

## 6 OTHER CEQA CONSIDERATIONS

This chapter addresses other California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) considerations that are required as part of an EIR. These considerations are:

- ▶ Cumulative Impacts (Section 6.1);
- ▶ Growth-Inducing Impacts (Section 6.2);
- ▶ Significant Irreversible Environmental Changes (Section 6.3); and
- ▶ Significant Unavoidable Environmental Effects (Section 6.4).

### 6.1 CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

Section 15130 of the State CEQA Guidelines requires the analysis of all cumulatively considerable impacts resulting from a proposed project. Section 15355 defines a cumulative impact as “two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts.” Cumulative impacts can originate from one project or from separate projects. Cumulative impacts result when two or more impacts of a project combine and increase the severity or significance of either impact. Cumulative impacts can also be created when impacts from separate projects combine to make a compound impact that is more severe than the impacts would have been had the projects occurred in isolation.

This chapter identifies cumulative impacts that could be created as a result of implementation of the 2030 General Plan. Pursuant to Section 15130 of the State CEQA Guidelines, “(t)he discussion of cumulative impacts shall reflect the severity of the impacts and their likelihood of occurrence, but the discussion need not provide as great detail as is provided for the effects attributable to the project alone.” According to State guidance, the discussion in this section is guided by the standards of practicality and reasonableness and focuses on the cumulative impacts to which the identified other projects contribute rather than the attributes of other projects which do not contribute to the cumulative impact.

The cumulative analysis examines impacts of the 2030 General Plan taken together with other past, present, and probable future projects producing related impacts. This chapter examines the cumulative effects of the 2030 General Plan combined with impacts resulting from buildout of plans for Marysville, Wheatland, Yuba City, adjacent counties, other nearby cities, and other related projects and plans in the region. The analysis in this section includes two important parts:

1. a determination of whether the long-term impacts of all related past, present, and future plans and projects would cause a cumulatively significant impact; and
2. a determination as to whether implementation of the 2030 General Plan would have a “cumulatively considerable” contribution to any significant cumulative impacts.

Effects related to greenhouse gas emissions are inherently cumulative in nature. A detailed discussion of effects of the 2030 General Plan related to greenhouse gas emissions is presented in Section 4.7 of this EIR.

#### 6.1.1 METHODS OF ANALYSIS

For the purposes of evaluating cumulative impacts, the State CEQA Guidelines allow the use of two alternative methods to determine the scope of projects to be considered:

- ▶ **List method**— A list of past, present, and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts, including, if necessary, those projects outside the control of the lead agency (in this case, Yuba County).

- ▶ **Regional growth projections method**— A summary of projections contained in adopted general plans or related planning documents, or in a prior environmental document that has been adopted or certified, which described or evaluated regional or areawide conditions contributing to the cumulative impact.

This analysis uses the regional growth projections method (sometimes called “the plan method”). The analysis examines population, housing, and employment growth projections for jurisdictions in Yuba, Sutter, Butte, Nevada, and Placer Counties.

## 6.1.2 GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE

The geographic scope that could be affected by the proposed project varies depending on the issue topic. The geographic area associated with different environmental effects was used to define the area considered for cumulative impacts. The cumulative geographic scope for air pollutant impacts, such as those related to emissions of ozone precursors, is very broad, encompassing large areas within the same air basin. The cumulative geographic scope for stationary source noise impacts, on the other end of the spectrum, is relatively narrow, since noise attenuates substantially with distance, making impacts more localized.

The environmental impact analysis throughout this EIR occurs at the countywide scale and, over the long term, describes environmental impacts of implementing the 2030 General Plan. Chapter 4 of this EIR presents an analysis of countywide environmental effects over a long period of time, allowing the County to take into account certain cumulative environmental effects. Significance conclusions, mitigation measures, and 2030 General Plan policies and actions that would reduce impacts of implementation of the 2030 General Plan would often, but not always, reduce cumulative impacts.

Table 6-1 provides information on the geographic scope considered for cumulative impacts on different resource areas addressed in this EIR.

<b>Table 6-1 Geographic Scope of Cumulative Impacts</b>	
Issue Area	Geographic Area
Aesthetic Resources	Yuba County
Agricultural Resources	Sacramento Valley
Air Quality	Sacramento Valley Air Basin; odor impacts are localized
Biological Resources	Yuba County and the Sacramento Valley
Climate Change	Global, regional, and local (project site and vicinity) (See Section 4.7 for detailed discussion of this impact area)
Cultural Resources	Yuba County, Sacramento Valley, portions of the foothills – the cumulative scope for cultural resources depends on the type and scientific significance of potential finds; for resources related to mining history, the cumulative scope could include other portions of the foothills in California affected by gold rush activity, for example.
Geology, Soils, Minerals, and Paleontological Resources	Valley Growth Boundary, rural communities, and directly adjacent areas – effects are generally localized; paleontological resources are considered at a broader scale reflecting the extent of the Modesto Formation, which is considered a paleontologically sensitive rock unit that extends throughout the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys
Hydrology and Water Quality	Sacramento Valley Groundwater Basin
Land Use	Regional development anticipated in Yuba County adjacent counties (Placer, Sutter, Butte, and Nevada counties).

<b>Table 6-1 Geographic Scope of Cumulative Impacts</b>	
Issue Area	Geographic Area
Noise and Vibration	Effects are generally localized; traffic noise impacts occur along local, Countywide, and regional roadways affected substantially by 2030 General Plan traffic
Parks and Open Space	Valley Growth Boundary, rural communities, and directly adjacent areas – depends on specific impact as effects are generally localized
Public Health and Hazards	Valley Growth Boundary, rural communities, and directly adjacent areas – depends on specific impacts as effects are generally localized
Population, Housing, and Employment	Yuba County and adjacent counties (Placer, Sutter, Butte, and Nevada counties).
Utilities and Service Systems	Valley Growth Boundary, rural communities, and directly adjacent areas – depends on specific service or utility
Transportation and Circulation	Regional and local facilities affected by 2030 General Plan land use and traffic

### 6.1.3 REGIONAL GROWTH PROJECTIONS

In order to understand the related present and future plans that would have related cumulative impact to those anticipated in the 2030 General Plan, the County has collected information on existing and projected future population and employment for surrounding areas. Table 6-2 lists the estimated population, number of households, and number of jobs in Yuba County and the surrounding counties, and in the incorporated cities and the projections for the same in 2030 or 2035. Just as the County would expect to grow substantially during the General Plan time horizon, there is also growth anticipated in adjacent areas.

<b>Table 6-2 Estimated and Projected Population, Housing, and Employment—2009 and 2035</b>						
Jurisdiction	Population		Housing Units		Jobs	
	2010	2035*	2010	2035*	2005***	2035*
<b>Sutter County</b>						
Live Oak	8,791	14,028	2,427	4,831	1,140	2,712
Yuba City	65,372	94,571	22,706	35,777	22,642	38,441
Unincorporated Sutter County	24,991	25,667	8,639	9,313	4,377	8,643
<b>Sutter County Total</b>	<b>99,154</b>	<b>134,266</b>	<b>33,772</b>	<b>49,921</b>	<b>28,159</b>	<b>49,796</b>
<b>Yuba County</b>						
Marysville	12,867	13,336	5,019	5,977	7,854	9,720
Wheatland	3,558	23,056	1,215	8,490	634	4,699
Unincorporated Yuba County	56,955	118,106	22,010	42,834	13,165	25,260
<b>Yuba County Total</b>	<b>73,380</b>	<b>154,498</b>	<b>28,244</b>	<b>57,301</b>	<b>21,019</b>	<b>39,679</b>

<b>Placer County</b>						
Auburn	13,578	17,985	6,041	7,868	8,153	8,525
Colfax	1,993	4,246	875	1,813	1,081	1,925
Lincoln	41,111	112,209	17,804	40,904	7,994	38,427
Loomis	6,743	8,336	2,462	3,228	3,762	4,822
Rocklin	56,019	69,155	21,397	26,700	15,405	27,262
Roseville	115,781	172,500	47,190	72,789	60,167	100,402
Unincorporated Placer County	111,877	186,278	54,913	75,936	35,089	66,313
<b>Placer County Total</b>	<b>347,102</b>	<b>570,709</b>	<b>150,682</b>	<b>229,238</b>	<b>131,651</b>	<b>247,676</b>
<b>Butte County</b>						
Biggs	1,787	3,997	634	1,397	--	--
Chico	88,228	127,212	37,159	52,860	--	--
Gridley	6,454	13,170	2,449	4,923	--	--
Oroville	14,687	28,582	6,393	12,203	--	--
Paradise	26,310	33,667	12,789	16,134	--	--
Unincorporated Butte County	84,302	114,687	37,199	49,749	--	--
<b>Butte County Total*</b>	<b>221,768</b>	<b>321,315</b>	<b>96,623</b>	<b>137,266</b>	<b>88,714</b>	<b>123,539</b>
<b>Nevada County</b>						
<b>Nevada County Total</b>	<b>98,680</b>	<b>123,940</b>	<b>51,013</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>
*: Projections for Butte County jurisdictions are for 2030, not 2035. ***Existing jobs are from SACOG for 2005. ***Existing job figure for Butte County is from 2006. Sources: DOF 2007 and 2010, SACOG 2008, BCAG 2006						

## 6.1.4 CUMULATIVE EFFECTS OF THE 2030 GENERAL PLAN

### AESTHETIC RESOURCES

Development in Sutter County, Butte County, Nevada County, and Yuba County cities would cause substantial changes to the exiting visual character. Important visual resources present in Yuba County (agricultural lands, views of the Sutter Buttes and the Sierra Nevada, waterways, etc.) would be affected by land use change under the cumulative scenario by related projects and plans. There is a **significant** cumulative aesthetics impact.

