

## SECTION 4: CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

### 4.1 - Introduction

CEQA Guidelines Section 15130 requires the consideration of cumulative impacts within an EIR when a project's incremental effects are cumulatively considerable. Cumulatively considerable means, "the incremental effects of an individual project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects." In identifying projects that may contribute to cumulative impacts, the CEQA Guidelines allow the use of a list of past, present, and reasonably anticipated future projects, producing related or cumulative impacts, including those that are outside of the control of the lead agency.

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(b), "the discussion of cumulative impacts shall reflect the severity of the impacts and their likelihood of occurrence, the discussion need not provide as great [a level of] detail as is provided for the effects attributable to the project alone." The discussion should be guided by standards of practicality and reasonableness, and it should focus on the cumulative impact to which the identified other projects contribute rather than on the attributes of other projects that do not contribute to the cumulative impact.

In compliance with CEQA, Sacramento LAFCo establishes the following standard in its Policies, Standards, and Procedures Manual:

- Chapter 4, General Standards
  5. An EIR completed on a project subject to LAFCo review shall contain a discussion of the following topics:
    - a. County-wide or cumulative impacts which concern LAFCo.

The proposed project's cumulative impacts were considered in conjunction with other proposed and approved projects in Sacramento County that concern or have some level of involvement or authority with LAFCo. Table 4-1 provides a list of the projects considered in the cumulative analysis.

**Table 4-1: Cumulative Projects**

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Status</b>
Sacramento County	City of Galt Sphere of Influence EIR	Consists of both an added area of approximately 1,053 acres and the detachment of territory of approximately 1,613 acres from the current SOI. The amended SOI would result in a net decrease of approximately 560 acres from the existing SOI.	Sacramento County	Completed
	RE Kammerer Road Solar Facility	15-megawatt solar farm facility consisting of ground-mounted photovoltaic solar modular array panel blocks on 115 acres of an approximately 160-net-acre site	8212 Kammerer Road (within the proposed SOIA Area)	Pending
	Grundman/Wilkinson Solar Farm	18-megawatt solar farm facility (ground-mounted photovoltaic solar array panels) on 139.2 acres of an approximately 154.82-net-acre site	10743 Bruceville Road (within the proposed SOIA Area)	Pending
	RE Bruceville Road Solar Facility	15-megawatt solar facility consisting of ground-mounted photovoltaic solar modular array panel blocks on 115 acres of an approximately 119.67-net-acre site	11281 Bruceville Road	Pending
	Point Pleasant Road Solar Facility	1-megawatt solar facility (ground-mounted photovoltaic solar array panels) on approximately 9.7 acres of an approximately 67.306 net-acre site	6116 Point Pleasant Road	Pending
	City of Sacramento General Plan and EIR	General Plan Update (in process; boundaries of City are not changing)	City of Sacramento	Completed
	County of Sacramento General Plan and EIR	General Plan Update	County of Sacramento	Completed

**Table 4-1 (cont.): Cumulative Projects**

Jurisdiction	Project	Characteristics	Location	Status
Sacramento LAFCo	Folsom Annexation Request	The proposed project involves the annexation of approximately 3,600 acres into the City of Folsom.	The project is generally located within the City's South of Highway 50 sphere of influence.	Approved
Multiple Jurisdictions	Southeast Connector	The proposed project is a 35-mile multi-modal transportation facility that will link communities in Sacramento and El Dorado Counties, including Elk Grove, Rancho Cordova, Folsom, and El Dorado Hills.	Multiple locations	Pending
El Dorado County, Placer County, Sacramento County, Sutter County, Yolo County, Yuba County	Sacramento Area Council of Governments Metropolitan Transportation Plan 2035	Comprehensive long-range transportation plan for the region's multi-modal transportation system and one of SACOG's primary statutory responsibilities as the region's Metropolitan Planning Organization	Sacramento Metropolitan Planning Area	Completed
State of California	Bay Delta Conservation Plan	Water diversion and conveyance project with components for ecosystem levee protection along the Delta	Sacramento, Yolo, Solano, Contra Costa, Stanislaus, and Alameda counties	Pending

## 4.2 - Cumulative Impact Analysis

The cumulative impact analysis below is guided by the requirements of CEQA Guidelines Section 15130. Key principles established by this section include:

- A cumulative impact only occurs from impacts caused by the proposed project and other projects. An EIR should not discuss impacts that do not result from the proposed project.

