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STATUTORILY REQUIRED SECTIONS

INTRODUCTION

The Statutorily Required Sections chapter of the EIR includes brief discussions regarding those topics 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 induce economic or population growth, and in addition, the chapter includes lists of significant irreversible environmental changes, cumulative impacts, and significant and unavoidable impacts caused by the proposed project.

GROWTH INDUCEMENT

An EIR must discuss the ways in which a proposed project could foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing in the vicinity of the project, and how that growth will, in turn, affect the surrounding environment (See CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2[d]). Growth can be induced in a number of ways, including through the elimination of obstacles to growth, or through the stimulation of economic activity within the region. The discussion of the removal of obstacles to growth relates directly to the removal of infrastructure limitations or regulatory constraints that could result in growth unforeseen at the time of project approval.

A number of issues must be considered when assessing the growth-inducing effects of development plans, such as the proposed project. These include the following:

Elimination of Obstacles to Growth: The extent to which infrastructure capacity provided to accommodate the proposed project would allow additional development in surrounding areas; and

Economic Effects: the extent to which development of the proposed project could cause increased activity in the local or regional economy.

Development of the Wildhorse Ranch project site could result in the construction of up to 191 residential units. Growth-inducing impacts associated with the proposed project would be considered to be any effects of the project allowing for additional growth or increases in population beyond that proposed by the project.

As discussed in this Draft EIR, the project site is currently designated as Agriculture in the Davis General Plan and therefore is not anticipated for urban development. As a result, the proposed project includes a request for a General Plan Amendment to change land uses from Agriculture to Residential High Density, Residential Medium Density, Residential Low Density Neighborhood Greenbelt, Natural Habitat Area, and Urban Agricultural Transition Area. Should

the proposed project be approved, infrastructure would have to be extended to the site in order to provide needed services. Some infrastructure already exists adjacent to the project site, which would allow the project to connect to existing systems. These improvements would include but not be limited to wastewater infrastructure and a stormwater drainage system. It is important to note that project infrastructure would be sized to serve only the needs of the project. As oversizing of infrastructure would not occur, project improvements would not necessarily result in the elimination of obstacles to growth. Furthermore, the only area surrounding the project that is not already developed is the agricultural land east of the site. This site, known as the Mace-Covell Gateway site, is one of the three potential sites for the Davis Sports Park project, currently being processed by the City. While the Mace-Covell Gateway site is being considered for development of a park, the possibility exists that this site may remain in agricultural operation. However, as the proposed project does not include the extension of any infrastructure (i.e., roads, sewer, and water lines, etc.) to the eastern border of the site, which is comprised of the Davis Agricultural Habitat buffer, the project would not facilitate the development of agricultural lands east of the project site. In summary, the proposed project would not lead to growth inducement.

SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

The CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.2(c), require that this EIR consider significant irreversible environmental changes caused by the proposed project if developed. An impact would be a significant and irreversible change in the environment if:

- Development of the project would involve a large commitment of nonrenewable resources;
- The primary and secondary impacts of development would generally commit future generations to similar uses (e.g., a highway provides access to a previously remote area);
- Development of the proposed project would 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 would 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 irreversible environmental changes:

- Conversion of existing agricultural farmland to suburban land uses;
- Conversion of habitat;
- Removal of trees;
- Commitment of municipal services to new development; and
- Irreversible alteration of existing character of the project site and obstruction of views from adjacent existing homes.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

CEQA Guidelines Section 15130 requires that an EIR discuss the cumulative and long-term effects of the proposed project that 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, § 15355; see also Pub. Resources Code, § 21083, subd. (b).) Stated another way, “a cumulative impact consists of an impact which is created as a result of the combination of the project evaluated in the EIR together with other projects causing related impacts.” (CEQA Guidelines, § 15130, subd. (a)(1).)

“[I]ndividual effects may be changes resulting from a single project or a number of separate projects.” (CEQA Guidelines, § 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, § 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, §§ 15064, subd. (h)(1), 15065, subd. (c), 15355, subd. (b).) This formulation indicates that particular impacts may be less-than-significant on a project-specific basis but significant on a cumulative basis, because their small incremental contribution, viewed against the larger backdrop, is cumulatively considerable.

