
4.0 INTRODUCTION TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS AND ASSUMPTIONS USED

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The following is an introduction to the environmental analysis for the proposed project, cumulative analysis, and general assumptions used in the environmental analysis. The reader is referred to the individual technical sections of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR or DEIR) (Sections 4.1 through 4.15) regarding the specific assumptions and methodologies used in the analysis for that particular technical subject. This document utilizes numerous resources and references that are identified by brief citations throughout the document, with more complete citations to the specific resource or reference included in a listing at the end of each chapter.

4.0.1 ANALYSIS ASSUMPTIONS GENERALLY USED TO EVALUATE THE IMPACTS OF THE CITY OF ROCKLIN GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

BASELINE ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS ASSUMED IN THE DRAFT EIR

Section 15125(a) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that an environmental impact report (EIR) include a description of the physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of a project as they exist at the time the Notice of Preparation (NOP) is published and the environmental analysis is begun. The CEQA Guidelines also specify that this description of the physical environmental conditions is to normally serve as the baseline physical conditions by which a lead agency determines whether impacts of a project are considered significant.

The environmental setting conditions of the City of Rocklin Planning Area are described in detail in the individual technical sections of the Draft EIR (see Sections 4.1 through 4.15). In general, these sections describe the setting conditions of the City of Rocklin Planning Area as they existed when the NOP for the General Plan Update was released on July 31, 2008. In addition, the Draft EIR also includes any setting information that has been updated since the release of the NOP.

As identified in Section 3.0, Project Description, an important factor associated with the existing environmental setting of the city is that while there are large vacant land areas, the majority of the city's land area has approved land use development entitlements (and in several cases they are subject to executed development agreements) that specify land use patterns and have been previously reviewed for physical environmental impacts (e.g., Clover Valley EIR, State Clearinghouse No. 9322077). For example, the Northwest Rocklin and Clover Valley areas contain large areas of vacant undeveloped land, but they have approved land use entitlements for residential, commercial, office, and recreation development. Thus, the land use pattern and associated environmental impacts for the majority of the city are already anticipated irrelevant of the adoption of the proposed project.

BUILDOUT ASSUMPTIONS UNDER THE GENERAL PLAN ASSOCIATED WITH THE CITY PLANNING AREA

Future growth in the Planning Area is guided by the land uses identified in the General Plan Land Use Diagram (see **Figure 3.0-6** in Section 3.0, Project Description). The Draft EIR impact analysis (both temporary [i.e., construction-related] and operational effects) is based on these proposed land use patterns, including proposed transportation improvements identified in the proposed Circulation Diagram (see **Figure 3.0-7**). The Draft EIR also evaluates the indirect environmental effects of construction and operation of the land uses and transportation improvements in the proposed General Plan Update. It should be noted that this EIR also evaluates the impacts associated with the Sixth Amendment to the Redevelopment Plan, as well as those associated with the Climate Action Plan (CAP). Both the Redevelopment Plan and the CAP are consistent with the proposed General Plan and with buildout assumptions discussed below. As such, any

4.0 INTRODUCTION TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS AND ASSUMPTIONS USED

development or activity under the Redevelopment Plan, as amended, and/or the CAP would be included in the below assumptions and would not be in addition to them.

Residential Buildout Assumptions

As described in Section 3.0, Project Description, the General Plan Update analyzed three residential buildout scenarios, based on low, mid-range, and high growth scenarios. The low growth scenario, based on Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) projections, assumes that residential building permits issued will average 200 dwelling units per year and reach buildout after 2035. The mid-range growth scenario, based on an examination of recent residential building activity, assumes that residential building permits issued will average 400 dwelling units per year and reach buildout in 2028. The high growth scenario, based on a historic annual growth rate of 9 percent, assumes that residential building permits issued will average 600 dwelling units per year and reach buildout in 2021 (refer to **Table 3.0-1** in Section 3.0, Project Description). The City has assumed that the mid-range growth scenario is most likely to be the accurate average over the buildout horizon. However, the Draft EIR uses the high growth scenario as the base for the city's buildout projection for a worst-case scenario.

Non-Residential Buildout Assumptions

In order to project buildout of non-residential development, the City estimated the annual average absorption rate (historic) for each land use category based on an annual average of the actual growth that occurred between 1992 and 2008. The time frame selected includes both a slow and a high growth cycle so it is considered a reasonable estimate for purposes of these projections.