As development occurs in the unincorporated County and surrounding areas, substantial changes in visual conditions would continue as open viewsheds are replaced by urban development. Increased urban development would also lead to increased nighttime light and glare in the region and more limited views of the night sky and sky glow effects, and would disrupt the rural nature of the area. The effect of these changes, when considering the related projects, on aesthetic resources from past and planned future projects is a cumulatively **significant** impact.

Assessment of visual quality is a subjective matter and reasonable people may differ as to the aesthetic value of the open space and grazing lands in the unincorporated County, and whether development of urban uses would constitute a substantial degradation of the existing visual character or quality of the County and its surroundings. Implementation of the 2030 General Plan would substantially alter the visual or aesthetic character within the

Valley Growth Boundary, rural communities, and directly adjacent areas by converting agricultural lands and open space to developed urban uses.

The 2030 General Plan includes all feasible mitigation in the form of policies and actions. Beyond these, there is no mechanism to allow implementation of the 2030 General Plan and the related projects while avoiding the conversion of open space and agricultural use to urban development. No feasible mitigation is available to completely mitigate impacts on visual resources associated with the conversion of agricultural land and open space to urban development, impacts on views of scenic vistas (including views of agricultural landscapes and the Sutter Buttes), and contribution to light and glare; there is no mechanism to allow implementation of development projects while avoiding the conversion of the local viewsheds from agricultural land uses and open spaces to urban development.

As noted in the 2030 General Plan, drafting of the general plan update was guided by the vision to protect agricultural lands, rural landscapes, air and water quality, and natural resource areas that prove to be positive characteristics of Yuba County, and that are important to maintaining quality of life for citizens of Yuba County.

The County's aesthetic priorities are described in the Natural Resources Element, Visual Resources Goals NR 9, NR 10 and NR 11. The Natural Resources Element goals and policies address conservation of locally-important visual resources, as well as maintaining view corridors for important regional visual resources, such as the Sutter Buttes.

Among other visual resources noted in the 2030 General Plan area are large native trees found with the riparian forest habitat along the Feather River and Bear River, there are scattered native trees and large nonnative trees along roadsides and agricultural fields throughout the County that contribute to the local and regional aesthetic character. The 2030 General Plan includes implementing actions to develop a tree preservation ordinance to preserve oak woodlands, oak trees, and other large trees (Action NR 10.1).

The County's land use policies to encourage infill development and redevelopment of vacant and underutilized properties within existing unincorporated communities have visual as well as air quality benefits. The County will seek funding for design and implementation of air quality, noise, and visual buffers along regional transportation routes. The County will coordinate with regional transportation agencies and drainage districts to find opportunities to use these same buffer areas for natural drainage conveyance, multi-modal transportation routes, visual buffering, community gardens, and for other useful public purposes.

Despite the range of policies and programs in the 2030 General Plan that would reduce or avoid adverse aesthetics impacts throughout Yuba County, urban development of agricultural lands and open space would occur. Growth and development in adjacent counties (Sutter County, Butte County, Nevada County and Placer County) would involve similar conversion of former agricultural lands, open space, and elements of the rural landscape. Cumulative aesthetics impacts are considered **significant**.

Given the large scale of this development and the rural nature of the regional setting, the impacts on visual resources from implementing projects accommodated under the 2030 General Plan is **cumulatively considerable**. All feasible mitigation is included as policies and actions of the 2030 General Plan. This impact is **significant and unavoidable**.

## **AGRICULTURAL AND FOREST RESOURCES**

Conversion of Important Farmland in the Sacramento Valley is a **significant** cumulative impact resulting from urbanization. The cumulative loss of forestland through development in the region is considered a **significant** cumulative impact, also. There are no properties protected by Williamson Act contracts in Yuba County and, therefore, no cumulatively considerable contribution to any impact related to the Williamson Act. See Section 4.2 of this EIR for more detail.

Implementation of the 2030 General Plan would permanently convert Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, and Unique Farmland, located in Yuba County to nonagricultural, urban and built up uses. As described in Section 4.2, Agricultural Resources, the Proposed Project, at buildout in 2030, would result in the conversion of approximately 5,683 acres of Prime, Statewide Important or Unique Farmlands. The 2030 General Plan would also combine with past, present, and future development within the Sutter, Butte, and Yuba County farming areas and larger Sacramento Valley region to convert Important Farmland to urban use. The 2030 General Plan includes policies and actions to balance the need for development with the need to protect the County's ongoing agricultural heritage and economic base. The 2030 General Plan Land Use Diagram calls for development to be focused within the Valley Growth Boundary, with limited development outside of the boundary. This Valley Growth Boundary effectively establishes long-term agricultural areas within valley portions of the unincorporated County to be conserved for ongoing agricultural activities (see Policy CD1.1, Policy CD1.2, and Policy CD1.3). The Land Use Diagram also maps Rural Community boundaries for the unincorporated communities, which are mostly located in the foothill and mountain portions of the County, which will serve a similar function in directing any development to areas within Rural Community Boundary Areas and preserving open space areas, including those serving an agricultural purpose.

However, the direct conversion of agricultural land would contribute to the incremental decline of Important Farmland in the region and result in the irreversible conversion of this agricultural land. The loss of Important Farmland is a **cumulatively considerable** impact when considered in connection with the significant cumulative losses that would occur through implementation of the proposed project, past farmland conversions, and planned future development.

Much of the County's forest lands are located on protected federal lands, which would preclude major development from affecting those lands. Most of the development anticipated under implementation of the 2030 General Plan would occur within the Valley Growth Boundary rather than in the foothills and mountains, where the County's forest resources are located. Policies and actions in the 2030 General Plan would reduce adverse impacts to forest lands. Rural development under the 2030 General Plan would be focused within a series of Rural Community Boundary Areas, which include a minor amount of timberland. As noted, in Section 4.2, Agricultural Resources, there is the potential for the conversion of approximately 245 acres of timberland. For the period from 2006 to 2008 applications for rezoning of land designated timberland production zone (TPZ) affected a total of 3,340 acres in Butte County and 597.5 acres in Placer County (CDF 2009).

Project objectives include planning proactively for long-term development and conservation within Yuba County's rural communities, in order to make them more environmentally and economically sustainable places. Another objective of this project is to maintain the existing Rural Community Boundary Areas, which are reflected in the existing (1996) General Plan. The forest land areas that could potentially be affected by implementation of the General Plan are within the existing (1996) Rural Community Boundary Areas. The conversion of forestland in Yuba County combined with timberland conversion in adjacent counties as a result of rural community development and rural subdivisions is a **significant** cumulative impact.

The 2030 General Plan, while maintaining existing (1996) rural community boundaries, would make a **considerable contribution** to this significant cumulative impact. Other than the policies and actions included in the General Plan, there is no additional feasible mitigation available to address this potentially significant impact. This impact is **significant and unavoidable**.

## AIR QUALITY

Air quality in the region does not meet State of California standards. Construction and operation of projects accommodated under regional plans could have a long-term impact on a region's emission profile and ability to attain and maintain NAAQS and CAAQS. The cumulative effects from short- and long-term criteria pollutants generated from the proposed 2030 General Plan, combined with related projects, creates a **significant** cumulative impact.

Feather River Air Quality Management District (FRAQMD) significance thresholds are intended to be used to judge whether or not the subject project would have a cumulatively considerable impact. Ozone precursor thresholds are set at a level that would, with compliance, prevent further deterioration of ambient air quality and a regionally cumulative significant impact (e.g., worsened status of non-attainment). Particulate matter thresholds for use at the project level were designed to represent the emission levels above which a project's individual emissions would result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to the region's existing air quality conditions. Construction-related and operational criteria air pollutant emissions associated with General Plan buildout would exceed FRAQMD significance thresholds. Therefore, the 2030 General Plan would have a **cumulatively considerable** contribution to air pollutants in the region. All feasible mitigation is included as policies and actions of the 2030 General Plan and compliance with existing standards (including FRAQMD standard construction mitigation). This impact is **significant and unavoidable**.

Implementation of the new General Plan would result in less-than-significant CO-related air quality impacts from local mobile sources. Since the model used in the traffic analysis is a regional transportation model, this is representative of the cumulative condition. Therefore, the impact would also be **less than significant** on a cumulative basis.

