

# **ATTACHMENT 1**

**Before the Board of Supervisors  
County of Placer, State of California**

**In the matter of: A RESOLUTION CERTIFYING  
THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT,  
ADOPTING A STATEMENT OF FINDINGS, A STATEMENT  
OF OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS AND A  
MITIGATION MONITORING PLAN REGARDING  
THE REGIONAL UNIVERSITY SPECIFIC PLAN,  
RELATED ENTITLEMENTS AND DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT**

**Resolution No. 2008-**

**The following resolution was duly passed by the Board of Supervisors  
of the County of Placer at a regular meeting held November 4, 2008,  
by the following vote:**

**Ayes:**

**Noes:**

**Absent:**

**Signed by me after its passage.**

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**Jim Holmes, Chairman**

**Attest:**

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**Ann Holman  
Clerk of said Board**

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This Statement of Findings and Statement of Overriding Considerations is made with respect to the "Project Approvals" (as defined below) for the Regional University Specific Plan (the "Plan") and states the findings of the Board of Supervisors (the "Board") of the County of Placer (the "County") relating to the environmental impacts of the Plan to be developed in accordance with the Project Approvals.

**WHEREAS**, Angelo K. Tsakopoulos, William C. Cummings, and Placer 2780, a California limited partnership, (referred to hereinafter collectively as the "Applicant") have requested the County Board take the following requested actions related to the Plan, which are referred to collectively as the "Project Approvals":

1. Certification of a Final Environmental Impact Report and adoption of a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan;
2. Adoption of amendments to the Placer County General Plan;
3. Adoption of amendments to the Dry Creek/West Placer Community Plan;
4. Approval of a Specific Plan;
5. Approval of Development Standards and Design Guidelines for the Specific Plan;
6. Approval of rezonings;
7. Approval of a Development Agreement, and

**WHEREAS**, the Project Approvals constitute the "Project" for purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA"--Public Resources Code sections 21000 *et seq.*) and CEQA Guidelines Sec. 15378 and these determinations of the Board, and

**WHEREAS**, a notice of preparation for an environmental impact report for the Project was prepared by the County and sent to the State Clearinghouse on March 4, 2005, under the title De La Salle University and Community Specific Plan (SCH No. 2005032026), and

**WHEREAS**, on December 7, 2007, the County released a draft environmental impact report ("DEIR") that was prepared for the Project under the direction of the County, and

**WHEREAS**, the DEIR was made available for public comment in accordance with CEQA from December 10, 2007 through January 23, 2008,

**WHEREAS**, the County received written comments on the DEIR, in response to which the County prepared and released a Final Environmental Impact Report on September 12, 2008, (the "FEIR") and

**WHEREAS**, the Board gave full and legal notice of a public hearing to consider and act upon the Project Approvals and the FEIR, which was held on November 4, 2008, and

**WHEREAS**, the Board duly considered the FEIR for the Project, which consists of the DEIR and the Final EIR, the addendices thereto, the comments of the public, both oral and written, and all written materials in the record connected therewith, and is fully informed thereon,

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF PLACER:**

(1) The FEIR has been prepared in accordance with all requirements of CEQA and the Guidelines.

(2) The FEIR was presented to and reviewed by the Board. The FEIR was prepared under supervision by the County and reflects the independent judgment of the County. The Board has reviewed the FEIR, and bases its findings on such review and other substantial evidence in the record.

(3) The Board hereby certifies the FEIR as complete, adequate and in full compliance with CEQA as a basis for considering and acting upon the Project Approvals and, exercising its independent judgment, makes the specific findings with respect thereto as set forth in Exhibit A, attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference.

(4) All mitigation measures proposed in the FEIR shall be implemented, and the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan ("MMRP") is adopted, and will implement all mitigation measures adopted with respect to the Plan pursuant to all of the Project Approvals. The MMRP is hereby incorporated into the Plan and thereby becomes part of and limitations upon the entitlements conferred by the Project Approvals.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:** That notwithstanding the imposition of the mitigation measures in the MMRP as set forth above, significant impacts of the Plan have not been reduced to a level of insignificance or eliminated by changes in the proposed Plan. The Board of Supervisors finds that the project will bring substantial benefits to the County and that the Plan's benefits outweigh the Plan's significant unmitigated adverse impacts and pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15093 adopts and makes the Statement of Overriding Considerations as set forth in Section XIII of Exhibit A, attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference, to explain why the Development's benefits override its unavoidable impacts. Having carefully considered the Plan, its impacts and the foregoing benefits, the Board of Supervisors finds, in light of the important social, economic and other benefits that the Plan will bring, the adverse environmental impacts of the Plan that are not fully mitigated are acceptable.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:** That the Planning Department is directed to file a Notice of Determination with the County Clerk within five (5) working days in accordance with Public Resources Code section 21152(a) and CEQA Guidelines section 15094.

**EXHIBIT A**

**CEQA FINDINGS OF FACT**

**and**

**STATEMENT OF OVERRIDING  
CONSIDERATIONS**

**of the**

**PLACER COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

**for the**

**REGIONAL UNIVERSITY SPECIFIC PLAN  
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT  
(SCH # 2005032026)**

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Final Environmental Impact Report ("FEIR") prepared for the Regional University Specific Plan ("RUSP" or the "Project") addresses the potential environmental effects associated with implementation of the goals, policies, and objectives of the Project. These findings have been prepared to comply with requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") (Pub. Resources Code, § 21000 et seq.) and the CEQA Guidelines (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15000 et seq.). These findings refer to the FEIR where material appears in that document. Otherwise, references are to the Draft EIR ("DEIR").

## II. DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

Like the EIR itself, these findings use a number of acronyms. To make the findings easier to follow, key acronyms are defined below.

"BMP" means Best Management Practices.

"Board of Supervisors" or "Board" refers to the Placer County Board of Supervisors.

"CA DFG" means California Department of Fish and Game.

"Cal/EPA" means California Environmental Protection Agency.

"Caltrans" means California Department of Transportation.

"CEQA" means California Environmental Quality Act.

"cfs" means cubic feet per second.

"CNEL" means Community Noise Equivalent Level.

"CO" means carbon monoxide.

"CVP" means Central Valley Project.

— "DA" means Development Agreement for the Regional University Specific Plan.

"dB" means decibel(s).

"dBA" means A-weighted sound levels.

“dbh” means diameter at breast height.

“DEIR” or “Draft EIR” means Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Regional University Specific Plan (December, 2007).

“DCWWTP” means Dry Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant.

“EIR” means Environmental Impact Report.

“EPA” means United States Environmental Protection Agency.

“ESA” means the federal Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. § 1531 et seq.).

“FEIR” or “Final EIR” means Final Environmental Impact Report for the Regional University Specific Plan (September 2008).

“kV” means kilovolt.

“L<sub>dn</sub>” means day-night noise level.

“L<sub>eq</sub>” means equivalent sound level.

“LOS” means level of service.

“MGD” means million gallons per day.

“MMRP” means Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.

“mph” means miles per hour.

“NA” means not applicable.

“NEPA” means National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. § 4321 et seq.).

“NO<sub>x</sub>” means nitrogen oxides.

“NOP” means Notice of Preparation.

“NPDES” means National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System.

“OL” means operating location.

“PCB” means polychlorinated biphenyls.

“PFFP” means Public Facilities Financing Plan.

“PG&E” means Pacific Gas & Electric Company.

“PM<sub>10</sub>” means particulate matter equal to or less than 10 microns in diameter.

“ppb” means parts per billion.

“ppm” means parts per million.

“ppmv” means parts per million by volume.

“ROG” means reactive organic gases.

“RT” means Regional Transit.

“SACOG” means Sacramento Area Council of Governments.

“SEL” means sound exposure level.

“SMUD” means Sacramento Municipal Utilities District.

“SPWA” means South Placer Wastewater Authority.

“TMA” means Transportation Management Association.

“TOD” means Transit Oriented Development.

“USFWS” means U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

“USGS” means U.S. Geological Survey.

“V/C” means volume-to-capacity.

“VMT” means vehicle miles traveled.

“VOC” means volatile organic compound.

### III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

#### Project Location

The proposed Regional University Specific Plan (“RUSP”) project site encompasses approximately 1,157.5 acres in unincorporated west Placer County (see Draft EIR Figure 2-1). The eastern boundary of the project site is located adjacent to and immediately west of a proposed future Watt Avenue extension, with the western boundary adjacent to Brewer Road. The northern boundary is irregular, with the northwest corner falling approximately 2.7 miles north of Base Line Road. The southern boundary is also irregular, following an existing property line in the western portion of the project site, curving south to meet the proposed future intersection of Watt Avenue and Pleasant Grove Boulevard. The project site is immediately adjacent to the West Roseville Specific Plan Area, which is within the City of Roseville/Placer County Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”) Area. (DEIR, pp. 2-1, 2-4.)

#### Project Background

The RUSP area (Plan Area) falls within the “Future Study Area” identified by the Placer County General Plan as an appropriate location for consideration of potential future urban or suburban growth.

The proposed RUSP would include two primary components: a University campus and an adjoining Community. The University is planned to accommodate approximately 6,000 students, with 800 professors and staff, offering both undergraduate and graduate degrees. In addition to the institutional facilities on campus, the campus would include approximately 1,155 residential units for students and faculty, as well as retirement housing. The preliminary University program could include a full range of academic, administrative, athletic, and performing arts facilities; a stadium; faculty and staff housing; student housing; and a retirement village. In addition, a portion of the campus is planned for the potential establishment of a private high school that could accommodate 1,200 students and accompanying staff and faculty. Before any development can occur on the University property, the County must approve a Campus Master Plan in accordance with the requirements of the Specific Plan. The proposed Community would be mixed-use, with a variety of residential, commercial, employment, open space, parks, and public uses, including a kindergarten through sixth grade (K-6) school and a kindergarten through eighth grade (K-8) school. The Community would include 3,232 residential units of varying densities. Draft EIR Figure 2-2 depicts the land use plan for the RUSP. (DEIR, p. 2-1.)

The project site is currently zoned F-B-X (Farm-Combining—80-acre minimum site size) with a Placer County General Plan designation of Agriculture. The Farm (F) Zone district allows single-family residential and a variety of agricultural uses and related structures including, but not limited to, agricultural processing, animal raising and keeping, ranching, and crop production. The project site is also within an area designated as a Future Study Area in the General Plan. The Future Study Area is bounded by Base Line Road to the south, the Placer/Sutter County line to the west, Fiddymment Road to the east (generally), and Pleasant Grove Creek to the north (generally). The General Plan states that future growth may occur in the unincorporated area or in areas annexed to an adjacent city. The West Roseville Specific Plan Area was within the Future Study Area but has been annexed to the City of Roseville limits. The project is seeking to amend the land uses shown on the General Plan Generalized Land Use Diagram and the General Plan Land Use Diagram, as shown in Draft EIR Figures 2-3 and 2-4. (DEIR, p. 2-4.)

Planned and approved development in the RUSP vicinity includes the approved West Roseville Specific Plan, the proposed Sierra Vista Specific Plan, the approved Placer Vineyards Specific Plan (litigation pending), the proposed Riolo Vineyards Specific Plan, the proposed Curry Creek Community Plan Area, the proposed Creekview Specific Plan, and the proposed Placer Ranch Specific Plan. Planned and approved development in the RUSP vicinity is shown on Figure 4-1 in the Draft EIR. (DEIR, p. 2-7.)

The West Roseville Specific Plan, east of the RUSP in the City of Roseville, includes approximately 3,150 acres. At buildout, the West Roseville Specific Plan area will include approximately 8,500 dwelling units, 200 acres of commercial/office development, and approximately 1,200 acres of public facilities, including open space. The West Roseville Specific Plan area is now under construction. (DEIR, p. 2-7.)

