

## SECTION 3: ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

### Organization of Issue Areas

This Recirculated Draft Environmental Impact Report (Recirculated Draft EIR) provides analysis of impacts for those environmental topics where it was determined that the proposed project would result in “potentially significant impacts.” Sections 3.1 through 3.16 discuss the environmental impacts that may result with approval and implementation of the proposed project.

### Issues Addressed in This Recirculated Draft EIR

The following environmental issues are addressed in Section 3:

- Aesthetics
- Agricultural Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology, Soils, and Seismicity
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Transportation/Traffic
- Utilities and Service Systems

Each environmental issue area in Sections 3.1 through 3.16 contains a description of:

1. The environmental setting as it relates to the specific issue
2. The regulatory framework governing that issue
3. The methodology used in identifying the issues
4. The significance criteria
5. An evaluation of the project-specific impacts and identification of mitigation measures
6. A determination of the level of significance after mitigation measures are implemented

## **Determination of Significance**

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Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15125(a), an EIR must include a description of the physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of the project, as they exist at the time the Notice of Preparation (NOP) is published (in this case, September 2010). This environmental setting will normally constitute the baseline physical conditions by which a lead agency determines whether an impact is significant. The environmental setting is presented from a site, local, sub-regional, and/or regional perspectives, as appropriate to each environmental topic. The environmental setting is normally the baseline physical condition by which the lead agency determines whether an impact is significant. The environmental effects of the project are defined as changes to the environmental setting that are either direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical changes to the environment that are attributable to the project.

According to CEQA Section 21065.3, a “project-specific effect” means all the direct or indirect environmental effects of a project other than cumulative or growth-inducing effects. According to the CEQA Guidelines Section 15382, a significant effect on the environment means “a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project.” For each category of physical condition evaluated in this EIR, thresholds of significance have been developed using criteria discussed in the CEQA Guidelines; criteria based on factual or scientific information; criteria based on regulatory standards of local, state, and federal agencies; and criteria based on goals, objectives, and policies identified in the Sacramento County General Plan and the City of Elk Grove General Plan.

As stated within Section 2.2, Project Characteristics, it is possible that the City may request annexation of the entire SOIA Area, or submit multiple annexation applications for portions of the SOIA Area. In addition, it is possible that the City may develop a phased annexation program to further guide development within the SOIA Area. For the purposes of analysis, this EIR assumes that the entirety of the SOIA Area would eventually be annexed and subsequently developed. This assumption represents the environmental ‘worst-case’ or “maximum impact” project scenario. However, this EIR does not assume a particular timeline for annexation and/or development of the SOIA Area. A phased annexation program may result in lessened environmental impacts. Due to the project not involving any development proposals, the unknown schedule of future annexation applications that may be submitted pursuant to approval of this project, and variability of a phased annexation program, a separate phased annexation program is not analyzed in this EIR. However, a proposal for annexation may be subject to further environmental review.

Mitigation measures identified in this report are characterized by one of three categories: (1) measures necessary to reduce the identified impact below a level of significance; (2) measures recommended to reduce the magnitude of a significant impact, but not below a level of significance; and (3) measures recommended to reduce the magnitude of a less than significant impact. Where

implementation of more than one mitigation measure is needed to reduce an impact below a level of significance, this is noted.

The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act Sections 56885.5 and 56886 provide the Sacramento LAFCo with broad authority to condition incorporation projects that promote effective and orderly organization changes. However, Section 56886 does prohibit LAFCo from directly regulating (or mitigating) land use and property development (including the subdivision of land).

## Mitigation and Findings

Determining the severity of project impacts is fundamental to achieving the objectives of CEQA. CEQA Guidelines Section 15091 requires that decision makers mitigate, as completely as is feasible, the significant impacts identified in the Final EIR. If any significant unmitigated impacts remain, CEQA Guidelines Section 15093 requires decision makers, if still approving the project, adopt a statement of overriding considerations that explains why the benefits of the project outweigh the adverse environmental consequences identified in the EIR.

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## Impact Analysis and Mitigation Measure Format

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The format adopted in this EIR to present the evaluation of impacts is described and illustrated below.

### Summary Heading of Impact

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**Impact AES-1:** An impact summary heading appears immediately preceding the impact description (Summary Heading of Impact in this example). The impact abbreviation identifies the section of the report (AES for Aesthetics, Light, and Glare in this example) and the sequential order of the impact (1 in this example) within that section. To the right of the impact number is the impact statement, which identifies the potential impact.

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### Impact Analysis

A narrative analysis follows the impact statement.

### Significance Before Mitigation

This section identifies the level of significance of the impact before any mitigation is proposed.

### Mitigation Measures

In some cases, following the impact discussion, reference is made to state and federal regulations and agency policies that would fully or partially mitigate the impact. In addition, policies and programs from applicable local land use plans that partially or fully mitigate the impact may be cited.

Project-specific mitigation measures, beyond those contained in other documents, are set off with a summary heading and described using the format presented below:

**MM AES-1a** Project-specific mitigation is identified that would reduce the impact to the lowest degree feasible. The mitigation number links the particular mitigation to the impact with which it is associated (**AES-1** in this example); the letter identifies the sequential order of that mitigation for that impact (**a** in this example).

***Significance After Mitigation***

This section identifies the resulting level of significance of the impact following mitigation.

Abbreviations used in the mitigation measure numbering are:

<b>Code</b>	<b>Environmental Issue</b>
AES	Aesthetics, Light, and Glare
AG	Agricultural Resources
AIR	Air Quality
BIO	Biological Resources
CUL	Cultural Resources
GEO	Geology, Soils, and Seismicity
GHG	Greenhouse Gas Emissions
HAZ	Hazards and Hazardous Materials
HYD	Hydrology and Water Quality
LU	Land Use and Planning
MIN	Mineral Resources
NOI	Noise
POP	Population and Housing
PSU	Public Services
TRANS	Transportation and Traffic
USS	Utilities and Service Systems