2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The Summary chapter provides an overview of the Covell Village project (described in detail in Chapter 3 – Project Description), and summarizes the conclusions of the environmental analysis, provided in detail in Chapter 4. This chapter also reviews the alternatives to the Proposed Project that are described in Chapter 5, Alternatives Analysis, and identifies the Environmentally Superior Alternative. Table 2-1, at the end of this chapter, provides a summary of the environmental effects of the Proposed Project and the High Density Alternative identified in each technical issue section of Chapter 4. The table contains the environmental impacts, the significance of the impacts for the Proposed Project and the High Density Alternative, the proposed mitigation measures, and the significance of the impacts after the mitigation measures are implemented.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION

Proposed Project

The proposed Covell Village Project involves the development of a mixed-use community on approximately 422 acres in Yolo County, California. The project site is located just outside the City of Davis, north of Covell Boulevard between Pole Line Road and F Street. The site consists of a 383-acre parcel identified by Yolo County Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) 035-970-033, as well as an approximately 39-acre portion of APN 042-110-011, which adjoins the northwestern boundary of the 383-acre parcel.

The subject property is bordered on its western, southern, and eastern sides by existing urban uses (See Figure 3-2, Project Location Map). These existing uses include the ConAgra (formerly Hunt Wesson) property, Northstar Development, and the California Northern Railroad tracks to the west of the site; residential neighborhoods and commercial uses to the south of the site; and residential neighborhoods to the east of the site. The western portion of the site's northern boundary is agricultural land, while the eastern portion abuts the decommissioned City of Davis landfill.

The Covell Village Project includes the development of single-family and multi-family residential units, senior-only home sites, and other residential uses (i.e., six-plex cluster homes, co-housing townhouses, lofts above commercial, and a senior care core facility). The total number of dwelling units proposed for the project is 1,515. The project also includes the development of a 30,000 square foot hospice facility in the northern portion of the site, as well as a commercial Village Center, and dedication of a fire station site and a school site.

High Density Alternative

The High Density Alternative involves the development of 1,990 residential units on the same 422-acre project site. The construction of an additional 343 single family units on the project site would be accomplished by decreasing the lot sizes of the currently proposed single family lots. The High Density Alternative also includes 347 townhouse units that include 30 co-housing units, whereas the proposed project only includes 30 co-housing units. The High Density Alternative would not include the senior-only home sites, but would include the same number and types of other units proposed for the Proposed Project, including but not limited to, 24 six-plex cluster homes. It should also be noted that the commercial Village Center, hospice facility, fire station site, and school site are included in the High Density Alternative.

For the High Density Alternative, parkland obligation increases to 23.985 acres, while greenbelt obligation would remain at 23.6 acres. City staff has noted that the City may approve fees in lieu of dedicated parkland.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

Under CEQA, a significant effect on the environment is defined as a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project, including land, air, water, mineral, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance. Implementation of the Proposed Project or the High Density Alternative could result in significant impacts on those resource areas listed below.

This Draft EIR discusses mitigation measures that could be implemented by the City to reduce potential adverse impacts to a level that is considered less-than-significant. Such mitigation measures are noted in this Draft EIR and are found in the following sections: agricultural resources; land use; transportation and circulation; air quality; noise; cultural resources; biological resources; geology; hazards; hydrology, water quality, and drainage; public services and facilities; and population, housing, and employment. If an impact is determined to be significant or significant, applicable mitigation measures are identified as appropriate. These mitigation measures are also summarized in Table 2-1 below. The mitigation measures presented in the Draft EIR will form the basis of the Mitigation Monitoring Plan. An impact that remains significant after including mitigation measures is considered an unavoidable adverse impact.

Aesthetics

The Aesthetics chapter of the EIR summarizes existing regional and project area aesthetics, including a description of the existing visual character or quality of the site. This chapter also includes an analysis of whether any scenic vistas, scenic highways, or scenic resources, such as trees and/or historic resources exist within the project area. Creation of new sources of light and glare by the project and their effects upon the surrounding vicinity are also evaluated in the Aesthetics chapter.