Toxic air contaminants (TACs) are considered in land use planning in association with sensitive land uses. Projects and plans throughout the region would contribute roadway and railway traffic that could occur near sensitive receptors, resulting in a **significant** cumulative impact. Sensitive land uses or sensitive receptors are people or facilities that generally house people (e.g., schools, hospitals, residences, etc.) that may experience adverse effects from unhealthful concentrations of air pollutants. There are numerous types of these receptors throughout Yuba County, particularly concentrated near populated areas. Operational activities that require the use of diesel-fueled vehicles for extended periods, such as commercial trucking facilities or delivery/distribution areas, may generate diesel particulate matter (DPM) emissions near sensitive receptors. Although commercial and industrial uses that would be developed under the 2030 General Plan have not been specifically identified, it is likely that commercial uses that could be developed under the 2030 General Plan would have tenants that would require large delivery and shipping trucks that use diesel fuel. The General Plan includes policies that would require buffers between sensitive land uses and sources of TACs. The General Plan anticipates that the review and conditioning of projects, including buffering and other measures to promote compatibility of adjacent land uses, would be formalized through updates to County Codes. Despite the implementation of 2030 General Plan policies and actions, existing regulations, it is possible that sensitive land uses may be exposed to substantial TAC concentrations. Growth in roadway and railroad traffic under the 2030 General Plan, combined with regional growth in the cumulative scenario could represent a significant cumulative impact. The County considers the contribution of the 2030 General Plan to be **cumulatively considerable**. All feasible mitigation is included as policies and actions of the 2030 General Plan. This impact is **significant and unavoidable**.

Exposure to odors that occurs under the 2030 General Plan is not anticipated to combine with regional sources of odors in a way that would generate cumulatively considerable impacts. Odor impacts are generally localized and do not combine with odor impacts in nearby jurisdictions to increase the severity of impacts. There is **no significant** impact.

See Section 4.7 of this EIR for the discussion of Greenhouse Gas impacts of the General Plan, including potentially cumulative impacts. The County's greenhouse gas reduction plan describes the County's strategy for compliance with AB 32-related requirements and the related air quality, transportation, public investment benefits and strategy for compliance with state and federal legislation.

## **BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

Past development in Yuba County, ranging from conversion of land to agricultural production to recent expansion of urban development, has resulted in a substantial loss of native habitat to other uses. This land conversion has benefited a few species, such as those adapted to agricultural, urban, and rural-scale developed uses, but the

overall effect on native plants, animals, and habitat has been negative. Although many future projects and plans included in the cumulative scope of this analysis would be required to mitigate those impacts, in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act, Federal Endangered Federal Species Act, California Endangered Species Act, and other state, local, and federal statutes, many types of habitats and species are provided no protection. Therefore, it can be expected that the net loss of native habitat for plants and wildlife, agricultural lands, and open space areas that support important biological resources in Yuba County and related areas will continue. The cumulative loss of habitat for special status species, such as habitat for riparian and aquatic species (e.g., California red-legged frog, giant garter snake, and western yellow-billed cuckoo) have already resulted in drastic declines in numbers of these species. This is a **significant cumulative impact**. Please refer to Section 4.4 of this EIR for more details.

Implementing the 2030 General Plan could result in further loss of special status species and their habitat. Continued development of natural resources areas will result in the incremental decline in the amount of habitat remaining to support special-status species and sensitive natural communities. The 2030 General Plan would contribute to an ongoing decline of special status species and habitats.

The cumulative conversion of habitat for development and agricultural use has resulted in the reduction in populations of twenty-five plant species in Yuba County that have been listed as special status. Special-status plants that occur in vernal pool complex could be affected by development under the 2030 General Plan. Furthermore, habitat modification and fragmentation as a result of development that could occur under the 2030 General Plan could degrade habitat quality to a degree that it no longer supports special-status plant populations.

The 2030 General Plan policies and actions require avoidance of impacts to special-status species and their habitats. The Natural Resources Element also designates various types of open space, including open space required to protect critical habitat and other important biological resources. Therefore, the 2030 General Plan's contribution to a significant cumulative impact would be reduced by implementing the General Plan policies and actions. However, it may not be feasible to completely avoid direct and indirect impacts, while still allowing full build out of the designated land uses and therefore the 2030 General Plan would have a **cumulatively considerable** contribution to this significant cumulative impact. All feasible mitigation is included as policies and actions of the 2030 General Plan. This impact is **significant and unavoidable**.

In Yuba County, most established riparian vegetation occurs along the largest rivers; the Feather River, Yuba River, and Bear River, and south Honcut Creek. Important riparian corridors also occur along Dry Creek and other tributaries to Honcut Creek and the Yuba River. Riparian vegetation is present in the surrounding region along the Sacramento River and in the Sutter Bypass. Agricultural, residential, and industrial water use and land development have resulted in a **significant cumulative** reduction in the extent of riparian habitats in the County and surrounding region. Implementing Action NR 5.3, which requires private and public projects to provide setbacks to protect riparian habitat as a condition of project approvals, is expected to substantially reduce impacts on riparian habitats. However, complete avoidance may not be possible while still allowing full build out of the designated land uses. Therefore, the 2030 General Plan would have a **cumulatively considerable** contribution to this significant cumulative impact. All feasible mitigation is included as policies and actions of the 2030 General Plan. This impact is **significant and unavoidable**.

The complex array of habitats in Yuba County and adjacent counties supports abundant and diverse fauna because large tracts of land are covered by habitats known to have outstanding value for wildlife, such as mixed coniferous forests and oak woodlands. Migratory bird species use these forests for breeding during summer months and rice fields in the northern Sacramento Valley, including western Yuba County and Sutter County are also considered important wildlife habitat because of their position in the Pacific Flyway, the westernmost of North America's four flyways, or migration routes. Conversion of agricultural lands and forests and woodlands for developed land uses in the region has resulted in a **significant cumulative impact** to wildlife that are dependent upon these habitats. All feasible mitigation is included as policies and actions of the 2030 General Plan. This impact is **significant and unavoidable**.

The policies and programs of the 2030 General Plan would avoid, minimize, and/or compensate for potential adverse effects to migratory wildlife and habitat used in wildlife movement. These policies include protection for anadromous fish habitat, deer ranges and migratory habitat, and riparian habitat which is commonly used by various wildlife species for migration. However, avoidance of migratory routes and potential migratory habitat is not mandatory and the 2030 General Plan does not identify or designate any land specifically for migratory habitat conservation. Therefore the extent to which significant impacts would be reduced by implementing the General Plan policies cannot be known in advance of specific project designs. Complete avoidance would not be possible while still allowing full build out of the designated land uses. Therefore, the 2030 General Plan would have a **cumulatively considerable** contribution to this significant cumulative impact. All feasible mitigation is included as policies and actions of the 2030 General Plan. This impact is **significant and unavoidable**.

The alteration of the hydrologic condition supporting long-term soil saturation and conversion to other uses, primarily agriculture, has resulted in a **significant cumulative impact** to freshwater emergent wetlands in Yuba County and the surrounding region. These habitat types are considered sensitive by the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and also typically fall under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, pursuant to the Federal Clean Water Act.

Implementing the 2030 General Plan could result in the loss of freshwater emergent wetland and vernal pool complex with vernal pools and swales. Implementing the General Plan policies and actions listed above, along with the additional mitigation measures, is expected to reduce significant impacts on wetland and other waters of the United States requiring delineation and avoidance of these habitats to the maximum extent feasible, establishment of wetland habitat buffers, and by providing compensation for unavoidable impacts in a manner that would ensure no net loss of overall wetland habitat in the County. Complete avoidance would not be possible while still allowing full build out of the designated land uses. Therefore, the 2030 General Plan would have a **cumulatively considerable** contribution to this significant cumulative impact. All feasible mitigation is included as policies and actions of the 2030 General Plan. This impact is **significant and unavoidable**.

The County anticipates that implementation of the Yuba-Sutter Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP) / Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) would reduce cumulative biological resources impacts. The Yuba-Sutter NCCP/HCP is a cooperative planning effort intended to:

- ▶ continue economic growth and community development;
- ▶ retain the economic vitality of the local agricultural community;
- ▶ maintain recreation, hunting, fishing, and other public uses of the local open space;
- ▶ simplify and expedite land use and conservation planning in the plan area;
- ▶ protect threatened and endangered species; and
- ▶ preserve plant and wildlife communities.

The Yuba-Sutter Regional NCCP/HCP will provide an opportunity to mitigate potential impacts to biological resources that may occur through implementation of the General Plan. The NCCP/HCP is still in draft form as of the writing of this document, but the County anticipates that it will be finalized and adopted before the 2030 General Plan is fully implemented. 2030 General Plan policies and actions to ensure compliance with the NCCP/HCP, once adopted. There is **no cumulative impact**.

Climate change impacts could involve disruption for biological resources. In California, the timing and amounts of water released from reservoirs and diverted from streams are constrained by their effects on various native fish, especially those that are listed under the federal and state endangered species acts as threatened or endangered. Several potential hydrological changes associated with global climate change could influence the ecology of aquatic life in California and have several negative effects on cold-water fish. If climate change raises air temperature by just a few degrees Celsius, this change could be enough to raise the water temperatures above the tolerance of salmon and trout in many streams, favoring instead non-native fish, such as sunfish and carp. Unsuitable summer temperatures would be particularly problematic for many of the threatened and endangered

fish that spend summers in cold-water streams, either as adults, juveniles, or both. In short, climate change could significantly affect threatened and endangered fish in California. It could also cause non-threatened and non-endangered fish to reach the point where they become designated as such (DWR 2006). The degree to which the 2030 General Plan could contribute to a significant cumulative climate-change related biological resources impact is unknown at this time.