The lead agency should define the relevant geographic area of inquiry for each impact category (id., § 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)).

The possibility exists that the “cumulative impact” of multiple projects will be significant, but that the incremental contribution to that impact from a particular project (e.g., Base Project) may not itself be “cumulatively considerable.” Thus, CEQA Guidelines section 15064, subdivision (h)(5), states that “[t]he 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, it is not necessarily true that, even where cumulative impacts are significant, any level of incremental contribution must be deemed cumulatively considerable.

Wildhorse Ranch Cumulative Setting

The cumulative analysis for this EIR is based on the *City of Davis General Plan* (May 2001) and the *Program EIR for the City of Davis General Plan Update and Project EIR for Establishment of a New Junior High School* (General Plan Update EIR) (January 2000). The cumulative traffic analysis was also based on full buildout of the UC Davis 2003 Long Range Development Plan, including the research park and *Aggie Village*, Spring Lake residential development in the City of Woodland and the Woodland Gateway development. Given that the air and noise analyses for the proposed project are based upon the traffic data prepared for the project, the air and noise cumulative settings include the same parameters as the traffic cumulative setting. Cumulative impacts are analyzed in each section of Chapter 4 and summarized below.

Impacts

The following cumulative impacts are identified in Chapter 4 of this Draft EIR:

Land Use and Agricultural Resources

4.1-5 Long-term impacts to Prime Farmland from the proposed project in combination with existing and future developments in the Davis area.

The proposed project would contribute to the ongoing conversion of farmland to urban uses. The General Plan Update EIR found that the conversion of prime farmland would be considered a significant and unavoidable impact even with the implementation of General Plan policies, including the provision of agricultural acreage at a minimum 1:1 ratio. In addition, because the project site is designated as Agriculture on “Figure 11b – Land Use” of the 2001 Davis General Plan, the project site has not been anticipated for urban development. Therefore, the conversion of the project site in addition to the cumulative loss of Prime Farmland elsewhere in the vicinity would result in a *significant* impact. Even with implementation of mitigation measures, the impact would remain significant and unavoidable.

4.1-6 Consistency with the City of Davis’ plans, policies, or ordinances.

The project includes a General Plan Amendment to revise the project site land use designation to accommodate the project. However, as with the other entitlements requested for the proposed project, the final authority for determination of the proposed, or any future, General Plan amendments to this designation rests with the Davis City Council. Approval of this project or any potential future project application of a similar nature in the City of Davis is a discretionary action of the City Council. Future conversion of land designated for agricultural use to residential uses, if any, would undergo analysis and environmental review. Furthermore, pursuant to Measure J, should the project or any similar project be approved by the City Council the decision would be voted on by the residents of the City of Davis. It is also pertinent to note that the proposed project has been designed to be consistent with several General Plan goals and policies related to provision of needed housing and alternative modes of transportation.

As a result, approval of the proposed project or any future project would require the approval of both the City Council and the residents of Davis; therefore, a *less-than-significant* cumulative land use impact would result.

Population, Housing, and Employment

4.2-4 Long-term impacts to population, housing, and employment from the proposed project in combination with existing and future developments in the Davis area.

The proposed project is identified in the City of Davis General Plan EIR Addendum as a yellow light project. The addendum identifies that with buildout of all currently zoned and “green light” projects (includes buildout of the Verona and Grande sites) by June 2013 the total single-family residences within the City would be approximately 15,291, remaining below the anticipated 15,500. Development of the proposed project would result in the construction of up to 191 residential units, 151 of which are single family residences. Therefore, with buildout of the proposed project, the total single family residences would be 15,442, below the 15,500 Growth Management Action “e” threshold, and a *less-than-significant* impact would result.

Transportation and Circulation

4.3-6 Cumulative impacts regarding the deterioration of the Second Street / Mace Boulevard intersection LOS.