The Aesthetics analysis concludes that impacts relating to the generation of light and glare from project residences and businesses would be less-than-significant under both the Proposed Project and the High Density Alternative.

However, consistent with the conclusion stated within the Davis General Plan Update EIR, other visual impacts, including those pertaining to the conversion of open space/agricultural land to urban uses on the project site would result in visual impacts that cannot be mitigated, under both the near-term or cumulative conditions for the Proposed Project and the High Density Alternative. Therefore, these impacts would be considered significant and unavoidable.

Agricultural Resources

This chapter of the EIR summarizes the status of the existing agricultural resources on the site and the areas surrounding the City of Davis, using the current state LESA (Land Evaluation and Site Assessment) model and other data, including identification of any State-designated Important Farmlands on the project site. Any conflicts with existing zoning for agricultural use, existing Williamson Act contracts, or right-to-farm ordinances applicable to the project site are also identified. This chapter further includes a discussion regarding conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses.

The Agricultural Resources analysis determines that although implementation of the Proposed Project and the High Density Alternative would result in a significant impact relating to the proximity of the proposed hospice facility to active agricultural operations, this would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with the adoption of mitigation measures identified in the chapter. However, as noted in the General Plan Update EIR, the permanent loss of Prime Farmland on the project site cannot be mitigated, and would therefore be considered a significant and unavoidable impact. Therefore, although mitigation has been included in the DEIR to reduce the impacts, the Proposed Project or the High Density Alternative, would result in significant and unavoidable impacts in both the near-term and cumulative contexts.

Land Use

The Land Use chapter evaluates the consistency of the Proposed Project and the High Density Alternative with the City of Davis' adopted plans and policies. The evaluation is based upon a thorough review of the City's General Plan and Zoning Ordinance, as well as any other appropriate documents, to address consistency issues. The Land Use chapter further assesses the compatibility of the Proposed Project and the High Density Alternative with the surrounding land uses, both existing and proposed.

The Land Use analysis notes that significant incompatibilities would arise from the proximity of the proposed residences to the closed Davis Landfill, under either the Proposed Project or the High Density Alternative. However, these concerns would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with the adoption of mitigation measures

identified in the chapter. All other impacts identified in the land use chapter were found to be less-than-significant.

Transportation and Circulation

The Transportation and Circulation chapter of the Draft EIR is based on a traffic study prepared for the Covell Village project site. This chapter describes existing traffic conditions, summarizes the existing and planned regional and local transportation network, and a describes the traffic load and capacity of street systems, including level of service standards for critical street segments and intersections. The Transportation and Circulation chapter also includes an analysis of the Existing Plus Project scenario and the Cumulative traffic scenario (Cumulative No Project and Cumulative Plus Project). Other issues addressed in the this chapter include traffic hazards due to design features, emergency access, and transit and bicycle facilities.

The Transportation and Circulation analysis finds that impacts to alternative modes of transportation and impacts to on-site circulation from the Covell Village Project would be less-than-significant. Several traffic-related impacts are identified as significant in the analysis, with implementation of either the Proposed Project or the High Density Alternative. These impacts include: impacts to the surrounding roadway network under Existing Plus Project conditions; impacts to on-site access; impacts to parking supply and demand regarding the Village Center; and impacts to traffic flow from construction traffic. Cumulative impacts to study intersections were also identified as significant. The implementation of mitigation measures identified in the chapter would be expected to reduce the identified significant impacts to less-than-significant levels. Finally, impacts to certain segments of Covell Boulevard and Pole Line Road with implementation of either the Proposed Project or the High Density Alternative were found to be significant. The Draft EIR determined that impacts to segments of Pole Line Road south of Covell Boulevard and segments of Covell Boulevard between F Street and Pole Line Road could not be reduced to less-than-significant levels, and therefore impacts would remain significant and unavoidable under both the Existing Plus Project and Cumulative scenarios. However, impacts to Pole Line Road north of Covell Boulevard could be reduced to a less-than-significant level with the incorporation of mitigation measures included in the Draft EIR.