## CULTURAL RESOURCES

Cultural resources in the region generally consist of prehistoric sites, historic sites, historic structures, and isolated artifacts. During the 19th and 20th centuries, localized urbanization and intensive agricultural use in the region caused the destruction or disturbance of numerous prehistoric sites, while many structures now considered to be historic were erected. From the latter half of the 20th century to the present, prehistoric and historic structures have been disturbed and destroyed. During this period, the creation and enforcement of various regulations protecting cultural resources have substantially reduced the rate and intensity of these impacts. However, even with these regulations, cultural resources are still degraded or destroyed as cumulative development in the region proceeds. Development of projects and plans assumed in the cumulative scenario has the potential to result in the discovery of undocumented subsurface cultural resources or unmarked historic-era or prehistoric Native American burials. However, these potential impacts would not increase in severity in consideration of cumulative projects.

Cumulative gains in population, households, and jobs would require a commensurate increase in infrastructure, capital facilities, services, housing, and commercial uses in Yuba County, its incorporated cities, and areas adjacent counties. Each of these increases carries with it a corresponding increase in the magnitude of ground disturbance and the construction of new buildings and structures and other site development activities. The impact on archaeological deposits, human remains, and paleontological resources would be substantial given the past extent of urban development, and anticipated gains in population, jobs, and housing. There is a **significant** cumulative impact to cultural resources.

Due to the nature of cultural resources, adverse impacts are site-specific and need to be determined on a project-by-project basis. The incorporation of standard measures addressing the response when undocumented resources are discovered would address this potential impact. The proposed policies of the 2030 General Plan constitute mitigation available to reduce impacts on cultural resources due to development in the unincorporated County. With implementation of General Plan policies and actions, in addition to other applicable state regulations, the impacts of the 2030 General Plan would be reduced. However, with the level of development and earth disturbance accommodated under the 2030 General Plan, it is possible that significant cultural resources could be affected. The impact is considered **cumulatively considerable**. All feasible mitigation is included as policies and actions of the 2030 General Plan. This impact is **significant and unavoidable**.

## GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Cumulative impacts on geology and soils would be less than significant based on the application of goals, policies, and actions incorporated into the 2030 General Plan, as described in Section 4.6, “Geology, Soils, Mineral Resources, and Paleontological Resources.”

Cumulative gains in population, households, and jobs in the areas included within the cumulative scenario would require a commensurate increase in infrastructure, capital facilities, services, housing, and commercial uses. Each of these increases carries with it a corresponding increase in the amount of ground disturbance resulting from the construction of new buildings and structures and other site development activities. However, each individual project considered in this cumulative analysis must meet building code requirements, as well as the requirements of local policies (i.e., grading and erosion control plans). Therefore, there would be no additive effect and the 2030 General Plan will have a **less than cumulatively considerable** impact related to seismic and soil hazards.

The cumulative loss of access to mineral resources is a **significant** cumulative impact resulting from encroachment by development into areas with mineral resources.

Implementation of the proposed policies and actions of the 2030 General Plan and implementation of existing regulations for SMARA Mineral Resource Zones, would reduce the impacts of buildout of the 2030 General Plan on mineral resources. Nonetheless, it is possible that development of the County's Rural Community Boundary Areas could preclude extraction of important County mineral resources along the Yuba River. One of the key objectives of the 2030 General Plan is to proactively guide development of rural areas of the County, including those that could be within areas of important mineral resources. The County has included all feasible mitigation as a part of the 2030 General Plan. The 2030 General Plan would have a **cumulatively considerable** contribution to a significant cumulative impact. All feasible mitigation is included as policies and actions of the 2030 General Plan. This impact is **significant and unavoidable**.

A records search of the University of California Museum of Paleontology's Paleontology Collections database did not identify any previously recorded fossil localities. However, certain portions of the County are underlain by Pleistocene-age alluvial deposits, which are considered paleontologically sensitive. The fact that vertebrate fossils have been recovered throughout the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys in these sediments suggests that there is a potential for uncovering additional similar fossil remains during construction-related earthmoving activities. Development under the cumulative scenario could adversely affect these resources, resulting in a **significant** cumulative impact.

Implementation of the policies and actions of the 2030 General Plan would reduce the impacts of buildout of the 2030 General Plan on paleontological resources. Work stoppage is required where resources are discovered. Consultation with a paleontologist and measures to avoid further impact would be required. However, the County cannot guarantee that construction and development activities would avoid impacts to paleontological resources. Therefore, the 2030 General Plan would have a **cumulatively considerable** contribution to a significant cumulative impact. All feasible mitigation is included as policies and actions of the 2030 General Plan. This impact is **significant and unavoidable**.

## **GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS**

Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions have the potential to adversely affect the environment because such emissions contribute, on a cumulative basis, to global climate change. Global climate change has the potential to result in sea level rise (resulting in flooding of low-lying areas), to affect rainfall and snowfall (leading to changes in water supply), to affect temperatures and habitats (affecting biological resources), and to result in many other adverse effects.

The proper context for addressing this issue in an EIR is within an assessment of cumulative impacts. Although it is unlikely that development projects that could occur under the 2030 Yuba County General Plan will, by themselves, contribute significantly to global climate change, cumulative emissions from many projects under many such plans could impact global GHG concentrations and the climate system. Global GHG emissions represent a **significant** cumulative impact.

Some major GHG emission sectors can be affected by local government actions, while others cannot. GHG emission sectors such as transportation and electricity will be regulated by the implementation of state-wide emission reduction programs (e.g., vehicle emissions standards, renewable energy portfolio standards). Legislation already in effect will achieve state-wide reductions of GHG emissions associated with electricity production, industry, and other sources. It is anticipated that future legislation and regulations at the state and federal levels would further reduce GHG emissions, with different reduction potential available for each sector.

Land use and building patterns resulting from local government development policies can affect VMT, water use, wastewater generation, solid waste generation, and building energy use. Future residents, employees, and visitors in projects accommodated under the 2030 General Plan would drive vehicles that generate GHG emissions.

SB 375, signed in September 2008, aligns regional transportation planning efforts, regional GHG reduction targets, and fair-share housing allocations under state housing law. SB 375 requires Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to adopt a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) or Alternative Planning Strategy (APS) to address GHG reduction targets in the context of that MPO's Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

The GHG reduction target for the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) Area, of which Yuba County is a part, is 7% per capita by 2020 and 16 % per capita by 2035. Both targets are expressed as percent per capita below 2005 levels. These reduction targets will be updated every eight years, but can be updated every four years if advancements in emissions technologies affect the reduction strategies to achieve the targets.

The County recognizes in the 2030 General Plan that transportation is the largest source of GHGs in Yuba County and California, and that land use and transportation planning to reduce vehicular travel is needed to achieve GHG reduction goals, especially since, given the predominance of transportation as a source of GHG emissions, improvements in building energy efficiency and other GHG emissions sectors can be overwhelmed by increases in VMT. The County also recognizes that effectiveness of a local GHG reduction program for a growing area like Yuba County is contingent on development patterns and transportation systems that reduce emissions from the transportation sector. The County has measured the relative local GHG efficiency, with results presented in Section 4.7.

Because the 2030 General Plan would generate higher GHG emissions per service population than is needed at the state level to achieve the AB 32 target, and since a substantial quantity of GHG emissions would be generated though buildout of the General Plan, this impact is considered a **cumulatively considerable** contribution to the significant cumulative impact of global climate change.

In addition to GHG emissions from implementation of the 2030 General Plan, another cumulative impact of climate change includes increased global average temperatures (global warming) through the intensification of the greenhouse effect, and associated changes in local climatic conditions. Areas of the unincorporated County could experience increased average temperatures; modifications to the timing, amount, and form (rain vs. snow) of precipitation; changes in the timing and amount of runoff; reduced water supply; deterioration of water quality; elevated sea level; and other **significant** cumulative impacts.

Policies and actions in the 2030 General Plan would reduce the extent and severity of climate change-associated impacts by proactively planning for changes in climate and conditions, and providing methods for adapting to these changes. Impact of climate change on Yuba County would occur during a time span far beyond the buildout of the 2030 General Plan. The 2030 General Plan proposes all feasible mitigation to respond and adapt to foreseeable impacts of climate change in the form of General Plan policies and actions, but the efficacy of the County's policy approach for dealing with the local effects of climate change is unknowable at this time. For the purposes of this EIR, the impact is considered **significant and unavoidable** and the County's contribution is **cumulatively considerable**.

A detailed discussion of GHG emissions resulting from the 2030 General Plan is provided in Section 4.7, Climate Change.

## **HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS**

Buildout of the 2030 General Plan would increase the quantity and intensity of development of unincorporated areas of the County. With implementation of General Plan policies and actions, along with the application of existing regulations, projects developed under the 2030 General Plan would result in less-than-significant impacts

related to routine transport, use, and disposal of hazardous materials; interference with an adopted emergency response plan; exposure of structures to urban or wildland fires; and public health hazards from development on a known hazardous materials site.