**Cumulative Effects**

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- When the combined cumulative impact from the increment associated with the proposed project and other projects is not significant, an EIR need only briefly explain why the impact is not significant; a detailed explanation is not required.
- An EIR may determine that a project's contribution to a cumulative effect impact would be rendered less than cumulatively considerable if a project is required to implement or fund its fair share of mitigation intended to alleviate the cumulative impact.

The cumulative impact analysis that follows relies on these principles as the basis for determining the significance of the proposed project's cumulative contribution to various impacts.

**4.2.1 - Aesthetics**

The geographic scope of the cumulative aesthetics analysis is the area surrounding the project area. This is the area within view of the project and therefore, the area most likely to experience changes in visual character or experience light and glare impacts.

The land use designations surrounding the project area include primarily agricultural uses to the south, east, and west, and urban uses to the north. Other planned or reasonably foreseeable roadway improvement projects in the immediate area include Kammerer Road and Grant Line Road that form the proposed Sphere of Influence Amendment (SOIA) Area's north and northeastern boundaries, respectively. In addition, two solar facilities are proposed within the SOIA Area as separate applications (not part of the proposed project), and one application is proposed immediately south of the SOIA Area.

The project, in combination with planned and reasonably foreseeable projects, could result in substantial changes to the aesthetic character of the study area. The project would replace rural setting with urban character. Other planned and reasonably foreseeable projects would introduce structures that would reduce the intactness and unity of the agricultural and rural visual landscape and scenic vistas, as well as introduce substantial new sources of light and glare resulting in a cumulative impact on visual quality. Mitigation in this Recirculated Draft EIR requires any application to annex territory within the SOIA Area to comply with the City of Elk Grove's Citywide Design Guidelines by minimizing the use of reflective materials in building design and designing outdoor light fixtures to be directed/shielded downward and screened. Mitigation also requires on-site tree preservation or off-site mitigation or payment of an in-lieu fee.

Cumulative impacts would be reduced through design measures incorporated into future development to be sensitive to the rural and agricultural views. In addition, general plan policies would have the effect of reducing cumulative visual change, such as the creation of open space areas and view corridors to preserve key visual elements, and would result in development that is aesthetically pleasing. However, alteration of visual character from agricultural to urban uses and adverse effects on scenic vistas would be an unavoidable and cumulatively significant impact.

#### **4.2.2 - Agricultural Resources**

The geographic scope of the cumulative agricultural resources analysis is focused on Sacramento County. Therefore, it is most appropriate to use the Sacramento County boundary as the basis for assessing cumulative impacts.

Development and land use activities within both the SOIA Area and nearby areas have the potential to result in the conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural use, conflict with Williamson Act contracts, and creation of pressures that cause the premature conversion of agricultural land. In addition, implementation of the Southeast Connector would have the potential to directly impact farmland.

Future development of the SOIA Area may result in the conversion of approximately 400 acres of Prime Farmland, 132 acres of Unique Farmland, and 5,236.6 acres of Farmland of Statewide Importance. These conversions would make up approximately 2.7 percent of the total important farmland acreage known to exist in Sacramento County in 2010 (approximately 211,744 acres) (Elk Grove DEIR 2003). Given the rate of conversion in Sacramento County, this would be a significant cumulative impact. Mitigation measure MM AG-1 requires project applicants preserve one acre of farmland land of equal or higher quality for each acre of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance that would be developed as a result of the project. This measure also requires minimum conservation easement content standards. This would ensure that some agricultural land is preserved; however, conversion of agricultural land would still occur. Mitigation Measure AG-3 would require the City to prepare a plan to avoid land use compatibility conflicts prior to annexation. Although conversion of Important Farmland in Sacramento County anticipated as a result of potential development of the SOIA Area would be mitigated by protection of other farmland, the project would still result in the loss of Important farmland and the project's contribution to this cumulative impact is considered significant and unavoidable.

#### **4.2.3 - Air Quality**

The geographic scope of the cumulative air quality analysis is the Sacramento Valley Air Basin. Air pollution is regarded as a regional issue; therefore, this area would be the area most likely to be impacted by project emissions.

All of the projects listed in Table 4-1 would result in new air emissions, during construction or operations (or both). Future annexation and development activities within the proposed project area could accommodate more population and jobs than anticipated by the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (SMAQMD) air quality attainment plans and Sacramento Area Council of Government's (SACOG) Metropolitan Transportation Plan's growth assumptions and, therefore, would be inconsistent with both applicable SMAQMD air quality attainment plans. Furthermore, the project may result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is nonattainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard.

