

5 INTRODUCTION TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

5.1 SCOPE OF THE DRAFT PEIR

In accordance with Section 15082(a) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, the City of Folsom prepared and circulated a Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) for the proposed project. The NOP for the 2035 General Plan Draft PEIR was published on August 18, 2017 (State Clearinghouse No. 2017082054). The NOP and Project Description were circulated to the public, state and local agencies, and other interested parties to solicit comments on the 2035 City of Folsom General Plan (2035 General Plan). The City held a scoping meeting for the Draft PEIR consistent with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15082(c), and closed the period for public and agency comment on the NOP on September 18, 2017.

Environmental issues and alternatives raised by comments received on the NOP during the 30-day public review period were considered for inclusion in the Draft PEIR. (See Appendix A, *Notice of Preparation*, and Appendix B, *Comments on the Notice of Preparation*.) Public and agency comments received on the NOP were reviewed, and environmental issues identified in the comment letters are individually referenced in Appendix B to indicate the specific section in the Draft PEIR where these issues are addressed. Pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines, the focus of this Draft PEIR includes the specific issues identified in the NOP, as well as concerns identified in the responses to the NOP.

The issues to be evaluated in the environmental document as shown in Table 5-1 were identified in the NOP or raised in public and agency comments on the NOP.

Table 5-1 Environmental Topics Evaluated in the Draft PEIR

Land Use, Population and Housing	Aesthetics and Visual Resources	Agricultural and Forestry Resources
Air Resources	Biological Resources	Cultural Resources
Geology, Soils, and Mineral Resources	Global Climate Change	Hazards and Hazardous Materials
Hydrology and Water Quality	Noise and Vibration	Public Services and Recreation
Transportation and Circulation	Tribal Cultural Resources	Utilities and Service Systems
Alternatives	Cumulative Impacts and Other Required CEQA Topics	

5.2 CONTENTS OF THE DRAFT PEIR

The State CEQA Guidelines require that all EIRs include specified content (State CEQA Guidelines Sections 15122 to 15130). Table 5-2 sets forth the location in this Draft PEIR where required content appears.

Table 5-2 CEQA Required Content of Draft EIRs

CEQA Requirement	Where It Appears in this Draft PEIR
Table of Contents	Table of Contents
Summary	Chapter 2, Executive Summary of the Draft PEIR
Project Description	Chapter 3, Project Description
Environmental Setting	Chapters 3, 4, 6 – 21 of the Draft PEIR
Environmental Impacts	Chapters 4, and 6 – 21 of the Draft PEIR
Significant Environmental Impacts	Chapters 4, and 6 – 21 of the Draft PEIR
Mitigation Measures	Chapters 2, 4, and 6 – 21 of the Draft PEIR
Alternatives to the Proposed Project	Chapter 20 of the Draft PEIR
Effects Found Not to Be Significant	Chapters 2, 4, and 6 – 21 of the Draft PEIR
Organizations and Persons Consulted	Chapter 23 of the Draft PEIR
Cumulative Impacts	Chapter 21 of the Draft PEIR

5.3 PRESENTATION OF THE IMPACT ANALYSIS IN THE DRAFT PEIR

The environmental analysis section of this Draft PEIR (Chapters 4 and 6 through 21) is organized and carried out in accordance with the CEQA Environmental Checklist (Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, 2017). Each chapter presents the setting, an assessment of the potential indirect and secondary environmental impacts, and, if needed, mitigation measures for each environmental issue area identified in Table 5-1 and in Chapter 2, *Executive Summary*. Cumulative impacts are evaluated in Chapter 21, *Required CEQA Analyses*. For each resource category, the following conditions are discussed:

- **Environmental Setting.** This section provides a general overview of the environmental resource and the conditions on and adjacent to the project area (described in Section 5.5). The setting is presented from local and regional perspectives as appropriate for each environmental topic.
- **Regulatory Framework.** For federal, state, regional agencies, and the City of Folsom, this section presents applicable laws, ordinances, regulations, and guidance for the resource.
- **Environmental Effects.** This section provides significance criteria with which to judge whether an environmental impact is significant, or less than significant. Significance criteria are established both by State CEQA Guidelines, and by significance thresholds of federal, state, and local agencies. Potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed project are assessed, the impacts' level of significance prior to mitigation is identified, and feasible mitigation measures for reducing the associated impacts are set forth. The level of significance after mitigation is then assessed.

