

This section discusses the additional topics statutorily required by CEQA. The topics discussed include significant irreversible environmental changes/irretrievable commitment of resources, significant and unavoidable environmental impacts, and growth-inducing impacts.

7.1 SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

Public Resources Code Sections 21100(b)(2) and 21100.1(a) require that an EIR prepared for the adoption of a plan, policy, or ordinance of a public agency must include a discussion of significant irreversible environmental changes of project implementation. CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(c) describes irreversible environmental changes as follows:

Uses of nonrenewable resources during the initial and continued phases of the project may be irreversible since a large commitment of such resources makes removal or nonuse thereafter unlikely. Primary impacts and, particularly, secondary impacts (such as highway improvement which provides access to a previously inaccessible area) generally commit future generations to similar uses. Also irreversible damage can result from environmental accidents associated with the project. Irretrievable commitments of resources should be evaluated to assure that such current consumption is justified.

Implementation of the proposed Tehama County 2008-2028 General Plan would result in the conversion of land is located in the Upland Agriculture land use designation 24,924.8 acres of farmland and grazing land. Development of the proposed Planning Area would constitute a long-term commitment to urban land uses. It is unlikely that circumstances would arise that would return any developed land to its original undeveloped condition. Therefore, conversion of open space and agricultural land to urban development is considered a significant irreversible environmental effect.

Development of the County would irretrievably commit building materials and energy to the construction and maintenance of buildings and infrastructure proposed. Renewable, nonrenewable, and limited resources that would likely be consumed as part of development would include oil, gasoline, lumber, sand and gravel, asphalt, water, steel, and other similar materials. Many of these materials would be consumed during development activities, and therefore cannot be reused or recycled. It is possible that some building materials could be recycled or salvaged, such as glass and aluminum. Currently, the County has requirements for the recycling or reuse of building materials.

In addition, implementation of development under the 2008-2028 General Plan would result in an increased demand on utilities for energy such as electricity and natural gas (see Section 4.14, Utilities and Service Systems). Energy conservation measures would reduce the potential demand from each land use, but overall energy consumption would likely still increase with development. Most electricity in California comes from generating plants utilizing fossil fuels such as coal and natural gas. These fuels are consumed during electricity generation and cannot be retrieved. Other sources of electricity include hydroelectric, nuclear and renewable sources (e.g., wind, solar). Hydroelectric and renewable electricity relies on power sources that are not consumed during electricity generation. Electricity from nuclear plants requires radioactive materials for power generation. These materials, along with other materials that come in contact with them (e.g., fuel rods), generally cannot be used for other purposes. Natural gas and propane are used to heat buildings. These gases are burned to provide heat, and thus cannot be reused.

7.0 OTHER SECTIONS REQUIRED BY CEQA

7.2 SIGNIFICANT AND UNAVOIDABLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(b) requires an EIR to discuss unavoidable significant environmental effects, including those that can be mitigated but not reduced to a level of insignificance. In addition, Section 15093(a) of the CEQA Guidelines allows the decision-making agency to determine the benefits of a proposed project outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental impacts of implementing the project. The County can approve a project with unavoidable adverse impacts if it prepares a "Statement of Overriding Considerations" setting forth the specific reasons for making such a judgment.

The reader is referred to the various environmental issue areas of Section 4.0, 5.0 and 6.0 for further details and analysis of the significant and unavoidable impacts identified below.

Section 4.1 Aesthetics

Alteration of Visual Character

Impact 4.1.5 Implementation of the General Plan will encourage new development activities that could degrade the existing visual character or quality of the County and its communities. The conversion of areas of the County from their current rural visual character to a more urban character, in combination with the potential growth of the incorporated cities of the County, will result in a cumulatively considerable change in the visual character of the area. Implementation of General Plan policies and implementation measures identified under Impacts 4.1.1 through 4.1.4 would substantially reduce the alteration of visual character and light/glare impacts within the County in relation to the impacts that could occur under the current General Plan without these provisions. However, the change in the visual character of the County, especially in the north-central area between Red Bluff and the Shasta County line, as development progresses pursuant to the General Plan, will result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to the overall urbanization of the region. It is recognized as a **cumulatively considerable and unavoidable** consequence of the intensification and direction of development proposed in the General Plan.

