
9. STATUTORILY REQUIRED SECTIONS

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9.1 INTRODUCTION

The Statutorily Required Sections chapter of the Draft EIR includes discussions regarding those topics that are required to be included in an EIR, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.2. The chapter includes a discussion of the proposed project's potential to result in growth-inducing impacts; the cumulative setting analyzed in this EIR; energy conservation; significant irreversible environmental changes; and significant and unavoidable impacts caused by the proposed project.

9.2 GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS

State CEQA Guidelines section 15126.2(d) requires an EIR to evaluate the potential growth-inducing impacts of a proposed project. Specifically, an EIR must discuss the ways in which a proposed project could foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment. Growth can be induced in a number of ways, including the elimination of obstacles to growth, or by encouraging and/or facilitating other activities that could induce growth. Examples of projects likely to have growth-inducing impacts include extensions or expansions of infrastructure systems beyond what is needed to serve project-specific demand, and development of new residential subdivisions or office complexes in areas that are currently only sparsely developed or are undeveloped.

The CEQA Guidelines are clear that while an analysis of growth-inducing effects is required, it should not be assumed that induced growth is necessarily significant or adverse. This analysis examines the following potential growth-inducing impacts related to implementation of the proposed project and assesses whether these effects are significant and adverse (see *CEQA Guidelines*, Section 15126.2[d]):

1. Foster population and economic growth and construction of housing.
2. Eliminate obstacles to population growth.
3. Affect service levels, facility capacity, or infrastructure demand.
4. Encourage or facilitate other activities that could significantly affect the environment.

Foster Population and Economic Growth and Construction of Housing

As discussed in Section XIV, Population & Housing, of the Initial Study prepared for the proposed project, the proposed 34-unit single-family development would increase the available housing within the project vicinity, which would be expected to increase population in the area. Using the 2.6 persons/household average household size from the Bickford Ranch Specific Plan (BRSP) EIR,¹ the project would house an estimated 89 residents. Given that the project site is currently designated Agriculture/Timberland 10-Ac. Min. per the General Plan and zoned Farm, combining minimum Building Site of 10 acres (F-B-X 10-Ac. Min.), residential uses have not been previously anticipated for the site. While development of the proposed project is

¹ Placer County Community Development Resource Agency. *Bickford Ranch Specific Plan Revised Draft Environmental Impact Report*. Adopted December 18, 2001.



dependent upon the installation of Bickford Ranch Road and associated utilities through Phase 1 of the BRSP and extension of such infrastructure through a portion of BRSP Phase 2 to the project entry, these off-site improvements, and buildout of the BRSP, have been previously analyzed in the BRSP EIR. The proposed project's on-site infrastructure would be sized to accommodate only the proposed 34 residential units.

Although the project would provide short-term employment opportunities, which would likely be filled from the local employee base, with the possible exception of a few household and landscape maintenance jobs, no permanent jobs would be created by the proposed project. Therefore, the project would not result in long-term employment growth in the area.

All physical environmental effects of the proposed project, including single-family residential development and utilities and infrastructure improvements, have been addressed throughout this EIR and the Initial Study prepared for the proposed project. Overall, the proposed project would not be expected to generate any new growth-inducing impacts beyond those impacts identified in this EIR.

Eliminate Obstacles to Population Growth

The elimination of either physical or regulatory obstacles to growth is considered to be a growth-inducing effect. A physical obstacle to growth typically involves the lack of public service infrastructure. The extension of public service infrastructure, including roadways, water mains, and sewer lines, into areas that are not currently provided with these services, would be expected to support new development. Similarly, the elimination or change to a regulatory obstacle, including existing growth and development policies, could result in new growth.