The 2,175-acre Sierra Vista Specific Plan, southeast of the RUSP, is located along the western edge of the City of Roseville in unincorporated Placer County and nearly entirely within the City of Roseville's Sphere of Influence. At buildout, the Sierra Vista Specific Plan will provide for approximately 10,500 dwelling units, approximately 2.3 million square feet of retail and office uses, and approximately 440 acres of public facilities, including parks and open space. The Sierra Vista Specific Plan is currently in preparation. (DEIR, p. 2-7.)

The Placer Vineyards Specific Plan, south of the RUSP in unincorporated Placer County, includes approximately 5,230 acres. At buildout, the Placer Vineyards Specific Plan will include 14,132 dwelling units, 274 acres of commercial uses, 641 acres of quasi-public (public facilities/services, religious facilities, schools, and major roadways) land uses, and 919 acres of park and open space land. The Placer County Board of Supervisors approved the Placer Vineyards Specific Plan in July 2007 and construction is projected to occur over a 20 to 30-year time frame. (DEIR, p. 2-7.)

The Riolo Vineyards Specific Plan, southeast of the RUSP in unincorporated Placer County, includes approximately 527.5 acres. At buildout, the Riolo Vineyards Specific

Plan will include 932 dwelling units, approximately 7 acres of commercial development, and approximately 204 acres of public facilities, including open space, infrastructure, and agricultural uses. The Riolo Vineyards Specific Plan EIR is currently in preparation for Placer County. (DEIR, p. 2-7.)

The Curry Creek Community Plan Area, encompasses a portion of the RUSP, and is within a Future Study Area identified by the Placer County General Plan as an appropriate location for consideration of potential future urban or suburban growth. Although the entire Plan Area lies within the Curry Creek Community Plan, the RUSP is independent of the Curry Creek Community Plan. (DEIR, p. 2-7.) No formal Community Plan process has yet been initiated.

The approximately 570-acre Creekview Specific Plan area is in the initial planning stages and would be located northeast of the RUSP. If approved, the Creekview Specific Plan would consist of approximately 2,160 dwelling units, 38 acres of industrial land use, a 14-acre school, and a community clubhouse on three acres. (DEIR, p. 2-7.)

The Placer Ranch Specific Plan, northeast of the RUSP in unincorporated Placer County, includes approximately 6,793 acres. The Placer Ranch Specific Plan would include 6,793 residential dwelling units, 527 acres of business park and light industrial uses, 150 acres of office professional uses, 99 acres of commercial uses; 275 acres of parks, landscape corridors, and open space; two new elementary schools; and a new middle school. In addition, the proposed project includes a 300-acre branch campus of California State University Sacramento, with an estimated total enrollment of 25,000 students. The project applicant recently requested that this project be considered for annexation into the City of Roseville. (DEIR, pp. 2-7 to 2-8.)

### Project Objectives

Pursuant to Section 15124 of the State CEQA Guidelines, the applicant's objectives in proposing this project include the following:

- Objective 1    Establish a well-respected four-year University that will serve Placer County's residents, attract talented students and staff, and provide a catalyst for business, cultural, and athletic opportunities.
- Objective 2    Establish a mixed-use community adjacent to the University, which incorporates smart-growth principles and is attractive to residents, employers, and commercial service providers.
- Objective 3    Locate the University and Community to take advantage of:
  - Six hundred acres of land provided for the University campus;
  - Five hundred fifty-six acres of land provided for the development of the Community, the entire net proceeds of which will fund the University,

- requiring no taxpayer funds;
- Adjacency to planned development (West Roseville Specific Plan);
- Ability to connect to the future regional transportation and infrastructure system (Watt Avenue, Pleasant Grove Boulevard, Base Line Road, and Placer Parkway at Watt Avenue);

- Objective 4 Ensure that the University and Community are designed as stand-alone projects yet are planned to link to potential future adjacent development.
- Objective 5 Foster a sense of community and identity throughout the Plan Area by providing distinct neighborhoods with a cohesive design image.
- Objective 6 Provide a diversity of Community housing opportunities for households of differing income levels, with approximately 3,200 dwelling units, distributed between low density (approximately 20 percent), medium density (approximately 50 percent), and high density residential (approximately 30 percent), with overall densities higher than historically developed in Placer County.
- Objective 7 Provide on-campus housing opportunities, including residence halls for students, a village of homes for faculty/staff, and a retirement housing complex.
- Objective 8 Promote opportunities for neighborhood interaction and walking by providing diverse architectural styles with porches, multiple street linkages within neighborhoods, and access to the open space network.
- Objective 9 Establish the University Village to promote the development of a “place” that serves as a shared activity center for the University and Community, where faculty, students, and community residents can come together for retail, business, entertainment, and recreation.
- Objective 10 Provide a Civic Area with parks, schools, and public services centrally located within the Community.
- Objective 11 Establish a circulation system that encourages pedestrian and bicycle usage by providing wide sidewalks and bikeways.
- Objective 12 Provide open space drainage corridors that accommodate multiple uses, including pedestrian and bicycle linkages to all areas of the Community and University, provide for passive recreation uses and conjunctive use for habitat preservation, storm water drainage, detention, retention, and storm water quality treatment.

- Objective 13 Provide a comprehensively planned infrastructure system to serve the needs of the University, Community residents and businesses.
- Objective 14 Provide a phasing and public facilities financing plan to enable the Plan Area to grow in a coordinated and economically feasible manner, while incorporating provisions for the delivery of adequate services and long-term maintenance of facilities.

(DEIR, pp. 2-8 to 2-9.)

Development of the proposed project would occur on existing agricultural land, which would result in a loss of agricultural land and biological resources, including regulated wetlands and other waters of the U.S., and other significant natural habitat areas. The project applicant has committed to preserve, restore, enhance, and/or create open space functions and values at levels required to mitigate project impacts to less-than-significant levels to the extent feasible. (DEIR, p. 2-9.)

### Project Components

The RUSP consists of the University and the Community which will be developed in accordance with the Development Standards and Design Guidelines as well as the provisions of a Development Agreement. The Community contains four major components: the University Village, the Central Civic Area, the North and East Residential Villages, and the Open Space Network. Draft EIR Table 2-1 shows the breakdown of land use by acre and the number of residential units per residential density. (DEIR, p. 2-9.)

### The University

The University campus would encompass the western 600 acres of the project site. The planned campus location was influenced by the desire to incorporate the existing wetland area into the campus and the desire for a centrally-focused campus model. The core campus area would be located approximately one-quarter mile from the terminus of University Boulevard, a proposed major east-west arterial within the Plan Area. The applicant has indicated that the campus is intended to be a pedestrian-oriented place with non-automobile access modes, such as bicycle and pedestrian travel, encouraged and facilitated. (DEIR, p. 2-9.)

### The Community

The Community would incorporate residential, retail/office, and public facilities, including schools, parks, and open space. Primary elements within the Community include the University Village, the North and East Residential Villages, the Central Civic Area, and the Open Space Network. (DEIR, p. 2-10.)

The University Village is designed to be a small-town commercial mixed-use area that could serve as an interface between campus and community life. The University Village would be located adjacent to a proposed University athletic stadium, with the core campus less than a quarter mile to the west. Commercial development would be located on the periphery of the University Village, with a pedestrian-oriented commercial mixed-use village center fronting the University. Second floor (and possibly third floor) uses above the commercial mixed-use village would allow for offices and residences. A neighborhood commercial center is proposed at the east end of the University Village. The two commercial areas would be connected with a central street. This area would have wide sidewalks along the street to facilitate pedestrian activity. (DEIR, p. 2-10.)

Higher-density residential uses would border the commercial uses. A residential mix of high-density apartments and townhomes, medium-density row houses, and cluster housing would be located within walking distance of the commercial area. These units would front onto adjacent streets, with parking clustered behind or accessed from alleyways. The overall average residential density of the University Village would be approximately 18 dwelling units per acre. (DEIR, pp. 2-10 to 2-11.)

The Central Civic Area would be located in the geographic center of the Community and is envisioned by the applicant as a central hub of civic and recreational activity. The components of the Central Civic Area include a 22.1-acre Community Park, a 10-acre K-6 school, a 2.2-acre fire station/sheriff services center, a 2.2-acre public/quasi-public site, and a 16.4-acre high-density residential site. All parcels would be located on a greenway system, allowing significant access and visibility to this focal element. The Community Park, along with the other parks in the Plan Area, would help provide for the active recreation needs of the Community. (DEIR, p. 2-11.)

Residential neighborhoods of low and medium densities would be located in two distinct neighborhoods: the North Village and the East Village. These villages would allow for a variety of housing types, densities, and styles. Densities for the low-density neighborhoods would range from 4 to 7.9 dwelling units per acre and 8 to 15.9 dwelling units per acre for the medium-density neighborhoods. The neighborhoods would be designed with centrally located parks to serve as focal points and to be easily accessible via non-vehicular modes. Pedestrian orientation is a focus of the Plan Area, with an open space system that includes a multi-use trail, as well as on-street bike lanes in selected areas within the community. (DEIR, p. 2-11.)

The planned open space network would contain linear open spaces, drainageways, and parks that would function for drainage purposes, while also allowing pedestrian and bicycle travel within the Plan Area. The open space network would link the residential neighborhoods, schools, and parks to the University and the commercial areas. The open space corridors would be designed to pass drainage flows within a meandering channel, creating upland areas for re-vegetation and to provide for multiple passive recreation uses. Trails with interpretive signs would be provided for pedestrians and bicyclists in the upland areas. (DEIR, p. 2-11.)

## Proposed Amendments to Placer County General Plan Policies

Amendments to the following Placer County General Plan policies and Dry Creek/West Placer Community Plan policies were proposed prior to project approval. Although the Board had already approved most of these changes, including those to the Dry Creek/West Placer Community Plan (but not including the proposed amendment to General Plan Policy 9.A.2 and to language in Part III of the General Plan), in July 2007 in connection with its approval of the Placer Vineyards Specific Plan, the Board will re-approve the previously approved amendments in connection with the RUSP because of litigation against the Placer Vineyards approval, which was still pending at the time of RUSP approval. The Board will also approve several amendments that had not been previously approved. Changes are shown in underline for new text and strikeout for deleted text. (DEIR, p. 2-42.)

### **Part I**

Amend the Land Use Diagram and Generalized Land Use Diagram to conform to the Specific Plan Land Uses as approved

**Page 21:** LAND USE BUFFER ZONE STANDARDS: Amend 2nd paragraph as follows: This *General Plan* requires the use of buffer zones in several types of development. While the exact dimensions of the buffer zones and specific uses allowed in buffer zones will be determined through the County's specific plan, land use permit, and/or subdivision review process, buffer zones must conform to the following standards (as illustrated conceptually in Figures I-2 through I-7); provided, however, different buffer zone standards may be established within a Specific Plan as part of the Specific Plan approval.

### **Page 30: Table I-7: Functional Classifications**

Table I-7, Functional Classifications, of the Placer County General Plan, Part I Land Use/Circulation Diagrams and Standards, would be amended to include the following proposed project roads:

- University Boulevard
- A Street
- B Street

Any changes to the names of the proposed roads listed above would be reflected in Table I-7 of the General Plan.

### **Land Use**

**Policy 1.H.4.** The County shall allow the conversion of existing agricultural land to urban uses only within community plan or specific plan areas, ~~and~~ within city spheres of influence, or where designated for urban development on the General Plan *Land Use Diagram*.

**Policy 1.H.5.** The County shall require development within or adjacent to designated agricultural areas to incorporate design, construction, and maintenance techniques that protect agriculture and minimize conflicts with adjacent agricultural uses, except as may be determined to be unnecessary or inappropriate within a Specific Plan as part of the Specific Plan approval.