See additional discussion for Impact 4.1-5 in Section 4.1, Aesthetics

Section 4.2 Agricultural Resources

Conversion of Agricultural Land

Impact 4.2.4 Implementation of the General Plan Land Use Map, along with other proposed development in Tehama County and the cities of Red Bluff, Corning and Tehama, would contribute to the additional conversion of important farmlands to other uses and may increase agriculture/urban interface conflicts. Implementation of the General Plan will change land use designations which may result in a net loss of over 35,000 acres of lands currently designated for agricultural land use. Implementation of General Plan policies and implementation measures identified under Impacts 4.2.1, 4.2.2, and 4.2.3 would substantially support agricultural resources within the County and, in many ways, would install a more accountable system for slowing down the conversion of agricultural lands. However, given the statewide trend in the conversion of important farmland areas, and the

extent of conversion in Tehama County anticipated as a result of subsequent development in Tehama County, either under the current General Plan or pursuant to the 2008-2028 General Plan, implementation of the 2008-2028 General Plan would contribute substantially to farmland conversion in the region and is a **cumulatively considerable and unavoidable** consequence of the intensification of development proposed in the General Plan.

See additional discussion for Impact 4.2-4 in Section 4.2, Agricultural Resources

Section 4.3 Air Quality

Regional Air Quality Impacts

Impact 4.3.6 Implementation of the 2008-2028 General Plan along with potential development of the Planning Area would exacerbate existing regional problems with ozone and particulate matter. The 2008-2028 General Plan's contribution to these conditions is considered cumulatively considerable. Implementation of the 2008-2028 General Plan would result in substantial new development, increased population, and adversely affect regional air quality. The growth in population, vehicle usage and business activity within the NSVAB, when considered with growth proposed under the General Plan, would contribute to cumulative regional air quality impacts. It also could potentially delay attainment of standards for which counties in the NSVAB currently are in nonattainment status, mainly ozone and PM₁₀. Implementation of the 2008-2028 General Plan policies, implementation measures and mitigation measures identified under **Impact 4.3.1** through **Impact 4.3.5** would assist in reducing the General Plan's contribution to cumulative regional and local air quality impacts; however, this contribution is still considered **cumulatively considerable** and thus a **significant and unavoidable** impact. No feasible mitigation is available to completely mitigate this impact.

See additional discussion for Impact 4.3-6 in Section 4.3, Air Quality

Section 4.7 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Wildland Fire

Impact 4.7.1 Implementation of the General Plan could result in safety hazards associated with wildland fires in residential areas adjacent to open space and natural areas. Implementation of Safety Element General Plan policies and associated implementation measures, SAF-1.1, SAF-1.2, SAF-1.2a, SAF-1.3, SAF-3.1, SAF-3.1a, SAF-3.1b, SAF-3.1c, SAF-3.1d, SAF-3.1e, SAF-3.2, SAF-3.2a, SAF-3.3, SAF-3.4, SAF-3.4a, SAF-3.5, SAF-3.5a, SAF-3.5b, SAF-3.5c, SAF-3.5d, SAF-3.5e, SAF-3.5f, SAF-3.5g, SAF-3.5h, SAF-3.5i, SAF-3.5j would serve to minimize impacts to residential areas within the Planning Area due to wildland fires and safety hazards. However, despite these provisions, it is possible that fires within the urban-wildland interface may still pose a threat to life and property. As a result, this impact is considered **significant and unavoidable**.

See additional discussion for Impact 4.7-1 in Section 4.7, Hazards and Hazardous Materials

7.0 OTHER SECTIONS REQUIRED BY CEQA

Section 4.8 Hydrology and Water Quality

Groundwater Supply Impacts

Impact 4.8.3 Implementation of the 2008-2028 General Plan would potentially result in a substantial depletion of groundwater supplies or substantial interference with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level increase the demand for water from both surface and groundwater sources throughout Tehama County, which could result in water shortages or reduce recharge to aquifers. Implementation of the General Plan policies and affiliated implementation measures would reduce ensure that impacts to groundwater resources in Tehama County. However, impacts associated with increased groundwater extraction, coupled with reduced recharge rates, during dry or drought years would be considered a **less than significant and unavoidable** impact to the local groundwater table level throughout Tehama County.