The Second Street / Mace Boulevard intersection operates at LOS C under both the Existing and Existing With Project scenarios. Under Cumulative No Project conditions, background volume growth results in LOS F conditions during both the AM and PM peak hours. The addition of project traffic would cause the overall average control delay to increase by more than five seconds during the PM peak hour. In addition, the proposed project would contribute three percent to the total volume of growth at the Second Street / Mace Boulevard intersection during the AM and PM peak hours. Therefore, the development of the proposed project would result in a significant cumulative impact to the Second Street / Mace Boulevard intersection. With implementation of mitigation measures required in the Draft EIR, a *less-than-significant* impact would result.

Air Quality

4.4-4 Long-term air quality impacts from the proposed project in combination with existing and future developments in the Davis area.

Based on the YSAQMD standards of significance the proposed project would result in a significant cumulative impact if the project would result in an individually significant impact to air quality. As indicated in Impact 4.4-3, carbon monoxide concentrations, the proposed project would not result in a potentially significant impact because it would not generate emissions in excess of YSAQMD thresholds for operational emissions. In addition, the proposed project would ultimately result in a less-than-significant impact to

air quality as a result of construction emissions with implementation of Mitigation Measure 4.4-1. Therefore, the project's incremental contribution to the long-term cumulative air quality impact would not be cumulatively considerable, resulting in a *less-than-significant* cumulative air quality impact.

Noise

4.5-5 Cumulative impact of traffic noise levels.

Cumulative plus project conditions within the project area would include the generation of increased traffic on roads within the local roadway network, which would result in changes of traffic noise levels between 0 and 1 dB, relative to cumulative no-project conditions. Pursuant to the project significance criteria, a substantial increase in traffic noise levels is defined as 1.5 to 5 dB, depending on the pre-project traffic noise level.

Table 4.5-4 shows the predicted traffic noise levels for existing and cumulative conditions, and the changes in traffic noise levels that would result from implementation of the proposed project. The levels are provided in terms of Ldn at a standard distance of 100 feet from the centerline of the project-area roadways for existing and future, with project and without project conditions.

Due to the relatively small number of trips that are predicted to be generated by the project as compared to existing and future trips without the project, traffic noise level increases are not predicted to be significant on any of the roadway segments evaluated. Therefore, the cumulative impact of increased traffic-related noise associated with the proposed project would be *less-than-significant*.

4.5-6 Cumulative impact of traffic noise levels at outdoor activity areas proposed within the 60 dB Ldn contours.

Future cumulative plus project traffic noise levels would exceed the City's 60 dB Ldn exterior noise level standard at proposed uses within the 60 dB Ldn contours shown in Table 4.5-6. The future cumulative plus project traffic noise level at the project site, at a distance of 100 feet from Covell Boulevard, would be 67 dB Ldn. Table 4.5-6 indicates that the distance from the Covell Boulevard centerline to the cumulative plus project 60 dB Ldn contour is 284 feet. However, primary outdoor activity areas are not proposed between the southernmost multi-family residential uses of the project and East Covell Boulevard. All proposed common outdoor activity areas would be partially shielded by the multi-family residences and would be located a considerable distance from East Covell Boulevard. As a result, the proposed outdoor activity areas would not be exposed to future traffic noise levels above 60 dB Ldn exterior noise level standard of the City of Davis. Therefore, cumulative impacts related to traffic noise levels at outdoor activity areas would be considered *less-than-significant*.

4.5-7 Cumulative impact of traffic noise levels at interior residential areas proposed within the 60 dB Ldn contours.

Table 4.5-4 indicates that the cumulative plus project traffic noise, at a distance of 100 feet from Covell Boulevard, would be 67 dB Ldn. The nearest proposed residential building would be approximately 120 feet from the roadway centerline, where first floor building façade exposure would be approximately 66 dB Ldn. Because upper-floor noise exposure is typically two dB higher than first-floor exposure due to reduced ground absorption, upper-floor façades of the proposed residences could be exposed to future traffic noise levels of approximately 68 dB Ldn. Given this exterior exposure, a building façade traffic noise level reduction of 23 dB would be required to ensure compliance with the City of Davis interior noise level standard of 45 dB Ldn or less.