Development of the proposed project is dependent upon the installation of Bickford Ranch Road and associated utilities through Phase 1 of the BRSP and extension of such infrastructure through a portion of BRSP Phase 2 to the project entry. Thus, the adjusted baseline assumes backbone infrastructure associated with the BRSP would already exist within the project vicinity as part of buildout of BRSP Phase 1. The improvements are already planned and approved for the BRSP. Therefore, the growth associated with the improvements has already been anticipated and evaluated in the BRSP EIR. The utility infrastructure proposed for the project site would be sized to specifically serve the proposed 34 single-family units.

In the event BRSP Phase 2 improvements have not yet been constructed, and the proposed project has obtained necessary entitlements and is ready to proceed, off-site improvements to a segment of Bickford Ranch Road would be required as part of the proposed project to extend services and complete access to the project site. Specifically, such improvements would include the approximately 400-foot extension of Bickford Ranch Road from the Phase 1 terminus thereof to the project site and along the entire frontage of the project, including all required water, sewer, drainage and dry utilities therein. In addition, improvements would be made to the BRSP landscape corridor parcel which fronts upon the project, including the landscaping thereof and the installation of the multi-purpose trail in accordance with the improvement concept set forth in the BRSP Development Standards and Design Guidelines. All off-site improvements would be constructed consistent with the BRSP and applicable mitigation measures. As previously discussed, the aforementioned BRSP-associated improvements represent County-planned improvements that have been previously anticipated to occur regardless of implementation of the proposed project. Although implementation of the aforementioned improvements may be considered to eliminate obstacles to growth, the improvements and



potential resulting growth have been previously anticipated by the County for the area. As such, the proposed project would not eliminate obstacles to growth in a manner that would encourage previously unplanned growth.

Affect Service Levels, Facility Capacity, or Infrastructure Demand

Increases in population that would occur as a result of a proposed project may tax existing community service facilities, requiring construction of new facilities that could cause significant environmental impacts. As discussed in Section XV, Public Services, of the Initial Study, increased demands for fire and police protection services attributable to the proposed project would not necessitate the construction of new or expanded facilities that could cause significant environmental impacts. In addition, as discussed in Section XIX, Utilities & Service Systems, of the Initial Study, wastewater generated by the proposed project could be accommodated by existing wastewater treatment facilities and planned infrastructure, and the previously approved water supply infrastructure associated with the BRSP would accommodate the domestic and fire flow demands associated with the proposed project.

The landfill that would serve the proposed project has adequate capacity to manage the solid waste generated as result of the project. Furthermore, mitigation measures set forth in Section X, Hydrology & Water Quality, of the Initial Study, would ensure that the proposed project would not create or contribute runoff water that would exceed the capacity of the County's stormwater drainage systems. Therefore, the proposed project would not increase population such that service levels, facility capacity, or infrastructure demand would require construction of new facilities that could cause significant environmental impacts.

Encourage or Facilitate other Activities That Could Significantly Affect the Environment

This EIR and the accompanying Initial Study provide a comprehensive assessment of the potential for environmental impacts associated with implementation of the proposed project. Please refer to Chapters 4 through 8 of this EIR and the Initial Study (see Appendix C of this EIR), which comprehensively address the potential for impacts from urban development on the project site.

9.3 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

CEQA Guidelines, Section 15130 requires that an EIR discuss the cumulative and long-term effects of the proposed project that would adversely affect the environment. "Cumulative impacts" are defined as "two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts" (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15355). "[I]ndividual effects may be changes resulting from a single project or a number of separate projects" (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15355, subd. [a]). "The cumulative impact from several projects is the change in the environment which results from the incremental impact of the project when added to other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time" (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15355, subd. [b]).

