6 OTHER CEQA-MANDATED SECTIONS

6.1 GROWTH INDUCEMENT

PRC Section 21100(b)(5) specifies that the growth-inducing impacts of a project must be addressed in an EIR. Section 15126.2(e) of the State CEQA Guidelines provides the following guidance for assessing growth-inducing impacts of a project:

> Discuss the ways in which the proposed project could foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment. Included in this are projects which would remove obstacles to population growth (a major expansion of a wastewater treatment plant might, for example, allow for more construction in service areas). Increases in the population may tax existing community service facilities, requiring construction of new facilities that could cause significant environmental effects. Also, discuss the characteristics of some projects which may encourage and facilitate other activities that could significantly affect the environment, either individually or cumulatively. It must not be assumed that growth in any area is necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment.

A project can induce growth directly, indirectly, or both. Direct growth inducement would result if a project involved construction of new housing. Indirect growth inducement would result, for instance, if implementing a project resulted in:

- substantial new permanent employment opportunities (e.g., commercial, industrial, or governmental enterprises);
- substantial short-term employment opportunities (e.g., construction employment) that indirectly stimulates the need for additional housing and services to support the new temporary employment demand; or
- removal of an obstacle to additional growth and development, such as removing a constraint on a required public utility or service (e.g., construction of a major sewer line with excess capacity through an undeveloped area).

Growth inducement itself is not an environmental effect but may foreseeably lead to environmental effects. If substantial growth inducement occurs, it can result in secondary environmental effects, such as increased demand for housing, demand for other community and public services and infrastructure capacity, increased traffic and noise, degradation of air or water quality, degradation or loss of plant or animal habitats, conversion of agricultural and open space land to urban uses, and other effects.

6.1.1 Growth-Inducing Impacts of the Project

POPULATION GROWTH

As discussed in the General Plan EIR, growth under the General Plan would allow for the future construction of up to 45,397 new homes within the Planning Area at a wide range of types and densities. Construction of these homes would increase the City's population by approximately 155,282 residents, from 2022 estimates, to a total of 332,254 at Project build out. With the proposed amendment to the General Plan the estimated population at build out would increase by 5,979 residents as compared to the current General Plan. The General Plan EIR recognized that future urban development outside of the City limits may be appropriate to accommodate future growth and identified Study Areas as possible annexation areas for the City to accommodate such growth. The Project identifies the LEA Community Plan Area as a new community plan that overlaps with the South Study Area.

New population growth as a result of the Project would increase the population in the Planning Area and exceed projections assumed under the current General Plan as well as the regional planning efforts completed by SACOG. However, the increase in population as a result of the Project would be dispersed throughout the Planning Area to specific growth areas, such as the LEA Community Plan Area and infill areas established in the General Plan. Development of proposed housing associated with the Project is anticipated to meet population needs and would occur over Project buildout (30 years or more). Where growth could lead to physical changes beyond those anticipated in the General Plan, the potential for effects are evaluated throughout this SEIR.

GROWTH EFFECTS ASSOCIATED WITH INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

The Project would directly induce growth through increases in residential development potential and density in the LEA Community Plan Area and the Old Town Policy Area. The City's infrastructure and public services are largely provided by other public and private service providers (e.g., Sacramento County Water Agency and Elk Grove Water District for water supply, Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District and Sacramento Area Sewer District for wastewater service, Sacramento Municipal Utility District for electrical service) that utilize master plans for guiding planned facility and service expansions that are subject to environmental review under CEQA. The General Plan identifies future growth in the Study Areas, such as the South Study Area, that are outside of some service boundaries for utility providers. The General Plan EIR evaluated impacts from providing services outside of the existing service boundaries for agencies such as the Sacramento County Water Agency and Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District. Some infrastructure may need to be expanded to address the increase in development proposed under the Project. However, the Project would not require infrastructure to be extended outside of areas for growth already identified in the General Plan and its EIR.

The General Plan includes proposed roadway improvements that have been designed to support the General Plan Land Use Policy. The General Plan does not include any provisions requiring the oversizing of infrastructure facilities to serve growth not anticipated in the General Plan Land Use Policy Map. The Project does not include any specific infrastructure improvements and also does not include any oversized infrastructure or infrastructure extensions that would result in growth. There would be no new significant effect from the Project and the impact is not more severe than of that originally identified in the General Plan EIR.

ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF GROWTH

The General Plan and proposed amendments would induce further population and job growth in the City as well as potentially induce growth outside of the City (e.g., within the Study Areas). Proposed roadway improvements would support such growth within the City. As a result, the General Plan and proposed amendments are considered to be growth-inducing. The environmental effects of this growth within the City and Study Areas is addressed in the General Plan EIR. The Project does not propose to locate residential units in areas not anticipated for residential or urban development in the General Plan and General Plan EIR. The environmental effects of the implementation of the Project are discussed in Sections 3.1 through 3.10 and Chapter 4 of this Draft SEIR.

6.2 SIGNIFICANT AND UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS

The State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(c) requires EIRs to include a discussion of the significant environmental effects that cannot be avoided if the proposed project is implemented. The following impacts are considered substantially more severe than impacts identified in the General Plan EIR and are significant and unavoidable; that is, no feasible mitigation is available to reduce these impacts to a less-than-significant level:

- Impact 3.2-2: Operational Air Quality
- Impact 3.5-1: Project Generated Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions
- Impact 3.6-2: Increased Traffic Noise

- Impact 4-3: Cumulative Air Quality Impacts
- Impact 4-6: Cumulative GHG Emissions
- Impact 4-8: Cumulative Traffic Noise Impacts

6.3 SIGNIFICANT AND IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

The State CEQA Guidelines (Section 15126) require a discussion of the significant irreversible environmental changes that would be involved in a project if it were implemented. The irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources is the permanent loss of resources for future or alternative purposes. Irreversible and irretrievable resources are those that cannot be recovered or recycled or those that are consumed or reduced to unrecoverable forms.

As noted in Chapter 2, "Project Description," of this Draft SEIR, the Project would result in up to 1,851 new dwelling units beyond what was evaluated in the General Plan EIR and currently provided for under the General Plan. While the Project would increase development intensities, all Project parcels were already anticipated for various levels of development under the General Plan (City of Elk Grove 2019). While development intensity throughout the Planning Area would increase, the Project could result in a reduced level of commercial development as compared with that anticipated by the General Plan. Additionally, the Project would not increase the City's development footprint because development was assumed to occur in the LEA Planning Area, Old Town Policy Area, and South and West Study Areas as part of General Plan buildout. Implementation of the Project could result in the irreversible and irretrievable commitment of material resources and energy during construction and operation of future development, including:

- construction materials, such as soil, rocks, wood, concrete, glass, and steel;
- water supply for expended development potential; and
- energy expended in the form of electricity, gasoline, diesel fuel, and oil for equipment and transportation vehicles that would be needed for Project construction.

Because the General Plan EIR already evaluated the commitment of material resources and energy, the Project's use of these nonrenewable resources is expected to account for a minimal portion of the region's resources and would not affect the availability of these resources for other needs in the region. As discussed in Section 3.4, "Energy," Project implementation would not result in the long-term inefficient use of energy or natural resources. Therefore, long-term Project operation would not result in substantial long-term consumption of energy and natural resources beyond what was evaluated in the General Plan EIR.

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