See additional discussion for Impact 4.8.3 in Section 4.8, Hydrology and Water Quality.

Cumulative Water Supply

Impact 4.8.7 Implementation of the 2008-2028 General Plan would potentially increase the demand for water from both surface and groundwater sources throughout Tehama County, which could result in water shortages or reduce recharge to aquifers. Implementation of the General Plan policies and affiliated implementation measures would ensure significantly reduce impacts to groundwater resources, including a net deficit in the aquifer or a lowering of the groundwater table. However, increased extraction rates during dry or drought years as a result of the updated General Plan buildout combined with impacts in neighboring counties will result in an impact that is that impacts to groundwater resources in Tehama County would be considered **less than cumulatively considerable** and is considered a **significant and unavoidable** impact.

See additional discussion for Impact 4.8.7 in Section 4.8, Hydrology and Water.

Section 4.11 Population and Housing

Substantial Increase in Population and Housing

Impact 4.11.1 Implementation of the 2008-2028 General Plan would include an increase in land uses that promote the increase in population and housing to the area. The 2008-2028 General Plan will increase the population to the area and the 2008-2028 General Plan does not contain any policies which would limit population growth. Because of this, the implementation of the 2008-2028 General Plan will result in a **significant and unavoidable impact**.

See additional discussion for Impact 4.11-1 in Section 4.11, Population and Housing

Cumulative Population and Housing Growth

Impact 4.11.3 Implementation of the 2008-2028 General Plan could result in a cumulative increase in population and housing growth in the incorporated areas of

Tehama County as well as surrounding counties and associated environmental impacts. The EIR contains mitigation measures where appropriate to reduce or eliminate potentially significant impacts associated with population growth in the County. While the General Plan contains policies that would help offset the effects of population growth, there are no measures that would completely mitigate the environmental effects of population growth under cumulative conditions. Even with implementation of General Plan policies and mitigation measures, environmental impacts would remain significant, as population growth will inevitably occur and housing and other services would need to be provided to accommodate this growth. Therefore, impacts related to population growth would be **cumulatively considerable** and **significant and unavoidable**.

See additional discussion for Impact 4.11-3 in Section 4.11, Population and Housing

Section 4.13 Transportation and Circulation

Cumulative Traffic Impacts on Local Roadways and State Highways

Impact 4.13.7 When considered with existing, proposed, planned and approved development in the region, implementation of the Tehama County 2008-2028 General Plan would contribute to cumulative traffic volumes in the region that result in significant impacts to level of service and operations. While the 2008-2028 General Plan land uses would provide for alternative modes of transportation and promote the use of public transportation, the implementation of 2008-2028 General Plan would still result in a substantial increase in traffic volumes on local roadways and state highway facilities that would result in significant traffic impacts within the Planning Area as well as in adjoining jurisdictions. Improvements to regional transportation facilities associated with cumulative traffic conditions are intended to be addressed through implementation of the RTP and the FIX FIVE study. Implementation of 2008-2028 General Plan Circulation policies and implementation measures CIR-4.1a, CIR-4.1b, CIR-4.1c, CIR-4.1d, CIR-4.2, CIR-4.2a, CIR-4.2b, CIR-4.3a, CIR 4.3a, CIR 4.3d would assist in reducing the County's cumulative contribution to regional traffic effects. However, this impact would still be considered **cumulatively considerable** and a **significant and unavoidable**. Further, the County does not have jurisdiction over improvements outside of the City's jurisdiction (e.g., facilities within adjacent counties, incorporated cities and Caltrans facilities) and the County cannot ensure that these improvements would be completed.

See additional discussion for Impact 4.13-1 in Section 4.13, Traffic and Circulation

Section 4.14 Utilities and Service Systems

Water Treatment and Distribution Facilities

Impact 4.14.1.1 Implementation the General Plan would result in the need for additional treatment capacity, storage capacity, and other conveyance facilities to meet the projected water demands. The policies and implementation measures in the General Plan provide for future water supply in the unincorporated portions of Tehama County and complement the existing

7.0 OTHER SECTIONS REQUIRED BY CEQA

standards and guidelines as well as ensure sufficient water supplies and delivery system capabilities are available to support new development in conjunction with existing development. However, impacts associated with the development of expanded water supply facilities could still be considered substantial and the only mitigation to truly remove this impact would be to not allow growth the County, which is not consistent with the objectives outlined in Section 3.0 of this DEIR. Therefore, implementation of the General Plan would result in water supply related impacts that are considered **significant and unavoidable**.