However, new residential development typically provides a building façade noise level reduction of 25 to 30 dB; therefore, future traffic noise levels at the interior spaces of these residential uses are predicted to be 45 dB Ldn or less, and the impact would be considered *less-than-significant*.

Biological Resources

4.6-8 Cumulative loss of biological resources in the City of Davis and the effects of ongoing urbanization in the region.

The project site consists of various habitat types including cropland, grazing land, and developed/landscaped areas. These biological communities provide habitat and foraging areas for endangered, threatened, and special concern animal species. Many of the sensitive habitats and species found on-site are not only a concern in the City, but also regionally throughout Yolo County. Population growth and large amounts of clearing for new roads and urban development within the next 20 years would likely be experienced regionally as well. Therefore, the cumulative impact on the environment must consider not only development within the project site, but also those developments occurring in surrounding areas such the City of West Sacramento, City of Winters, the City of Woodland, as well as surrounding counties.

Impacts likely to result from the implementation of the proposed project include disturbance to special-status plant and wildlife species, and migratory and listed bird species. While additional impacts may result from the implementation of individual projects within the City and surrounding areas, mitigation would be required of any discretionary projects impacting natural resources. These impacts would be adequately addressed by the establishment of mitigation measures, such as those required in this EIR. The pending Yolo County HCP and the City of Davis General Plan policies and guidelines for preservation of wildlife habitats would ensure that the cumulative impacts would be properly mitigated for by preserving mitigation lands for wildlife and sensitive communities within Yolo County. With these measures in place the proposed project would not have substantial adverse effects to the populations of the special-status species

and sensitive habitats, and therefore *less-than-significant* cumulative impacts are expected.

Aesthetics

4.7-4 Long-term impacts to the visual character of the region from the proposed project in combination with existing and future developments in the Davis area.

The proposed project would contribute to the cumulative change in visual character of an agricultural area within the City of Davis. The properties in the immediate vicinity of the project site are currently developed for residential uses with the exception of the land east of the project site, which is used for agricultural purposes. Therefore, in terms of the change to the visual character of the project area, development on the project site would be typical of what currently exists north, west, and south of the project site. Should development be allowed, the character of the area would change from flat fields and roadways to residences with trees and a greenbelt area. Development in the City, in addition to the development on the project site, would contribute to a change in the visual character of the area.

The Davis General Plan designates the project site as Agriculture. Conversion of agricultural land to residential development would result in permanent viewshed changes for properties to the west and would be considered significant and unavoidable. Although the conversion of rural lands is anticipated in the General Plan, the impact is still considered significant. Therefore, the conversion of the project site, in addition to other lands in the project area, from a rural to an urban setting would be considered *significant*.

Hydrology, Water Quality, and Drainage

4.8-5 Long-term increases in peak stormwater runoff flows from the proposed project in combination with existing and future developments in the Davis area.

Implementation of the proposed project would result in the construction of up to 191 residential units on the project site, thereby creating impervious surfaces where none currently exist. The addition of impervious surfaces to the project site could increase peak stormwater runoff rates and volumes on and downstream of the site. However, the proposed project would include on-site collection and detention facilities to accommodate the increased flows.

As indicated on page 5G-15 of the General Plan Update EIR, a proposed land use would be considered to have a significant impact if the new land use would “result in a substantial increase in the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner that would result in on- or off-site flooding; or create or contribute runoff water that would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage facilities.” The effect of the proposed project plus other development in the project area, leading to buildout of the General Plan, could be to increase stormwater flows to a degree that would exceed existing drainage system capacity and cause flooding downstream. The proposed project would

include a stormwater detention system that would ensure that the proposed project would not result in a cumulatively considerable incremental increase in stormwater flows that would result in flooding downstream of the project site. Furthermore, future development within the City of Davis would be required to comply with City drainage plans and polices to ensure that each project would not cause a significant negative impact to other drainage facilities in the watershed. Although the final design of the storm drainage system is conceptual at this time, final storm drainage design would be reviewed by the City Engineer for consistency prior to implementation of the project. Therefore, a *less-than-significant* cumulative impact would result from implementation of the proposed project.

