

A DRAFT NEGATIVE DECLARATION



CITY OF BISHOP DRAFT 2015 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT UPDATE

LEAD AGENCY:

City of Bishop
377 West Line Street
Bishop, CA 93514
Contact: Gary Schley (760) 873-8458

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act the City of Bishop has conducted an Initial Study to determine whether the draft 2015 Economic Development Element Update may have a significant adverse effect on the environment and on the basis of that study hereby finds:

- ◆ The proposed project could not have a significant effect on the environment, and a Negative Declaration will be prepared.

Project:

Title: City of Bishop 2015 Economic Development Element Update
Description: This 2015 Economic Development Element Update identifies programs and actions that the City of Bishop can implement to achieve the goals and policies established in the General Plan.
Proponent: The City of Bishop
Address: Post Office Box 1236, 377 West Line Street, Bishop, CA 93515
Contact: Gary Schley, Public Services Officer, 760-873-8458

Notice:

This document is provided for review by the general public. This is an information document about environmental effects associated with approval and implementation of the 2015 Economic Development Element Update. The decision-making body will review this document before considering the project. If you have comments on the adequacy of this document or the finding that this project will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment, please send your comments by mail or email to:

City of Bishop
P.O. Box 1236
Bishop, CA 93515
publicworks@ca-bishop.us
Contact: Gary Schley (760) 873-8458

Comments will be received for a 30-day period, through March 1, 2015, and public input will be encouraged throughout the public hearing process as well. Final action on this environmental determination will occur after the public hearing process, in conjunction with adoption of the proposed Economic Development Element.

Project Description

The City of Bishop is proposing a comprehensive update to the Economic Development Element of the City's General Plan. The update objective is to define a strategy for supporting, strengthening and diversifying the community's economy. The update identifies Bishop's unique environment and existing conditions, outlining our economic strengths, weaknesses and opportunities to support Economic Development goals, policies and actions. The Economic Development Element contains a economic and housing snapshot component that details the City's population growth, community demographics, household income, employment and labor markets, taxable retail sales, and housing characteristics. A community input component that presents key findings, themes and recommendations for economic development. A component that identifies a series of case studies from around the country that showcase communities actions to address various economic development issues, and a component that sets forth goals, policies and implementing actions. The Implementation Plan is intended to guide the community's progress toward achieving economic development goals for the next ten to fifteen years.

Finally, physical improvements associated with the Economic Development Element cannot be implemented without further review. Each future project will be subject to environmental review consistent with requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) at such time as it is proposed for consideration.

Project Location

The City of Bishop is a scenic community located on the eastern slopes of the Sierra Nevada Mountains in the northernmost part of Inyo County. The City is situated at the junction of U. S. 6 and U. S. 395, which is a major source of tourist and recreation traffic for Bishop. Bishop is the only incorporated City in Inyo County, and is located approximately 275 miles north of San Bernardino and 35 miles southeast of the Town of Mammoth Lakes.

Related Studies and Documents:

The current Economic Development Element Update is based upon policies set forth in the City of Bishop General Plan Economic Development Element prepared in 1992, and more specifically on the economic development goals and objectives expressed in the recent EDE Open House and EDE Working Group meetings.

ENVIRONMENTAL INITIAL STUDY

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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I. AESTHETICS -- Would the project:

- a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?
- b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?
- c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?
- d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

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DISCUSSION OF AESTHETICS: The 2015 Economic Development Element update recommends a wide range of goals, policies and programs. Although the project is a policy level document, economic development improvements may present a potential new source of light, changes to historical resources and landscape. The nature and extent of these changes will depend largely on specific details associated with each project as developed. Impacts associated with individual projects will be evaluated at the time the proposals are reviewed by the City. At a policy level, however, the potential impact of the Economic Development Element Update on the environmental resources will have no impact.

II. AGRICULTURE RESOURCES: In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. Would the project:

- a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?
- b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?
- c) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use?