See additional discussion for Impact 4.14.1.1 in Section 4.14, Utilities and Service Systems.

Cumulative Water Supply

Impact 4.14.1.2 Implementation of the General Plan in combination with other reasonably foreseeable development would increase the population within the County contributing to the cumulative demand for water resources and associated facilities. As a result additional water supply resources would be required. Implementation of the 2008-2028 General Plan, as well as compliance with current water law, should ensure that new projects not be approved unless a reliable water source is identified, therefore impacts associated with development on water quantity in the County should be less than significant. While the Plan includes numerous goals, policies and implementation measures, these primarily apply to new development. Development within existing general plan designations and zone districts could occur that would be below levels that would trigger local, state and federal laws governing water supplies. These small projects, such as single family homes, small offices or small industrial developments, would typically be exempt from CEQA, and would not trigger the need for water supply analysis. Individually, these types of developments would result in a less than significant impact on water supply, however cumulatively there is the potential for these small projects to have a significant impact on the water supply. Because there is the potential for numerous small development projects to have a cumulative impact on water supply in Tehama County even with implementation of the policies in the General Plan and implementation of state and federal law, this impact is considered **significant and unavoidable**.

See additional discussion for Impact 4.14.1.2 in Section 4.14, Utilities and Service Systems.

Cumulative Wastewater

Impact 4.14.2.2 Implementation of the 2008-2028 General Plan, in addition to other reasonably foreseeable development in the Cities of Red Bluff and Corning, would substantially increase cumulative demands on wastewater services including flows and require additional infrastructure and treatment capacity that would result in a physical effect on the environment. Implementation of the General Plan Land Use Element policies and associated implementation measures LU-2.1, LU-3.1A, LU-3.2, LU-3.2A, LU-6.1, LU-6.1A and Public Services Element policies and associated implementation measures PS-5.1, PS-5.1a, PS-5.1b, PS-5.1c, PS-5.2, PS-5.2a 1 will assist in reducing the General Plan's cumulative wastewater related impacts, however; not to a level that is less than significant. General Plan impacts to wastewater conveyance and

treatment are considered to be cumulatively considerable and therefore a **significant and unavoidable impact**.

See additional discussion for Impact 4.14.2.2 in Section 4.14, Utilities and Service Systems.

Section 6.0 Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative Increase in GHG Emissions

Impact 6.14 Buildout of the 2008-2028 General Plan would result in the cumulative increase of greenhouse gases, including CO₂, emitted into the atmosphere. The County can and does require energy efficient design in building construction within the County. This requirement and the General Plan policies and implementing actions listed above can effectively reduce GHG emissions from building design. Whether or not these requirements will reduce emissions effectively enough to mitigate the County's contribution to GHGs is unknown. The only entities which have jurisdiction over vehicle emissions in California are the State and Federal governments. Therefore, until such time that there are thresholds of significance with which to compare the County's GHGs contribution, it must be assumed that any increase in GHGs will lead to a change in climate and impacts could result from cumulative conditions. As a result, this impact is considered **significant and unavoidable** and the 2008-2028 General Plan would have a **cumulatively considerable** contribution.

See additional discussion for Impact 6.14 in Section 6.0, Cumulative Impacts.

7.3 GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS

INTRODUCTION

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15126.2(d) requires that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) evaluate the growth-inducing impacts of a proposed action. A growth-inducing impact is defined by the CEQA Guidelines as follows:

The way 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. Included in this are projects which would remove obstacles to population growth...It is not assumed that growth in an area is necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment.

A project can have direct and/or indirect growth inducement potential. Direct growth inducement would result if a project, for example, involved construction of new housing. A project would have indirect growth inducement potential if it established substantial new permanent employment opportunities (e.g., commercial, industrial or governmental enterprises) or if it would involve a construction effort with substantial short-term employment opportunities that would indirectly stimulate the need for additional housing and services to support the new employment demand. Similarly, a project would indirectly induce growth if it would remove an obstacle to additional growth and development, such as removing a constraint on a required public service. A project providing an increased water supply in an area where water service historically limited growth could be considered a growth-inducing project.