5.4 ENVIRONMENTAL BASELINE

As stated in the State CEQA Guidelines (Section 15125(a)), an EIR must describe the existing conditions in the vicinity of the proposed project. For each of the environmental resources assessed in this Draft PEIR, the description of existing environmental and regulatory conditions is included under the “Regulatory Setting” and “Environmental Setting” headings in each chapter.

In describing existing conditions, it is necessary to establish a date at which these conditions exist. As stated in the State CEQA Guidelines (Section 15125(a)), existing conditions are normally assessed “at the time the notice of preparation is published” or if a notice of preparation is not published “at the time environmental analysis is commenced.” The section further states, “[t]his environmental setting will normally constitute the baseline physical conditions by which a Lead Agency determines whether an impact is significant.”

As discussed in Sections 5.5.2 and 5.5.3 of this Draft PEIR, two baselines were used for this Draft PEIR. As discussed in Section 5.5.1, the coverage impact baseline is established as the year 2017, as the Notice of Preparation was prepared in August 2017. For traffic-related impacts (air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, noise, and traffic), the baseline is the year 2015 as established by the Sacramento Area Council of Governments’ (SACOG) Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS) (SACOG 2016). For other intensity effects that rely upon the size of the service population, the baseline is August 2017, similar to that used for coverage impacts.

5.5 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE 2035 GENERAL PLAN AND EVALUATION OF POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

Implementation of the 2035 General Plan would result in future land development, construction of infrastructure, and other actions that would result in increased levels of human activity, and that would convert or cover portions of the landscape. These actions would occur within areas designated by the existing 1988 General Plan and the 2035 General Plan for urban uses. Future development would consist of a variety of land uses, including residences, commercial activities, industrial uses, and the infrastructure necessary to support urban development.

This Draft PEIR focuses on the secondary or indirect effects of implementing the proposed 2035 General Plan¹. Section 15358(a)(2) of the State CEQA Guidelines defines secondary or indirect impacts as:

Indirect or secondary effects (*are those*) which are caused by the project and are later in time or farther removed in distance, but are still reasonably foreseeable. Indirect or secondary effects may include growth-inducing effects and other effects related to induced changes in the patterns of land use, population density, or growth rate, and related effects on air, water, and other natural systems, including ecosystems.

Indirect physical changes to the environment (impacts) that could result from implementation of 2035 General Plan or project alternatives are addressed in the appropriate technical chapters of this Draft PEIR. Likewise, inconsistency with an adopted plan, in general, is not considered a direct physical impact to the environment, but may result in impacts, which would be discussed in the appropriate technical chapters. According to this definition, potential secondary or indirect environmental effects may be divided into two broad classes:

¹ Section 15358 of the State CEQA Guidelines defines direct and indirect impacts. Direct impacts are defined as those impacts caused by a project that occur at the same time and place. No construction, operation, or other actions that could result in environmental effects would occur upon approval of the 2035 General Plan. Rather, any activity that could cause impacts would be manifested later in time over a dispersed area with implementation of the land uses, transportation and utility infrastructure, and policies of the 2035 General Plan.

- **Coverage Impacts** - Those that result from development or other activities covering land or otherwise physically interfering with a resource (e.g., constructing a paved parking lot over a sensitive biological resource); and,
- **Intensity Impacts** - Those that result from increased levels of human activity (e.g., increases in traffic levels leading to increased emissions of criteria air pollutants).

The definitions of these two types of potential effects as used in this Draft PEIR analysis are discussed further in Sections 5.5.2 and 5.5.3. In practice, an environmental topic, or some aspects of the topic, may be subject to a combination of both types of impacts.

5.5.1 AREAL EXTENT OF IMPACT ANALYSIS

The 2035 General Plan does not identify any additional areas designated for urban uses beyond those set forth in the 1988 General Plan as amended through fall 2017. Therefore, the environmental analysis concentrates its evaluation on those undeveloped areas designated for urban uses and the resources still present within them, including within the Folsom Plan Area Specific Plan (FPASP) area, south of Highway 50.