The historic average annual growth for non-residential development between 1992 and 2008 is 140,975 square feet per year for retail uses; 54,931 square feet per year for office uses; and 72,076 square feet per year for industrial uses.

Based upon the assumption that non-residential development absorption in Rocklin will continue to occur at rates that are similar to the trends shown above, buildout of non-residential development, particularly retail and office uses, is anticipated by the City to occur well beyond the General Plan Update horizon year of 2030 (refer to **Table 3.0-2** in Section 3.0, Project Description). It should be noted that the development of key growth catalysts (i.e., the construction of interchanges and/or improvements to freeway interchanges at Sierra College Boulevard/I-80, SR 65/Sunset Boulevard, and SR 65/Whitney Ranch Parkway) is likely to generate accelerated absorption of retail and office land uses in the vicinity of those facilities at the time the improvements are completed.

However, the Draft EIR assumes that non-residential development would reach buildout by the year 2030 in order to provide a conservative analysis of potential environmental effects of implementation of the proposed General Plan Update.

STRUCTURE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

Sections 4.1 through 4.15 of this Draft EIR contain a detailed description of current setting conditions (including applicable regulatory setting), an evaluation of the direct and indirect environmental effects resulting from the implementation of the proposed General Plan Update, identification of proposed General Plan Update policies and action steps, and City of Rocklin Municipal Code sections that mitigate the environmental effect, additional feasible mitigation measures, and identification of whether significant environmental effects of the project would

remain after application of proposed policies, action steps, and feasible mitigation measures. The individual technical sections of the Draft EIR include the following information:

Existing Setting

This subsection includes a description of the physical setting conditions associated with the technical area of discussion, consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15125. As previously identified, the existing setting is based on conditions as they existed when the NOP for the General Plan Update was released on July 31, 2008.

Regulatory Framework

This subsection consists of the identification of applicable federal, state, regional, and local plans, policies, laws, and regulations that apply to the technical area of discussion.

Impacts and Mitigation Measures

This subsection identifies direct and indirect environmental effects associated with implementation of the proposed project and identifies the Municipal Code sections and General Plan policies and action steps that would serve to mitigate the environmental effects. Standards of significance are identified and used to determine whether identified environmental effects are considered “significant” and require the application of mitigation measures. Each environmental impact analysis is identified numerically (e.g., Impact 4.8.1 – Construction Impacts on Surface Water Quality) and is supported by substantial evidence included in the discussion. In addition to impacts created from the application of the standards of significance, the Draft EIR also addresses impacts to the provisions of the proposed General Plan Update policies that could result in significant environmental effects.

Mitigation measures for the proposed project were developed through a thorough review of the environmental effects of the project by consultants with technical expertise as well as by environmental professionals. The mitigation measures identified consist of “performance standards” that identify clear requirements that would avoid or minimize significant environmental effects (the use of performance standard mitigation is allowed under CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.4(a) and is supported by case law *Rio Vista Farm Bureau Center v. County of Solano* ([1st Dist. 1992] 5 Cal. App. 4th at pp. 371, 375–376 [7 Cal. Rptr. 2d 307])).

An EIR for a general plan is substantially different from a project-level EIR in the way that mitigation measures are identified and incorporated back into the “project,” which in this case is the proposed General Plan Update, the Sixth Amendment to the Redevelopment Plan, and the Climate Action Plan. This is a function of the general plan and EIR being a set of programmatic documents as opposed to consideration of individual development projects with specific physical impacts. As much as possible, potential program-level environmental impacts related to the policies of a general plan are identified as the plan is being prepared. Additional policies and action steps can then be formulated and proposed in the general plan to address and mitigate those impacts. Furthermore, the general plan establishes policies and measures by which the city would address environmental issues related to future implementation of the plan.

A second way that mitigation measures in a general plan EIR differ from a project-level EIR is that the general plan recognizes that future development projects would be required to undertake their own subsequent CEQA analysis as provided for under CEQA Guidelines Section 15183. Future project-specific analysis would be required to occur at such time as proposed project-

4.0 INTRODUCTION TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS AND ASSUMPTIONS USED

specific information and project-specific sites are known for which environmental impacts can be identified and evaluated.