**Policy 1.H.6.** The County shall require new non-agricultural development immediately adjacent to agricultural lands to be designed to provide a buffer in the form of a setback of sufficient distance to avoid land use conflicts between the agricultural uses and the non-agricultural uses except as it may be determined to be unnecessary or inappropriate within a Specific Plan as part of the Specific Plan approval. Such setback or buffer areas shall be established by recorded easement or other instrument, subject to the approval of County Counsel. A method and mechanism (e.g., a homeowners association or easement dedication to a non-profit organization or public entity) for guaranteeing the maintenance of this land in a safe and orderly manner shall be also established at the time of development approval.

**Policy 1.O.1.** Except as otherwise provided in the Design Guidelines of an approved Specific Plan, The County shall require all new development to be designed in compliance with applicable provisions of the *Placer County Design Guidelines Manual*.

### **Transportation and Circulation**

**Policy 3.A.7.** The County shall develop and manage its roadway system to maintain the following minimum levels of service (LOS), or as otherwise specified in a Community or Specific Plan.

- a. LOS "C" on rural roadways, except within one-half mile of state highways where the standard shall be LOS "D."
- b. LOS "C" on urban/suburban roadways except within one-half mile of state highways where the standard shall be LOS "D."
- c. An LOS no worse than specified in the Placer County Congestion Management Program (CMP) for the State highway system.

The County may allow exceptions to these level of service standards where it finds that the improvements or other measures required to achieve the LOS standards are unacceptable based on established criteria. In allowing any exception to the standards, the County shall consider the following factors:

- The number of hours per day that the intersection or roadway segment would operate at conditions worse than the standard.
- The ability of the required improvement to significantly reduce peak hour delay and improve traffic operations.
- The right-of-way needs and the physical impacts on surrounding properties.
- The visual aesthetics of the required improvement and its impact on community identity and character.
- Environmental impacts including air quality and noise impacts.
- Construction and right-of-way acquisition costs.
- The impacts on general safety.
- The impacts of the required construction phasing and traffic maintenance.
- The impacts on quality of life as perceived by residents.
- Consideration of other environmental, social, or economic factors on which the County may base findings to allow an exceedance of the standards.

Exceptions to the standards will only be allowed after all feasible measures and options are explored, including alternative forms of transportation.

**Policy 3.A.8.** ~~The County's level of service standards for the State highway system shall be no worse than those adopted in the Placer County Congestion Management Program (CMP).~~

**Policy 3.A.12.** The County shall require an analysis of the effects of traffic from all land development projects. Each such project shall construct or fund improvements necessary to mitigate the effects of traffic from the project consistent with Policy 3.A.7. Such improvements may include a fair share of improvements that provide benefits to others.

## **Recreational and Cultural Resources**

**Policy 5.A.16.** Except as otherwise provided in an approved Specific Plan, The County should not become involved in the operation of organized, activity-oriented recreation programs, especially where a local park or recreation district has been established.

**Policy 5.A.25.** The County shall encourage the establishment of activity-oriented recreation programs for all urban and suburban areas of the County. Except as otherwise provided in an approved Specific Plan, sSuch programs shall be provided by jurisdictions other than Placer County including special districts, recreation districts, or public utility districts.

### **Agricultural and Forestry Resources**

**Policy 7.B.1.** The County shall identify and maintain clear boundaries between urban/suburban and agricultural areas and require land use buffers between such uses where feasible, except as may be determined to be unnecessary or inappropriate within a Specific Plan as part of the Specific Plan approval. These buffers shall occur on the parcel for which the development permit is sought and shall favor protection of the maximum amount of farmland.

### **Noise**

**Policy 9.A.2.** The County shall require that noise created by new non-transportation noise sources be mitigated so as not to exceed the noise level standards of Table 9-1 as measured immediately within the property line of lands designated for noise-sensitive uses: provided, however, the noise created by occasional events occurring within a stadium on land zoned for university purposes may temporarily exceed these standards as provided in an approved Specific Plan.

### **Part III**

**Page 146:** Amend 2nd sentence of 2nd paragraph as follows: The County will not consider GPAs in the Future Study Area until an application for the West Placer Specific Plan has been adopted ~~accepted~~ by the County.

### Proposed Dry Creek/West Placer Community Plan Policy Amendments

6 The Capital Improvement Program (CIP) shall ~~be sufficient to ensure~~ strive to maintain a minimum level of service (LOS) "C" on the Community Plan area's road network – ~~Given~~ the projected buildout of the Community Plan area and implementation of the CIP.

9 The level of service (LOS) on roadways and intersections identified on the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) shall be a Level C or better. The first priority for available funding shall be the correction of potential hazards. ~~Land development projects shall be approved only if LOS C can be sustained on the CIP roads and intersection after:~~

a. ~~Traffic from approved projects has been added to the system.~~

b. ~~Improvements funded by this program have been constructed.~~

The County may allow exceptions to this level of service (LOS) standard where it finds that the improvements or other measures required to achieve the LOS standards are unacceptable based on established criteria. In allowing any exception to the standard, the County shall consider the following factors:

- The number of hours per day that the intersection or roadway segment would operate at conditions worse than the standard.
- The ability of the required improvement to significantly reduce peak hour delay and improve traffic operations.
- The right-of-way needs and the physical impacts on surrounding properties.
- The visual aesthetics of the required improvement and its impact on community identity and character.
- Environmental impacts including air quality and noise impacts.
- Construction and right-of-way acquisition costs.
- The impacts on general safety.
- The impacts of the required construction phasing and traffic maintenance.
- The impacts on quality of life as perceived by residents.
- Consideration of other environmental, social, or economic factors on which the County may base findings to allow an exceedance of the standards.

Exceptions to the standard will only be allowed after all feasible measures and options are explored, including alternative forms of transportation.

(DEIR, pp. 2-44 to 2-47.)

#### IV. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

In accordance with section 15082 of the CEQA Guidelines, a Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the *Regional University Specific Plan EIR* was prepared by the County in March 2005. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines sections 15023, subdivision (c), and 15087, subdivision (f), the State Clearinghouse in the Office of Planning and Research is responsible for distributing environmental documents to State agencies, departments, boards, and commissions for review and comment. The County followed required procedures with regard to distribution of the appropriate notices and environmental documents to the State Clearinghouse. The State Clearinghouse was obligated to make that information available to interested agencies for review and comment. The NOP was received by the State Clearinghouse (SCH # 2005032026) on March 4, 2005, and was made available for a 30 day public review period ending on April 4, 2005. (See DEIR, p. 1-1, Governor's Office of Planning and Research, CEQA website <http://www.ceqa.net.ca.gov/DocDescription.asp?DocPK=579382>.)

The NOP is included as Appendix A of the Draft EIR. Responses to the NOP are included as Appendix B of the Draft EIR. (RDEIR, p. 1-1.)

Preparation of an EIR is a CEQA requirement for all discretionary projects in California that have a potential to result in significant environmental impacts. EIRs must disclose, analyze, and provide mitigation measures for all potentially significant environmental effects associated with adoption and implementation of proposed projects. Consistent with these requirements, the County in December 2007 published the Draft EIR for the proposed *Regional University Specific Plan* and circulated the document for review and comment by responsible and trustee agencies as well as interested members of the public. The NOA of the Draft EIR was received by the State Clearinghouse on December 10, 2007, and was made available for a public review period ending on January 24, 2008. All comments received on the Draft EIR during the review period are responded to in the Final EIR. (DEIR, pp. 1-1 to 1-2.)

The Draft EIR evaluates the existing environmental resources in the vicinity of the Specific Plan area and off-site infrastructure, analyzes potential impacts on those resources due to the proposed project, and identifies mitigation measures that could avoid or reduce the magnitude of those significant impacts. The environmental analysis chapter of the Draft EIR discusses the environmental and regulatory settings, impacts, and mitigation measures for each of the following fourteen topics:

- Aesthetics
- Agricultural Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology, Soils, and Seismicity

- Hazards
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Noise
- Public Services
- Public Utilities
- Transportation and Circulation
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Global Climate Change
- Water Supply

(DEIR, p. 1-7.)

The County received comments on the Draft EIR from 21 persons/agencies before the close of the comment period.

On September 25, 2008, the County presented the project at the Planning Commission hearing to make a final recommendation on the project. The Planning Commission unanimously recommended approval of the *Regional University Specific Plan*.

On November 4, 2008, the Board of Supervisors ("Board") held a public hearing on the project, at the end of which the Board certified the Final EIR and adopted the above-described General Plan and Community Plan amendments, the Regional University Specific Plan, and an accompanying Development Agreement, as well as various related planning documents. As part of the project approval, the Board approved these Findings of Fact, a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, and the Statement of Overriding Considerations included in Section XII of this document.

## V. RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

For purposes of CEQA and these Findings, the Record of Proceedings for the Project consists of the following documents, at a minimum:

- The Notice of Preparation and all other public notices issued by the County in conjunction with the Project;
- The Final EIR for the Regional University Specific Plan;
- All comments submitted by agencies or members of the public during the 45 day public comment periods on the Draft EIR;
- All comments and correspondence submitted to the County with respect to the Project, in addition to timely comments on the Draft EIR;
- The Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan for the Project;

- Copies of the Regional University Specific Plan and related documents prepared by staff after Board approval to conform to the Board's final decisions (e.g., in terms of including final the language of adopted policies, the final numbering of policies, changes to reflect errata identified in various documents);
- All findings and resolutions adopted by County decisionmakers in connection with the Project, and all documents cited or referred to therein;
- All reports, studies, memoranda, maps, staff reports, or other planning documents relating to the Project prepared by the County, consultants to the County, and responsible or trustee agencies with respect to the County's compliance with the requirements of CEQA and with respect to the County's actions on the Project;
- All documents submitted to the County by other public agencies or members of the public in connection with the Project, up through the close of the public hearing;
- Minutes and/or verbatim transcripts of all public meetings and public hearings held by the County in connection with the Project;
- Any documentary or other evidence submitted to the County at such public meetings and public hearings;
- The 1994 Placer County General Plan, as updated through the time of approval of the Regional University Specific Plan;
- The Dry Creek/West Placer Community Plan;
- The full (multi-volume) certified Environmental Impact Report for the Placer Vineyards Specific Plan, as approved by the Board of Supervisors in July 2007;
- The full (multi-volume) Environmental Impact Report for the Water Forum Proposal (Sacramento City/Sacramento County, 1999);
- The Water Forum Agreement;
- The full (multi-volume) Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report for the American River Pump Station Project (Placer County Water Agency, 2002);
- Integrated Water Resources Plan (Placer County Water Agency, August 2006);
- 2005 Urban Water Management Plan (Placer County Water Agency);

- Sacramento River Water Reliability Study, Revised Assessment of Water Supply Needs (August 2007);
- Sacramento River Water Reliability Study, Engineering Technical Report for the SRWRS Elverta Diversion Alternative (November 2006);
- Sacramento River Water Reliability Study Initial Alternatives Report (March 2005);
- Matters of common knowledge to the County, including, but not limited to federal, State, and local laws and regulations;
- Any documents expressly cited in these findings, in addition to those cited above; and
- Any other materials required to be in the record of proceedings by Public Resources Code section 21167.6, subdivision (e).

The custodian of the documents comprising the record of proceedings is Placer County Planning Director Michael Johnson, whose office is located at 3091 County Center Drive, Suite 140, Auburn, California, 95603.

The Board of Supervisors has relied on all of the documents listed above in reaching its decision on the Regional University Specific Plan, even if not every document was formally presented to the Board or County Staff as part of the County files generated in connection with the Project. Without exception, any documents set forth above not found in the Project files fall into one of two categories. Many of them reflect prior planning or legislative decisions with which the Board was aware in approving the Regional University Specific Plan. (See *City of Santa Cruz v. Local Agency Formation Commission* (1978) 76 Cal.App.3d 381, 391-392; *Dominey v. Department of Personnel Administration* (1988) 205 Cal.App.3d 729, 738, fn. 6.) Other documents influenced the expert advice provided to County Staff or consultants, who then provided advice to the Board. For that reason, such documents form part of the underlying factual basis for the Board's decisions relating to the adoption of the Regional University Specific Plan. (See Pub. Resources Code, § 21167.6, subd. (e)(10); *Browning-Ferris Industries v. City Council of City of San Jose* (1986) 181 Cal.App.3d 852, 866; *Stanislaus Audubon Society, Inc. v. County of Stanislaus* (1995) 33 Cal.App.4th 144, 153, 155.)