Locations where impacts are not assessed for the 2035 General Plan include Planning Areas 1 and 2 as indicated on Figure 3-2. Within Planning Area 1 all future urban development has been entitled previously by Sacramento County. Since the land uses within Planning Area 1 will compose the westerly gateway to the City of Folsom, the 2035 General Plan identifies this Planning Area as an area of concern to the City. The 2035 General Plan does not designate land uses within Planning Area 1, and sets forth no goals or policies to amend the City's sphere of influence to include Planning Area 1 or to annex the area in the future. For these reasons, with two exceptions, no impacts are assessed for urban development within Planning Area 1. The first exception is in the Draft PEIR's evaluation of future traffic conditions (see Draft PEIR Chapter 17), which evaluates traffic effects in the year 2035 by adding traffic generated by County-approved land uses within Planning Area 1 to traffic volumes generated with implementation of the 2035 General Plan as well as background traffic from Sacramento and El Dorado counties outside of these two areas within SACOG's traffic model. The second is in the Draft PEIR's evaluation of water supply (see PEIR Chapter 19). Because the City of Folsom is the water provider for the County-approved Glenborough and Easton projects within Planning Area 1, the future water demands of those two projects are assessed together with the future demands of buildout of the City of Folsom consistent with the 2035 General Plan.

Planning Area 2 comprises a portion of the City's designated Area of Concern, adopted by the Sacramento Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) in July 1996 (LAFCo 1996). Planning Area 2 consists largely of grazing land, but also includes gravel quarries and a portion of the Prairie City State Vehicular Recreation Area. The Sacramento County 2030 General Plan designates this area as General Agriculture. Planning Area 2 also makes up a portion of an area designated as "Vacant Urban Designated Lands (2050)" in SACOG's Sacramento Region Blueprint - Preferred Blueprint Scenario. As set forth in the Preferred Blueprint Scenario, through 2050 urban growth in Folsom will occur on vacant land within the current city limits (including the FPASP area) with small areas of existing urban uses being redeveloped with more intense mixed uses (SACOG, 2004). Under the SACOG's Preferred Blueprint Scenario, the area designated as Vacant Urban Designated Lands, including lands within Planning Area 2, would not be developed until after the year 2050.

The horizon year of the proposed Folsom General Plan is 2035. Therefore, consistent with SACOG's Preferred Blueprint Scenario, the 2035 General Plan does not assign any land uses or policies to Planning Area 2, other than a policy reference regarding relocation of the City's Corporation Yard.² Because there are no other land uses or policies assigned to Planning Area 2, the Draft PEIR does not assess the environmental effects of implementing the 2035 General Plan in Planning Area 2. However, potential effects related to growth inducement in Planning Area 2 are assessed in Chapter 4, *Land Use, Population, and Housing*, and Chapter 20, *Alternatives Analysis*, of this Draft PEIR.

5.5.2 COVERAGE IMPACTS

These impacts are based on the conversion of existing vacant parcels to a developed land use. Conversion can result in the eradication of, or damage to, a resource, revealing of environmental conditions detrimental to a developed land use, or exposure of the developed use to an existing environmental hazard. For the purposes of evaluating these effects, this Draft PEIR assumes that all land identified for urban uses in the 2035 General Plan would be developed with such uses within the 20 year planning horizon.

The areal coverage of developed uses that would occur with implementation of the 2035 General Plan as shown on Figure 3-2, excludes Planning Areas 1 and 2 as discussed in Section 5.5.1. For areas designated for urban or infrastructure uses by the 2035 General Plan, potential coverage effects for certain environmental topics were assessed in a multi-step process. Quantitative evaluations began with a review of resources potentially affected by the implementation of the 2035 General Plan project, and the areal extent of identified resources.

To determine the locations where a resource could be converted to developed uses under the proposed 2035 General Plan, an inventory of each environmental resource within each urban area project boundary was completed. Using Geographic Information Systems (GIS), all parcels or lots within the 2035 Plan Evaluation Area were identified as developed or vacant (see Figure 5-1). Vacant parcels were further identified as being located north of Highway 50, or south of Highway 50 within the FPASP area. For vacant parcels north of Highway 50, the analysis identified 453 total vacant parcels encompassing 441 acres. Of these 453 parcels, 377 are lots within existing single-family residential subdivisions totaling 163 acres, with a gross median lot size of 16,125 square feet. Of the remaining 76 parcels, the majority are designated for commercial or multi-family uses. For these uses, the total acreage is 278 acres with a gross median parcel size of 37,150 square feet. Once the 453 parcels were identified, each was evaluated using aerial photographs to determine its condition. As evidenced on the aerial photographs, the overwhelming majority of both the single-family residential and Commercial/Multi-family residential parcels are remnant areas within subdivisions or larger development projects, and most have been disturbed by prior rough grading and/or the construction of roads and utilities.

