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## 20. CEQA-REQUIRED ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

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This chapter summarizes the EIR findings in terms of the various assessment categories suggested by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines for EIR content. The findings of this EIR are summarized below in terms of Precise Plan-related potential "growth-inducing effects," "significant unavoidable impacts," "irreversible environmental changes," and "cumulative impacts."

### 20.1 GROWTH-INDUCING EFFECTS

CEQA Guidelines section 15126.2(d) requires that the EIR 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."

Residential development in accordance with the Specific Plan would produce an increase of up to 400 new primary residential units, plus an additional increase of up to 100 new secondary residential units. These housing units would accommodate an increase of approximately 1,485 residents, assuming an average of 2.97 people per household (the ABAG-projected average household size for unincorporated Solano County in 2030). Based on standard job rates for retail and industrial (including agricultural production) areas, the proposed neighborhood commercial and agricultural tourism areas would provide jobs for an estimated 136 additional employees in the plan area. Other proposed uses, such as the chapel, farm stand, recreation center, land conservancy office, and inn, would produce an additional small number of jobs.<sup>1</sup> Development in accordance with the Specific Plan would also extend roads and other infrastructure to the area.

The estimated population increase of 1,485 residents would represent approximately 5.8 percent of the ABAG-projected year 2030 population total of 25,800 for unincorporated Solano County and approximately 0.3 percent of the ABAG-projected 2030 population total of 562,900 for Solano County as a whole. The approximately 136 jobs produced by Specific Plan development would represent about one percent of the ABAG-projected 2030 job total of 11,260 for unincorporated Solano County and less than one percent of the ABAG-projected 2030 job total of 196,730 for the county as a whole.

These Specific Plan-generated population, housing and job increments would be generally consistent with the land use provisions of the Solano County General Plan and in and of themselves would represent a less-than-significant environmental impact. As described in

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<sup>1</sup> Job estimates are based on the non-residential square footages proposed under this Specific Plan and the following job rates: 1 employee per 450 square feet of retail space (which applies to the proposed 10,000 square feet of "agricultural tourism retail" and up to 10,000 square feet of neighborhood commercial retail space), 1 employee per 350 square feet of office space, and 1 employee per 800 square feet of industrial space (which applies to the proposed 50,000 square feet of "agricultural commodity processing and commercial nurseries").

chapters 3 through 17 of this EIR, however, the Specific Plan-related household and population increases and infrastructure extensions would contribute to associated potentially significant project and cumulative physical impacts, including significant air quality, biological resources, climate change, cultural and historic resources, hazardous materials exposure risk, noise, public services and utilities, and transportation impacts. These related impacts and associated mitigation measures are described in detail in chapters 3 through 17 of this EIR.

To a lesser degree, secondary growth-inducing impacts (the "multiplier" effect) could also be expected in other portions of the County and subregion. Such growth-inducing land use impacts of the project would occur in the form of future individual development proposals and associated applications. The majority of this primary and secondary growth inducement would be expected to occur in a manner consistent with the Solano County General Plan and other adopted local general plans.

Under water service Option A, the proposed Specific Plan development areas would be connected to the City of Fairfield municipal water system via an existing 24-inch water main in Green Valley Road. Associated on-site infrastructure would include approximately nine miles of new onsite water distribution pipeline and two onsite 500,000-gallon water storage tanks. Similarly, wastewater Service Option A would involve connection of the proposed Specific-Plan development areas to the Fairfield-Suisun Sewer District (FSSD) via an existing 12-inch sewer main in Green Valley Road, connecting to the Cordelia Wastewater Pump Station. Installation of a new parallel sewer main from the Specific Plan area to the Cordelia Pump Station. Associated on-site wastewater infrastructure would include approximately 5.7 miles of sewer pipelines. Under water and wastewater Option B, on-site infrastructure improvements would include onsite installation of a mixed-media water filtration and disinfection system, three or more groundwater wells, approximately 4.5 miles of onsite water distribution pipeline, a membrane bioreactor wastewater treatment plant, approximately 5.7 miles of sewer pipeline, sewer-pump stations, etc. The development limitations set forth in the Specific Plan would represent a reliable obstacle to other development occurring within the Specific Plan area. In addition, the water and sewer user connection prohibitions set forth in the proposed County Service Area (CSA) formation and proposed by the Fairfield Municipal Water and FSSD would be expected to represent a reliable obstacle to other development occurring both within and outside the Specific Plan area as a result of project-related water and sewer improvements.