The need for cumulative impact assessment reflects the fact that, although a project may cause an "individually limited" or "individually minor" incremental impact that, by itself, is not significant, the increment may be "cumulatively considerable," and, thus, significant, when viewed together with environmental changes anticipated from past, present, and probable future projects (CEQA



Guidelines, Section 15064, subd. [h(1)], Section 15065, subd. [c], and Section 15355, subd. [b]). Accordingly, particular impacts may be less than significant on a project-specific basis but significant on a cumulative basis if their small incremental contribution, viewed against the larger backdrop, is cumulatively considerable. However, it should be noted that CEQA Guidelines, Section 15064, Subdivision (h)(5) states, “[...]the mere existence of significant cumulative impacts caused by other projects alone shall not constitute substantial evidence that the proposed project’s incremental effects are cumulatively considerable.” Therefore, even where cumulative impacts are significant, any level of incremental contribution is not necessarily deemed cumulatively considerable.

Section 15130(b) of CEQA Guidelines indicates that the level of detail of the cumulative analysis need not be as great as for the project impact analyses, but that analysis should reflect the severity of the impacts and their likelihood of occurrence, and that the analysis should be focused, practical, and reasonable. To be adequate, a discussion of cumulative effects must include the following elements:

- (1) Either (a) a list of past, present and probable future projects, including, if necessary, those outside the agency’s control, or (b) a summary of projections contained in an adopted general plan or related planning document, or in a prior certified EIR, which described or evaluated regional or area-wide conditions contributing to the cumulative impact, provide that such documents are reference and made available for public inspection at a specified location;
- (2) A summary of the individual projects’ environmental effects, with specific reference to additional information and stating where such information is available; and
- (3) A reasonable analysis of all of the relevant projects’ cumulative impacts, with an examination of reasonable, feasible options for mitigating or avoiding the project’s contribution to such effects (Section 15130[b]).

For some projects, the only feasible mitigation measures will involve the adoption of ordinances or regulations, rather than the imposition of conditions on a project-by-project basis (Section 15130[c]). Section 15130(a)(3) states that an EIR may determine that a project’s contribution to a significant cumulative impact will be rendered less than cumulatively considerable, and thus not significant, if a project is required to implement or fund the project’s fair share of a mitigation measure or measures designed to alleviate the cumulative impact.

A discussion of cumulative impacts is provided within each of the technical chapters of this EIR pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15130.

Cumulative Setting

The lead agency should define the relevant geographic area of inquiry for each impact category (id., Section 15130, subd. [b][3]), and should then identify the universe of “past, present, and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts” relevant to the various categories, either through the preparation of a “list” of such projects or through the use of “a summary of projections contained in an adopted general plan or related planning document, or in a prior environmental document which has been adopted or certified, which described or evaluated regional or area wide conditions contributing to the cumulative impact” (id., subd. [b][1]). In accordance with Section 15130(b)(1)(a) and (b) of the CEQA Guidelines, the cumulative analysis in this EIR is based upon a summary of projections contained in the BRSP



EIR, as well as other reasonably foreseeable projects in the project region. The reasonably foreseeable projects in the project vicinity are described in further detail below.

Bickford Ranch Specific Plan

The BRSP is a County-approved master planned community anticipated for implementation over three phases on 1,942.5 acres to the east, south, and west of The Ridge project site. BRSP Phase 1 would be implemented to the west of the proposed project. Because implementation of the proposed project is dependent upon backbone infrastructure that would be constructed as part of Phase 1 of the BRSP, development of Phase 1 is included in the project baseline. At buildout, the BRSP would generally consist of 1,890 new residential units, more than 1,100 acres of open space and recreation, and new public facilities, including a fire station and school site for a potential future school. As such, the County-approved BRSP would result in changes to the existing land use environment through conversion of vacant land to developed uses.

Bickford Ranch Marketplace

The Bickford Ranch Marketplace is proposed for a 10-acre site at the southeast corner of Sierra College Boulevard and State Route (SR) 193, three miles east of the City of Lincoln, in an unincorporated area of the County. The BRSP area is located south and southeast of the Bickford Ranch Marketplace site, east of Sierra College Boulevard. The portion of the BRSP immediately south of the Bickford Ranch Marketplace site is designated as Open Space and vegetated with grassland and riparian habitat. The Bickford Ranch Marketplace project would include a total of 83,500 square feet (sf) of building space, comprised of one 56,000-sf grocery store, four retail buildings with a total of 20,400-sf of space, a 2,000-sf restaurant with a 40-seat patio, a 3,600-sf restaurant with a drive thru, and a nine-concurrent fueling position (18 nozzle) fuel station with a self-service car wash and convenience store.