Air Quality

The Air Quality chapter is based on an air quality assessment prepared for the Covell Village site and summarizes the regional air quality setting, including climate and topography, ambient air quality, and regulatory setting. The chapter utilizes the URBEMIS-2001 program to evaluate anticipated airborne pollutant emissions from the Covell Village Project, from both direct sources (project vehicle emissions) and indirect sources (i.e., stationary sources such as fireplaces and mechanical equipment). The Air Quality chapter also addresses carbon monoxide impacts and impacts associated with project construction activities, as well as cumulative air quality impacts.

The Air Quality analysis determined that impacts pertaining to increased carbon monoxide concentrations at project-area intersections would be less-than-significant with incorporation of mitigation measures identified in the chapter. Furthermore, construction emissions of ROG were also found to be less-than-significant with the incorporation of mitigation. However, air quality impacts due to vehicle trips to and from the project site, as well as short-term construction-related air quality impacts of NO_x, are found to be significant and unavoidable for both the Proposed Project and the High Density Alternative. In addition, under long-term cumulative conditions, air quality impacts are found to be significant and unavoidable for both the Proposed Project and the High Density Alternative.

Noise

The Noise chapter of the Draft EIR is based upon an environmental noise assessment prepared for the project site. The noise assessment includes an analysis of the existing noise setting, including measurements of existing traffic and general ambient noise levels in and near the project area. The Noise chapter also identifies all significant noise impacts upon, and generated by, the Proposed Project and the High Density Alternative. Determination of significance is based on the criteria set forth in the City of Davis General Plan Noise Element and City of Davis Zoning Code, as well as applicable State guidelines. In addition, the Noise chapter evaluates noise levels associated with the construction and operation of the Covell Village Project and the resulting impacts to sensitive receptors in the vicinity of the project site.

The Noise analysis concludes that several significant noise-related impacts would occur with implementation of either the Proposed Project or the High Density Alternative. These impacts include: impacts of off-site traffic on on-site noise-sensitive uses; an increase in existing traffic noise levels on surrounding roadways; short-term noise impacts from construction activities; and noise from activities at the Blue Max Kart Club go-cart track. Furthermore, under cumulative (Year 2025) conditions, significant impacts were predicted pertaining to the effects of off-site traffic on on-site noise-sensitive uses. Cumulative noise impacts to surrounding roadways were projected to be less-than-significant with implementation of the Proposed Project, but significant if the High Density Alternative were to be implemented. All impacts identified as significant in the noise analysis would be reduced to less-than-significant levels through the adoption of mitigation measures. Projected noise impacts from the California Northern Railroad were determined to be less-than-significant.

Cultural Resources

The Cultural Resources chapter is based upon a cultural resources assessment prepared for the Covell Village Project. The chapter summarizes the existing setting and describes potential construction-related effects to historical, archaeological, and paleontological resources. Significance criteria for cultural resources impacts are based on applicable federal, State, and local laws and regulations.

The Draft EIR found that the Proposed Project and the High Density Alternative would have less-than-significant impacts to prehistoric and historic resources on the project site with the incorporation of mitigation measures included in the Draft EIR. In addition, cumulative impacts to cultural resources would be less-than-significant for the Proposed Project and the High Density Alternative with the implementation of recommended mitigation measures.

Biological Resources

The Biological Resources chapter of the Draft EIR summarizes the existing biological resources setting for the project area. Data from the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) are analyzed and reviewed. The chapter presents the results of a records search of the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB), which was conducted to determine the potential of the project area to support rare, threatened, endangered, or otherwise sensitive species. In addition, the Biological Resources chapter includes the results of a wetland assessment, highlighting potential wetlands and other water of the U.S. in the project area. The chapter also provides the results of on-site field studies pertaining to the identification of potential habitats for special-status species and wetlands. Finally, the chapter identifies the biological resources-related permits required as part of the development process.