Under cumulative conditions, implementation of the 2030 General Plan, in conjunction with growth planned in surrounding jurisdictions, is not anticipated to present a public health hazard to residents. Projected growth both in the unincorporated County and in surrounding jurisdictions would involve storage, use, disposal, and transport of hazardous materials to varying degrees during construction and operation. Impacts from these activities are reduced since the storage, use, disposal, and transport of hazardous materials is extensively regulated by various federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and policies. Health and safety impacts associated with the past or current uses of a proposed project site usually occur on a project-by-project basis, rather than in a cumulative manner. Individual development projects in the County and in surrounding jurisdictions would implement and comply with existing hazardous materials laws, regulations, and policies. There is **no significant** cumulative impact.

The 2030 General Plan includes generalized land use designations and it is not possible to know if any proposed operations would involve hazardous materials either on-site or would require hazardous materials related activities off-site. The 2030 General Plan contains policies relating to hazardous materials use, transport, and emergency response that would require consideration of hazardous materials issues in the land use planning process.

Implementation of current state and federal regulations, as well as the policies of the 2030 General Plan may not prevent all potential releases of hazardous materials, but would serve to minimize both the frequency and the magnitude, if such a release occurs. In combination with existing federal and state regulations, these policies would also reduce the potential impacts of the routine transportation of hazardous materials in the County. Therefore, the 2030 General Plan would **not make a considerable contribution** to any significant cumulative impact related to transport of hazardous materials.

## HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

As discussed in Section 4.9, “Hydrology and Water Resources,” land uses and development consistent with the 2030 General Plan would result in less-than-significant impacts related to violation of water quality standards, erosion and sedimentation, construction-related water quality impacts, interference with groundwater recharge, flood hazards, and dam failure.

The 2030 General Plan would potentially combine with development in the region to create **significant** cumulative hydrologic and water resource impacts. However, the General Plan’s Public Health & Safety Element policies are designed to reduce the rate of runoff, filter out pollutants, and/or facilitate groundwater infiltration. These policies and actions are designed to meet the NPDES MS4, Title 22, California Toxics Rule (CTR), and Basin Plan water quality objectives described in “State Plans, Policies, Regulations, and Laws” in Section 4.9 of this EIR. Construction activities are required in order to conform with the SWRCB statewide NPDES stormwater permit for general construction activity, and any other necessary site-specific WDRs or waivers under the Porter-Cologne Act (see “State Plans, Policies, Regulations, and Laws” in Section 4.9), as well as Yuba County Department of Public Works Design Standards and Codes and Ordinances that regulate construction discharges (see “Regional And Local Plans, Policies, Regulations, And Ordinances” above).

Implementation of existing regulations and laws, along with the policies and actions of the 2030 General Plan would reduce the 2030 General Plan’s contribution to this potentially significant cumulative impact to water quality. The 2030 General Plan would have a **less than cumulatively considerable** contribution to a significant cumulative impact related to water quality impacts assuming application of existing regulations and policies and actions of the 2030 General Plan.

Development and land use change in Yuba County and in the surrounding region could result in additional impervious surfaces, and the diversion of groundwater to surface water through subsurface drainage features or localized dewatering measures. As a result, levels of groundwater recharge in the underlying groundwater basin would decline. Reductions in groundwater recharge in a given area could affect groundwater levels and the yield of hydrologically connected wells. This is considered a **significant cumulative impact**.

2030 General Plan policies would be implemented in coordination with the Yuba County Groundwater Management Plan on a regional level to ensure conjunctive use, perennial yield, and avoidance of groundwater overdraft within the County and in surrounding areas that are hydrologically connected to it. This would also be the case with the Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP), which includes providing groundwater management to protect and utilize the groundwater resources in a sustainable manner. With incorporation of 2030 General Plan policies, the Yuba County Groundwater Management Plan, and the IRWMP, the 2030 General Plan would have a **less than cumulatively considerable** contribution to a significant cumulative impact.

Much of the floodplain area of Yuba County and adjacent Sutter County is protected by levees along the Feather River, Yuba River, Bear River, and Honcut Creek. Riverine flooding can overwhelm the integrity of the local or regional levee system. When levees fail, people and structures are exposed to inundation, and death, injury, or loss of property can result. Development planned in the 2030 General Plan would place additional people and structures behind levees designed to protect against flooding. This is a potentially **significant** cumulative impact.

Adoption and implementation of the proposed policies in the 2030 General Plan, as well as existing state and local regulations, would reduce the risk for people and structures involving flooding that could result from failure of a levee. The potential for failure of a levee would remain, but state law, state regulations, and federal regulations are designed to reduce flood risk to an acceptable level (e.g. 200-year flood protection). Policy HS1.5 requires that the County commit to participation in the TRLIA and YCWA IRWMP ongoing efforts for levee certification, as well as compliance with state law related to flood protection for urbanized areas. Policies HS1.7 and HS1.8 require that the County utilize the best available flood hazard information when developing in floodplains, and Policy HS1.9 requires the County to demonstrate compliance with state and federal flood standards prior to approval of any development. According to this policy, levees must be certified pursuant to FEMA 100-year standards and 200-year standards with the implementation of recent changes in state law. With implementation of the 2030 General Plan policies and actions, the 2030 General Plan would make a **less than cumulatively considerable** contribution to a significant cumulative impact.

It is difficult to assess implications of climate change for flood frequency, in large part because of the absence of detailed regional precipitation information from climate models and because human settlement patterns and water-management choices can substantially influence overall flood risk. Still, increased amounts of winter runoff could be accompanied by increases in flood event severity and warrant additional dedication of wet season storage space for flood control as opposed to supply conservation. This need to manage water storage facilities to handle increased runoff could in turn lead to more frequent water shortages during high water demand periods. It is recognized that these impacts would result in increased challenges for reservoir management and balancing the competing concerns of flood protection and water supply. The General Plan's contribution to any significant cumulative flood hazard impact is unknown at this time.

Global climate change could affect surface water quality. A combination of a reduction in precipitation, the shift in volume and timing of runoff flows, and the increased temperature in lakes and rivers could affect a number of natural processes that eliminate pollutants in water bodies. For example, the overall decrease in stream flows could potentially concentrate pollutants and prevent the flushing of contaminants from point sources. Considerable work remains to determine the potential effect of global climate change to water quality as it effects Yuba County. Beyond this, a significance determination for cumulative climate-change related hydrology and water quality impacts would be speculative.

## LAND USE, HOUSING, AND POPULATION

Compliance with goals and policies in the 2030 General Plan would ensure that development pursuant to the 2030 General Plan would not disrupt or divide established communities. The 2030 General Plan policy diagrams would accommodate development in and adjacent to existing communities, but these policy diagrams do not include improvements that would divide existing communities. The 2030 General Plan does not identify new infrastructure improvements that would be located in a way that would divide an established community. There is **no significant** cumulative impact.

Impacts involving adopted land use plans or policies and zoning generally would not combine to result in cumulative impacts. The determination of significance for impacts related to these issues, as described by Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, is whether a project would conflict with any applicable land use plan or policy adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating environmental impacts. Such a conflict is site-specific; it is addressed on a project-by-project basis. Indirect effects from those plans and policies adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating environmental impacts, can lead to physical environmental impacts, which are considered in the appropriate sections of this EIR.

The State CEQA Guidelines Section 15125(d) requires that an EIR analyze the potential for inconsistencies between the project, in this case implementation of the 2030 General Plan, and other relevant plans, programs, regulations, and agencies with some authority over the project. The General Plan was designed to be consistent with a number of relevant plans and policies.

- ▶ **Yuba County Local Agency Formation Commission.** Yuba County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) is responsible for annexations and detachments of lands to cities and special districts, as well as the formation and dissolution of cities, special districts, and spheres of influence. The County is required to work with LAFCO during the annexation process to ensure that municipal services are provided to newly annexed areas. This would ensure consistency with LAFCO policies. The 2030 General Plan policies further ensure the County's coordination with Yuba LAFCO during future annexations.
- ▶ **Sacramento Area Council of Governments Blueprint.** The Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) Preferred Blueprint Scenario, referred to as the Blueprint, is a voluntary framework for regional transportation and land use planning that was developed to aid the jurisdictions in the six-county greater Sacramento area in guiding development through 2050. The Blueprint is intended to suggest different development patterns and density in the future compared to past trends in part to provide for more efficient public facilities and infrastructure, to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) regionally, to reduce air pollutant emissions, and reduce other environmental impacts. The 2030 General Plan includes substantially more development than anticipated under the Preferred Blueprint Scenario for the unincorporated County. The 2030 General Plan includes goals, policies, and actions that promote Blueprint principles, including the promotion of more public transportation and use of bicycles and non-motorized forms of transportation; providing many types of housing to meet the needs of all residents, rather than focusing solely on single-family, large-lot, detached residential development; promoting more compact development; redevelopment of vacant or underutilized parcels and using existing roadway systems, and public facilities; creating neighborhood and civic centers with mixed uses to provide neighborhood services to residential areas; and preserving natural features and systems. Goals and policies that promote the seven smart growth principles of the Blueprint are found throughout the 2030 General Plan.
- ▶ **Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP).** In 2008, SACOG approved the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) 2035 for the six-county region. The MTP is a 28-year plan for transportation improvements needed in the region to accommodate projected population and economic growth. The MTP makes connections between transportation needs, land use, and air quality on a regional level, and provides guidance for cooperative planning between different local jurisdictions. The 2030 General Plan uses the same principles outlined in the MTP for regional transportation planning.