APPROACH TO THE CUMULATIVE IMPACT ANALYSIS

CEQA Guidelines Section 15130 requires that EIRs include an analysis of the cumulative impacts of a project when the project's effect is considered cumulatively considerable. The analysis of cumulative impacts for each environmental factor can employ one of two methods to establish the effects of other past, current, and probable future projects. A lead agency may select a list of projects, including those outside the control of the agency, or alternatively, a summary of projects. These projects may be from an adopted general plan or related planning document, or from a prior environmental document that has been adopted or certified, and they may describe or evaluate regional or area-wide conditions contributing to the cumulative impact. This Draft EIR utilizes both approaches for the cumulative impact analysis.

Cumulative Setting and Impacts

This subsection is an analysis of the proposed project's contribution to cumulative impacts to the environment. The analysis focuses on whether the project's contribution is "cumulatively considerable" (CEQA Guidelines Section 15130; see also the following subsection: Approach to the Cumulative Impact Analysis, and Section 5.0, Cumulative Impacts). A cumulative impact occurs from the change in the environment that results from the incremental impact of the project when added to other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time (CEQA Guidelines Section 15355[b]). Accordingly, the cumulative setting includes related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the region.

Definition of Cumulative Setting

The cumulative setting conditions considered in this Draft EIR are as follows:

- **SACOG Sacramento Region Blueprint and Preferred Blueprint Scenario.** The Sacramento Region Blueprint depicts a way (in terms of land uses and transportation improvements) for the region to grow through the year 2050, during which time the region is expected to witness growth to include more than 3.8 million people, 1.9 million jobs, and 1.5 million housing units. In December 2004, the SACOG Board of Directors adopted the Preferred Blueprint Scenario, a vision for growth that promotes compact, mixed-use development and more transit choices as an alternative to sprawling low-density development, which would consume more land for an equivalent number of housing units and result in a number of corresponding adverse environmental impacts. The Preferred Blueprint Scenario predicts long-term environmental benefits from undertaking a realistic long-term planning process, and these benefits are intended to minimize the extent of the inevitable expansion of the overall regional urban areas. The results would be greater protection of natural resources because less land would be required for urban uses and less agricultural land converted. In addition, the Preferred Blueprint Scenario predicts less time devoted to travel, fewer car trips, and fewer miles traveled to work and local businesses. The reduction in traffic would improve air quality in the region by reducing carbon monoxide and particulate matter produced by car exhaust. While only advisory, the Blueprint is the most authoritative policy guidance in the Sacramento region for long-term regional land use and transportation planning.

4.0 INTRODUCTION TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS AND ASSUMPTIONS USED

- **Local Adopted General Plans.** These are the existing land use plans in the region, consisting of the cities of Roseville, Lincoln, Loomis, Auburn, and Colfax, as well as the plan for the unincorporated portions of Placer County. **Table 4.0-1** identifies anticipated growth of these jurisdictions by the year 2030 (which corresponds to SACOG 2035 growth projections for western Placer County) as well as post-2030 development anticipated.
- **Large-Scale Development Projects.** This includes community plans and area plans in the unincorporated Placer County area (Auburn/Bowman, Granite Bay, Sunset Industrial Area, Bickford, Dry Creek), as well as other major projects in western Placer County (Curry Creek, Regional University, Lincoln Sphere of Influence (SOI), Placer Ranch, Placer Vineyards, Riolo Vineyard, Creekview, Sierra Vista). **Table 4.0-1** identifies current anticipated development of these projects by year 2030 (which corresponds to SACOG 2035 growth projections for western Placer County) as well as post-2030 development anticipated. The discussion below provides a summary description of these projects.
- **Effect of Regional Conditions.** This consists of consideration of background traffic volumes and patterns on regional and state highways (e.g., I-80 and SR 65), background air quality conditions, and other associated environmental conditions that occur within the region, both within and outside of the Planning Area.
- **Consideration of Existing Development Patterns.** This consists of consideration of the current environmental conditions of existing development and past land use activities in the region. It includes major land use activities in the City of Rocklin and its associated SOI. Most of the undeveloped or recently developed (within the last 10 years) areas in the City of Rocklin have been master-planned through a series of Planned Unit Developments referred to as "General Development Plans" under the Rocklin Zoning Ordinance. Many areas which appear to be undeveloped or vacant actually have City-approved development plans or "entitlements." Timing of these developments will depend on market factors.