The Draft EIR found that implementation of the Proposed Project or the High Density Alternative would result in significant impacts to special-status plant species through the elimination of the depressional seasonal wetlands on-site. However, the Draft EIR includes mitigation measure, which would reduce the impact to special-status plants to a less-than-significant level.

The Draft EIR also found that the Proposed Project would have significant impacts to special-status animal species, including but not limited to three species of shrimp, valley elderberry longhorn beetle, giant garter snake, burrowing owl, and Swainson's hawk. However, mitigation measures recommended in the Draft EIR would reduce impacts to these species and their habitats to a less-than-significant.

The removal of trees, sensitive habitat associated with Channel "A" and Covell Drain, as well as cropland habitat and Jurisdictional Waters of the U.S. was also found to be significant; however, implementation of appropriate mitigation measures would reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Geology

The Geology chapter summarizes the setting and describes the potential effects to proposed land uses on the Covell Village Project site from earthquakes, expansive soils, soil erosion, as well as any other pertinent geological concerns.

The Draft EIR found that soil erosion associated with project construction activities would have significant impacts to receiving waters. However, the preparation of a Storm

Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) would reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level for the Proposed Project and the High Density Alternative. The Draft EIR also found that expansive soils could have significant impacts to structures developed for the Proposed Project or the High Density Alternative. However, implementation of mitigation measures recommended in the Draft EIR would reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Hazards

The Hazards chapter of the Draft EIR is based primarily on a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment prepared for the Covell Village Project. This chapter summarizes the setting and describes the existence of known hazardous materials or other hazards on the site, as well as describing the potential for additional hazards to exist on-site.

The Draft EIR found that the following potential on-site hazards would result in significant impacts to residents or employees introduced by the Proposed Project or the High Density Alternative: presence of pesticides and/or herbicides, PCB transformers, and asbestos and lead-based paint; above-ground and underground storage tanks; and the on-site gas pipeline. However, implementation of mitigation measures recommended in the Draft EIR would reduce all of the above impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Hydrology, Water Quality, and Drainage

The Hydrology, Water Quality, and Drainage chapter summarizes setting information and identifies potential project-associated impacts pertaining to irrigation drainage, stormwater drainage, flooding, groundwater, seepage, and water quality. The analysis includes on-site as well as off-site infrastructure facilities.

The Draft EIR found that should the Proposed Project or the High Density Alternative not incorporate adequate measures to ensure that project residents and structures are not located within the 100-year floodplain, approximately half of the project site would be subject to significant flooding impacts. However, implementation of mitigation measures recommended in the Draft EIR would reduce the impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Public Services and Facilities

The Public Services and Facilities chapter of the Draft EIR summarizes setting information and identifies potential new demand for services on the domestic water supply, wastewater treatment systems, fire protection, law enforcement, solid waste disposal, gas and electric service, schools, and parks and recreation. This chapter also analyzes impacts to public services consistent with the General Plan goal of a five-minute response time for public safety calls. The Public Services and Facilities chapter is based in part on a Water Supply Assessment prepared for the Covell Village Project (including the Proposed Project and the High Density Alternative) by the City of Davis.

The Draft EIR found that implementation of the Proposed Project or the High Density Alternative would result in increased demands for public services and facilities. Furthermore, these demands would result in significant impacts to law enforcement, fire protection, wastewater treatment, water supply, and park and recreation facilities. However, the Draft EIR includes mitigation measures, which would reduce the above impacts to public services and facilities to a less-than-significant level except for the impact related to residences outside of the five-minute response time.

Population, Housing, and Employment

The Population, Housing, and Employment chapter of the Draft EIR summarizes regional and local demographic information, as well as identifying projected population changes resulting from the Proposed Project and the High Density Alternative.

The Draft EIR found that implementation of the Proposed Project or the High Density Alternative would result in significant impacts to the General Plan's goals and policies related to population growth and affordable housing. However, the Draft EIR includes a mitigation measure, which would reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level. All other impacts were identified as less-than-significant for both the Proposed Project and the High Density Alternative.