There are no inconsistencies between the 2030 General Plan and other relevant plans, actions, and regulations that would result in any substantial adverse physical effects under CEQA other than those already addressed comprehensively and mitigated as appropriate throughout this EIR. The 2030 General Plan would have a less than cumulatively considerable contribution with any adopted land use plans, policies, and legislation meant to reduce environmental impacts. The 2030 General Plan would not conflict with an adopted habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan. There is **no significant** cumulative impact.

General plans in the region, along with specific plans that are outside the development assumptions from local general plans, would potentially accommodate substantially greater population and employment growth compared to regional forecasts and planning efforts. Population and employment growth beyond those included in local and regional land use and transportation plans could induce population growth, which could have a **significant** cumulative impact.

Implementation of the 2030 General Plan would accommodate an increase in population, housing, and employment within unincorporated Yuba County. Increases in land availability for residential development could directly induce population growth. Additionally, increases in land designated for industrial and commercial uses could indirectly induce population growth by increasing the number of jobs in the County. The purpose of the 2030 General Plan is to provide a framework for development and conservation in unincorporated Yuba County. The 2030 General Plan contains all feasible mitigation in the form of policies and actions that provide an orderly growth framework for unincorporated Yuba County. The County has designed the 2030 General Plan to balance land uses in order to avoid growth inducement elsewhere. However, the 2030 General Plan could accommodate a substantially greater population and employment growth than is included in existing forecasts and plans. If this level of job growth is realized, it is possible that population growth near future job centers could be induced. The amount of new development anticipated as a part of the 2030 General Plan exceeds growth anticipated for unincorporated Yuba County included in regional population and employment forecasts, SACOG's MTP, air quality attainment planning, and other regional plans. The 2030 General Plan would have a **cumulatively considerable** contribution to this significant cumulative impact. All feasible mitigation is included as policies and actions of the 2030 General Plan. This impact is **significant and unavoidable**.

Regional growth could displace existing housing and population, requiring the construction of housing elsewhere, representing a **significant** cumulative impact.

The 2030 General Plan provides overarching guidance for development and conservation. The 2030 General Plan does not propose to remove existing housing or displace existing population or housing units. However, it is possible that areas designated for development could involve removal of existing housing. The 2030 General Plan proposes policies and actions that facilitate development opportunities on vacant land, underutilized parcels, and through infill and redevelopment. The 2030 General Plan proposes numerous policies and actions to conserve the existing housing stock. However, it is possible that some housing could be removed during buildout. The 2030 General Plan could have a **cumulatively considerable** contribution to this significant cumulative impact. All feasible mitigation is included as policies and actions of the 2030 General Plan. This impact is **significant and unavoidable**.

## **NOISE**

Traffic noise levels will increase along major regional roadway corridors as a result of the additional traffic generated by buildout of the 2030 General Plan, coupled with regional growth. This represents a **significant** cumulative impact.

The primary factor for a cumulative noise impact analysis is the consideration of future traffic volumes. Implementation of the 2030 General Plan, along with regional growth and traffic conditions, would cause changes in traffic noise levels over existing traffic noise levels. The 2030 General Plan would make a **cumulatively**

**considerable** contribution to this significant cumulative impact. All feasible mitigation is included as policies and actions of the 2030 General Plan. This impact is **significant and unavoidable**.

## **PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES**

Buildout of the 2030 General Plan would involve changes to land use type, density, and scale, which would increase demands on public services and facilities. The cumulative impacts on, public education services, parks and recreation, fire protection and emergency services, criminal justice services, and library services are described below.

### **PUBLIC EDUCATION SERVICES**

Growth anticipated with buildout of the 2030 General Plan would result in an increased student population, contributing to an increased demand for additional public schools.

Policies identified in the 2030 General Plan are intended to ensure that new neighborhoods include conveniently-located schools to serve new population and that there is funding available via impact fees on new development to expand or construct new school facilities. Additionally, the 2030 General Plan supports and encourages joint-use libraries for school and community use, and other appropriate joint-use facilities.

The County will ensure that new development projects provide impact fees, land dedication, school construction, or other measures acceptable to local school districts to ensure adequate educational facilities. New development is required by state law to pay school impact fees to school districts and provide sites for new schools. As new development occurs, new schools will be developed to accommodate the growth. Therefore, **no cumulative impact** to public educational services would occur.

The 2030 General Plan does not have any cumulatively considerable contribution to any significant cumulative impact. The impact is **less than significant**.

### **FIRE PROTECTION, LAW ENFORCEMENT, AND EMERGENCY SERVICES**

It is expected that new fire protection and law enforcement facilities, and emergency services associated with development within the Valley Growth Boundary would be constructed and/or provided within development areas located within the Valley Growth Boundary identified on the County's Land Use Diagram. Land use change that occurs in Rural Communities served by foothill fire protection districts could require additional facilities. However, these facilities would be expected to be developed within Rural Community Boundary Areas, Fire protection services would be especially important in development areas with higher risk of wildfire, which includes the Rural Communities located in the foothills. Although major growth is not anticipated in the Rural Communities, some new development, particularly of service uses for rural residences, could occur. Any such development would need to conform to existing fire codes and regulations associated with defensible space, fire-resistant building materials, fire sprinkler systems, and fire flow requirements.

In the unincorporated County, fire protection services are provided by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), the US Forest Service (USFS), and several fire protection agencies listed in Section 4.12, "Public Services and Facilities."

2030 General Plan provides an overall guide for development and conservation in the County over the long-term, including ensuring adequate access to the full range of public services, facilities, and infrastructure. To support the County's goal for fire protection, the 2030 General Plan includes policies intended to maintain adequate levels of service for fire protection for both existing and new residents.

Implementing actions contained in the 2030 General Plan will require the County to maintain a planning and entitlement review process that documents compliance with state and local standards for fire safety, and to update zoning, development, improvement standards, and building standards, as necessary, to maintain compliance with relevant fire codes, including those maintained by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

However, the County does not directly control whether and when facilities to serve new growth would be constructed; these decisions are made by the local fire protection service providers. Local demand, therefore, would be served through local expansion of services, and could perhaps involve construction of additional facilities, but this would not combine with effects in neighboring areas to create any cumulative impact. There is **no significant** cumulative impact, therefore, the 2030 General Plan would make **no cumulatively considerable** contribution.

## **Parks and Recreation Impacts**

Several agencies provide park and recreation services in Yuba County in addition to County parks, including the Cities of Marysville and Wheatland, Olivehurst Public Utilities District (OPUD), River Highlands CSD, Browns Valley Irrigation District (BVID), and Yuba County Water Agency (YCWA).

Development and operation of new parks that may be needed to serve additional population accommodated under the General Plan could result in adverse impacts on the physical environment. Developed park facilities would be located within the Valley Growth Boundary and the Rural Community boundaries and natural and recreational open space may be provided in areas outside the Valley Growth Boundary and Rural Community Boundary Areas. Regional park and bike trail facilities could potentially be developed in more rural areas of the County. The General Plan includes policies and actions that will reduce impacts of park development both within and outside of the Valley Growth Boundary and Rural Community Boundary Areas.

The 2030 General Plan establishes the overall parkland standard as “a diversity of park types at a ratio of at least 5 acres for every 1,000 residents.” Implementation of this standard will require land dedication and/or fees and planning for parkland of different types that is integrated into new growth areas, as well as redevelopment areas. The County, however, is not the primary provider of developed park facilities or recreational programming for all unincorporated areas. Providing a diversity of parkland at ratios that are adequate to avoid overuse of existing facilities will require the cooperation of, and action by other agencies beyond the County’s direct control.

The General Plan provides the complete framework for providing parkland and recreational programming (see Action NR1.1), but the County cannot unilaterally implement this policy. Because the County cannot guarantee the full implementation of parkland and recreational policies and actions, and because it is possible that parkland and recreational facilities may not be provided at an adequate rate to avoid overuse of existing facilities, a **potentially significant** cumulative impact related to park facilities would occur. The 2030 General Plan would make a **cumulatively considerable** contribution to a significant cumulative impact. All feasible mitigation is included as policies and actions of the 2030 General Plan. This impact is **significant and unavoidable**.

## **TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC**

The traffic analysis included in this EIR addresses cumulative impacts to the regional transportation system. A regional traffic model was used to analyze impacts of the proposed General Plan at buildout, along with projected regional growth. The regional traffic model already assumes a level of growth for other nearby jurisdictions based on plans and population/employment projections.