Mitigation is proposed requiring an Air Quality Plan incorporating policies and other measures at least as stringent as those found in Elk Grove General Plan Policies CAQ-27 through CAQ-33 and associated actions, as well as compliance with all recommended SMAQMD measures to address construction emissions. . However, impacts associated with the potential project conflict with the applicable air quality plans remains significant and unavoidable as the potential for population growth and increased vehicle miles traveled (VMT) associated with the conceptual growth that may result from future development under the proposed SOIA demonstrates a substantial increase compared with existing conditions. According to SMAQMD CEQA guidance, projects that conflict with the applicable air quality plans would also result in cumulatively considerable air quality impacts. In addition, the project area is located within an air basin that is classified a severe non-attainment area for State and federal ozone and PM standards. The growth in population, vehicle usage and business activity within the non-attainment area, when considered with growth proposed under the Elk Grove General Plan and throughout Sacramento County, would contribute to cumulative regional air quality impacts. Implementation of the proposed project along with other growth in the area may either delay attainment of the standards or require the adoption of additional controls on existing and future air pollution sources to offset project-related emission increases. The contribution of emissions from subsequent development in the SOIA area would be cumulatively and is considered significant and unavoidable.

#### **4.2.4 - Biological Resources**

The geographic scope of the cumulative biological resources analysis considers the range of each species or resource, which could encompass portions of the County or larger portions of the Central Valley or State.

Development and land use activities within both the SOIA Area and nearby areas have the potential to result in impacts to special-status plant and animal species, sensitive natural habitat, and trees. Mitigation is included that requires project-level biological surveys; avoidance, preparation and implementation of a Habitat Conservation Management Plan (HCMP); a tree survey, and a tree preservation and monitoring plan; Swainson's hawk and other raptor preconstruction surveys and avoidance actions; Swainson's hawk and Greater sandhill crane foraging habitat mitigation; and permitting compliance with federal and state wetlands, waterways and streambed alterations and wetland habitat mitigation that would reduce impacts. However, impacts related to habitat modifications, on special-status wildlife species would remain significant and unavoidable. All other project-related biological impacts were found to be less than significant and did not require mitigation. Other projects that result in similar impacts would be required to mitigate for their impacts. Because the project would contribute to an overall reduction in total habitat for species such as Swainson's hawk and other raptors, it would have a cumulatively considerable contribution when considered with growth and development on a regional scale.

#### **4.2.5 - Cultural Resources**

The cumulative analysis for cultural resources impacts considers a broad cultural and regional system of which the resources are a part. The cumulative context for the cultural resources analysis for the proposed project includes Sacramento County as a whole.

Future development and land use activities within both the SOIA Area and the County have the potential to result in impacts to documented and undiscovered cultural resources such as artifacts, fossils, and burial sites. The general plan, other long-term planning documents, and regulatory agency guidance establish policies that require mitigation for impacts on potential cultural resources (e.g., evaluation requirements and inadvertent discovery procedures). Furthermore, these documents call for protection of known historic resources and mitigation in instances where previously undiscovered resources are encountered. However, even though Federal, State, and local laws are in place that protect these resources, as discussed above, there is potential for due to or loss of previously undiscovered resources that are encountered during construction activities. Therefore, the cumulative impact would be considered significant. Because all significant cultural resources are unique and non-renewable members of finite classes, all adverse effects erode the dwindling resource base, so the project's incremental contribution to these significant cumulative impacts would be potentially cumulatively considerable. Compliance with mitigation measures MM CUL-1 through MM CUL-3 would ensure that potential resources are identified and treated as required by regulations to protect any identified resources. This would ensure the project's cumulative contribution could be reduced to a less-than-considerable level.

#### **4.2.6 - Geology, Soils, and Seismicity**

The geographic context for the analysis of impacts resulting from geologic hazards is generally site-specific, rather than cumulative in nature, because every project site has different geologic considerations. In addition, every project would be subject to uniform site development and construction standards, adherence to which would provide adequate levels of safety to ensure that the cumulative impact would be less than significant.

#### **4.2.7 - Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

Greenhouse gas emissions contribute, on a cumulative basis, to the significant adverse environmental impacts of global climate change. No single project could generate enough greenhouse gas emissions to noticeably change the global average temperature. The combination of greenhouse gas emissions from past, present, and future projects contributes substantially to the phenomenon of global climate change and its associated environmental impacts and as such are addressed only as a cumulative impact. As identified in Section 3.7, mitigation measure MM GHG-1 establishes three threshold options to evaluate potential future development in the SOIA Area and mandates the achievement of at least one. These three threshold options are currently being used by air districts throughout the State and were established with the purpose of complying with AB 32, which represents the Statewide effort to substantially reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Therefore, since mitigation

measure GHG-1 requires that emissions associated with future development comply with at least one threshold, the project would be compliant with AB 32 and thus represent a less than cumulatively considerable impact.