## VI. FINDINGS REQUIRED UNDER CEQA

Public Resources Code section 21002 provides that “public agencies should not approve projects as proposed if there are feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures available which would *substantially lessen* the significant environmental effects of such projects[.]” (Emphasis added.) The procedures required by CEQA “are intended to

assist public agencies in systematically identifying both the significant effects of Projects and the feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures which will *avoid* or *substantially lessen* such significant effects.” (Emphasis added.) Section 21002 goes on to state that “in the event [that] specific economic, social, or other conditions make infeasible such project alternatives or such mitigation measures, individual projects may be approved in spite of one or more significant effects thereof.”

The mandate and principles announced in Public Resources Code section 21002 are implemented, in part, through the requirement that agencies must adopt findings before approving projects for which EIRs are required. (See Pub. Resources Code, § 21081, subd. (a); CEQA Guidelines, § 15091, subd. (a).) For each significant environmental effect identified in an EIR for a proposed project, the approving agency must issue a written finding reaching one or more of three permissible conclusions. The first such finding is that “[c]hanges or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the final EIR.” (CEQA Guidelines, § 15091, subd. (a)(1).) The second permissible finding is that “[s]uch changes or alterations are within the responsibility and jurisdiction of another public agency and not the agency making the finding. Such changes have been adopted by such other agency or can and should be adopted by such other agency.” (CEQA Guidelines, § 15091, subd. (a)(2).) The third potential conclusion is that “[s]pecific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the final EIR.” (CEQA Guidelines, § 15091, subd. (a)(3).) Public Resources Code section 21061.1 defines “feasible” to mean “capable of being accomplished in a successful manner within a reasonable period of time, taking into account economic, environmental, social and technological factors.” CEQA Guidelines section 15364 adds another factor: “legal” considerations. (See also *Citizens of Goleta Valley v. Board of Supervisors* (1990) 52 Cal.3d 553, 565 (*Goleta II*)).

The concept of “feasibility” also encompasses the question of whether a particular alternative or mitigation measure promotes the underlying goals and objectives of a project. (*Sequoyah Hills Homeowners Assn. v. City of Oakland* (1993) 23 Cal.App.4th 704, 715 (*Sequoyah Hills*)). “[F]easibility’ under CEQA encompasses ‘desirability’ to the extent that desirability is based on a reasonable balancing of the relevant economic, environmental, social, and technological factors.” (*City of Del Mar v. City of San Diego* (1982) 133 Cal.App.3d 410, 417 (*City of Del Mar*)).

The CEQA Guidelines do not define the difference between “avoiding” a significant environmental effect and merely “substantially lessening” such an effect. The County must therefore glean the meaning of these terms from the other contexts in which the terms are used. Public Resources Code section 21081, on which CEQA Guidelines section 15091 is based, uses the term “mitigate” rather than “substantially lessen.” The CEQA Guidelines therefore equate “mitigating” with “substantially lessening.” Such an understanding of the statutory term is consistent with the policies underlying CEQA,

which include the policy that “public agencies should not approve projects as proposed if there are feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures available which would *substantially lessen* the significant environmental effects of such projects.” (Pub. Resources Code, § 21002, emphasis added.)

For purposes of these findings, the term “avoid” refers to the effectiveness of one or more mitigation measures to reduce an otherwise significant effect to a less than significant level. In contrast, the term “substantially lessen” refers to the effectiveness of such measure or measures to substantially reduce the severity of a significant effect, but not to reduce that effect to a less than significant level. These interpretations appear to be mandated by the holding in *Laurel Hills Homeowners Association v. City Council* (1978) 83 Cal.App.3d 515, 519-527, in which the Court of Appeal held that an agency had satisfied its obligation to substantially lessen or avoid significant effects by adopting numerous mitigation measures, not all of which rendered the significant impacts in question less than significant.

Although CEQA Guidelines section 15091 requires only that approving agencies specify that a particular significant effect is “avoid[ed] or substantially lessen[ed],” these findings, for purposes of clarity, in each case will specify whether the effect in question has been reduced to a less than significant level, or has simply been substantially lessened but remains significant.

Moreover, although section 15091, read literally, does not require findings to address environmental effects that an EIR identifies as merely “potentially significant,” these findings will nevertheless fully account for all such effects identified in the Final EIR.

CEQA requires that the lead agency adopt mitigation measures or alternatives, where feasible, to substantially lessen or avoid significant environmental impacts that would otherwise occur. Project modification or alternatives are not required, however, where such changes are infeasible or where the responsibility for modifying the project lies with some other agency. (CEQA Guidelines, § 15091, subs. (a), (b).)

With respect to a project for which significant impacts are not avoided or substantially lessened either through the adoption of feasible mitigation measures or feasible environmentally superior alternative, a public agency, after adopting proper findings, may nevertheless approve the project if the agency first adopts a statement of overriding considerations setting forth the specific reasons why the agency found that the project’s “benefits” rendered “acceptable” its “unavoidable adverse environmental effects.” (CEQA Guidelines, §§ 15093, 15043, subd. (b); see also Pub. Resources Code, § 21081, subd. (b).) The California Supreme Court has stated that, “[t]he wisdom of approving . . . any development project, a delicate task which requires a balancing of interests, is necessarily left to the sound discretion of the local officials and their constituents who are responsible for such decisions. The law as we interpret and apply it simply requires that those decisions be informed, and therefore balanced.” (*Goleta II, supra*, 52 Cal.3d at p. 576.)

These findings reflect the independent judgment of the Board of Supervisors and constitute its best efforts to set forth the rationales and support for its decision under the requirements of CEQA.

## **VII.** **LEGAL EFFECTS OF FINDINGS**

To the extent that these findings conclude that various proposed mitigation measures outlined in the Final EIR are feasible and have not been modified, superseded or withdrawn, the County hereby binds itself to implement these measures. These findings, in other words, are not merely informational, but rather constitute a binding set of obligations that came into effect when the Board of Supervisors approved the Project.

The mitigation measures are referred to in the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) adopted concurrently with these findings, and will be effectuated through the process of constructing and implementing the Project. For the purposes of this Project, the objectives, goals and policies in the Specific Plan serve as mitigation measures. Therefore, the MMRP lists requirements in the Specific Plan as mitigation for the various environmental impacts associated with adoption and implementation of the Specific Plan.

## **VIII.** **MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM**

A Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) has been prepared for the Project and has been adopted concurrently with these Findings. (See Pub. Resources Code, § 21081.6, subd. (a)(1).) The County will use the MMRP to track compliance with Project mitigation measures.

## **IX.** **SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES**

The Final EIR identified several significant environmental effects (or "impacts") that adoption and implementation of the Regional University Specific Plan will cause. Most significant effects were avoided altogether because the proposed Project, as revised over the course of the adoption process, contains requirements that prevent the occurrence of significant effects in the first place. The requirements of the Specific Plan itself mitigate effects identified in the Draft EIR and the FEIR. Thus, the identification of additional mitigation beyond the requirements of the Specific Plan (the Project) was not, for the most part, necessary. Some significant impacts of implementation of the Specific Plan, however, cannot be avoided by the adoption of feasible mitigation measures or feasible alternatives; these effects are outweighed by overriding considerations set forth in Section XI below. This Section (IX) presents in greater detail the Board's findings with respect to the environmental effects of the Project.

This section also does not attempt to describe the full analysis of each environmental impact contained in the Final EIR. Instead, this section provides a summary description of each impact, describes the applicable mitigation measures identified in the Final EIR and adopted by the Board, and states the Board's findings on the significance of each impact after imposition of the adopted mitigation measures. A full explanation of these environmental findings and conclusions can be found in the Final EIR and these findings hereby incorporate by reference the discussion and analysis in the Final EIR supporting the Final EIR's determinations regarding mitigation measures and the Projects' impacts and mitigation measures designed to address those impacts. In making these findings, the Board ratifies, adopts and incorporates the analysis and explanation in the Final EIR in these findings, and ratifies, adopts and incorporates in these findings the determinations and conclusions of the Final EIR relating to environmental impacts and mitigation measures, except to the extent any such determinations and conclusions are specifically and expressly modified by these findings.

## **A. LAND USE**

### **Standards of Significance**

The RUSP is evaluated for compatibility with the existing and planned land uses in the project vicinity, and for consistency with adopted County plans and policies, County zoning, and LAFCO policies. An inconsistency is identified if the project does not appear to meet the intent of a specific goal or policy contained in the County's General Plan or any applicable adopted plan. Land use impacts are considered significant if the RUSP would conflict with any applicable County land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. The Placer County Board of Supervisors is ultimately responsible for interpreting the County's General Plan and determining whether the project is inconsistent with any adopted land use goals or policies. (DEIR, pp. 4-21 to 4-22.)

### **Consistency**

#### **Adopted Plans and Policies**

This section discusses the relationship of the RUSP to the adopted land use designations on the project site. This consistency analysis considers the adopted goals and policies of the Placer County General Plan. Each section of this EIR that considers physical environmental effects includes applicable General Plan goals and policies specific to that particular technical area. It is within the County's authority to interpret its General Plan and to ultimately decide if the project is consistent (or inconsistent) with applicable County goals or policies.

The proposed project was reviewed to determine if it would be generally consistent with applicable General Plan policies. Placer County General Plan Part I; Part III; and policies

under land use, transportation and circulation, recreational and cultural resources, agricultural and forestry resources, and noise would require amendments prior to approval of the proposed project. Generally, the policy amendments identified in this section would not result in physical impacts on the environment; however, to the extent that physical effects could occur, those effects are addressed in the appropriate technical sections of Chapter 6 of this EIR.

## **Zoning**

This section discusses the relationship between the proposed RUSP and current zoning designations for the site. This analysis considers the adopted County Zoning Ordinance. Mitigation measures are not identified for any inconsistencies identified. (DEIR, p. 4-23.)

The County Board of Supervisors adopted a zoning text amendment to create a Specific Plan zoning district (SPL). The Regional University Specific Plan area will be rezoned to the SPL zoning district. Therefore, the proposed project will be consistent with the County's Zoning Ordinance. The relevant sections of the Specific Plan (and/or companion documents thereto) will be adopted by ordinance and will incorporate by reference the Placer County Zoning Ordinance under Article 17.51 – Specific Plan District. The project's zoning will not substantially differ from zoning within the County's Ordinance, and as a result, will not have physical impacts or result in inconsistency with the Placer County Zoning Ordinance. (DEIR, p. 4-23.)

If there is a conflict between provisions in the Placer County Zoning Ordinance and the proposed project, the provisions of the project will govern the development in the Plan Area because the project includes a set of design standards and guidelines that will be adopted as part of the project. These design standards and guidelines will set forth the allowable (permitted) uses and will, in essence, take the place of the Zoning Ordinance. Where the proposed project does not address a specific provision or is silent, the Zoning Ordinance requirements will govern development in the Plan Area. The project will have its own set of design standards and guidelines. The development standards will set forth the permitted uses, development standards, and other regulations. All development within the RUSP will be required to comply with the development standards and design guidelines. (DEIR, p. 4-23.)

## **LAFCO**

A portion of Watt Avenue may require annexation into the City of Roseville. If any roadway annexations are required, LAFCO would use this EIR for its review and approval. It is anticipated at this time that the entire road would be within the County; however, if the County and City of Roseville determine that it is appropriate to annex the road to the City, the EIR for the RUSP could be used to make findings for the annexation. (DEIR, p. 4-23.)