² The Sacramento Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) is currently processing an application by the City of Folsom and others to amend the City's Sphere of Influence to include a 58-acre area at the southwest corner of Prairie City Road and White Rock Road. If Sacramento LAFCo approves the Sphere of Influence Request, the City will pursue amendment of the City's 1988 General Plan and Zoning Map, and submit a request to LAFCo to annex the area for the sole purpose of a future municipal corporation yard. Upon completion of these entitlements, the City could construct a relocated Corporation Yard at this location.

There are a total of 3,336 acres in the FPASP area south of Highway 50, of which 1,118³ acres would remain in open space. The remaining 2,218 acres would be developed with a variety of urban land uses and supporting infrastructure. Although potential environmental impacts could occur throughout the 2035 Plan Evaluation Area, the majority of the land available for new development of urban uses (77 percent of the citywide total or 2,218 acres) would be located within the FPASP area.

The possibility of potential coverage impacts was determined by layering maps of sensitive resources (e.g., sensitive species, areas of naturally occurring asbestos, flood hazards) over the map of vacant parcels (see Figure 5-1) using GIS. The results of this type of analysis are reported in the following chapters of the Draft PEIR:

- 6. Aesthetics and Visual Resources
- 7. Agricultural and Forestry Resources
- 9. Biological Resources
- 10. Cultural Resources
- 11. Geology, Soils, and Mineral Resources
- 13. Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- 14. Hydrology and Water Quality
- 18. Tribal Cultural Resources

5.5.3 INTENSITY IMPACTS

Intensity impacts, such as those for traffic, air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, and noise, depend upon both the location and level of human activity. Other impacts, such as those to public services and utilities depend upon the size of the served population.

The 2035 General Plan proposes no increases in the amount of land identified for urban uses beyond that currently identified in the 1988 General Plan as amended. However, the development of urban uses on vacant land designated and available for residential and employment uses would result in an increase in the number of people and jobs in the city over existing (2015/2017) conditions. For intensity impacts, this Draft PEIR evaluates a forecast of 2035 conditions consistent with the land uses identified in the 2035 General Plan.

The 2035 development forecast is based on a buildout model prepared by Mintier Harnish and DKS for use in the analysis of future traffic conditions. Summarily, the buildout model forecasts full development of all planned land uses within the existing city limits, full buildout of the Easton and Glenborough projects as approved by Sacramento County, and background land use assumptions outside of the city, Glenborough, and Easton consistent with the land use assumptions of SACOG's MTP/SCS. Because the MTP/SCS forecasts conditions for the year 2036, the buildout model used in this Draft PEIR interpolates 2035 conditions, the horizon year for the proposed Folsom General Plan. For traffic modeling purposes, these estimates were disaggregated and assigned to specific geographic areas (Traffic Analysis Zones, or TAZs). (For more information regarding the inputs and assumptions of the buildout model, see Appendix D, *Folsom Holding Capacity Methodology*, of this Draft PEIR.)

³ Of the 1,118 acres of open space, 1,054 acres would be qualified or Measure W open space. For further information regarding the different types of open space, see Chapter 3, *Project Description*, of this Draft PEIR.