SUMMARY OF PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

The following summary provides brief descriptions of the six alternatives to the proposed project that are evaluated in this Draft EIR. The alternatives are separated into two categories: (1) Comparative Alternatives, which are qualitatively compared to the propsed project in Section 5 Alternatives Analysis, and (2) Equal Weight Alternatives, which are both qualitatively and quantitatively analyzed throughout the DEIR. For a more thorough discussion of project alternatives, please refer to Chapter 5, Alternatives Analysis.

Comparative Alternatives

No Project Alternative

Under the No Project / No Build Alternative, the project site would remain active agricultural land. Furthermore, because the project site would not be developed, the site would not be annexed to the City of Davis, but would remain within the jurisdiction of Yolo County.

Reduced Acreage Alternative

The Reduced Acreage Alternative would not result in the development of the entire project site, as would the Proposed Project. Specifically, the Alternative would result in the development of 1,515 single family units on the portion of the project site south of Channel "A". The northern portion of the site would therefore not be included as part of

this alternative. The Reduced Acreage Alternative would delete the following Proposed Project components: fifty percent (50%) of the commercial Village Center, senior-only home sites, school site, hospice facility, and proposed habitat area.

Because the number of residential units included in the Reduced Acreage Alternative is unchanged from the Proposed Project, parkland obligation would remain the same, at 18.143 acres. However, the greenbelt requirement would be less for this Alternative, because the total residential development area of the site would be 147 acres, instead of 236 acres as with the Proposed Project. The Reduced Acreage Alternative would require a total dedication of 11.89 acres of greenbelt.

Reduced Intensity Alternative

The Reduced Intensity Alternative would involve the development of 1,000 residential units on the 422-acre project site. The same types of residential units that would be constructed for the Proposed Project would be included in the Reduced Intensity Alternative. Furthermore, the same ratios of unit types planned for the Proposed Project would be included in the Reduced Intensity Alternative. For example, under the Proposed Project, approximately 59 percent of the total number of units is single family units. Therefore, for the Reduced Intensity Alternative, 59 percent of 1,000 units would be single family units, or 590 units.

According to the City of Davis standards, the required amount of parkland and greenbelt acreage for the Reduced Intensity Alternative is 12.3 acres and 23.6 acres respectively. It should be noted that the amount of parkland required would be reduced as compared to the Proposed Project; however, the amount of greenbelt acreage required would remain the same because the greenbelt standard is based upon the amount of residential land to be developed. The assumption is made for the Reduced Intensity Alternative that the developer would propose to retain the parks and greenbelts as shown in the current project application.

Offsite Alternative

The CEQA Guidelines (Section 15126.6(b)) indicate that only locations that would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project need be considered for inclusion in the EIR.

The Offsite Alternative project site is located in Yolo County, immediately west of the City of Davis City limits. The Offsite Alternative location is north of Russell Road, south of County Road 31, east of County Road 98, and west of State Route 113. The project site is comprised of a total of 319.5 acres and is made up of two parcels with the following acreages: 159.48 acres and 160 acres. Similar to the Proposed Project, the project site would need to be annexed to the City of Davis.

The Offsite Alternative would have the same type and intensity of uses as the Proposed Project (1,515 residential units, Village Center, etc.).

Four Site Alternative

The total acreage for the Four Site Alternative is 190.1 acres. The Four Site Alternative is comprised of the following sites:

1. ConAgra / Hunt Wesson Site
2. Wildhorse Horse Ranch
3. Willowbank 9 South
4. Signature (inside-the-curve)

The 100-acre ConAgra / Hunt Wesson site is located adjacent to the Covell Village site to the west and is within the City of Davis City limits. The southern portion of the site consists of the old Hunt Wesson industrial site and the northern portion consists of fallow farmland. The 25.8-acre Horse Ranch site is located north of East Covell Boulevard and west of the Wildhorse development and is within the City of Davis City limits. The site consists of pasture and three rural residences and associated outbuildings. The 17.15-acre Willowbank 9 South site is located west of Mace Boulevard and north of Montgomery Avenue in the City of Davis. The site is currently vacant. The 47.1-acre Signature (inside-the-curve) site is located south of East Covell / Mace Boulevard in Yolo County, adjacent to the new junior high school site. The project site is currently farmland and does not contain any structures. Utilization of the Signature site for the development of the project would require annexation of the site to the City of Davis.

