

# El Dorado Hills Area Planning Advisory Committee



## APAC 2019 Board

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## **PD18-0002 EDH Folsom Self Storage EDH APC Subcommittee Report**

The El Dorado Hills Area Planning Advisory Committee (EDH APAC) formed a subcommittee to study the proposed PD18-0002 EDH-Folsom Self Storage Project located on the south side of Green Valley Rd between Shadowfax Lane and Sophia Parkway.

It is a consistent land use with the property's current zoning.

### **Traffic:**

As the Green Valley Rd corridor is one of only two major east-west connectors on the Western Slope of El Dorado County, and has long experienced very poor traffic circulation and Level of Service (LOS) conditions, and is a significant impact to the region, the subcommittee was very focused on the project's traffic impacts to the area.

What makes it difficult to evaluate the traffic impacts for this project is that the traffic study provided in supporting project documentation, also includes the cumulative impacts of the adjacent Sophia Parkway Commercial Project. The Sophia Parkway Commercial Project generates most of the traffic in the study - indeed, as the applicants stressed in their appearances at APAC, their self-storage project is probably one of the lowest traffic impact generating projects that could be proposed for the site, as it is currently zoned.

The EDH APAC Subcommittee recognizes that the proposed use has one of the lowest traffic impacts of most available uses for the parcel. Most other consumer focused uses for the commercial zoning (retail, service, restaurant) would generate considerably more average daily trips.

As such, the EDH APAC Subcommittee is only considering the traffic impacts of this project PD18-0002 - the proposed Sophia Parkway Commercial project traffic impacts will be evaluated when that project gets closer to its approvals process - we will consider them separate projects, with the exception of the on-property connectivity to Sophia Parkway itself, provided by the proposed reciprocal access easement of the Sophia Parkway Commercial Project's parking lot.

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Traffic concerns for the EDH APAC Subcommittee center around the timing of the improvements to Green Valley Rd (the merge/acceleration/deceleration, extended eastbound to southern turn lane to Sophia Pkwy) and the connectivity through the parking area of the proposed Sophia Parkway Commercial project. Will it all happen concurrent with construction, prior to the completion of construction, or will the two improvements be staged as the project is constructed, and completed in phases?

It is noted that in the traffic analysis on page 14 of 73 (numbered however as page 4 in the PDF) the following:

*Access - Under both alternatives a reciprocal access easement is proposed to allow access from both sites onto Green Valley Road and Sophia Parkway. Project driveways along these streets will include right-in, right-out only movements. The Self-Storage site will also have an emergency vehicle access along Shadowfax in the southwest corner of the site. Figure 2A illustrates Alternative #1 with the proposed access locations while Figure 2B illustrates Alternative #2.*

The EDH APAC Subcommittee remains curious about the timing of the other proposed traffic mitigation(s) regarding the storage queues for intersections, primarily at Green Valley Rd and Francisco Dr. Other projects are proposed to mitigate some of those conditions (The Vineyards at EDH is one) plus the intersection is on the CIP for capacity improvements in the 2023/24 through 2028/29 and 2037/38 time frames. But it seems that it will be accomplished via TIM Fees that the applicant will contribute to that intersection mitigation. The EDH APAC Subcommittee feels that these proposed mitigation via TIM Fees, delays the mitigation of actual, real, imminent impacts, and puts the implementation off to some undefined specific time in the future, dependant on the contribution of multiple other future projects, which may, or may not, become reality.

The westbound left turn Lane on GreenValley Rd to southbound Sophia Pkwy - on pages 57 & 58 of the 75 page traffic study (which are pages 67-68 in the PDF), mentions that the queue will exceed the length of the left turn lane, but determines it is not a problem because of the 2-way left turn lane beyond the dedicated turn lane to southbound Sophia Pkwy.

This is a problem in as much that the western end of 2-way left turn lane is striped with a double yellow line and there is a virtual island there.

Under the 'Existing plus Self Storage' and 'Existing plus Commercial scenarios', the queues for westbound Green Valley Road at Sophia Parkway will exceed the length of the left turn lane.

*"Since the left turn lane transitions into a TWLTL (Two Way Left Turn Lane), this will allow the queue to store without blocking through traffic".*

The left turn lane in its current configuration terminates in a double yellow line and a virtual traffic island exists between the left turn lane and TWLTL (Two Way Left Turn Lane). Crossing the double yellow line into the island is a Vehicle Code Violation. This should be addressed in the planning process.