La Faille Ranch

The La Faille Ranch property is an undeveloped 169.68-acre site within the valley to the north of The Ridge project site. The property is owned by the proposed project applicant and is currently used for cattle grazing. The southern boundary of La Faille Ranch includes the existing concrete-lined Caperton Canal, owned and operated by the Placer County Water Agency (PCWA), which bifurcates the ranch from The Ridge project site. An application to develop the property into 14 single-family residential lots ranging between 10 and 16 acres was previously submitted to the County and subsequently withdrawn. While an active application is typically the determining factor for deciding which projects are reasonably foreseeable and warrant inclusion in an EIR's cumulative analysis, the County has taken a conservative approach by including La Faille Ranch in the cumulative setting discussion, as the previous application to develop the site was partially processed through the County and the property is the only other site in the surrounding area, other than The Ridge, BRSP, and Bickford Ranch Marketplace, with a reasonably foreseeable potential for future development.

Turkey Creek Estates and Esplanade at Turkey Creek

Both the Turkey Creek Estates project (248 acres) and Esplanade at Turkey Creek project (approx. 175 acres) are approved residential projects within the Village 1 Specific Plan area of the City of Lincoln. According to the City of Lincoln, the total number of anticipated residential



units for both projects is 1,311.² Esplanade is the larger of the two projects (863 units) and consists of a 55 and older community. The project sites are immediately north of SR 193, approximately 0.65-mile west of the intersection of Sierra College Boulevard and SR 193 (Turkey Creek Estates) and 1.65 miles west of said intersection (Esplanade at Turkey Creek). Both projects are currently under construction.

The Waterfront

A project known as The Waterfront (18.6 acres) has also been entitled within the Village 1 Specific Plan, but is not currently under construction. The project would consist of 271 multifamily units and approximately 45,000 square feet of office, commercial, and restaurant space.

Deer Crossing

Deer Crossing is an entitled non-residential project southwest of the intersection of SR 193 and Oak Tree Lane, adjacent to the Village 1 Specific Plan area of the City of Lincoln. The project would consist of approximately 22,000 square feet of non-residential commercial/retail uses. The project is not under construction.

Geographic Scope of Cumulative Setting Within Each Chapter

Situations exist where the geographic setting differs for various environmental issue areas analyzed under CEQA. The following discussions provide further details on the geographic scope for the cumulative setting for each CEQA topic area evaluated in this EIR.

Aesthetics

The geographic scope for the cumulative aesthetics analysis includes all projects that could potentially exist within identified viewsheds, which includes views towards the project site from SR 193 and the planned Phase 1 BRSP terminus of Bickford Ranch Road. See Chapter 4, Aesthetics, for further details.

Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Energy

The geographic setting for the cumulative air quality analysis is the Sacramento Valley Air Basin (SVAB). Global climate change is, by nature, a cumulative impact. Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions contribute, on a cumulative basis, to the significant adverse environmental impacts of global climate change (e.g., sea level rise, impacts to water supply and water quality, public health impacts, impacts to ecosystems, impacts to agriculture, and other environmental impacts). A single project could not generate enough GHG emissions to contribute noticeably to a change in the global average temperature. However, the GHG emissions from a project in combination with other past, present, and future projects could contribute substantially to the world-wide phenomenon of global climate change and the associated environmental impacts. Although the geographical context for global climate change is the Earth, for analysis purposes under CEQA, and due to the regulatory context pertaining to GHG emissions and global climate change applicable to the proposed project, the geographical context for cumulative global climate change analysis in this EIR is limited to the State of California.