Each technical section of the Draft EIR includes a description of the cumulative setting's geographic extent based on the characteristics of the environmental issue under consideration (e.g., consideration of the Sacramento Valley Air Basin for cumulative air quality analysis) as set forth in Section 15130(b) of the CEQA Guidelines. For some issues, such as air quality, this area is very large, often extending over county lines to other parts of Northern California.

Large-Scale Development Projects in Unincorporated Western Placer County

The following summary includes the name, description, location, and current status of large-scale development projects in unincorporated western Placer County that are considered in the cumulative analysis of this document.

Curry Creek is a mixed-use master planned community consisting of residential, commercial, and office uses. The project is located in Placer County adjacent to the western boundary of the city of Roseville. The plan area is generally bounded by Baseline Road on the south and Brewer Road and Country Acres Lane on the west. The site's northern boundary is south of Phillip Road, and its eastern boundary is bordered by Placer County and the city of Roseville. The project is currently inactive.

Regional University is a 1,157.5-acre specific plan in western Placer County with a 600-acre university and a 557.5-acre community (university land uses: 356.5 acres of university/classroom uses, 60 acres of faculty/staff housing, and 183.5 acres of open space; community land uses:

4.0 INTRODUCTION TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS AND ASSUMPTIONS USED

315.5 acres of residential uses, 22.2 acres of commercial uses, and 219.8 acres of parks/open space/public and quasi-public/roadways). The project boundaries are unincorporated Placer County to the north approximately 2.7 miles north of Base Line Road, future extension of Watt Avenue to the east, existing property line to the south curving to meet the future intersection of Watt Avenue and Pleasant Grove Road, and Brewer Road to the west. The project is currently proposed.

Lincoln Sphere of Influence (SOI) reflects the March 2008 City of Lincoln General Plan Update, which identified a proposed change to the city's existing SOI. The proposal would add approximately 13,900 acres and add approximately 44,400 additional residents by 2050. The boundaries are proposed to be changed away from Sierra College Boulevard and to expand north of Wise Road and west of Dowd Road, adjacent to the northern portion of the city. The project is identified in the Lincoln General Plan, but no annexations have occurred to date.

Placer Ranch is a 2,213-acre specific plan in the Sunset Industrial Area Plan (980 acres of residential uses, 203 acres of professional/commercial uses, 360 acres of parks/open space/educational uses, 290 acres of CSUS branch campus, and 380 acres of roadway right-of-way). The project boundaries are Sunset Boulevard West to the north, Placer County and Sunset Industrial Area to the east, city of Roseville to the south, and unincorporated Placer County on the west. The project is currently an inactive development application.

Placer Vineyards is a 5,230-acre approved specific plan in southwestern Placer County (3,361 acres of residential uses, 309 acres of commercial/office uses, 308.5 acres of public/quasi-public uses, 919 acres of parks/open space, and 331.5 acres of roadway). The project boundaries are Base Line Road to the north, Dry Creek Parkway and Walerga Road to the east, Sacramento County line to the south, and Sutter County line and Pleasant Grove Road to the west. The project was originally approved by the Placer County Board of Supervisors on July 16, 2007, and the project applicant is currently submitting land use changes to approximately 100 acres.

Riolo Vineyards is a 525-acre specific plan in southwestern Placer County, in the Dry Creek/West Placer Community Plan Area (265.6 acres of residential uses, 91.1 acres agriculture, 7.5 acres commercial, 134 acres of parks/open space, and 27.6 acres public/quasi-public uses). The project boundaries are Dry Creek to the north, Walerga Road to the east, PFE Road to the south, and Watt Avenue to the west. The project is currently proposed.

Creekview is a 511.5-acre specific plan in the city of Roseville's SOI (214 acres of residential uses, 41.4 acres of commercial uses, 155.8 acres of parks/open space uses, 39.9 acres of urban reserve, and 60.4 acres of public/quasi-public uses). The project boundaries are unincorporated Placer County to the north, city of Roseville to the east (Fiddymont Ranch), city of Roseville to the south (planned extension of Blue Oaks Boulevard, and unincorporated Placer County to the west. The project is currently proposed.