Extending the westbound Green Valley Rd to southbound Sophia Pkwy turn lane would be a conflict for eastbound Green Valley Rd traffic to access a left turn across Green Valley Rd to the western driveway to Kipps Lane. The EDH APAC Subcommittee asks: should a left turn from eastbound Green Valley to Kipps at the western-most end of the TWLTL be eliminated, and direct that traffic further east to the entrance near the current existing Chevron station (technically, still Kipps Lane)?

The TWLTL extends west, past Amy's Lane - but there are no driveways available for vehicular traffic to accomplish a westbound to southbound left turn from Amy's Lane to the end of the TWLTL (at the beginning of the Left turn lane to Sophia Pkwy) for approximately 208 feet. Likewise, from the western termination point of the TWLTL east to Kipp's Lane at the Chevron Gas Station entrance, there are no eastbound to northbound driveways available for approximately 447 feet. Along both the northern road edge and the southern road edge of Green Valley Rd, there are short walls with decorative iron fences that prevent left turns. Can this segment of TWLTL be reconfigured with something as simple as striping to eliminate the TWLTL markings that exist today, and still provide the required stacking/queuing for the westbound left turn to Sophia Pkwy, and room for left turns into, and out of, Amy's Lane, and Kipps Lane?

A concern about the left to Kipps Lane was the conflict between Sophia Pkwy, Kipps Lane and Amy's Lane, as they are all in close proximity, and queuing and stacking in the TWLTL will be in conflict. The Subcommittee feels that either an island, or road striping reconfiguration should be required mitigations.

While the EDH APAC Subcommittee questions the timing of the traffic mitigation(s) proposed, the majority of the traffic study traffic and circulation impacts and concerns are generated by the traffic study linked to the proposed Sophia Parkway Commercial project. As the traffic impacts of the Proposed PD18-0002 EDH-Folsom Self Storage project presents considerably less traffic impacts, the EHD APAC Subcommittee is only raising questions and concerns as related to the PD18-0002 project, and feels that the traffic and circulation impacts of the proposed Sophia Parkway Commercial project should be evaluated separately.

#### **Utilities:**

The question of adequate electrical power and internet/data services have been raised by members of the EDH APAC Subcommittee, and area residents. The applicant has informed EDH APAC that sufficient electric power capacity exists to the project site. Per the utility company, no internet lines run on the south side of Green Valley Rd. There is a concern that

ultimately there may be a need to provide that connectivity by implementing a solution that may impact Shadowfax Lane (power/utility poles, or in ground utility infrastructure. The same assumptions may be raised in the evaluation of the Sophia Parkway Commercial project, so ideally a solution that could be implemented as a single project to minimize disruption to residents along Shadowfax Lane, if it is determined that the access for data connectivity needs to be along Shadowfax Lane.

### **Aesthetics:**

The debate about the aesthetic impacts can be made, but at looking at adjacent and nearby commercial properties along Green Valley Rd from Shadowfax Ln through Lakeridge Oaks Dr, including Amy's Lane, and Kipps Lane, reveals that these commercial properties already contains many very old buildings, some which are definitely showing their age, as well as some neglect. The nearby residences all seem to be in good shape, regardless of age. So while we can question the project site as being the 'gateway' or entrance to both El Dorado County and El Dorado Hills, compared to what is already in place, and based on the submitted project elevations, and the landscape plan, this project should not negatively impact the aesthetics of this road segment (the EDH APAC Subcommittee has attached several photos of the area from Google Street View and Google Earth). This being said, the EDH APAC Subcommittee feels that they very best possible design and higher quality materials should be considered for use at this western entrance to El Dorado County and El Dorado Hills.

More height in the landscaping elements, would be appropriate, as well as more mature landscaping plants and materials to provide more shielding when the project opens, as opposed to waiting for them to grow over several years. The streetscape along Green Valley Rd should be a major consideration, as well as the wall fronting Shadowfax Lane on the south, to break up the monolithic nature of the proposed wall elements, and to shield the interior of the project from the Green Valley Rd viewshed. Since part of the shielding is proposed to be accomplished by the construction of the proposed Sophia Parkway Commercial project, but no project timeline, or documents are available, mitigation via vertical landscaping elements should be a requirement.

### **Biological and environmental:**

A member of the EDH APAC Subcommittee expressed concerns regarding expectations to any water flow changes from the creek/wetlands that runs through the property, during, and after construction.

The applicant advises that they will be building water quality basins along both sides of the creek to mitigate water quality, and quantity, to not disrupt existing flows.