² City of Lincoln Community Development Project Activity Report, Updated July 01, 2021; available at <http://www.lincolncalifornia.gov/Home/ShowDocument?id=14458>; accessed September 3, 2021.



Biological Resources

The geographic scope for the cumulative biological resources analysis generally includes The Ridge project site, as well as the sites of the BRSP, Bickford Ranch Marketplace, La Faille Ranch property, and above-listed City of Lincoln projects along SR 193.

Transportation and Circulation

Transportation impact significance in this EIR is based upon vehicle miles travelled. As discussed in Chapter 7 of this EIR, projects that use efficiency metrics, such as VMT/capita or VMT/employee may not be required to analyze cumulative VMT impacts. As stated in the OPR Technical Advisory, “A project that falls below an efficiency-based threshold that is aligned with long-term goals and relevant plans has no cumulative impact distinct from the project impact.” Thus, a separate cumulative VMT analysis was not performed for this EIR. It is noted that the separate level of service analysis performed for the project for GP consistency purposes utilized the Placer County Travel Demand Forecasting Model, which was updated in 2016 and accounts for reasonably foreseeable cumulative projects in the region.

Wildfire

The geographic scope for the cumulative wildfire analysis generally includes The Ridge project site, as well as the sites of the BRSP, Bickford Ranch Marketplace, La Faille Ranch property, and above-listed City of Lincoln projects along SR 193.

Please refer to the Cumulative Impacts and Mitigation Measures section of each technical chapter for analysis of cumulative impacts for each CEQA topic.

9.4 SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

Per CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(d), this EIR is required to include consideration of significant irreversible environmental changes that would be caused by the proposed project, should the project be implemented. An impact would be determined to be a significant and irreversible change in the environment if:

- Buildout of the project area could involve a large commitment of nonrenewable resources;
- The primary and secondary impacts of development could generally commit future generations to similar uses (e.g., a highway provides access to a previously remote area);
- Development of the proposed project could involve uses in which irreversible damage could result from any potential environmental accidents associated with the project; or
- The phasing and eventual development of the project could result in an unjustified consumption of resources (e.g., the wasteful use of energy).

The proposed project would likely result in, or contribute to, the following significant irreversible environmental changes:

- Conversion of vacant land to a fully built-out residential community, thus precluding alternative land uses in the future; and
- Irreversible consumption of goods and services, such as fire, police, and school services, associated with the future population; and



- Irreversible consumption of energy and natural resources, such as water, electricity, and natural gas, associated with the future residents.

9.5 SIGNIFICANT AND UNAVOIDABLE IMPACTS

According to CEQA Guidelines, an EIR must include a description of those impacts identified as significant and unavoidable should the proposed action be implemented (CEQA Guidelines §15126.2[c]). Such impacts would be considered unavoidable when the determination is made that either mitigation is not feasible or only partial mitigation is feasible such that the impact is not reduced to a level that is less-than-significant. This section identifies significant impacts that could not be eliminated or reduced to a less-than-significant level by mitigations imposed by the County. The final determination of the significance of impacts and the feasibility of mitigation measures would be made by the County as part of the County's certification action. The significant and unavoidable impact of the proposed project is summarized below.

7-5 Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b). Based on the analysis below, even with the implementation of mitigation, the impact is *significant and unavoidable*.

Implementation of the proposed project would result in a significant impact related to exceeding the threshold for the unincorporated County baseline vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per capita. Mitigation Measure 7-5 requires implementation of a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Program to reduce the project-related VMT. However, the effectiveness of TDM strategies depend heavily on the level of implementation. The analysis presented in the EIR assumes the maximum level of implementation and, consequently, the results in Table 7-12 of the Transportation and Circulation chapter of this EIR present a best-case scenario. Furthermore, a portion of the TDM strategies may prove to be economically infeasible. Due to uncertainties regarding the ability for the mitigation measure to reduce VMT to a less-than-significant level, the impact would remain significant and unavoidable.