The RUSP was compared to the applicable Placer County LAFCO policies to determine compatibility. A potential incompatibility is disclosed below; however, a determination of significance was not made in the EIR. Placer County LAFCO will make the ultimate decision on consistency with LAFCO policies. (DEIR, p. 4-23.)

### Compatibility

#### **Existing Adjacent Land Uses**

Implementation of the RUSP would develop rural land with a University and a Community. The RUSP is evaluated for compatibility with existing and planned land uses adjacent to the project site. The analysis considers the type and intensity of uses in the project vicinity and evaluates the project against the existing environment and determines if it is compatible with those existing and planned uses surrounding the project site. As stated above, to the extent that potential incompatibilities result in a physical environmental effect, those effects were addressed in the appropriate technical sections of the EIR and are addressed in these findings. Where appropriate, the respective environmental sections are referenced for discussion of any potential physical/environmental impacts that are identified. (DEIR, pp. 4-23 to 4-24.)

Lands to the south, west, and north of the project site and off-site improvement areas are used primarily for rice farming, grazing, or are fallow. Adjacent land uses could be considered incompatible when physical effects (i.e., odors, dust, light, smoke) associated with the operation of one land use adversely affect an adjacent land use. Agricultural activities generate dust, smoke, and odors that could be considered a nuisance by future residents. Areas adjacent to the project area are actively cultivated. Under the proposed project, as residential development occurs, residential areas would be located adjacent to areas that are and would continue to be actively cultivated. Agricultural activities would generally only affect properties on the urban edge. Placer County has adopted a Right-to-Farm Ordinance (County Code 5.24.040) to reduce the loss of productivity of the County's commercial agricultural resources by limiting the circumstances under which agricultural operations may be deemed to constitute a nuisance. While the Right-to-Farm Ordinance would not prevent potential nuisance activities from occurring, it requires notification about potential nuisance activities. With this notification, new home buyers would be made aware of operations on adjacent property and would have the opportunity to evaluate the personal significance of these potential nuisances. For an analysis of project specific impacts related to adjacency issues between agricultural uses and future residences, see Sections 6.3, Air Quality and 6.9, Noise, and to adjacent agricultural uses, see Section 6.2 of the Draft EIR. (DEIR, p. 4-24.)

#### **Planned Adjacent Land Uses**

The proposed project Plan Area falls within the identified Placer County General Plan Future Study Area; therefore, the Plan Area is an appropriate location for consideration of potential future urban or suburban growth. Adjacent lands to the north, south, east, and

southeast are planned for mixed-use and residential development, which would be mutually compatible with the proposed project's objectives. (DEIR, p. 4-24.)

### **Projects Within An Approved Community or Specific Plan**

Lands to the east are included in the City of Roseville's WRSP area, which includes approximately 3,150 acres. At buildout, the WRSP area will contain approximately 8,500 dwelling units, 200 acres of commercial/office development, and 980 acres of public facilities including open space. Adjacent to this Plan Area are two areas planned for future annexation to the City of Roseville that will likely be developed. The WRSP area is now under construction. (*Placer Vineyards Specific Plan Revised Draft EIR*, page 4.1-3.) The WRSP includes a 267-acre vernal pool open space preserve. The proposed project would not include any uses that would directly affect the preserve area. As discussed in the technical sections of this Draft EIR, the proposed project would be required to implement Best Management Practices to prevent indirect impacts from runoff on the preserve area. The proposed project also includes a fence along the eastern portion of the project site (east of Watt Avenue) to prevent intrusion into the preserve area. (DEIR, p. 4-24.)

### **Projects Designated for Development by a City or County General Plan Designation or by Mutual Agreement**

The proposed Sierra Vista Specific Plan area, located on approximately 2,160 acres, is situated to the southeast of the project area, north of Base Line Road, between Fiddyment Road and east of Watt Avenue. The City of Roseville is currently processing this application. Although in the initial planning stages, if the project is approved as proposed, at buildout it would consist of approximately 10,320 dwelling units, along with approximately 188 acres of commercial. (DEIR, p. 4-25.)

### **Projects Currently in Discussions with Cities and/or the County**

Although no formal applications have been submitted, the County is considering a portion of the Future Study Area for development as the Curry Creek Community Plan, which would encompass adjacent land north and south of the project site. The Curry Creek Community Plan area is located directly north of Base Line Road between South Brewer Road and Watt Avenue on approximately 4,198 acres. (DEIR, p. 4-25.)

All of the adjacent uses identified above would be similar to those proposed in the RUSP, since they primarily consist of residential and commercial uses. Therefore, these uses would be considered mutually compatible with the RUSP. (DEIR, p. 4-25.)

### **Proposed Amendments to Placer County General Plan and Dry Creek/West Placer Community Plan Policies**

The project applicant is proposing amendments to the 1994 General Plan and the Dry Creek/West Placer Community Plan. The proposed amendments related specifically to land use are included in this chapter under the heading Project-Required Amendments to the County General Plan. The entire list of proposed amendments is included in Draft EIR Chapter 2, Project Description. Changes are shown in underline for new text and strikeout for deleted text. (DEIR, p. 4-25.)

The proposed General Plan amendments are considered necessary due to the passage of more than a decade since 1994 and due to some lack of clarity regarding the interplay between certain policies in the General Plan Transportation and Circulation Element. Certain proposed amendments are also intended to achieve greater clarity than can be found in the current language and to give the Board of Supervisors flexibility, in approving specific plans such as the Regional University Specific Plan, to tailor certain requirements to the needs of particular specific plan areas. (DEIR, p. 4-25.)

The proposed amendments to Policies 3.A.7, 3.A.8, and 3.A.12 of the Transportation and Circulation Element of the General Plan are intended to eliminate the existing lack of clarity regarding the extent to which the long-standing "exception" language found in existing Policy 3.A.7 was intended to apply with equal force to less qualified language currently found in Policies 3.A.8 and 3.A.12. This lack of clarity can be remedied by importing language from 3.A.8 directly into 3.A.7, deleting 3.A.8 as a stand-alone policy, and by cross-referencing 3.A.7 within 3.A.12. As amended, Policy 3.A.7 will be the one policy setting forth acceptable levels of service ("LOS") for various types of roadways in the County, and will permit the Board of Supervisors to consider "exceptions" to such LOS with respect to proposed transportation improvements that might be unacceptable for various specified reasons. (DEIR, p. 4-25.)

Similarly, there is currently some uncertainty regarding whether, in enacting Policy 3.A.7 in 1994 as part of the updated General Plan, the Board intended that the policy's "exception" language apply to similar pre-existing community plan policies setting forth acceptable LOS standards within individual community plan areas. Based on the belief that the 1994 exception language was probably intended to also apply in such situations, and based on the further belief that any ambiguity on that point should be eliminated in the interest of achieving greater consistency with regards to transportation policy, the applicants propose to expressly add the exception language from Policy 3.A.7 directly into Policy 9 of the Transportation and Circulation Element of the Dry Creek/West Placer Community Plan. (DEIR, pp. 4-25 to 4-26.)

The exception language in Policy 3.A.7 has taken on greater significance than was perhaps anticipated in 1994 when the Board approved the updated General Plan, based on the most current and thorough traffic studies available at that time. In creating, at the same time, Exhibit 1 to the Dry Creek/West Placer Community Plan, which has been the basis for the proposed Placer Vineyards Specific Plan, the Board clearly intended to ultimately approve a specific plan within the Community Plan area consistent with the standards and policies set forth therein. Planning decisions and considerations not in play

in western Placer County when the Dry Creek/West Placer Community Plan was adopted in 1990 and the General Plan was updated in 1994, such as annexations to Roseville and the proposed Curry Creek Community Plan, will result in an increase in the number of trips generated in and projected for this portion of the County. Even without the Regional University Specific Plan, congestion on western County roads will exceed the normally applicable LOS thresholds set forth in Policy 3.A.7. This reality has been demonstrated by the traffic impact analysis prepared as part of this Draft EIR, as well as the Revised Draft EIR prepared for the Placer Vineyards Specific Plan. Because the RUSP applicants assume that, in enacting Exhibit 1 together with Policy 3.A.7, the Board did not intend the LOS standards set forth in 3.A.7 and related policies to defeat the Board's ability to approve a specific plan (i.e., Placer Vineyards) consistent with Exhibit 1, the applicants are proposing to eliminate language from the Transportation and Circulation Element that, if taken out of context or interpreted in certain ways, could possibly frustrate the Board's ability to approve a specific plan in a form consistent with Exhibit 1. Similar considerations lay behind the proposal to amend Policy 9 of the Transportation and Circulation Element of the Dry Creek/West Placer Community Plan. (DEIR, p. 4-26.)

The applicants are proposing to amend General Plan Policy 7.B.1 dealing with buffers and the need to minimize urban/rural conflicts for two reasons. The first is that there is some ambiguity in the existing policies that makes them unclear in terms of exactly what might be required of the Regional University Specific Plan. The second reason is that, by allowing the Board to address these issues within individual specific plans without the need to be encumbered by the existing General Plan language, the proposed amendments, the applicants believe, will allow the Board to address the contents of the proposed Specific Plan based on the unique facts associated with the proposed Specific Plan. (DEIR, p. 4-26.)

The applicants are proposing General Plan amendments to allow the Board to use the Development Standards and Design Guidelines for individual specific plans to vary from the more generic "Placer County Design Guidelines Manual" where the Board deems such variance to be appropriate. This change would allow specific plan proponents to suggest, and the Board to approve if it desires, Design Guidelines for specific plans tailored to the unique circumstances of, and land use types contemplated by, those specific plans. (DEIR, p. 4-26.)

Next, the applicants are proposing amendments to General Plan policies dealing with "activity-oriented recreation programs." Policy 5.A.16 and 5.A.25 from the Recreation and Cultural Resources Element would be modified to eliminate the current unqualified prohibition on direct county involvement in such programs to allow such involvement, at the Board's discretion, in connection with approved specific plans. This would allow the County to develop and maintain community recreation programs. (DEIR, p. 4-26.)

The applicants are also proposing an amendment to Policy 9.A.2 to allow noise associated with occasional events held at the proposed university stadium to be acceptable even if the noise may temporarily exceed the standards included in the

Specific Plan. This change would allow events to take place at the proposed stadium recognizing that noise may, on a temporary basis, exceed the noise standards set forth in the General Plan. The applicants believe that the temporary exceedences that the changed policy would permit would help to attract a university to the site, as football games and other periodic sports activities are a normal part of on-campus activities. Without the ability to schedule sporting events, a university interested in the RUSP area might find the project site insufficient for its purposes. This amendment is consistent with Placer County Municipal Code (section 9.36.060), which exempts noise from the normal operation of public and private schools, typically consisting of classes and other school-sponsored activities. (DEIR, p. 4-27.)

The proposed amendment to the language included on page 146 of the Placer County General Plan is considered necessary due to the passage of more than a decade since 1994. This amendment clarifies that the County would not consider a general plan amendment in the Future Study Area until a specific application for the West Placer Specific Plan (Placer Vineyards) has been accepted by the County. This amendment to the text provides more specific direction from the County on when GPAs would be considered. Among the considerations for this change are the Board of Supervisor's direction to develop the Curry Creek Community Plan and the fact that there is development already approved and planned immediately adjacent to the Future Study Area to the east in the City of Roseville. (DEIR, p. 4-27.)

As noted earlier, the Board of Supervisors already approved most of these amendments in July 2007 in connection with the Placer Vineyards Specific Plan, which is in litigation currently. Because, despite the County's confidence that the Placer Vineyards approvals were lawful, litigation always creates a degree of uncertainty, the Board decided to re-approve these amendments in connection with the RUSP. The newly approved amendments are those relating only, or primarily, to the RUSP (e.g., the amendments relating to noise levels from stadiums and dealing with roadways in the Specific Plan area).