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DISCUSSION OF AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES: Although agricultural activities are found throughout the Owens Valley, including areas adjacent to Bishop, The City’s General Plan does not incorporate agriculture into the adopted Land Use Plan. Implementation of the Economic Development Element would not have the potential to impact existing farming activities, nor would it conflict with policy concerning conservation of agricultural lands.

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III. AIR QUALITY -- Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:

- a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan? ◆
- b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation? ◆
- c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)? ◆
- d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations? ◆
- e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people? ◆

DISCUSSION OF AIR QUALITY: Air quality in the City of Bishop is generally good due to the absence of significant pollutant sources in or near the planning area. Actions contained in the Economic Development Element would not significantly change the level of air quality. Some actions would have the potential to increase emissions: these potential effects will be evaluated at the time that project proposals are considered by the City. At a policy level, the impact of the Economic Development Element implementation on air quality will be less than significant.

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES -- Would the project:

- a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service? ◆
- b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, and regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service? ◆
- c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means? ◆

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d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?



e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?



f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?



DISCUSSION OF BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES: As a planning document, the Economic Development Element would not in itself result in impacts to biological resources. Implementation of the actions outlined in the Economic Development Element will require subsequent discretionary approvals and environmental review pursuant to CEQA, at which time project-specific impacts related to biological resources can be more specifically defined and site-specific mitigation measures can be identified to reduce those impacts. Because the project is a policy level document and future discretionary projects would be reviewed on a project-specific basis consistent with CEQA and the City's General Plan, the Economic Development Element update would not have a significant environmental impact to biological resources.

V. CULTURAL RESOURCES -- Would the project:

a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in '15064.5?



b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to '15064.5?



c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?



d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?



VI. GEOLOGY AND SOILS -- Would the project:

a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:



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i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.



ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?



iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?



v) Landslides?



b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?



c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?



d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?



e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?



DISCUSSION OF GEOLOGY AND SOILS: The City of Bishop is located at the north end of the Owens Valley between the Sierra Nevada and White Mountains. The valley is a seismically active region of eastern California. There are no fault lines identified within the City limits and the City is not within an Alquist-Priolo designated zone, so the risk of seismically induced ground rupture is low. The Bishop area topography is generally flat and sloping to the east. Because the draft Economic Development Element is a policy level document, no significant geotechnical impacts are expected in association with the proposed project.

VII. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Would the project:

a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?



b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?



c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?



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d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?



e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?



f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?



g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?



h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?



DISCUSSION OF HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS: A search of the EPA database indicates that there are no Class I hazardous waste disposal sites in the area, nor are there major waste generators in the City as a whole. None of the goals and policies proposed in the draft Economic Development Element Update is associated with transport, use or disposal of hazardous materials, or unusual fire hazard, or potential disruption to emergency response procedures or plans, and implementation of the proposed goals and objectives would not be expected to result in any hazards to the public. Approval and implementation of the Economic Development Element Update would not be significant with respect to hazards and hazardous materials.

VIII. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY --

Would the project:

a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?



b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?



c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?



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d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?



e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?



f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?



g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?



h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?



i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?



DISCUSSION OF HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY: The City uses a stormwater collection system, in conjunction with the natural creek drainage system, to manage run-off. For Bishop, the only area that FEMA has identified as being within the 100-year flood plain are areas along the south fork of Bishop Creek and the Bishop Creek Canal which is located along the northeast and east City limit. Another source of potential flooding is related to dam inundation from a number of dams located west of Bishop in the Sierra Nevada Bishop Creek drainage. Flooding would only occur in the unlikely event that the dams failed, and would affect those areas downstream from the dams. Additionally, The Bishop Public Works Department is actively maintaining and improving its water and sewer systems by re-constructing water storage tanks, pump stations, fire hydrants, main distribution lines and sewer plant improvements. Because of mandatory federal and state water quality requirements, the City's maintenance and improvement efforts, and because the proposal is a policy level document, the Economic Development Element would not have a significant hydrological or water quality impact to the community.

IX. LAND USE AND PLANNING - Would the project:

a) Physically divide an established community?



b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?



c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?