Sierra Vista is 2,178-acre specific plan in western Placer County (1,148.1 acres of residential uses, 280.8 acres of commercial uses, 405.6 acres of parks/open space/paseo, 83.1 acres of public/quasi-public uses, 70.9 acres of urban reserve, and 189.3 acres of landscape corridors/roadway right-of-way). The project boundaries are the city of Roseville and Pleasant Grove Boulevard to the north, Fiddymont Road to the east, Baseline Road to the south, and the proposed Curry Creek Specific Plan to the west. The project is currently proposed.

4.0 INTRODUCTION TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS AND ASSUMPTIONS USED

**TABLE 4.0-1
DEVELOPMENT ASSUMPTIONS
IN CITIES AND TOWN AND UNINCORPORATED WESTERN PLACER COUNTY**

Cities and Towns (Current General Plans)	Existing (2008) Residential Units	Cumulative (2030) Conditions Residential Units	Post 2030 Conditions Residential Units	Existing (2008) Retail KSF	Cumulative (2030) Conditions Retail KSF	Post 2030 Conditions Retail KSF	Existing (2008) Office KSF	Cumulative (2030) Conditions Office KSF	Post 2030 Conditions Office KSF	Existing (2008) Industrial KSF	Cumulative (2030) Conditions Industrial KSF	Post 2030 Conditions Industrial KSF
Roseville	45,413	58,465	58,465	10,769	17,117	17,117	10,095	16,677	16,677	9,889	18,780	18,780
Lincoln	15,046	22,248	22,248	763	2,325	2,325	587	1,720	1,200	3,381	5,562	5,562
Lincoln SOI	158	15,086	33,750	-	2,718	6,073	-	3,160	7,060	-	1,471	3,287
Loomis	2,365	3,652	3,652	326	1,501	1,501	133	597	597	763	915	915
Auburn	5,734	7,472	7,472	1,375	1,756	1,756	714	1,041	1,041	278	566	566
Colfax	697	941	941	261	460	460	39	67	67	200	221	221
Unincorporated Areas (Current General Plans)												
Auburn/Bowman	9,587	17,271	17,271	1,581	2,955	2,955	1,805	3,524	3,524	1,036	2,809	2,809
Granite Bay	7,305	7,915	7,915	632	948	948	433	890	890	77	78	78
Sunset	-	-	-	0	357	357	28	912	912	4,308	7,933	7,933
Bickford	10	1,890	1,890	3	105	105	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Dry Creek	1,393	3,520	3,520	47	223	223	1	157	157	172	897	897
Other Unincorporated	14,789	20,214	20,214	450	1,221	1,221	145	397	397	546	746	746
Major Projects in West Placer County												
Brookfield	-	-	3,000	-	-	375	-	-	225	-	-	-
Curry Creek	-	-	16,206	-	-	2,025	-	-	2,122	-	-	-

4.0 INTRODUCTION TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS AND ASSUMPTIONS USED

Cities and Towns (Current General Plans)	Existing (2008) Residential Units	Cumulative (2030) Conditions Residential Units	Post 2030 Conditions Residential Units	Existing (2008) Retail KSF	Cumulative (2030) Conditions Retail KSF	Post 2030 Conditions Retail KSF	Existing (2008) Office KSF	Cumulative (2030) Conditions Office KSF	Post 2030 Conditions Office KSF	Existing (2008) Industrial KSF	Cumulative (2030) Conditions Industrial KSF	Post 2030 Conditions Industrial KSF
Regional University	-	2,632	4,387	-	129	215	-	45	75	-	-	-
Placer Ranch	-	4,055	6,759	-	628	1,047	-	3,146	5,243	-	2,511	4,185
Placer Vineyards	151	7,261	14,132	-	900	2,173	-	162	1,688	31	-	-
Riolo Vineyard	6	570	950	-	53	88	-	-	-	-	-	-
Creekview	-	1,499	2,499	-	100	167	-	145	242	-	-	-
Sierra Vista	-	5,716	9,526	-	1,299	2,165	-	164	274	-	-	-
Sutter Pointe ¹	-	8,750	17,500	-	1,094	2,188	-	750	750	-	1,500	1,500
Total	102,654	189,157	252,297	16,207	35,889	45,484	13,980	33,556	43,141	20,681	43,989	47,479

¹ The Sutter Pointe Specific Plan is located in Sutter County but was included in the consideration of cumulative setting conditions associated with changes in land form in the region.