## **B. AESTHETICS**

### **Standards of Significance**

The Initial Study for the proposed project found that there would be no impact on a scenic vista or State scenic highway because the project site is not considered a scenic vista and there are no listed State scenic highways in the project vicinity. Therefore, this issue was not addressed further in the EIR. Under criteria based on the State CEQA Guidelines, for purposes of this EIR, impacts to aesthetics are considered significant if the proposed project would:

- Be incompatible with the rural, open-space and agricultural character of the natural landscape;

- Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the project site or its surroundings; or
- Create a new source of light or glare which would contribute to the discomfort glare or disability glare experienced by adjacent residences and other users.

**Impact 6.1-1:**        **Development of the proposed project could be incompatible with the agricultural character of the natural landscape in the project site and its surrounding areas. This impact is potentially significant.** (DEIR, pp. 6.1-14 to 6.1-15.)

**Finding:**

Changes or alternatives have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that substantially lessen, but do not avoid, the potentially significant environmental effect associated with the project's potential incompatibility with the agricultural character of the natural landscape in the project site and its surrounding areas. No mitigation is available to render the effects less than significant. The effects (or some of the effects) therefore remain significant and unavoidable.

**Explanation:**

As shown in Figures 6.1-2 through 6.1-5, the project site is characterized by undeveloped agricultural land. Because the topography of the project site is generally flat, viewers from within the site are able to see beyond the project site boundaries. The eastern portion of the project site would include development of the University Village, a Central Civic Area, North and East Villages, and an open space network. The University Village would provide a commercial mixed-use area and high-density residential housing primarily to serve the University community; the Central Civic Area would provide a community park, a fire station, public/quasi public uses, and some high-density residential housing; the North and East Villages would provide low to medium-density residential housing; and the open space network would contain linear open spaces, drainageways, greenbelts, and parks to provide for drainage purposes and pedestrian and bicycle circulation. A limited amount of open space would be retained and would be visible from Base Line Road, Phillip Road and Brewer Road; however, the retained open space would exist in an altered condition within an urban setting. Residential areas would be developed with residential units of varied density, ranging from 5 to over 20 units per acre. Lower density units would be single-family detached homes (up to 2 stories in height) with relatively large front and back yards and fences. Higher density multi-family units would be smaller detached and attached units, and may include townhouses, condominiums, and apartment buildings that could be up to 3 stories or 45 feet in height. Non-residential uses in the community portion of the project site could be multistory (up to 3 stories or 45 feet in height). (DEIR, p. 6.1-14.)

The western portion of the project site along Brewer Road would be developed with the University campus, including preservation of existing wetlands and lake system for year-round water habitat and on-site stormwater retention and detention. The University campus would include buildings containing classrooms, lecture halls, laboratories, studios, administrative offices, libraries, dormitories, and faculty housing that may be housed in multi-story buildings up to 55 feet in height and could include structures, such as a tower, that exceed this height. In addition, the University campus could also include athletic fields, a stadium, landscaping, signage, campus lighting, and open space. Although a design has not been submitted for the stadium, it is anticipated that it could be up to 55 feet in height and could be located on a portion of the University Campus located near proposed residential uses in the Community portion of the project site. (DEIR, p. 6.1-14.)

The Design Guidelines prepared for the project define parameters for building height, materials, and style and address signage on the site and specifically restrict the number, location, size, and construction materials of all signs on the project site. (DEIR, p. 6.1-15.)

Infrastructure development shall be governed by the Regional University Specific Plan Infrastructure Plan, described below. (See FEIR pp. 2-2—2-8.) The project would also include off-site infrastructure improvements such as off-site road extensions, roadway and intersection improvements, and sewer, electrical, natural gas, and communications infrastructure. These off-site infrastructure improvements would be underground, with the exception of the Watt Avenue extension. (DEIR, p. 6.1-15.)

These proposed land uses would substantially change views from within the Plan Area because the rural undeveloped character would be eliminated and replaced with solid, geometric structures rising from the area. The proposed project would also change the views from off site. The proposed Plan Area would be visible from Brewer Road, nearby rural residences, the adjacent wrecking yard, and surrounding agricultural land, and the adjacent West Roseville Specific Plan area. The project site would also be visible from Base Line Road, which is a widely used arterial. (DEIR, p. 6.1-15.)

Viewers from Brewer Road, the adjacent West Roseville Specific Plan area, and adjacent properties to the north and south would see a change within the Plan Area with development of the proposed land uses. Changes to the project site as a result of the proposed project would occur in portions planned for the University campus and the Community. For nearby viewers, the change in visual character would be considerable, because the existing landscape would be substantially altered from agricultural land to a mostly urbanized setting with a university campus, suburban density housing, and commercial buildings. (DEIR, p. 6.1-15.)

The project would appear in the foreground to middleground for these adjacent receptors. Because of their placement, construction of large buildings, stadiums, parking lots, and various university buildings would be a significant impact. For receptors farther away,

the project site would appear in the middleground to background. The proposed construction would appear in the distance from Base Line Road and other surrounding proposed projects such as the West Roseville Specific Plan and Placer Vineyards; however, because of the size and scope of the proposed university buildings, impacts to distant receptors would be substantial. Other agricultural land would still be prominent, but the contrast of large angular structures against the rural undeveloped area would remain significant. (DEIR, p. 6.1-15.)

Similarly, the degree of perceptible change for adjacent residences and properties is strong, while perceptible change for more distant roadways in the area is weak. The closer the receptor is to the site, the more the project creates a visual contrast between the undeveloped area and the buildings on the site. (DEIR, p. 6.1-15.)

There are no measures available to mitigate the loss of the agricultural character of the project site. The proposed project includes design guidelines that would define the character of the project. However, although these guidelines would make the developed project more attractive than it otherwise may be, the guidelines would not mitigate the aesthetic effects to a less-than-significant level. This is considered a *significant impact*. Implementation of Mitigation Measure 6.1-1 would preserve land within the County from development; however, despite implementation of this mitigation measure, the loss of the visual character of the undeveloped land on the RUSP site would remain *potentially significant*. (DEIR, p. 6.1-15.)

**Mitigation Measure:**

6.1-1 *Implement Mitigation Measure 6.2-1, which requires that one acre of agricultural land be preserved within Placer County for each acre of agricultural land impacted by the Community and University development within the Specific Plan area.* (DEIR, p. 6.1-16.)

**Significance After Mitigation:**

Significant and unavoidable.

**Impact 6.1-2:**      **Development of the proposed project could introduce new sources of light and glare to the specific plan and surrounding areas, which could contribute to the discomfort glare or disability glare experienced by adjacent residences and other uses. This impact is *potentially significant*.** (DEIR, p. 6.1-16.)

**Finding:**

Changes or alternatives have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that substantially lessen, but do not avoid, the potentially significant environmental effect

associated with the introduction of light and glare to the specific plan and surrounding areas. No mitigation is available to render the effects less than significant. The effects (or some of the effects) therefore remain significant and unavoidable.

**Explanation:**

New development within the Plan Area would create artificial light from new educational, residential, commercial, and recreational uses by introducing nighttime lighting for security purposes, occasional recreational activities, automobile headlights, signs, and street lighting. Because the existing Plan Area is devoid of light sources, the proposed uses would substantially change the existing conditions at the site with respect to lighting, resulting in a significant impact. (DEIR, p. 6.1-16.)

New development would have the potential to reflect sunlight during the day, potentially affecting future residents within the project. However, individual development applications within the RUSP would be subject to design/site review by the County, which would ensure that the materials used and the height of the buildings would not create substantial amounts of discomfort glare or disability glare. The project would be primarily residential uses, which typically do not incorporate exterior materials that produce substantial amounts of glare. (DEIR, p. 6.1-16.)

The proposed project includes areas designated for the University that could include a stadium and athletic facilities with associated lighting, which could be located near residential uses within the Plan Area. Because there is no specific proposal for a stadium, the details of stadium design can only be estimated at this time. Assuming a 20,000 seat stadium, the stadium structure itself, could be up to 55 feet tall with lighting extending above the rim of the stadium by another 50 to 60 feet. Lighting for other on-campus athletic facilities could also be 55 feet tall. Given the height of these potential light sources, the light would be visible for great distances and could illuminate adjacent residential uses within or beyond the Plan Area. (DEIR, p. 6.1-16.)

As discussed in the Environmental Setting portion of the Draft EIR, Policy 1.O.9 of the Placer County General Plan discourages lighting that shines unnecessarily onto adjacent properties or into the night sky. Illuminated signs are regulated by the County in Section 17.54.170F of the Placer County Zoning Ordinance. Lighting is also addressed in the Placer County Design Guidelines, which require screening of light sources adjacent to residential areas, directing lighting away from roadways and the minimization of upward lighting. (DEIR, p. 6.1-16.)

The proposed project includes construction of new roadways and pedestrian walkways that would require new street lighting within the project site. The project includes proposed standards that place taller fixtures along arterial and collector streets, medium height fixtures along residential streets, and short fixtures along pedestrian walkways, and includes standards for foot-candle intensity and design. The Table 6.1-1 provides the proposed height, foot candle, and design standards for street lighting. (DEIR, p. 6.1-16.)

Off-site improvement areas could include roadway lighting for the Watt Avenue extension. Similar to on-site elements of the proposed project, lighting associated with the Watt Avenue extension could introduce new nighttime lighting to surrounding areas that are currently devoid of artificial light. If constructed, those off-site improvements would be subject to design/site review by the County. (DEIR, p. 6.1-16.)

With the project, the project site would change from an unlit area to development that would include new light sources, such as new street lighting, exterior building and security lighting, campus lighting, athletic field lighting, and stadium lighting. Because the RUSP contains no information on the control of light and glare and local regulations are relatively limited and general in nature, there is a potential for substantial light as a result of RUSP development that could adversely affect nighttime views in the area. Clear nighttime views could be drowned out by the bright haze caused by sky glow. Therefore, this would be considered a *significant impact*. (DEIR, p. 6.1-17.)

**Mitigation Measure:**

- 6.1-2 a) *In conjunction with tentative small lot map or design review process for commercial or park submittals within the Community, the applicant shall include a lighting plan for review and approval by the Planning Department. The lighting plan shall incorporate the following light control standards and provisions for minimizing, shielding, and screening of night lighting, angles of light sources, and control of light spill and glare:*
1. *All outdoor fixtures shall use shielded fixtures with a maximum cutoff angle of 90 degrees.*
  2. *Residential development shall use shielded fixtures with a maximum cutoff angle of 90 degrees for security lighting.*
  3. *Energy efficient lamp technologies shall be incorporated wherever possible such as metal halide, induction lamps, high-pressure sodium, and linear and compact florescent sources. Mercury vapor shall be avoided. Incandescent lights shall be avoided unless they are integrated with a control mechanism that limits their operation time.*
- b) *The project applicant for the University Campus shall submit for review and approval by the Planning Department a lighting plan as part of the Campus Master Plan that includes athletic facilities and stadium, if proposed. The lighting plan shall incorporate the following light control standards and provisions for minimizing, shielding and screening of night lighting, angles of light sources, and control of light spill and glare:*

1. *All outdoor fixtures shall use shielded fixtures with a maximum cutoff angle of 90 degrees.*
2. *Energy efficient lamp technologies shall be incorporated wherever possible such as metal halide, induction lamps, high-pressure sodium, and linear and compact florescent sources. Mercury vapor shall be avoided. Incandescent lights shall be avoided unless they are integrated with a control mechanism that limits their operation time.*
3. *Stadium and athletic field lighting systems shall protect surrounding uses from spillover light and glare by incorporating the following guidelines and specifications into all proposed lighting plans and construction documents:*
  - A. *Stadium and athletic field lighting shall be sized, oriented, and hooded to minimize spill light beyond the campus property line and glare visible at nearby residences or residential-zoned land.*
  - B. *The proposed stadium and athletic fields within the Plan Area shall include field lighting fixtures and lamps that are metal halide, or a combination of metal halide and high-pressure sodium, which provide more natural color rendition. Low watt fluorescent or incandescent bulbs shall also be installed in any associated service building and for security lighting.*
  - C. *On-field lighting shall be matched to the specific type of field requirements (e.g., lighting levels needed for type of sport, division, and telecast requirements).*
  - D. *Exterior project lighting shall be directed downward and sufficiently shielded to avoid substantial light trespass on adjacent uses.*
  - E. *The applicant shall provide a lighting plan that shall be subject to review and approval by the County. The plan shall include a photometric diagram, prepared by a certified lighting professional, showing predicted maintained lighting levels produced by the proposed lighting fixture facilities. The lighting plan shall demonstrate how the plan has been formulated to minimize new light and glare to area residents and motorists.*

- F. *The lighting plan shall include provisions to limit glare from direct and indirect sources (e.g. reflective surfaces illuminated by direct sources) at residences.*

(DEIR, pp. 6.1-17 to 6.1-19.)