Based on these considerations, no substantial, detrimental growth-inducing effect is expected. With the exception of CEQA-exempt projects, any such future individual development proposals would require routine local review of associated development applications, including CEQA-mandated development-specific environmental review, to ensure that any adverse environmental impacts are adequately addressed. These existing requirements and procedures would be expected to reduce the environmental impacts of such secondary growth-inducement associated with the project to less-than-significant levels, except where specific statements of overriding consideration are adopted.

## **20.2 SIGNIFICANT UNAVOIDABLE IMPACTS**

CEQA Guidelines section 15126.2(b) requires that the EIR discuss "significant environmental effects which cannot be avoided if the proposed project is implemented." Significant unavoidable impacts are those that would not be reduced to less-than-significant levels by the mitigation measures recommended in this EIR.

Mitigation measures have been identified to reduce identified significant and potentially significant effects associated with the proposed Specific Plan to less-than-significant levels, with the exception of the following significant unavoidable impacts:

- **Impact 3-3: Project Contribution to General Plan-Identified Countywide Cumulative Impacts on County Visual Character.** Existing vegetative screening would block views of Specific Plan-designated neighborhood development from Green Valley Road. The Specific Plan land use and open space framework, associated stringent development standards and design guidelines would also minimize the project visual impacts. The project would nevertheless contribute to this General Plan-identified cumulative visual effect.
- **Impact 4-1: Impact on Prime Farmland.** A principle and goal of the Draft Specific Plan, implemented through the Specific Plan-proposed Green Valley Agricultural Conservancy, Agricultural Business Plan, Resource Management Plan, and Transfer of Development Rights Program, is to return the substantial portion of state-designated Prime Farmland inventory in the plan area that has not been in recent cultivation back to cultivated agricultural use. Nevertheless, the Draft Specific Plan proposed Elkhorn, Nightingale and Three Creeks neighborhood areas would convert some areas of state-designated Prime Farmland in the plan area. Over time, Specific Plan-designated development in these three neighborhood areas would permanently remove up to an estimated 123 acres of Prime Farmland from agricultural production. This Specific Plan-related long-term potential for conversion of Prime Farmland in the plan area to urban use would represent a **significant and unavoidable impact**. (Alternative Specific Plan land use concepts which would reduce the amount of designated Prime Farmland displaced by development, are described in Draft EIR chapter 19, Alternatives to the Proposed Action, under Alternatives 19.2: Modified Specific Plan Land Layout to Avoid Prime Farmland Areas, and Alternative 19.3: Reduced Specific Plan Development Capacity.)
- **Impact 5-3: Long-Term Regional Air Emissions Increases.** Specific Plan-facilitated development is not reflected in the latest applicable Clean Air Plan (CAP). The Specific Plan's inconsistency with the CAP is primarily an administrative effect, in that the CAP is out-of-date and does not reflect the current 2008 Solano County General Plan and other recent planning projections. In addition, traffic increases associated with Specific Plan-facilitated development would likely exceed the latest proposed BAAQMD significance threshold for reactive organic gases (ROG), should that threshold be adopted. Since no feasible full mitigation for this ROG contribution impact has been identified, the Specific Plan's effect on long-term regional emissions increases would represent a **significant and unavoidable impact**.
- **Impact 7-1: Specific Plan-Related and Cumulative Increase in Greenhouse Gas Emissions.** Construction and ongoing operation of Specific Plan-facilitated development would result in a net increase in carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions. The Specific Plan contains guidelines and principles for encouraging energy efficiency in new development within the plan area. In addition, Specific Plan-facilitated new building construction and other improvements would be required to meet California Energy Efficiency Standards for Residential and Nonresidential Buildings, helping to reduce associated future energy demand and associated Specific Plan contributions to cumulative regional greenhouse gas emissions. Nevertheless, because the effectiveness of this

Specific Plan-proposed mitigation program in reducing the plan-related contribution to cumulative greenhouse gas emissions in the region cannot be reliably quantified (see Mitigation 7-1 in EIR chapter 7), it has been conservatively determined that the Specific Plan would contribute measurably to an anticipated substantial cumulative net regional increase in greenhouse gas emissions, representing a **significant unavoidable project and cumulative climate change impact**.