#### **4.2.8 - Hazards and Hazardous Materials**

The geographic scope of the cumulative hazards and hazardous materials analysis is Sacramento County.

Future development and land use activities within both the SOIA Area and nearby areas have the potential to result in impacts associated with hazardous materials usage, risk of upset, exposure of schools, emergency evacuation, and wildfires. The general plan, other long-term planning documents, and regulatory agency guidance establish policies that require compliance with hazardous materials handling regulations, inspection and reporting requirements, first responder training, identification of evacuation and response procedures, and wildfire protection measures. Furthermore, the project proposed a mitigation measure that requires that properties that are suspected or known to contain hazardous materials and sites that are listed on or identified on any hazardous material/waste database search and surrounding areas are reviewed, tested, and remediated for potential hazardous materials in accordance with all local, state, and federal regulations. Therefore, the overall cumulative impact related to hazards would be reduced to less than significant through compliance with existing regulations.

#### **4.2.9 - Hydrology and Water Quality**

The geographic scope of the cumulative hydrology and water quality analysis consists of the two watersheds the SOIA Area straddles (American River and Cosumnes River). Hydrologic and water quality issues have the potential to affect downstream areas; therefore, using watersheds as a basis for analysis provides for a conservative evaluation of cumulative impacts.

Future development and land use activities within both the SOIA Area and nearby areas have the potential to create adverse impacts associated with water quality, groundwater, flooding, and drainage. Development projects would require compliance with City of Elk Grove Municipal Code Chapter 16.44, Land Grading and Erosion Control, including compliance with provisions of the City's NPDES Permit, as well as identification of all types of flood hazards and locations of flood management facilities and demonstration that post-development storm water run-off peak flows and volumes will not exceed pre-development levels for land within the 100-year floodplain, that would reduce impacts to less than significant level. In addition, mitigation to require that new projects in the SOIA Area not result in new or increased flooding impacts on adjoining parcels on upstream and downstream areas would reduce the project's drainage impacts to less than significant. All other project-related hydrological impacts were found to be less than significant and did not require mitigation. Other projects that result in similar impacts would be required to mitigate for their impacts. Because other project in the American River and Cosumnes River watersheds would be



required to comply with the same regulations that require SWPPPs and BMPs, the overall cumulative impact from development would be less than significant.

#### **4.2.10 - Land Use and Planning**

Land use inconsistencies are not physical effects in and of themselves and combinations of policy inconsistencies would not rise to the level of a physical effect. There would be no cumulative impact related to land use. Cumulative effects of the physical changes related to the project are discussed in the other topics in this section.

#### **4.2.11 - Mineral Resources**

The geographic scope of the cumulative mineral resources analysis is Sacramento County. Mineral resources are most commonly evaluated in the context of countywide resources; therefore, it is most appropriate to use this as the basis for assessing cumulative impacts.

Future development within the County may contribute to the loss of mineral resources through conversion of Mineral Resource Zones to urban uses. However, the SOIA Area is not located in a designated mineral resources zone. Therefore, future urbanization of proposed project would not contribute to conversion of Mineral Resource Zones or the loss in availability of these resources. The project's contribution to this impact would be less than cumulatively considerable.

#### **4.2.12 - Noise**

The geographic scope of the cumulative noise analysis is the project vicinity, including surrounding sensitive receptors. Noise impacts tend to be localized; therefore, the area within 0.5-mile of the project site would be the area most affected by project activities.

Development within the SOIA Area may result in increased traffic noise along roadways used by project-generated traffic. As indicated in Section 3.12, Noise, the traffic noise increases associated with such development would range from 0 to 10 dB  $L_{dn}$  relative to cumulative conditions without the project. The project-related increases would exceed the project thresholds of significance on nine roadway segments. As a result, this impact is considered significant. Mitigation is proposed that would require any application to annex territory within the SOIA Area to comply with Chapter 6.32 of the City of Elk Grove Municipal Code regarding noise exposure, reducing impacts to future sensitive receptors to a less than significant level. While repaving the affected segments using open-graded asphalt, rubberized asphalt, or similar material could reduce traffic noise levels 4 dB, thereby reducing this impact to a level of insignificance along some segments, this measure would not provide the required to degree of noise reduction to fully mitigate this impact along all affected roadway segments. In addition, because of driveway access requirements and other physical constraints, the construction of solid noise barriers at the existing residences located along these impacted sections is similarly considered infeasible. The Sacramento County General Plan Policy NO-9 pertains to increased traffic noise levels that result from capacity-enhancing roadway

improvement projects. However, this policy would not be applicable to the increase in traffic noise levels that would result from future buildout of the SOIA Area, because the area would be under City jurisdiction. Other projects shown in Table 4-1 would generate trips that contribute to this cumulative impact. As such, the proposed project's contribution to the cumulative noise environment would be cumulatively considerable.