**Significance After Mitigation:**

Significant and unavoidable.

**Impact 6.1-3:** **The proposed project, in conjunction with other cumulative development in west Placer County, could be incompatible with the agricultural character of the natural landscape in the project site and its surrounding areas. This impact is potentially significant.** (DEIR, p. 6.1-19.)

**Finding:**

Changes or alternatives have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that substantially lessen, but do not avoid, the potentially significant environmental effect associated with the incompatibility of the proposed project, in conjunction with other cumulative development in west Placer County, with the agricultural character of the natural landscape in the project site and its surrounding areas. No mitigation is available to render the effects less than significant. The effects (or some of the effects) therefore remain significant and unavoidable.

**Explanation:**

The Specific Plan area is typical of undeveloped agricultural areas of west Placer County and is not unique in appearance. Similar areas to the east, such as the approved West Roseville Specific Plan area and Placer Vineyards, and the proposed Placer Ranch and Sierra Vista Specific Plan areas, would result in conversion of previously undeveloped agricultural land to suburban uses. More specifically, the Sierra Vista, Placer Ranch, and Placer Vineyards Specific Plan areas along with the WRSP and Curry Creek area of which the RUSP project is included, total approximately 18,400 acres. The Plan Area would represent approximately 6.2 percent of that total. Taking into account other development projects in the cities of Lincoln and Rocklin, RUSP would account for less than 6 percent of converted land in the region. (DEIR, p. 6.1-19.)

There are a number of planned and approved land use changes and development in west Placer County. Along Interstate 80 and Highway 65, west Placer County has already undergone a significant change from rural undeveloped land and agriculture to urban uses. The nearby City of Roseville is fast approaching projected buildout of its Sphere of Influence, which contributes to the landscape change in west Placer County area. Land

development proposals nearby to the Specific Plan area include the approved West Roseville Specific Plan area, and the proposed Placer Vineyards, Placer Ranch, and Sierra Vista Specific Plan areas. Development of the Curry Creek Community Plan, adjacent to RUSP, is also likely in the future. Development of the project site, in conjunction with other development in west Placer County, would continue the trend of replacing the rural character of the area with suburban development. (DEIR, p. 6.1-19.)

The landscape would change from scattered oaks, riparian vegetation, grasslands, and vernal pools to suburban and urban development with prominent buildings rising from the landscape. West Placer County would change from an area with an agricultural character to an area with prominent buildings for suburban and urban uses. The proposed project would contribute to this change. Because the project proposes land uses that could develop larger scale structures, such as university buildings up to 5-stories in height and a stadium up to 60 feet in height, which could be larger in scale than nearby approved and proposed suburban residential and commercial uses. The degree of perceptible change associated could be greater from the larger scale development in the proposed project than in surrounding developments at future buildout. This could create a visual contrast to viewers adjacent to the project site, as well as viewers on nearby roads and properties. Therefore, the cumulative visual impacts of the project and other probable future projects are significant, and the project's incremental contribution to these visual impacts would be cumulatively considerable and thus *significant* in and of itself. (DEIR, p. 6.1-19.)

Assuming approval and implementation of the project, there are no measures available to mitigate the loss of the agricultural character of the project site. The proposed project includes design guidelines that would define the character of the project. However, although these guidelines would make the developed project more attractive than it otherwise may be, the guidelines would not mitigate the aesthetic effects to a less-than-significant level. Implementation of Mitigation Measure 6.1-1 would help preserve agricultural land. Off-site preservation of undeveloped land would lessen the cumulative effect of the conversion to urban uses. However, despite implementation of this mitigation measure, the cumulative loss of the agricultural character at the RUSP site, including the various surrounding specific plan areas, remains *significant and unavoidable*. (DEIR, p. 6.1-20.)

**Mitigation Measure:**

6.1-3            *Implement Mitigation Measure 6.1-1.*

**Significance After Mitigation:**

Significant and unavoidable.

**Impact 6.1-4:**            **The proposed project, in combination with other cumulative development in west Placer County, could contribute to sky glow and diminished views of the night sky experienced by**

residents of west Placer County. This impact is *potentially significant*. (DEIR, p. 6.1-20.)

**Finding:**

Changes or alternatives have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that substantially lessen, but do not avoid, the potentially significant environmental effect associated with the contribution of the proposed project, in conjunction with other cumulative development in west Placer County, to sky glow and diminished views of the night sky experienced by residents of west Placer County. No mitigation is available to render the effects less than significant. The effects (or some of the effects) therefore remain significant and unavoidable.

**Explanation:**

Similar to the change in views and alteration of the existing visual character, planned and approved cumulative urban development in west Placer County would introduce new light sources to the area and would result in an increase in sky glow in the region. Although project-specific impacts, such as those discussed in Impact 6.1-2, could be reduced through specifications in design guidelines that incorporate focused and intensity-appropriate lighting design, the accumulation of light sources to an area of Placer County that is mostly devoid of artificial light sources would lead to increased sky glow in the area, which could diminish views of the night sky. Because the project could be developed before other approved or proposed projects, light emanating from this project would be the sole contributor to sky glow in the area. While project-specific mitigation could reduce impacts of other individual development projects, the cumulative effect of multiple new sources of light would nonetheless diminish views of the night sky. Clear views of the natural night sky would be diminished due to the haze of light emanating from cumulative development in the area. This would be a significant cumulative impact. (DEIR, p. 6.1-20.)

The artificial light from new educational, residential, and commercial buildings in addition to nighttime lighting for security purposes would not create a substantial perceptible change or a stark visual contrast to other nearby lighting. However, the possibility of stadium and athletic field lighting in the proposed project could be more intense than nighttime lighting typical of suburban residential and commercial uses approved and proposed in western Placer County. The stadium and athletic field lighting would be major contributors to sky glow. When considering the project in a regional context of approved development in west Placer County, the proposed project's incremental contribution to regional sky glow would be considerable and thus *significant*. Implementation of Mitigation Measure 6.1-2, which would require special provisions for lighting design and guidelines for stadium and athletic field lighting, would not reduce this cumulative impact to a less-than-cumulatively considerable (i.e., less-than-significant) level, resulting in a *significant and unavoidable* cumulative impact. (DEIR, p. 6.1-20.)

**Mitigation Measure:**

6.1-4            *Implement Mitigation Measure 6.1-2.*

**Significance After Mitigation:**

Significant and unavoidable.

**C.     AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES**

**Standards of Significance**

Under criteria based on the State CEQA Guidelines, for purposes of this EIR, an impact would be considered significant if the proposed project would:

- Convert Important Farmland (Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Local Importance) as defined in the California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program to non-agricultural use;
- Create potential conflicts with County goals, policies, and standards that may lead to physical impacts on the environment;
- Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or with a Williamson Act contract;  
or
- Involve other changes in the existing environment that, due to their location or nature could result in conversion of Important Farmland to non-agricultural use.

**Impact 6.2-1:**            **The proposed project could convert Important Farmland (Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Local Importance) as defined in the California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program to non-agricultural use. This impact is *potentially significant*. (DEIR, p. 6.2-12.)**

**Finding:**

Changes or alternatives have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that substantially lessen, but do not avoid, the potentially significant environmental effect associated with the proposed project's conversion of Important Farmland (Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Local

Importance) as defined in the California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program to non-agricultural use. No mitigation is available to render the effects less than significant. The effects (or some of the effects) therefore remain significant and unavoidable.

**Explanation:**

The California Department of Conservation (CDC) Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) combines technical soil ratings and current land use information to create an inventory of Important Farmland. The CDC divides Important Farmland into four categories: Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Local Importance. In addition, the Placer County Agriculture Department recognizes all farmland that would be converted to non-agricultural use for the RUSP project as farmland that is critical to the shrinking agricultural land base in Placer County, and recommends that conversion of all farmland to non-agricultural uses be mitigated on a 1:1 basis. (DEIR, p. 6.2-12.)

According to the most recent information from the FMMP, the approximately 1,157.5-acre RUSP project site contains 518.5 acres of Farmland of Local Importance, 564.1 acres of Unique Farmland, and 74.7 acres of Farmland of Statewide Importance. The project site includes approximately 183.5 acres of land that contains natural and created wetlands that support no agricultural uses. Nonetheless, this land has been classified by the State of California as Important Farmland. Agricultural lands that would be disturbed due to the construction of off-site infrastructure include 49.5 acres of land classified predominately as Farmland of Local Importance for an extension of Watt Avenue; 26 acres of land classified predominately as Unique Farmland for off-site grading; and 20 acres of Unique Farmland for a detention/retention basin. Because the ultimate footprint of the Watt Avenue extension and off-site grading areas would not occupy the entire disturbed area, the impacted area would be approximately 35 acres and 16.5 acres, respectively. The project proposes that the detention/retention basin would be used for agricultural purposes, such as grazing, so this area would not be converted. Table 6.2-3 shows the total acres of agricultural land that would be affected by the proposed project. (DEIR, pp. 6.2-12 to 6.2-13, FEIR p. 2-10.)

Development of the RUSP project site plus areas proposed for off-site infrastructure would result in the conversion of approximately 1,024 acres of Important Farmland, as defined by the CDC and farmland recognized by the Placer County Agriculture Department as critical to the shrinking agricultural land base in Placer County, to non-agricultural uses. In addition to the 1,024 acres of Important Farmland proposed for conversion with this project, the project site includes approximately 183.5 acres of land that currently supports no agricultural uses because of the dense matrix of naturally occurring and created wetlands that predominate the acreage. Although this land is identified as Important Farmland, the acreage has not been used for farming, and the land is important to maintain the existing biological resources and the natural drainage needed to support the wetlands. This acreage would be preserved in Open Space under the

proposed project to provide multiple benefits, including passive recreation, habitat, and stormwater detention/retention, and the land will continue to function in a similar manner to its current use/function. As a result, these 183.5 acres are not included in the acreage of land identified for conversion of Important Farmland, and the proposed project would convert 1,024 acres of Important Farmland that is currently used for agricultural purposes to developed urban uses. This is considered a *significant impact*. (DEIR, p. 6.2-13.)