The types of uses included in the Proposed Project would also be included in the Four Site Alternative. The Four Site Alternative would also construct the same number of residential units as planned for the Proposed Project. However, due to the geographical separation of the four sites, the project would have to be redesigned in order to be distributed over four different sites.

Equal Weight Alternative

High Density Alternative

The High Density Alternative involves the development of 1,990 residential units on the project site. The breakdown of units proposed for the High Density Alternative is shown in Table 5-1. The construction of an additional 343 single family units on the project site would be accomplished by decreasing the lot sizes of the currently proposed single family lots. As shown in Table 5-1, the High Density Alternative also involves the increase of co-housing units from 30 (Proposed Project) to 347. The High Density Alternative would not include the senior only home sites, but would include the same number and types of other units proposed for the Proposed Project, including but not limited to, 24 six-plex cluster homes. The High Density Alternative would also include the commercial Village Center and hospice facility, as well as dedication of a fire station site and a school site.

For the High Density Alternative, parkland obligation increases to 23.985 acres, while greenbelt obligation would remain at 23.6 acres. City staff has noted that the City may approve fees in lieu of dedicated parkland.

Environmentally Superior Alternative

The CEQA Guidelines (Section 15126.6(e)(2)) states that if the environmentally superior alternative is the "No Project" alternative, the EIR shall also identify an environmentally superior alternative among the other alternatives. For the Covell Village Project, aside from the No Project Alternative, the Reduced Acreage Alternative would be considered the environmentally superior alternative. Although the Reduced Acreage Alternative would not achieve all of the applicant's project objectives (in particular, Objective 13 listed at the beginning of the Alternatives section, which pertains to the commercial Village Center), the Reduced Acreage Alternative would result in fewer environmental impacts than the Proposed Project while still providing a mix of housing types consistent with the goals of the applicant.

The Reduced Acreage Alternative does not involve the construction of a hospice facility in the northwestern corner of the project site, and therefore the applicant would not be required to revise the site plan to include a 500-foot buffer along the northwestern perimeter of the project site, in order to protect persons at the hospice from the potential effects of aerial pesticide application on agricultural lands to the north. Furthermore, under the Reduced Acreage Alternative, new residences would not be situated directly to the south of the decommissioned Davis landfill. Therefore, impacts pertaining to hazards associated with the landfill would be reduced.

Because seasonal wetland habitat located north of Channel "A" would not be developed under the Reduced Acreage Alternative, impacts to biological resources would be fewer than with implementation of the Proposed Project. In addition, because the Reduced Acreage Alternative would convert fewer acres of Prime Farmland, the impacts associated with conversion of agricultural land would be fewer, although the impacts would still be considered significant and unavoidable. Furthermore, the Reduced Acreage Alternative would also reduce environmental impacts pertaining to noise, air quality, and geology because of the reduction of the commercial Village Center size and other amenities described above. However, certain impacts in these categories would be expected to remain significant.

Finally, due to the decreased number of vehicle trips, which would be generated by the Reduced Acreage Alternative, traffic impacts would be expected to be less intense as compared to the Proposed Project. For example, the Alternative would generate approximately 17,506 average daily trips (ADT), as compared to approximately 27,627 ADT under the Proposed Project.

The following Table (Table 2-1) summarizes the impacts identified in the environmental section of this Draft EIR. The Proposed Project and the High Density Alternative impacts are identified for each environmental analysis section (4.1 – 4.13) in the Draft EIR in Table 2-1 below. The level of significance of each impact, any mitigation measures required for each impact, and the resultant level of significance after mitigation are also given below.