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DISCUSSION OF LAND USE AND PLANNING: The goals, policies and actions outlined in the proposed 2015 Economic Development Element are based upon and consistent with the lands uses described in the City's General Plan Land Use Element. However, the Economic Development Element does make several recommendations that could impact area land uses. All of these proposed actions would require subsequent project level review by the City, including CEQA documentation to assess potential impacts. Because the proposed Economic Development Element is a policy level document it will have no adverse impact.

X. MINERAL RESOURCES - Would the project:

- a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state? ◆
- b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan? ◆

DISCUSSION OF MINERAL RESOURCES: No mineral resources are known to exist in the proposed project area. All of the Economic Development Element actions would be subject to individual review prior to approval, including identification of environmental resources and mitigation if required. Therefore, the project will not result in a negative impact to mineral resources.

XI. NOISE B Would the project result in:

- a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies? ◆
- b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels? ◆
- c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project? ◆
- d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project? ◆
- e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels? ◆
- f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels? ◆

Potentially Significant Impact

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation

Less Than Significant Impact

No Impact

DISCUSSION OF NOISE: The City of Bishop ambient noise levels are relatively low due to the small size of the City, and the limited inventory of undeveloped land and open space. The primary noise sources include traffic along U.S. Hwy.395, aircraft flying in and out of Eastern Sierra Regional Airport, and several small industrial developments located thru out the City. The City reviews noise impacts as part of the CEQA compliance process, supported by General Plan policies. These requirements would apply to individual actions recommended in the Economic Development Element at the time they are proposed; approval of the Economic Development Element Update would not in itself have a significant impact with respect to noise impacts.

XII. POPULATION AND HOUSING Would the project:

a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?



b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?



c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?



DISCUSSION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING: The Economic Development Element would not substantially affect population growth or exceed regional or local population projections. Therefore, approval of this document will have no impact on population and housing; potential impacts of individual projects will be assessed as the projects are proposed for implementation.

XIII. PUBLIC SERVICES

a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:

Fire protection?



Police protection?



Schools?



Parks?



Other public facilities?



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DISCUSSION OF PUBLIC SERVICES: The draft Economic Development Element contains goals, policies and actions rather than specific projects. When or if specific actions are implemented it would require some form of focused study and compliance with CEQA. With the understanding of each specific project requiring an individual study and CEQA compliance, there does not appear to be a significant impact to public services.

XIV. RECREATION

a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?



b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?



DISCUSSION OF RECREATION: The Economic Development Element will not significantly impact the use of local public parks or necessitate the expansion of recreational facilities, therefore have no impact on recreation. Project level CEQA documentation will be prepared as individual projects are proposed for implementation.

XV. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC -- Would the project:

a) Cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?



b) Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?



c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?



d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?



e) Result in inadequate emergency access?



f) Result in inadequate parking capacity?



G) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?



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DISCUSSION OF TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC: The draft Economic Development Element contains goals, policies and actions rather than specific projects. Specific projects will have subsequent review for their cumulative impact on the City’s circulation system. Therefore, the draft Economic Development Element will not result in adverse impacts associated with transportation and traffic.

XVI. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Would the project:

- a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board? ◆
- b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects? ◆
- c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects? ◆
- d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed? ◆
- e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the projects projected demand in addition to the providers existing commitments? ◆
- f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the projects solid waste disposal needs? ◆
- g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste? ◆

DISCUSSION OF UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS: The proposed draft Economic Development Element goals, policies and actions would not result in a need for new systems or supplies or substantial alterations to power, communications, water supplies, water treatment or distribution facilities, solid waste disposal, sewer and sewer treatment. However, future specific projects will be reviewed for potential impacts to utilities and service systems as part of project level CEQA review. Therefore, the Economic Development Element will have no impact on utilities and service systems.

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XVII. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?



b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?



c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?



DISCUSSION OF MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE: The 2015 Economic Development Element update can be adopted and implemented by the City of Bishop without significant impacts to the environment. The entire record of information provided in this Initial Study indicates that there would be no significant cumulative impacts, or substantial adverse impacts on human beings, or substantial adverse impacts on fish or wildlife or sensitive species or cultural resources.