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The CEQA Guidelines further explain that the environmental effects of induced growth are considered indirect impacts of the proposed action. These indirect impacts or secondary effects of growth may result in significant, adverse environmental impacts. Potential secondary effects of growth include increased demand on other community and public services and infrastructure, increased traffic and noise, and adverse environmental impacts such as degradation of air and water quality, degradation or loss of plant and animal habitat, and conversion of agricultural and open space land to developed uses. Growth inducement also may constitute an adverse impact if the growth is not consistent with or accommodated by the land use plans and policies for the area affected. Local land use plans set forth land use development patterns and growth policies that allow for the orderly expansion of urban development supported by adequate urban public services.

COMPONENTS OF GROWTH

The timing, magnitude, and location of land development and population growth in a community or region are based on various interrelated land use and economic variables. Key variables include regional economic trends, market demand for residential and non-residential uses, land availability and cost, the availability and quality of transportation facilities and public services, proximity to employment centers, the supply and cost of housing, and regulatory policies or conditions. Since the general plan of a community defines the location, type and intensity of growth, it is the primary means of regulating development and growth in California.

GROWTH EFFECTS OF THE PROJECT

Based on Government Code Section 65300, the 2008-2028 General Plan is intended to serve as the overall plan for the physical development of Tehama County. While the General Plan does not specifically propose any development projects, it does regulate future population and economic growth of the County that would result in indirect growth-inducing effects.

Implementation of the 2008-2028 General Plan would refine existing land use designations in the County, establish new policies, actions and design guidelines to guide and manage future development and land uses in the County. This would also include policy direction on roadway facility improvements, public service improvements and the extension and expansion of utilities. The subsections in Section 4.0 discuss the specific environmental effects resulting from the proposed land use patterns and associated extension of public services, by environmental issue. If the 2008-2028 General Plan were to result in full buildout of the proposed land uses, 184,810 residential units and a population of approximately 484,203 would result. However, as discussed in Section 3.0, this growth is not likely to occur within the 2008-2028 planning period. As such, a number of growth projections were analyzed which resulted in a determination of the highest growth scenario for the planning period. Projections calculate an anticipated 2028 unincorporated population to be 63,385 persons and 26,972 housing units.

As described above, the 2008-2028 General Plan would induce further population and job growth in the County. The 2008-2028 General Plan could indirectly induce growth if it would remove an obstacle to additional growth and development, such as removing a constraint on a required public service. Proposed roadway improvements would support such growth within the County's Planning Area. The 2008-2028 General Plan also would encourage the development of infrastructure, including extension of infrastructure into unserved areas, to support the projected development. As a result, the 2008-2028 General Plan is considered to be growth-inducing. Sections 4.1 through 4.14 of this DEIR address the environmental effects of this growth within the County's Planning Area.

It is anticipated that agricultural areas to the west and south of the proposed Planning Area may be pressured to develop, if adjacent lands are developed and infrastructure extended under the proposed project.

Annexation of land beyond the City of Red Bluff and Corning current borders would add pressure to areas within and surrounding the County's Planning Area. In addition, the extension of infrastructure and would place growth pressure on adjoining land areas. Ultimately, these Cities would continue to control land use and growth within the City's Sphere of Influence through their adopted General Plan and zoning provisions and Colusa County would also continue to control land use and growth through its General Plan and zoning provisions.

SECONDARY EFFECTS OF GROWTH

This EIR discusses the environmental effects associated with the implementation of the project. Environmental effects of growth on adjacent properties resulting in conversion of existing land uses especially on lands beyond the City's proposed Planning Area would be similar to those associated with the proposed project evaluated in Sections 4.1 through 4.14, which includes impacts associated with traffic, noise, air quality, hydrology and water quality, hazards, public services, utilities and services, cultural resources, geological resources, biological resources, land use, population and housing, agricultural resources and visual resources. However, this growth would further contribute to these local and regional environmental impacts beyond the effects of the project.