**Mitigation Measure:**

6.2-1 *In order to mitigate for the loss of farmland resources converted to non-agricultural uses on the project site and on areas designated for off-site improvements, one acre of agricultural land within Placer County shall be preserved for each acre of agricultural land impacted by the Community and University development within the project area. A total of 1,024 acres has been identified to be compensated at this one-to-one ratio. That portion of the University site consisting of 183.5 acres proposed as open space and not currently in agricultural production and 53 acres of land temporarily impacted do not require mitigation. If the 20-acre offsite detention/retention basin can be used for agricultural purposes while maintaining its functional use as a detention/retention basin as determined by the County, no mitigation shall be required for this area. Mitigation lands shall be protected by agricultural conservation easements containing restrictive encumbrances in a form deemed acceptable to and approved by the County.*

*Lands proposed for mitigation shall satisfy at least one of the following criteria, as determined by the Planning Director in consultation with the County Agricultural Commissioner: (1) be in agricultural production, or have the potential to support agriculture, (2) be undeveloped and have a Natural Resources Conservation Service soils classification of the same or greater value than lands being affected within the Regional University Specific Plan property at issue, or (3) be undeveloped and have the same or higher value California Department of Conservation Important Farmland Mapping categorization than lands being affected with the Specific Plan property. "In-kind" mitigation (i.e., rice land for rice land) is not required for the agricultural land impacted by the development within the Project Area when so approved by County.*

*Mitigation land shall be acquired in increments of no less than 80 total contiguous acres in size. This 80-acre minimum size standard can be met by the acquisition of one or more parcels that cumulatively add up to 80 acres or more. The mitigation land shall be within or adjacent to lands designated as Agriculture or Open Space within the Placer County General Plan, unless the Planning Director, in consultation with the*

*County Agricultural Commissioner, determines the proposed land meets the purpose and intent of this mitigation measure.*

*Mitigation lands shall be acquired in the appropriate minimum size prior to approval by the County of any permit or entitlement that could result in ground disturbance (e.g., prior to issuance of grading permit or improvement plans), including the construction of off-site or onsite project infrastructure.*

(DEIR, p. 6.2-14.)

**Significance After Mitigation:**

Significant and unavoidable.

**Impact 6.2-2:**        **The proposed project could create potential conflicts with County goals, policies, and standards that may lead to physical impacts on the environment. This impact is *potentially significant*.** (DEIR, p. 6.2-15.)

**Finding:**

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that substantially lessen, but do not avoid, the potentially significant environmental effect associated with the project's creation of potential conflicts with County goals, policies, and standards that may lead to physical impacts on the environment. No mitigation is available to render the effects less than significant. The effects (or some of the effects) therefore remain significant and unavoidable.

**Explanation:**

Goals and policies from the Placer County General Plan and the Placer Legacy Program that are relevant to the proposed project are listed above in the Regulatory Setting portion of the Draft EIR. The goals and policies focus on the preservation of agricultural uses and the protection of existing agricultural operations in Placer County from land use conflicts. (DEIR, p. 6.2-15.)

As discussed with respect to Impact 6.2-1, the proposed project would convert farmland to non-agricultural uses. Of the land that would be disturbed for construction of the proposed project, approximately 1,024 acres are used for agriculture. General Plan policy 1.H.4 allows the conversion of existing agricultural land to urban uses only within community plan areas and within city spheres of influence where the subject land is designated for urban development on the General Plan Land Use Diagram. Although the project site is not within an approved community plan area, it is within an area defined in the General Plan as a "Future Study Area." As stated in Part III of the Placer County

General Plan, the County “recognizes that as the county continues to grow, additional areas may be identified as being suitable for development at urban or suburban densities and intensities. The most appropriate location for such additional growth, and the area that will be considered first by the County, is the ‘Future Study Area.’” The County is considering a portion of the Future Study Area, including the RUSP site and much of the land bordering the RUSP site, for development as the Curry Creek Community Plan, though the County has not yet initiated the formal planning process. So, although the project site is currently designated for agriculture, its possible conversion to other uses was anticipated in the General Plan as a Future Study Area. (DEIR, p. 6.2-15.)

The proposed project includes an amendment to the Placer County General Plan policy 1.H.4 that would allow the conversion of existing agricultural land to urban uses within specific plan areas, as well as for community plan areas. The process for approval of a community plan would be similar to that required for a specific plan: both would require environmental documentation (such as an EIR) that would be circulated for public review and comment and would ultimately have to be approved by the Placer County Board of Supervisors. Therefore, the project would be consistent with the overall intent of General Plan policy 1.H.4. If approved, this amendment would apply to other specific plans in the County as well as the proposed project. However, this amendment would broaden the policy to allow conversion of agricultural land in specific plans, which, as noted above, would undergo a similar process to that required for community plans, including preparation of an environmental document that would be circulated for public review and comment. Therefore, this amendment would not result in an additional physical change in the environment that would not otherwise be subject to environmental review. However, such an amendment could be seen by some person as setting a political precedent for other projects, not already identified in the General Plan for development, to convert agricultural land to non-agricultural uses. (DEIR, p. 6.2-15.)

The Placer County General Plan requires the use of buffer zones in several types of development. These buffer zones are required to separate urban uses (particularly residential) from lands designated Agriculture or Timberland on the Land Use Diagram. The County requires the buffer zones because external effects of agricultural operations, such as noise from machinery, dust, the use of fertilizers and chemical sprays, and other related agricultural/timber harvesting activities, could create problems for nearby residential and other sensitive land uses. A conflict may be created when development intrudes into areas of existing agriculture, which, when located in rural areas, can generally carry on activities burdening adjacent properties without having to mitigate for such effects. The County’s minimum buffers, included on the development side, are intended to allow agriculture, with its external effects, to continue adjacent to development. In addition, Measure AV-22 of the Placer Legacy Program recommends, but does not require, the establishment by the County of “permanent transition areas and buffers between urban/suburban areas and agricultural areas through conservation easements and/or fee title acquisition of lands containing multiple resource values.” These buffers also serve to minimize disturbance of agricultural operations from nearby urban or suburban uses, including trespassing by nearby residents and domestic animals.

Since production operations vary by crop or agricultural type, the effect of those operations can vary; thus the General Plan includes different buffer distances for various crops or agricultural types. For instance, rice production requires the aerial application of seed and fertilizers, so the buffer for rice production is a minimum of 400 feet. Practices associated with grazing, on the other hand, are less intense, so the General Plan requires a 100-foot buffer. (DEIR, pp. 6.2-15 to 6.2-16.)

The proposed project does not include buffers, but the RUSP includes proposed amendments to the Placer County General Plan (see "Required Permits and Approvals" in DEIR Chapter 2, Project Description), including amendments that would allow the County to establish different buffer zone standards, or remove buffer zone standards, within a specific plan as part of the specific plan approval. Therefore, with approval of the proposed amendments, the project would be consistent with the General Plan. However, the change or removal of buffer zone standards that would be permitted by the revised General Plan policies could result in a loss of agricultural productivity on lands adjacent to the proposed project and on lands adjacent to future specific plans in Placer County. These lands would not be converted to non-agricultural use as a result of development of the RUSP, but since one of the purposes of the buffers is to minimize disturbance of agricultural operations from nearby urban or suburban uses, the policy assumes that the absence of buffers would result in a disturbance of agricultural operations and a resultant loss of productivity on lands where buffers would be required absent the proposed policy revisions. (DEIR, p. 6.2-16.)

A number of factors prevent a quantified determination of loss of agricultural productivity that could result from the revised General Plan policies on lands adjacent to the proposed project and on lands adjacent to future specific plan areas in Placer County. These factors include the types of agricultural uses affected by the policy revisions, the types of land uses proposed within a specific plan, and the selection of alternate agricultural uses within the affected areas. For example, the General Plan requires a buffer width range of 200 to 800 feet and a residential exclusion area of 400 feet between urban development and irrigated rice and vegetables. For field crops, the required buffer width range is 100 to 400 feet, with a residential exclusion area of 100 feet. The proposed project site is on land used predominately for irrigated rice farming. Using the standards of the General Plan, the development of the proposed project would result in a loss of rice-farming potential within 400 feet of all residential uses. However, lands adjacent to the developed project could be suitable for other forms of agricultural production. New development adjacent to existing agricultural operations generating substantial external effects (e.g., odors or pesticide drift) could effectively require an adjacent farming or ranching operation to modify its agricultural operation to accommodate the development by reducing the extent of external effects. For instance, according to the General Plan, field crops could be operated within 100 feet of residential uses. Therefore, in the case of the proposed project, the loss of agricultural productivity on lands adjacent to residential uses that would result from the proposed General Plan amendments is unknown because the number of productive acres lost is dependent on the selection of alternate crops on land currently used for irrigated rice. At the County level, the loss of agricultural

productivity that would result from the proposed General Plan amendments would depend upon the number and location of specific plans to which the revised policies would apply, the land uses within the proposed specific plan, and the selection of alternate agricultural uses within the affected areas. In the case of land uses within a specific plan, the General Plan does not require buffers for all land uses; they are required only for commercial/office uses, business park uses, and some types of recreational uses. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that agricultural operations and land uses proposed within a specific plan that do not require buffers are fully compatible. In any event, all future specific plans in Placer County will require public disclosure of environmental impacts in an environmental document, which will be subject to approval by the Board of Supervisors. Nonetheless, because the proposed project includes General Plan amendments that could result in a loss of productivity on an undetermined number of acres of agricultural land, and no mitigation is available to prevent or reduce this loss, this impact is considered *significant and unavoidable*. (DEIR, pp. 6.2-16 to 6.2-17.)

**Mitigation Measure:**

None available.

**Significance After Mitigation:**

Significant and unavoidable.

**Impact 6.2-3:**            **The proposed project could conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or with a Williamson Act contract. This impact is *potentially significant*.** (DEIR, p. 6.2-17.)

**Finding:**

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that substantially lessen, but do not avoid, the potentially significant environmental effect associated with the project's creation of potential conflicts with County goals, policies, and standards that may lead to physical impacts on the environment. No mitigation is available to render the effects less than significant. The effects (or some of the effects) therefore remain significant and unavoidable.

**Explanation:**

The project site is currently zoned F-B-X (80-acre minimum) with a General Plan designation of Agriculture. This designation allows a variety of agricultural uses and related structures including, but not limited to, agricultural processing, animal raising and keeping, ranching, and crop production. F-B-X means farm-building site with an 80-acre minimum lot size. The proposed project would convert land currently designated for agricultural uses in the County General Plan and zoning ordinance to develop a university campus and mixed use community and associated off-site infrastructure. However, the

proposed project is within the "Future Study Area," indicating that the County has determined that the subject land is appropriate to consider for suburban or urban growth. Therefore, although the project site is currently designated for agriculture, its ultimate conversion to other uses was anticipated in the General Plan. In addition, much of the land bordering the RUSP project site is planned, or being considered, for future urban development. In addition, the proposed project includes an amendment to the General Plan to designate the project site for development. Therefore, the project as proposed would not conflict with the Agriculture designation in the General Plan. (DEIR, p. 6.2-17, FEIR p. 2-11.)

No parcels within the RUSP project site or off-site improvement areas are currently enrolled under a Williamson Act contract. However, a 159.38-acre parcel (APN 017-090-021-510) north of and adjacent to the University portion of the project site is enrolled under a Williamson Act contract, and parcels south of and adjacent to the University portion of the project site (APNs 017-130-007-000 [52.26 acres], 017-130-009-000 [118.6 acres], 017-130-034-000 [20.17 acres], and 017-130-033-000 [19.74 acres]) are enrolled under a Williamson Act contract, but are currently in non-renewal and will expire in 2014. The parcels under Williamson Act contract identified above and adjacent Williamson Act parcels in the project vicinity that would not be affected by the proposed project are shown on Draft EIR Figure 6.2-3. As discussed above with respect to Impact 6.2-1, because the proposed project does not include buffers within the site, there would be the potential for incompatibilities between future users of the RUSP site and adjacent agricultural operations. Because the proposed project would include residential uses adjacent to agricultural uses, certain agricultural practices, such as aerial spraying of pesticides, could be limited or eliminated, which could result in a potential loss of productivity on adjacent lands. However, lands to the south have filed for non-renewal of the Williamson Act contracts and there is an existing residence on the parcel to the north that is currently under contract, so intense farming in this area would already be limited. Nonetheless, because there would be no buffers included on the project site, there could be a loss of agricultural productivity on the land enrolled under a Williamson Act contract. Therefore, this would be considered a *significant impact*. No mitigation is available to prevent or reduce this loss; therefore, this impact is considered *significant and unavoidable*. (DEIR, p. 6.2-17.)

**Mitigation Measure:**

None available.

**Significance After Mitigation:**

Significant and unavoidable.

**Impact 6.2-4:**            **The proposed project, in conjunction with other development in Placer County, could convert Important Farmland (Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Local Importance) as defined in the**