- **Impact 17-1: Baseline Plus Project Impacts on Intersection Operations.** Until implementation of the planned I-80/I-680/SR 12 and Green Valley Road/I-80 Interchange Improvement Project (i.e., the planned reconstruction of this interchange complex as described in section 17.1.3 of this Draft EIR) and the planned North Connector Road (west and east extension of Business Center Drive) is funded and implemented, the projected interim baseline plus project intersection impacts on the following three study intersections are considered to be **significant and unavoidable**:
  - #7: Green Valley Road at Business Center Drive in the PM peak hour,
  - #9: Green Valley Road at the I-80 Westbound on-ramp in the AM and PM peak hours, and
  - #10: Green Valley Road at the I-80 Eastbound ramps in the AM and PM peak hours.
- **Impact 17-2: Cumulative Plus Project Impacts on Intersection Operations.** Under projected cumulative (2030) plus project conditions, the project would contribute significantly to further deterioration of traffic operations at one study intersection, #5: Green Valley Road at Westlake Drive, in the PM peak hour. It is recommended in this Draft EIR that this intersection be left in its current condition, since the project-related delay would be limited to the left-turn movement at the side street (Westlake Drive approach in the PM peak), an effect that would not seem to justify adding a signal.

### 20.3 IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

CEQA Guidelines section 15126.2(c) requires that the EIR discuss "significant irreversible environmental changes which would be caused by the proposed project should it be implemented." Irreversible environmental changes caused by the proposed Specific Plan would include the following:

- As discussed in chapter 12 (Land Use and Open Space) of this EIR, the project would convert the project site from rural residential, cultivated and fallow agricultural lands, undeveloped grazing lands, oak woodlands, ponds, and drainages to a combination of low-density residential, community services, open lands, agriculture, and roads and infrastructure--all under the principles, policies, standards, and guidelines of the Middle Green Valley Specific Plan.
- The project would permanently alter onsite and offsite views of the project site, as discussed in chapter 3 (Aesthetics) of this EIR.
- The project would result in loss of existing plan and wildlife habitat, as described in chapter 6 (Biological Resources).

- The project may result in loss of historic and prehistoric resources, as described in chapter 8 (Cultural, Historic and Paleontological Resources) of this EIR.

For practical purposes, these environmental changes would be permanent and irreversible.

## 20.4 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Section 15130(a) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that the EIR "discuss cumulative impacts of a project when the project's incremental effect is cumulatively considerable...." The CEQA Guidelines (section 15355) define "cumulative impacts" as "...two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts."

Additional, reasonably foreseeable development projects in the project vicinity are identified in chapter 12 (Land Use and Open Space) of this EIR. In conjunction with these reasonably foreseeable projects, the various changes facilitated by the Specific Plan, as outlined in EIR chapter 2 (Project Description), would cause the following significant cumulative impacts, each of which is discussed in its respective, identified EIR chapter:

- **Impact 3-3: Project Contribution to General Plan-Identified Countywide Cumulative Impacts on the Visual Character of the County** (see EIR chapter 3, Aesthetics);
- **Impact 5-2: Odor Impacts on "Sensitive Receptors"** (see EIR chapter 5, Air Quality);
- **Impact 5-3: Long-Term Regional Air Emissions Increases** (see EIR chapter 5, Air Quality);
- **Impact 6-14: Cumulative Impact on Biological Resources** (see EIR chapter 6, Biological Resources);
- **Impact 7-1: Specific Plan-Related and Cumulative Increase in Greenhouse Gas Emissions** (see EIR chapter 7, Climate Change);
- **Impact 13-4: Specific Plan-Facilitated and Cumulative Traffic Noise Impacts on Green Valley Road** (see EIR chapter 13, Noise); and
- **Impact 17-2: Cumulative Plus Project Impacts on Intersection Operations** (see EIR chapter 17, Transportation and Circulation).

This EIR recommends mitigation measures that would reduce the project's contribution to these cumulative impacts to less-than-significant levels, with the exception of *Impacts 3-3, 5-3, 7-1, and 17-2*, which are identified as *significant unavoidable impacts*.

## **20.5 EFFECTS FOUND NOT TO BE SIGNIFICANT**

Section 15128 of the CEQA Guidelines requires that the EIR "contain a statement briefly indicating the reasons that various possible significant effects of a project were determined not to be significant and were therefore not discussed in detail in the EIR." This EIR discusses all of the environmental topic areas included in CEQA Guidelines Appendix G (Environmental Checklist Form), with the potential significance of each impact evaluated in the appropriate EIR chapter (e.g., chapter 3--Aesthetics, chapter 4--Agricultural and Mineral Resources, etc.).