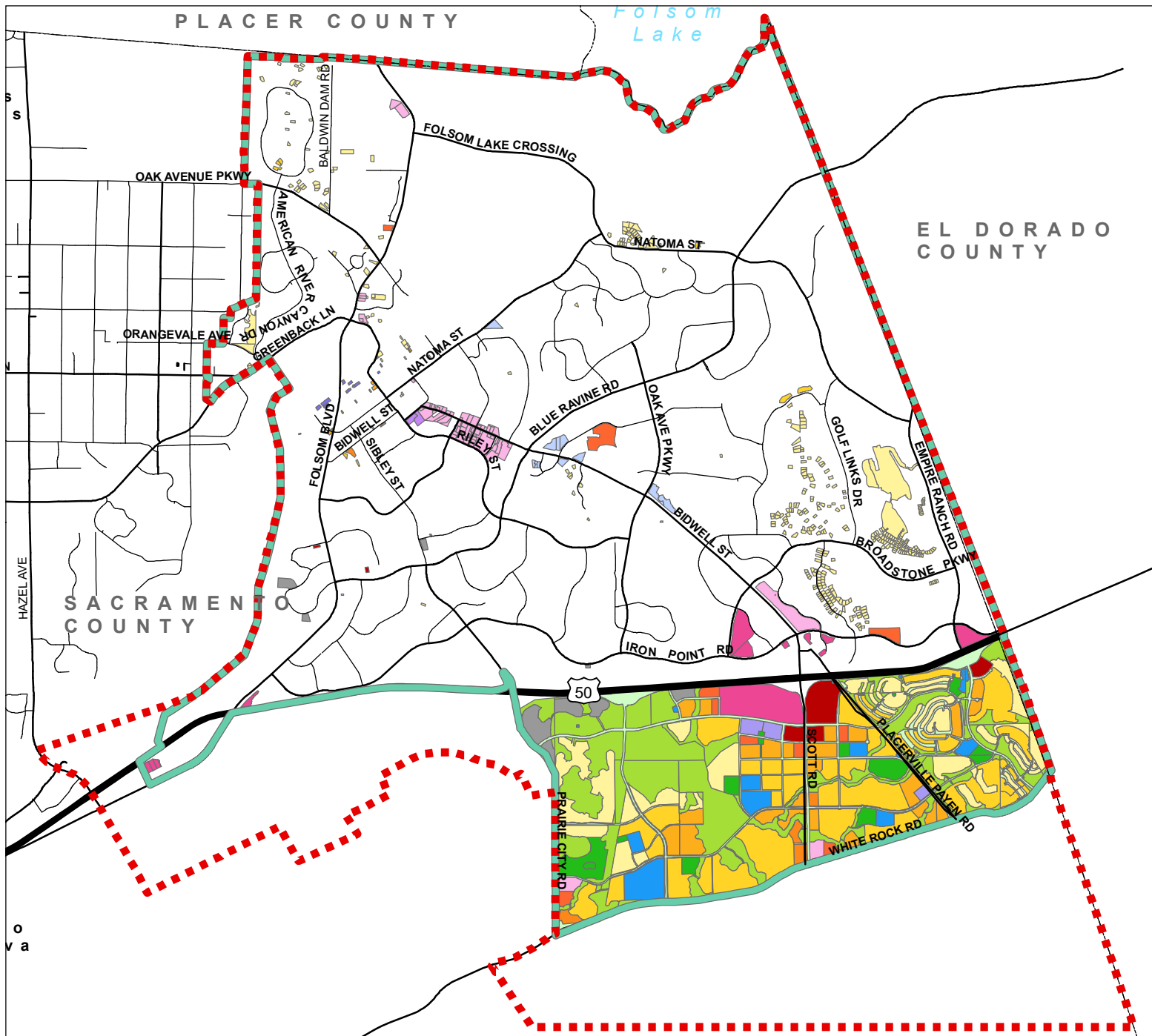
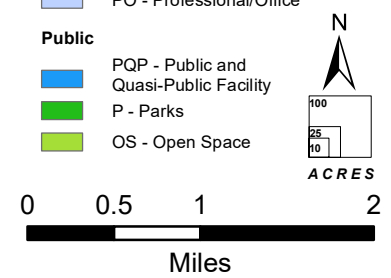


Figure 5-1
City of Folsom
Folsom Holding Capacity:
Vacant and Undertutilized
Sites

- 2035 General Plan Planning Area
 - Folsom City Boundary
 - County Boundary
- Residential**
- SF - Single Family
 - SFHD - Single Family High Density
 - MLD - Multifamily Low Density
 - MMD - Multifamily Medium Density
 - MHD - Multifamily High Density
- Commercial**
- GC - General Commercial
 - CC - Community Commercial
 - RCC - Regional Commercial Center
 - AOC - Auto-Oriented Commercial
- Mixed Use**
- MU - Mixed Use
 - HF - Historic Folsom Mixed Use
- Employment/Industrial**
- IND - Industrial/Office Park
 - PO - Professional/Office
- Public**
- PQP - Public and Quasi-Public Facility
 - P - Parks
 - OS - Open Space



Created by
 Planning Partners 2018.
 Additional Sources:
 City of Folsom, 2017;
 County of Sacramento, 2017.