Consideration of Cumulative Impacts

Each technical section in the Draft EIR considers whether the project's effect on anticipated cumulative setting conditions is cumulatively considerable (i.e., a significant effect). "Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of an individual project are significant when viewed in connection with effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects (CEQA Guidelines Section 15065[a][3]). The determination of whether the project's impact on cumulative conditions is considerable is based on a number of factors, including consideration of applicable public agency standards, consultation with public agencies, and expert opinion. Section 5.0, Cumulative Impacts, provides a summary of the cumulative impacts associated with the proposed General Plan Update.

Cumulative impacts are based on the project's contribution to development compared with the cumulative baseline condition.

4.0.2 TERMINOLOGY USED IN THE DRAFT EIR

This Draft EIR uses the following terminology to describe the environmental effects of the proposed project:

Rocklin General Plan Planning Area: The Planning Area represents all of the area within the city boundaries (approximately 19.8 square miles), plus the additional 1.2 square miles outside the city boundaries that comprise the City's SOI. The boundaries of the General Plan Planning Area remain the same for the proposed General Plan as they were for the 1991 General Plan. **Figure 3.0-5** shows the Planning Area boundary as well as the existing city limits.

Less Than Significant Impact: A less than significant impact would cause no substantial change in the physical condition of the environment (no mitigation would be required for project effects found to be less than significant).

Significant Impact and Potentially Significant Impact: A significant impact would cause (or would potentially cause) a substantial adverse change in the physical conditions of the environment. Significant impacts are identified by the evaluation of project effects using specified standards of significance provided in each technical section of the DEIR. Identified "significant" impacts are those where the project would result in an impact that can be measured or quantified, while identified "potentially significant" impacts are those impacts where an exact measurement of the project's effects cannot be made but substantial evidence indicates that the impact would exceed standards of significance. A potentially significant impact may also be an impact that may or may not occur and where a definite determination cannot be foreseen. Mitigation measures and/or project alternatives are identified to avoid or reduce project effects to the environment to a less than significant level.

Significant and Unavoidable Impact: A significant and unavoidable impact would result in a substantial negative change in the environment that cannot be avoided or mitigated to a less than significant level if the project is implemented.

Less Than Cumulatively Considerable Impact: A less than cumulatively considerable impact would cause no substantial change in the physical condition of the environment under cumulative conditions.

4.0 INTRODUCTION TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS AND ASSUMPTIONS USED

Cumulatively Considerable Impact: A cumulatively considerable impact would result when the incremental effects of an individual project result in a significant adverse physical impact on the environment under cumulative conditions.

Standards of Significance: A set of significance criteria to determine at what level or “threshold” an impact would be considered significant. Significance criteria used in this EIR include the CEQA Guidelines; factual or scientific information; regulatory performance standards of local, state, and federal agencies; and City goals, objectives, and policies. Specified significance criteria used by the City of Rocklin are identified at the beginning of the impact analyses of each technical section of the DEIR.

Subsequent Projects/Activities: These are anticipated development projects (e.g., residential, commercial, industrial, recreational projects) that could occur in the future as a result of the implementation of the proposed General Plan, the continuation and potential expansion of land use activities (such as agricultural operations), or as a result of changes from the land use designations of the existing General Plan. This could also include public infrastructure and utility extension projects including, but not limited to, roadway widenings and extensions, intersection improvements, and water, stormwater, and wastewater distribution improvements.

4.0.3 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORTS UTILIZED IN THIS EIR

This Draft EIR utilizes technical information and analyses from previously prepared EIRs that are relevant to the consideration of environmental effects of the proposed project, which is supported by the CEQA Guidelines (see Sections 15148 [Citation] and 15150 [Incorporation by Reference]).

By utilizing these provisions of the CEQA Guidelines, the City, in preparing this Draft EIR, has been able to make maximum feasible and appropriate use of the technical information in these previously prepared EIRs. These EIRs and other referenced materials are available for review upon request at the City of Rocklin Community Development Department at 3970 Rocklin Road, Rocklin, CA 95677.