The EDH APAC Subcommittee appreciates the applicants' efforts to preserve and protect the wetlands on the property site, considering that filling in the wetlands on the property site was

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one of the options available to the applicants. That being said, the EDH APAC Subcommittee prefers that ongoing monitoring and enforcement of the water quality aspect of the wetlands, be established as part of the conditions of approval.

### **Community Comments:**

I have mixed feelings about the location for the project.... but the original project was for mixed-use commercial so maybe this is better?

I recognize that there is an issue with this property being the entrance to the County, and to EDH - but... the area already has one old storage yard with outdoor storage of boats and RVs. There are several other old commercial uses nearby (to be honest, in a questionable state of repair). The County already approved another gas station, the new AM PM, to go along with the other gas station on the northside of Green Valley Rd. The City of Folsom will be expanding Green Valley to 4 lane this spring, and this project offers to add a third eastbound lane in front of the project to Sophia Pkwy, which should benefit traffic and circulation

Another resident opines that the project should offer little to no exterior lighting that may contribute to light pollution that may impact area residents, or the California State Park across Green Valley Rd at Folsom Lake.

Other residents desires tall landscaping to block the view of the project from hillside homes above the project (Lakeridge Oaks, Rolling Hills Estates, Cambria Way, Hidden Acres Dr, Hill View Dr, Mormon Island Dr, The Promontory, and Shadowfax Lane residents).

A member of the **El Dorado County Cemetery Advisory Committee**, Melinda Peak, suggests concerns regarding possible effects of the project on the Mormon Island cemetery, in regards to visual impacts to the historic cemetery, as well as physical concern, with water run-off of parking lots, and for security impacts, with vandalism potentially occurring. Her specific comments follow:

- The cemetery has water problems and some erosion occurring, including mystery holes in graves, and obelisks and markers tilting. The County is obligated to care for this cemetery; shouldn't the water problems be investigated and resolved before you increase runoff dramatically to the cemetery with more paved surfaces?
- Where does all that additional water get channeled with it having to run off instead of soaking in to the land?
- Is there a back-up system to prevent water flow to the cemetery should the primary system get blocked?
- Is the water problem related to the recent work at Dyke 8 (Mormon Island Dam or whatever it is called now)?

- How are you handling the presence of the Natomas Ditch, part of a National Register of Historic Places eligible site? Other sections destroyed in Folsom required special recordation as mitigation.
- Does the project require a Corps of Engineers permit?
- Is the water problem perhaps related to the changes in the Natomas Ditch system over the years, creating road flooding?
- More people seeing the cemetery through their use of a new facility could lead to increased vandalism. How will you protect the cemetery?
- Fencing is failing at the cemetery—perhaps some security could be enhanced by the potential new neighbor fixing the fencing and adding a secure gate?
- How about adding a security camera pointed at the cemetery on one of the buildings proposed?
- Perhaps a secure gate could be locked, and on-site facility managers help with maintaining a key, and taking i.d. from visitors? Limit the hours of access to the cemetery for long-term protection?
- Is the facility going to block the view of the cemetery from Green Valley? The presence of the facility may provide cover for vandals or increase popularity as a hideaway location for young people, similar to “Heaven.”

## **In Conclusion:**

The EDH APAC Subcommittee appreciates the opportunity to review the proposed project, and the willingness of the applicant to participate at multiple EDH APAC meetings, and their availability to answer questions.

## **The Subcommittee recommends Conditional Support of the project as proposed:**

1. The Subcommittee is concerned about the traffic mitigation(s) timing - particularly for the TIM Fees intended for Green Valley Rd at Francisco Drive. The Subcommittee would like to see real-term defined dates for the implementation of these proposed mitigation(s).
2. The Subcommittee recommends that the proposed reciprocal access easement to allow access from both sites (EDH-Folsom Self Storage, and Sophia Parkway Commercial) onto Green Valley Road and Sophia Parkway be required as a condition of approval of the project.
3. The Subcommittee recommends that a solution to the conflict of the western end of the Two Way Left Turn Lane on Green Valley Rd in the vicinity of Kipps Lane and Amy's Lane, and the anticipated future queuing/stacking of the westbound left turn lane from Green Valley Rd to southbound Sophia Pkwy be resolved as part of the conditions of approval of this project.
4. The Subcommittee recommends that ongoing monitoring and enforcement of the water quality aspect of the wetlands, be established as part of the conditions of approval of this project.
5. The Subcommittee recommends that more vertical landscape elements be utilized to break up the monolithic nature of the project's perimeter wall (specifically fronting Green Valley Rd, as well as the wall fronting Shadowfax Lane and residences on the south) as a condition of approval, and that mature landscape plantings be used.