The results of this forecast are set forth in Table 5-3. While the 2035 General Plan does not identify any additional areas designated for urban uses beyond those set forth in the 1988 General Plan as amended through fall 2017, not all areas designated for urban uses have been developed as of August 2017, the baseline date for the environmental analysis. See Table 5-3.

Table 5-3 2035 Conditions with Implementation of the Folsom 2035 General Plan

Totals	Existing Developed and Open Space Areas 2017	Incremental Increase in Developed and Open Space Areas from 2017 - 2035 ⁴	Total of Existing Plus 2017 - 2035 Development
Total General Plan acreage ¹	13,437	3,993	17,430
Open Space Acreage	,3,973	0	3,973
Total Developed Acreage	9,464	3,993	13,457
Dwelling units ²	27,997	15,250	43,247
Population ³	78,525	31,883	110,408
Employment	54,496	10,777	65,273

Notes:

¹ 2017 numbers from Mintier Harnish (2017)

² 2017 numbers from California Department of Finance (2017)

³ 2017 numbers from TAZ data provided by DKS (2017)

⁴ The incremental increase in developed and open space areas from 2017 to 2035 represents the new development or preserved open space lands that would be developed or preserved on vacant or underutilized lands as they existed in fall 2017. As proposed by the 2035 General Plan, the incremental increase would consist of the completion of the land uses designated by the 2035 General Plan.

Sources: Mintier Harnish 2017, DKS 2017.

As with the Coverage Impact analysis, the Intensity Impact Analysis focuses on the difference between the location and level of human activity currently existing (2015/2017), and the level of activity that would exist with implementation of the 2035 General Plan. The results of this type of analysis are reported in the following chapters of the Draft PEIR:

- 8. Air Resources
- 12. Global Climate Change
- 15. Noise and Vibration
- 16. Public Services and Recreation
- 17. Transportation
- 19. Utilities and Service Systems

5.6 PRESENTATION OF MITIGATION IN THE DRAFT PEIR

Mitigation measures identified in this Draft PEIR are characterized in one of two categories: 1) necessary to reduce the identified impact below a level of significance; and 2) recommended to reduce the magnitude of a significant impact, but not below a level of significance. Where implementation of more than one mitigation measure is needed to reduce an impact below a level of significance, this fact is noted.

Mitigation measures in this Draft PEIR are formulated to be consistent with the strategy as set forth in State CEQA Guidelines Section 15370 as follows:

- Avoiding the impact altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action,
- Minimizing impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation,
- Rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the impacted environment,
- Reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action,
- Compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments,
- Modification or addition of policies or implementing actions included as part of the 2035 General Plan,
- Modification of land use, circulation, or other policy diagrams in the 2035 General Plan capable of minimizing or eliminating a potentially significant impact; and
- Requiring other actions (e.g., actions performed by another agency).

5.7 FREQUENTLY USED TERMS

Implementation - This term implies that something is constructed and becomes operational, or a policy or procedure is enacted and becomes effective.

Conversions and Equivalencies

1 acre = 43,560 square feet
 1 square mile = 640 acres
 1 mile = 5,280 feet

Project Area – See Section 5.5.1. For more information regarding the location and area of the project, see Chapter 3, *Project Description*.

Less-than-Significant Impact (LS) - A less-than-significant impact is an impact that would not result in a substantial and adverse change in the environment and would not require mitigation.

Significant Impact (PS) - CEQA (PRC Section 21068) defines a significant impact as an environmental effect that has “a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project.” Levels of significance can vary by project, based on the change in the existing physical condition and the “...substantial body of opinion that considers or will consider the effect to be adverse...” The State CEQA Guidelines provide a list of consequences that would normally be regarded as having a significant effect on the environment. This Draft PEIR uses the CEQA definition of significant impacts together with the local environmental standards established by the City. Mitigation measures are proposed, when feasible, to reduce the magnitude of significant impacts.

Significant and Unavoidable Impact (SU) - A significant and unavoidable impact is one that would result in a substantial adverse effect on the environment which could not be mitigated to a less-than-significant level. A project could still proceed with significant unavoidable impacts, but the City would then be required to prepare a Statement of Overriding Considerations, pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15093, that would explain why the City would proceed with the project despite the occurrence of the impacts.

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