#### **4.2.13 - Population and Housing**

The geographic scope of the cumulative population and housing analysis is Sacramento County, which is the area most likely to be affected by project activities.

Future development and land use activities within both the SOIA Area and Sacramento County may result in population and employment growth. The City of Elk Grove is proposing expansion of its SOI boundary to accommodate future population and housing growth and help in achieving jobs housing balance. The SOIA expansion is intended to accommodate growth projected to occur in the City and the SOIA Area would provide sufficient acreage to accommodate projected population and employment growth. Furthermore, any application to annex territory within the Sphere of Influence Amendment Area would be required to comply with a proposed mitigation measure requiring the City of Elk Grove to revise and update its General Plan in accordance with state law that address the annex territory and establish in their Housing Element (updated to reflect the annex territory) that it has or will meet its regional share of housing needs for all income levels. Therefore, the SOIA would likely not induce substantial growth outside of the SOIA Area and the project's contribution to growth inducement would not be considerable.

#### **4.2.14 - Public Services**

The geographic scope of the cumulative public services and recreation analysis is the SOIA Area and the service areas of the public service providers that may potentially serve the project area, such as the Cosumnes Community Services District's Fire Department, the City of Elk Grove Police Department, the City of Elk Grove and the Cosumnes Community Services District Parks Department, the Cosumnes Community Services District, the Sacramento Public Library Authority, and the Elk Grove Unified School District.

Future development and land use activities within both the SOIA Area and neighboring jurisdictions have the potential to increase demands for such public services as fire protection, emergency medical response, police protection, schools, parks, libraries, and recreational facilities. Specifically, the assumed growth projection for the SOIA Area would lead to an indirect increase in the need for higher levels of fire protection, including additional staffing, vehicles, and facilities, as well as enhanced level of law enforcement services. As discussed in Section 3.14, Public Services, it is assumed that facilities needed to provide adequate public services in the SOIA Area would be constructed within the SOIA Area, and construction of these facilities would result in significant and unavoidable effects physical effects related to aesthetics, agricultural resources, air quality, biological

resources, noise, and transportation/traffic. The provision of public services would represent only a small portion of these impacts and would not be considered cumulatively considerable.

#### **4.2.15 - Transportation/Traffic**

The geographic scope of the cumulative transportation analysis is the Sacramento area.

Future development and land use activities within the SOIA Area may generate 218,000 vehicle trips per day. The traffic analysis identified several roadways that would operate at an unacceptable level of service and would require improvements should the SOIA Area become fully developed in the future. Mitigation is proposed requiring the applicant to provide fair-share impact fees to fund the future improvements. However, some of the roadways affected by this mitigation measure would not be in the jurisdiction of the City of Elk Grove. Other planned and approved projects would also add significant numbers of new trips to local roadways. Therefore, the proposed project, in conjunction with other projects, would have a cumulatively considerable contribution to unacceptable roadway and freeway operations. This would be a significant and unavoidable impact.

Future development and land use activities within the SOIA Area would implement mitigation measures that would require update to the City's Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan as well as its Transit Master Plan. It is reasonable to assume that other projects would also be required to provide public transit, bicycle, and pedestrian access. Therefore, the proposed project, in conjunction with other projects, would not have any cumulatively considerable impacts on these transportation-related areas.

#### **4.2.16 - Utilities and Service Systems**

The geographic scope of the cumulative utility systems analysis is the SOIA Area and the service areas of the utility providers that may potentially serve the project area, such as the Sacramento County Water Agency, the Sacramento Area Sewer District, the Cosumnes Community Services District, the Sacramento Municipal Utility District, the Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District, and Pacific Gas and Electricity).

Future development and land use activities within both the SOIA Area and neighboring jurisdictions have the potential to increase demands for utilities including water, wastewater, storm drainage, solid waste, and energy. Mitigation is proposed that would require that City demonstrate that there is adequate water and wastewater treatment capacity and infrastructure planned or available prior to annexation activity. However, these impacts were found to be significant and unavoidable at the project level. Because the demand of the proposed project in combination with other cumulative demand on water supply and wastewater treatment plant capacity could exceed the availability of these utilities, this cumulative impact is considered significant and the project's contribution would be cumulatively considerable and significant and unavoidable.