The transportation analysis supporting the 2030 General Plan and this EIR takes into account regional growth specifically on streets and highways connecting the County with adjacent jurisdictions. By comparing the volumes of traffic on those external gateways to projections from those adjacent jurisdictions’ traffic models, an understanding of the magnitude of land use absorption can be achieved as described below:

- ▶ SR 65 at the Yuba/Placer County line – This segment is projected to carry about 76,000 ADT under the 2030 General Plan scenario. This amount of traffic is greater than the cumulative (2050) projection of 58,000 ADT for this segment in the City of Lincoln General Plan, which assumes the new general plan land uses. The increase over the City of Lincoln estimate may be due to a greater amount of land use absorption now contemplated in south Yuba County and the City of Wheatland.
- ▶ SR 20, 5<sup>th</sup> Street, and Third Bridge over Feather River at the Yuba/Sutter County line – These crossings are projected to carry approximately 200,000 ADT under the 2030 General Plan scenario. This amount of traffic is slightly greater than the cumulative (2030) projection of 190,000 ADT from the City of Yuba City Year 2030 Traffic Model, indicating that the Yuba County TDM considers the 2030 land uses from the Yuba City General Plan.

The scenarios studied in Section 4.13, “Transportation and Circulation,” of this EIR are considered cumulative by nature because anticipated land use forecasts for other areas are already included in the traffic model. Please refer to Section 4.13 for more details on the 2030 General Plan’s cumulative transportation impacts.

Regional population and employment growth is anticipated to result in traffic volumes along regional roadways, such as SR 70, that could exceed acceptable levels of service. This represents a **significant** cumulative impact.

While the 2030 General Plan includes various policies to reduce traffic demand and mitigation for roadway segments and intersections, traffic is anticipated to exceed level of service standards at certain roadway segments and intersections. The 2030 General Plan would make a **cumulatively considerable** contribution to this significant cumulative impact. All feasible mitigation is included as policies and actions of the 2030 General Plan. This impact is **significant and unavoidable**.

## UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

### Water Supply

Development of land uses allowed under the 2030 General Plan would lead to new water demand. This demand, combined with demand created by development in the region, would potentially result in a **significant** cumulative impact related to water supply.

However, substantial surplus water supplies exist under current conditions in Yuba County. Because the existing surplus is greater than projected demand it is not anticipated that the increase in demand would require new entitlements. In addition, proposed policies within the 2030 General Plan and state law require that new water consumptive projects of substantial size demonstrate adequate supplies. The County has also incorporated water conservation policies in the 2030 General Plan, which supplement water conservation that is already required as a part of building code compliance. For these reasons, the 2030 General Plan would have a **less than cumulatively considerable** contribution to this significant cumulative impact.

From a Statewide perspective, global climate change could affect California’s environmental resources through potential, though uncertain, changes related to future air temperatures and precipitation and their resulting impacts on water temperatures, reservoir operations, stream runoff, and sea levels (Kiparsky and Gleick 2003). These changes in hydrological systems could threaten California’s economy, public health, and environment (California Energy Commission 2003). The types of potential climate effects that could occur on California’s water resources include:

Several recent studies have shown that existing water supply systems are sensitive to climate change. Potential impacts of climate change on water supply and availability could directly and indirectly affect a wide range of institutional, economic, and societal factors. Much uncertainty remains, however, with respect to the overall impact of global climate change on future water supplies. For example, models that predict drier conditions

suggest decreased reservoir inflows and storage and decreased river flows, relative to current conditions. Models that predict wetter conditions project increased reservoir inflows and storage, and increased river flows. Much uncertainty also exists with respect to how climate change will affect future demand of water supply.

Little work has been done on the effects of climate change on specific groundwater basins, groundwater quality or groundwater recharge characteristics. Changes in rainfall and changes in the timing of the groundwater recharge season would result in changes in recharge. Warmer temperatures could increase the period where water is on the ground by reducing soil freeze. Conversely, warmer temperatures could lead to higher evaporation or shorter rainfall seasons, which could mean that soil deficits would persist for longer time periods, shortening recharge seasons. Warmer, wetter winters would increase the amount of runoff available for groundwater recharge. This additional winter runoff, however, would be occurring at a time when some basins, particularly in Northern California, are being recharged at their maximum capacity. Reductions in spring runoff and higher evapotranspiration, on the other hand, could reduce the amount of water available for recharge. However, the extent to which climate will change and the impact of that change on groundwater are both unknown. A reduced snowpack, coupled with increased rainfall, could require a change in the operating procedures for California's existing dams and conveyance facilities. Whether or not there is a significant cumulative climate-change related groundwater impact is unknown at this time.

### **Wastewater Management Services**

Growth in Yuba County, Sutter County, Butte County, and other nearby areas would contribute to additional demands for wastewater collection and treatment, leading to a need for additional wastewater facilities in the future. The construction and operation of these facilities and the cumulative potential for water quality violations related to wastewater treatment represent **significant** cumulative impacts.

By adhering to the policies proposed in the 2030 General Plan, as well as all applicable requirements pertaining to wastewater treatment and septic systems, the County could minimize impacts associated with construction of new wastewater treatment facilities or extension of existing facilities or infrastructure. Technical sections of this EIR evaluate the effects of construction activities relative to specific environmental issue areas, such as biological resources, air quality, etc., at a programmatic level of detail, as is appropriate for a general plan.

The 2030 General Plan includes policies and actions, and this EIR includes mitigation measures, where necessary, to reduce or avoid impacts, as noted throughout Section 4.0 of this EIR. Despite mitigating policies and actions and the application of necessary mitigation measures, construction and operation of new or expanded wastewater treatment facilities and infrastructure may result in significant environmental effects. The County has included throughout the 2030 General Plan all feasible measures available to mitigate such impacts. Nonetheless, it is possible that 2030 General Plan could involve **cumulatively considerable** contribution to these significant cumulative impacts. All feasible mitigation is included as policies and actions of the 2030 General Plan. This impact is **significant and unavoidable**.

### **Solid Waste Management and Recycling**

The Yuba-Sutter Regional Waste Management Authority was established in 1990 by a Joint Powers Agreement between Sutter and Yuba Counties and the Cities of Live Oak, Marysville, Wheatland and Yuba City for the purpose of providing reliable, economical, integrated and environmentally sound waste management services to the residents, businesses and organizations of the bi-county area (Yuba-Sutter Regional Waste Management Authority 2010).

The primary landfill that serves unincorporated portions of Yuba County is the Ostrom Road site, which also serves as Sutter County's primary landfill site. The Ostrom Road Landfill is among the landfill sites used by Butte, Nevada and Colusa Counties; however it is not the primary landfill for these counties (Butte County 2010, CalRecycle 2010). Existing regulations also require diversion of solid waste. Therefore, there is **no significant** cumulative impact with respect to solid waste disposal.

Buildout of the 2030 General Plan would increase local generation of solid waste. Existing capacity exists to serve this increase in demand. In addition, under 2030 General Plan policy, new projects may only be approved if sufficient capacity to dispose of solid waste exists at the time the new project is subject to review. For these reasons, buildout under the 2030 General Plan is not anticipated to require the construction of new landfills and would **not make a considerable contribution** to a significant cumulative impact.

## ENERGY

Regional growth would involve new building construction, development projects and plans, transportation facilities, and other activities that would demand additional energy resources. This will require the construction of new energy infrastructure, the construction and operation of which could have **significant** cumulative impacts.

The 2030 General Plan includes a wide range of energy conservation strategies for land use, transportation, community design, public facilities and infrastructure. The 2030 General Plan includes policies and implementation measures that recognize the need to design buildings, coordinate development patterns, coordinate transportation planning, coordinate regional infrastructure investment, and comply with regional planning requirements during General Plan buildout to achieve energy conservation, as well as other objectives.

However, the demand for energy and consumption of energy resources would still increase. Future land use patterns, new construction and building renovations, and commuting patterns would increase demand for energy in the County. Cumulative development throughout the County and the region would result in a significant cumulative increase in the demand for energy and the need for construction of additional facilities to generate and/or distribute electricity. This is considered a significant cumulative impact. The County has included all feasible mitigation as policies and actions in the 2030 General Plan. Nonetheless, the 2030 General Plan would have a **cumulatively considerable contribution** to this significant cumulative impact. All feasible mitigation is included as policies and actions of the 2030 General Plan. This impact is **significant and unavoidable**.

## 6.2 GROWTH-INDUCING EFFECTS

The State CEQA Guidelines (Section 15126.2[d]) require that an EIR evaluate the growth-inducing effects of a proposed project (in this case, the update of the General Plan). Specifically, an EIR must discuss the ways 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.

Direct growth-inducing impacts are generally associated with the provision of urban services to an undeveloped area, although it is also possible to induce rural growth that does not depend on the availability of urban services. The provision of these services to a site, and the subsequent development, can serve to induce other landowners in the vicinity to convert their property to urban uses. Indirect, or secondary growth-inducing impacts consist of growth induced in the region by the additional demands for housing, goods and services associated with the population and employment increase caused by, or attracted to, a new project.

Growth inducement, by itself, is not an environmental effect, but may indirectly lead to environmental effects. Such environmental effects may include increased traffic, degradation of air quality, conversion of agricultural land to urban uses directly from population and employment growth and indirectly from development associated with goods and services needed by such growth.

Based on Section 65300 of the Government Code, the 2030 General Plan is required to serve as a comprehensive, long-term plan for physical development and conservation in the unincorporated County.