4.8-6 Cumulative impacts related to degradation of water quality.

Construction of the proposed project would contribute to a cumulative increase in urban pollutant loading, which would adversely affect water quality. Cumulative development in the Davis area, including the proposed project, would also result in increased impervious surfaces that could increase the rate and amount of runoff, thereby potentially adversely affecting existing surface water quality through increased erosion and sedimentation. The primary sources of water pollution include: runoff from roadways and parking lots; runoff from landscaping areas; non-stormwater connections to the drainage system; accidental spills; and illegal dumping. Runoff from roadway and parking lots could contain oil, grease, and heavy metals; additionally, runoff from landscaped areas could contain elevated concentrations of nutrients, fertilizers, and pesticides.

The mitigation measures for the project-specific impacts identified in Impact Statements 4.8-3 and 4.8-4 would reduce the pollutants in the stormwater from this project to a level lower than in the runoff from most developed areas within the Davis area, because most of these areas were constructed before stormwater quality BMPs were required. Additionally, future development projects would be required to implement BMPs comparable to the BMPs identified in this project. However, without implementation of proper BMPs, this project and other future projects would result in a continued decrease in the water quality of the local Davis natural drainage system. As a result, the incremental contribution from the proposed project to the cumulative water quality impact is significant. With implementation of the mitigation measures required in the EIR, a *less-than-significant* impact would result.

Public Services and Facilities

4.9-9 Long-term impacts to public services and facilities from the proposed project in combination with existing and future developments in the Davis area.

Implementation of the proposed project would contribute toward an increased demand for public services and facilities within the City of Davis. Public service and facility needs for the City of Davis have been evaluated in the Davis General Plan, and the goals and policies included in the General Plan ensure that adequate services will be available for build-out of the General Plan according to the current Land Use Diagram. The current

Land Use Diagram shows the project site as Agriculture. Therefore, development of the project site with urban uses would exceed the demand for public services and facilities anticipated in the Davis General Plan. However, as demonstrated in this Draft EIR, with the incorporation of mitigation measures, impacts to public services and facilities as a result of the proposed project would be less-than-significant. Therefore, the project's cumulative contribution to the City's public service and facility needs would also be less-than-significant. Furthermore, other future development projects would be required by the City to pay their fair share fees toward the expansion and creation of public services and facilities. Therefore, although certain facilities would be adversely impacted as a result of project implementation, cumulative impacts associated with public services and facilities would be considered *less-than-significant* with mitigation incorporated.

4.10-1 Project impacts concerning the production of GHGs.

The City is still in the process of establishing GHG reduction targets for new development occurring prior to 2010. Therefore, the City does not currently have an established threshold of significance against which the proposed project can be evaluated. Although the proposed project would implement several design standards to reduce energy use well below 2009 Title 24 standards, as well as ensure overall consistency with the latest GHG reduction measures identified by the California Attorney General, a single project cannot, on its own, feasibly mitigate impacts associated with the large-scale issue of global climate change; therefore, impacts related to GHG emissions and global climate change would remain significant. Even with implementation of the mitigation measure required in the EIR, a significant and unavoidable impact would remain.

SIGNIFICANT AND UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS

In most cases, impacts that have been identified would be less-than-significant after incorporation of appropriate mitigation measures. Impacts that cannot be feasibly mitigated to a less-than-significant level would remain significant and unavoidable adverse impacts.

The project-specific significant and unavoidable impacts are listed below:

- 4.1-3 Loss of prime agricultural land.
- 4.7-1 Impacts related to altering the existing character of the project site and obstructing views of existing homes.
- 4.9-4 Increased demand for fire protection services.

The significant and unavoidable cumulative impacts are listed below:

- 4.1-5 Long-term impacts to Prime Farmland from the proposed project in combination with existing and future developments in the Davis area.

4.7-4 Long-term impacts to the visual character of the region from the proposed project in combination with existing and future developments in the Davis area.

4.10-1 Project impacts concerning the production of GHGs.