PBES Department? The Planning Commission? Or the Board of Supervisors?

The Board of Supervisors will hear an appeal of the Director's decision to approve the project.

After all of the above, if the applicant receives some level of approval to proceed, who monitors compliance?

The Planning department would be responsible for most of the monitoring/compliance matters. The Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) located in Chapter 2 of the Draft EIR lists the proposed Mitigation Measures, along with who is responsible for oversight of the compliance/monitoring of individual mitigation measures.

What inspection process occurs?

Inspections vary depending upon the potential impact and subject matter. For example, Planning is required to conduct annual winterization inspections to ensure the vineyard is installed and operated as designed and approved. Winterization inspections typically occur in the fall of each year.

Is the applicant required to follow the letter of the approved EIR and conditions of approval?

Yes. Any non-compliance or violation of the EIR and conditions may result in enforcement action by the County.

If there are future changes of the project, does the applicant have to apply to Planning to have the approvals modified?

Yes, any increases in the approved vineyard acreage or changes to the approved erosion control plan would need to be submitted to Planning for consideration. Depending upon the significance of the modification, a new environmental document and public review period may be required.

Common Terms Defined

CEQA

“CEQA”, or the California Environmental Quality Act, is a statute that requires state and local agencies to identify the significant environmental impacts of their actions and to avoid or mitigate those impacts, to the extent feasible.

Cumulative Impacts

“Cumulative impacts” refers to two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts.

- (a) The individual effects may be changes resulting from a single project or a number of separate projects.
- (b) The cumulative impact from several projects is the change in the environment which results from the incremental impact of the project when added to other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time.

EIR

“EIR” or “Environmental Impact Report” means a detailed statement prepared under CEQA describing and analyzing the significant environmental effects of a project and discussing ways to mitigate or avoid the effects. The term “EIR” may mean either a draft or a final EIR depending on the context.

- (a) Draft EIR (DEIR) means a document that includes a detailed analysis of a proposed project’s significant environmental effect on the environment. The DEIR must include specific contents, including (but not limited to): a summary of the project and its impacts; description of the project; alternatives to the proposal; environmental setting; impacts which cannot be avoided; irreversible changes to the environment; growth-inducing impacts; cumulative effects; and mitigation measures. .
- (b) Final EIR (FEIR) means an EIR containing the information contained in the draft EIR, comments either verbatim or in summary received in the review process, a list of persons commenting, and the response of the Lead Agency to the comments received.

Lead Agency

“Lead Agency” means the public agency which has the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving a project. The Lead Agency will decide whether an EIR or Negative Declaration will be required for the project and will cause the document to be prepared.

Notice of Preparation (NOP)

“Notice of Preparation” means a brief notice sent by a Lead Agency to notify the Responsible Agencies, Trustee Agencies, the Office of Planning and Research, and involved federal agencies that the Lead Agency plans to prepare an EIR for the project. The purpose of the notice is to solicit guidance from those agencies as to the scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the EIR. Public agencies are free to develop their own formats for this notice.

Notice of Availability (NOA)

“Notice of Availability” is a notice issued by the Lead Agency to solicit comments from the public and other agencies on the DEIR.

Notice of Completion (NOC)

“Notice of Completion” means a brief notice filed with the Office of Planning and Research by a Lead Agency as soon as it has completed a draft EIR and is prepared to send out copies for review.

Helpful Links

Walt Ranch Project documents	http://www.countyofnapa.org/PBES/WaltRanch/
Napa County General Plan	http://www.countyofnapa.org/GeneralPlan/
CEQA Guides and Handbooks	http://opr.ca.gov/docs/SCH_Handbook_2012.pdf http://resources.ca.gov/ceqa/guidelines/