The 2030 General Plan does not propose any specific development projects. In a sense, then, the 2030 General Plan therefore would not have direct growth-inducing impacts. Indirect growth-inducing impacts would occur,

however, due in part to changes in the Land Use Diagram and the goals, policies, and actions of the 2030 General Plan.

Revisions to the General Plan are required in order to address long-range land use planning needs. The goals, policies, and actions of the 2030 General Plan provide a framework to accommodate future growth and conservation. Projected growth is described in Chapter 3, “Project Description,” and the environmental consequences related to the potential growth are analyzed throughout Chapter 4.

The General Plan is designed to accommodate economic and population growth that would increase economic activity and population. Anticipated population growth is indirect in nature because the proposed General Plan does not directly propose development, but only provides the framework for development planning and implementation to proceed.

The actual level of buildout and the timing of construction and development activities would be subject to market conditions and other factors beyond the County’s control or knowledge. However, with the substantial amount of new development accommodated under the General Plan, it is possible that, through expansion of job opportunities or other aspects of the General Plan, growth elsewhere could be facilitated. If jobs are created that cause people to move to the region and create a demand for housing construction beyond that provided locally, the General Plan could be considered growth inducing.

Whether or not growth obstacles are eliminated relates to the extent to which the 2030 General Plan would increase infrastructure capacity or change the regulatory structure such that additional development in the unincorporated County would be allowed. A physical obstacle to growth typically involves the lack of infrastructure and public service capacity. The extension of public service infrastructure (e.g., roadways, water and sewer lines) into areas that are not currently provided with these services would be expected to support new development. Similarly, the elimination or change to a regulatory obstacle, including existing growth and development policies, could result in new growth.

To the extent that infrastructure is sized to accommodate already approved and expected growth based on the population projections of the 2030 General Plan, growth inducement would not occur beyond that accommodated by the expanded infrastructure and services. However, if infrastructure and facilities are oversized, or extended to areas outside of the Valley Growth Boundary, this could induce growth by providing capacity to areas not intended for development.

As detailed in the 2030 General Plan, this EIR, Municipal Service Reviews (MSRs) by the Yuba Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO), infrastructure and public services are planned and implemented according to the needs of planned and forecast development. The General Plan would not, then, have growth-inducing impacts related to the removal of obstacles to growth in the surrounding vicinity.

### **6.3 SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES**

CEQA requires that significant irreversible environmental changes caused by a plan be addressed in an EIR. Specifically, the EIR must consider whether “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” (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2[c]). Nonrenewable resources, as used in this discussion, refer to the physical features of the natural environment: land, air, and waterways.

The land use designations proposed by the 2030 General Plan would result in commitment of allowable land uses to these areas for the foreseeable future. Proposed changes to land use designations would allow the development of differing uses that may not have been previously anticipated by the existing (1996) General Plan. As discussed in Section 4.10, “Land Use,” of this EIR, the proposed amendments would both allow urban development in areas

the 1996 General Plan designated for open space and also open space in areas where the 1996 General Plan and amendments allowed development.

The 2030 General Plan would use both renewable and nonrenewable natural resources for construction and operation of projects allowed under the revised Land Use Diagram. Projects accommodated under the 2030 General Plan would use nonrenewable fossil fuels in the form of oil and gasoline during construction and operation. Other nonrenewable and slowly-renewable resources consumed as a result of development would include, but not necessarily be limited to, lumber and other forest products, sand and gravel, asphalt, petrochemical construction materials, steel, copper, lead, and water. Operation of future urban development would also consume energy and water.

Irreversible changes would likely occur as a result of future excavation, grading, and construction activities associated with development of land uses envisioned in the 2030 General Plan. Although these changes can generally be addressed by mitigation measures, the potential for disturbance would represent an irreversible change. The 2030 General Plan would also result in irreversible changes by increasing land use densities and introducing development onto the sites that are designated for a specific land use, but that are presently undeveloped.

Land uses and development consistent with the 2030 General Plan would result in changes to traffic and circulation and therefore would increase emissions of air pollutants and generation of noise.

Land uses and development consistent with the 2030 General Plan would result in the conversion of agricultural lands to nonagricultural uses. Although the 2030 General Plan includes policies and programs aimed at protecting existing agricultural land uses and promoting continuation of agricultural operations, any conversion of agricultural lands would be a significant irreversible environmental change. These areas have important visual resources, which would be irreversibly converted to urban use as a result of implementation of the 2030 General Plan.

The 2030 General Plan could result in irreversible damage from environmental accidents, such as an accidental spill or explosion of a hazardous material. During construction of projects accommodated under the 2030 General Plan, equipment on the site would use various types of fuel. Operation of projects potentially accommodated under the 2030 General Plan could include the use of hazardous materials, which could increase the risk of an accidental spill or release. However, these hazardous materials would be sold in relatively small quantities and in California, the storage, use and sale of hazardous substances are strictly regulated and enforced by various local and regional agencies. The enforcement of these existing regulations would be expected to minimize the potential for irreversible damage associated with accidental spills or explosions.

The 2030 General Plan would generate greenhouse gas emissions as described in Section 4.7, "Climate Change." Such emissions and the impacts of climate change related to greenhouse gas emissions would represent a significant irreversible change to the environment.

## **6.4 SIGNIFICANT AND UNAVOIDABLE EFFECTS**

According to Sections 15126.2(a) and 15126.2(b) of the State CEQA Guidelines, an EIR shall identify and focus on the significant environmental effects of the proposed project, including effects that cannot be avoided if the proposed project were implemented. For the 2030 General Plan, these would include the following:

### **Section 4.1, "Aesthetics"**

Impact 4.1-1: Adverse Impacts on Scenic Vistas.

Impact 4.1-3: Degradation of Visual Character.

Impact 4.1-4: Increase in Nighttime Lighting and Daytime Glare.

## **Section 4.2, “Agriculture and Forestry Resources”**

Impact 4.2-1: Loss of Important Farmland and Conversion of Agricultural Land to Non-Agricultural Uses.

Impact 4.2-2: Loss of Forest Land or Conversion of Forest Land to Non-Forest Use.

## **Section 4.3, “Air Quality”**

Impact 4.3-1: Generation of Long-Term Operational, Regional Emissions of Criteria Air Pollutants and Precursors and Consistency with Air Quality Planning Efforts.

Impact 4.3-2: Generation of Short-Term Construction-Related Emissions of Criteria Air Pollutants and Precursors.

Impact 4.3-4: Exposure of Sensitive Receptors to Emissions of Toxic Air Contaminants.

Impact 4.3-5: Exposure of Sensitive Receptors to Emissions of Odors.

## **Section 4.4, “Biological Resources”**

Impact 4.4-1: Impacts to Special Status Wildlife and Fish Species.

Impact 4.4-3: Loss and Degradation of Sensitive Habitats.

Impact 4.4-4: Interference with Movement or Migratory Patterns of Fish or Wildlife Species.

Impact 4.4-5: Potential for Direct and Indirect Impacts on Federally Protected Wetlands and Other Waters of the United States.

## **Section 4.5, “Cultural Resources”**

Impact 4.5-1: Damage to Identified Historical Resources and Unique Archaeological Resources.

Impact 4.5-2: Damage of Previously Unidentified Cultural Resources.

Impact 4.5-3: Disturbance and Damage to Human Remains.

## **Section 4.6, “Geology, Soils, Mineral Resources, and Paleontological Resources”**

Impact 4.6-6: Loss of Availability of Known Mineral Resources.

Impact 4.6-7: Possible Damage to Unknown, Potentially Unique Paleontological Resources.

## **Section 4.7, “Climate Change”**

Impact 4.7-1: Increase in Greenhouse Gas Emissions.

Impact 4.7-2: Impacts of Climate Change on Yuba County.

## **Section 4.10, “Land Use Planning, Population, and Housing”**

Impact 4.10-4: Induce Population Growth.

Impact 4.10-5: Displacement of Existing Population and Housing.

## **Section 4.11, “Noise and Vibration”**

Impact 4.11-2: Exposure to or Generation of Noise Levels in Excess of Local Standards.

Impact 4.11-3: Increases in Ambient Noise Levels.

## **Section 4.12, “Public Services and Facilities”**

Impact 4.12-4: Need for New or Expanded Parks and/or Recreation Facilities and Potential for Accelerated Deterioration of Existing Parks.

## **Section 4.13, “Transportation and Traffic”**

Impact 4.13-1: Increase in Traffic Levels.

Impact 4.13-3: Potential Traffic Impacts in Other Jurisdictions.

Impact 4.13-4: Traffic Impacts on Caltrans’ Facilities.

Impact 4.13-5: Increased Vehicle Miles of Travel (VMT).

Impact 4.13-7: Introduce New Traffic Hazards.

## **Section 4.14, “Utilities and Service Systems”**

Impact 4.14-2: Construction of New or Expanded Water or Wastewater Facilities.

Impact 4.14-3: New or Expanded Storm Water Drainage Facilities.

## **Section 4.15, “Energy”**

Impact 4.15-2: Increased Energy Demand and Need for Additional Energy Infrastructure.

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