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## 7.0 LONG-TERM IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROJECT

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

### 7.1 GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS

#### INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

The CEQA Guidelines further explain that the environmental effects of induced growth are considered indirect impacts of the proposed action. These indirect impacts or secondary effects of growth may result in significant, adverse environmental impacts. Potential secondary effects of growth include increased demand on other community and public services and infrastructure, increased traffic and noise, and adverse environmental impacts such as degradation of air and water quality, degradation or loss of plant and animal habitat, and conversion of agricultural and open space land to developed uses.

Growth inducement may constitute an adverse impact if the growth is not consistent with or accommodated by the land use plans and growth management plans and policies for the area affected. Local land use plans provide for land use development patterns and growth policies that allow for the orderly expansion of urban development supported by adequate urban public services, such as water supply, roadway infrastructure, sewer service, and solid waste service.

#### COMPONENTS OF GROWTH

The timing, magnitude, and location of land development and population growth in a community or region are based on various interrelated land use and economic variables. Key variables include regional economic trends, market demand for residential and non-residential uses, land availability and cost, the availability and quality of transportation facilities and public services, proximity to employment centers, the supply and cost of housing, and regulatory

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policies or conditions. Since the general plan of a community defines the location, type and intensity of growth, it is the primary means of regulating development and growth in California.

### GROWTH EFFECTS OF THE PROJECT

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

Implementation of the proposed Project proposes phased development of a hospital and related medical office buildings, including renovation of existing structures over the course of approximately twenty years. The site currently contains two medical office buildings and an associated parking lot in the northwest corner of the site. Aside from these structures, the site is vacant and covered with grasses and dirt roads. The specific environmental effects resulting from the proposed Project are discussed in the environmental issue areas (Section 4.1 through Section 4.11). The proposed Sutter Elk Grove Master Plan project would develop a two-story medical office building and a detached two-story Ambulatory Care Center, a two- to three-story general acute care hospital, as well as other medical-related buildings that are conceptual in nature and still in the early stages of development. No residential component is proposed which would result in a permanent increase in population. Yet, the Project would establish substantial new permanent employment opportunities.

No roadway improvements are included as part of the Project which would increase capacity on local roads.

### Population Growth

Implementation of the proposed Project would not create any additional residential units. SACOG projects the City's job/housing ratio in year 2025 to be 0.65. Implementation of the proposed Sutter Elk Grove Master Plan project is anticipated to create approximately 997 jobs in association with the medical office building, ambulatory care center, and hospital uses proposed. While the Project would provide jobs associated with these uses, it would not be a substantial generator of new jobs that would result in an influx of new residents to fill these jobs. Employees for the uses proposed as part of the Project are anticipated to come from the local population base, such as existing physicians practicing within the City. As a result, the Project would not create an increase in population or demand for housing. Likewise, no substantial increase in demand for housing would be generated in association with the creation of jobs for the proposed uses. However, the proposed Sutter Elk Grove Master Plan project would result in an improvement in the number of employment opportunities in the City, thereby improving the jobs per housing unit ratio.

### Growth Effects Associated with Infrastructure Improvements

The proposed Sutter Elk Grove Master Plan project could potentially indirectly induce growth if it would remove an obstacle to additional growth and development, such as removing a constraint on a required public service. The City's infrastructure and public services are largely provided by other public and private service providers (e.g., Sacramento County Water Agency for water supply, Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District and County Sanitation District 1 for wastewater service, Sacramento Municipal Utility District for electrical service) that utilize master plans for guiding planned facility and service expansions that are subject to environmental review under CEQA.

The site is located in an area with two existing medical office buildings and associated parking lots. As a result, water, wastewater, storm water, gas, electric and telephone infrastructure are located in and surrounding the Project site.

The Project does not include any roadway improvements that would add capacity or accommodate increased traffic volumes. Therefore, the Project would not result in any growth effects associated with increasing roadway capacity.

### ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF GROWTH

As described above, the proposed Project is not anticipated to substantially increase population growth in the City of Elk Grove. Growth would occur relative to the addition of medical office buildings, an ambulatory care facility, a two- to three-story general acute care hospital, as well as other medical-related buildings that are still in the early stages of development, on a site that has previously been developed with two medical office buildings. Additional traffic trips would be generated to the site, resulting in impacts to roadways, air quality and noise. The proposed uses would also result in increased demand for water, wastewater, police and fire services. Biological resources on the site would also be impacted. Placement of medical-related facilities on the site would also result in potential for accidental release of hazardous substances. These impacts have been addressed and appropriately mitigated in Sections 4.1 through 4.12 of this EIR.

### 7.2 SIGNIFICANT AND UNAVOIDABLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

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

#### AIR QUALITY

##### Potential Increase in Long-Term Atmospheric Greenhouse Gas Emissions

**Impact 4.2.9** The Project, in addition to existing, approved, proposed, and reasonably foreseeable development shown in Table 4.0-1 of this EIR, may contribute to an increase in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the earth's atmosphere and potentially hinder or delay implementation of reduction targets under AB 32. Higher concentrations of GHGs have been linked to the phenomenon of climate change. The Project's contribution to this cumulative impact is considered **cumulatively significant** and **unavoidable**.

#### BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

##### Cumulative Biological Resource Impacts

**Impact 4.3.8** The development of this Project would contribute cumulatively to the loss of biological resources in the region and the ongoing urbanization in southern Sacramento County. This would result in a cumulatively considerable

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contribution to the impact. Implementation of mitigation measures **MM 4.3.3a** through **MM 4.3.3c**, **MM 4.3.4a** through **MM 4.3.4c**, **MM 4.3.5a** through **MM 4.3.5b**, and **MM 4.3.7a** and **MM 4.3.7b** would reduce the Project-specific impacts on special-status species to a less than significant level. However, on a cumulative level, the Project's contribution to the direct and indirect impacts would be considered **cumulatively considerable** and the impact is **significant and unavoidable** in regards to the loss of Swainson's hawk foraging habitat.

### TRAFFIC AND CIRCULATION

#### Cumulative Traffic Impacts on Study Intersections

**Impact 4.12.20** Buildout of the proposed Project would result in unacceptable operations being exacerbated at the Laguna Boulevard/Big Horn Boulevard intersection in the AM and PM peak hours with the addition of project traffic. This is considered a significant cumulative impact. Since any possible mitigation would be deemed infeasible due to right-of-way constraints, this impact is **cumulatively significant and unavoidable**.

**Impact 4.12.23** Buildout of the proposed Project would result in unacceptable operations being exacerbated at the Red Elk Drive/Big Horn Boulevard intersection in the AM and PM peak hours with the addition of project traffic under cumulative conditions. This is a significant cumulative impact. Implementation of **MM 4.12.23** would provide acceptable (LOS B) operations during both the AM and PM peak hours with the addition of project traffic under cumulative conditions. The identified improvements are anticipated to be funded through the Roadway Fee Program which currently does not include these improvements. However, the City intends to include these in the next Roadway Fee Program update. As a result of the Red Elk Drive/Big Horn Boulevard intersection not being identified for improvement in the current Roadway Fee Program, this impact is considered **cumulatively significant and unavoidable**.

**Impact 4.12.25** Buildout of the proposed Project would result in unacceptable operations being exacerbated at the SR-99 NB Off-Ramp/East Stockton Boulevard intersection in the AM and PM peak hours by the addition of project traffic under cumulative conditions. This is a significant cumulatively impact. Implementation of **MM 4.12.25** would restore the average delay at the intersection to acceptable levels (LOS B) in the AM and PM peak hours. The identified improvements are anticipated to be funded through the Roadway Fee Program which currently does not include these improvements. However, the City intends to include these in the next Roadway Fee Program update. As a result of the SR 99 NB Off-Ramp/East Stockton Boulevard intersection not being identified for improvement in the current Roadway Fee Program, this impact is considered **cumulatively significant and unavoidable**.

#### Cumulative Traffic Impacts on Local Roadways and State Highways

**Impact 4.12.29** Buildout of the proposed Project would result in unacceptable operations being exacerbated during both the AM and PM peak hours on the northbound SR 99 off-ramp diverge to Laguna Boulevard with the addition of

project traffic. This is a significant cumulative impact. Implementation of **MM 4.12.29** would improve the SR 99 regional corridor; however this does not ensure that the Project's impacts on the state facility will be fully mitigated because the improvements have not yet been identified and may not be within the vicinity of the Project's impacts. Therefore, the impact of the Project would be **cumulatively significant and unavoidable**.

**Impact 4.12.30** Buildout of the proposed Project would result in unacceptable operations being exacerbated during the PM peak hour on the northbound SR 99 loop on-ramp merge from Laguna Boulevard with the addition of project traffic. This is a significant cumulative impact. Implementation of **MM 4.12.30** would be used to improve the SR 99 regional corridor; however this does not ensure that the Project's impacts on the state facility will be fully mitigated because the improvements have not yet been identified nor has the fee been adopted by any of the local agencies (City of Sacramento, City of West Sacramento, City of Elk Grove). Therefore, the impact of the Project would be **cumulatively significant and unavoidable**.

### 7.3 MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

State CEQA Guidelines Section 15065 identifies four mandatory findings of significance that must be considered as part of the environmental review process of a project. These findings are identified below with an analysis of the Project's relationship to these findings.

The project has the potential to: substantially degrade the quality of the environment; substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species; cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels; threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community; substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of an endangered, rare or threatened species; or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory.

Sections 4.1 through 4.12 of the Draft EIR address environmental impacts that are anticipated to occur with implementation of the Project. Section 4.3 (Biological Resources) evaluates in detail the Project's impact on biological resources, including the potential of the Project to reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, or substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of an endangered, rare or threatened species. As discussed in Section 4.3, the Project would have a less than significant impact on loss of common habitat, and the loss of habitat for special-status species. The Project would result in impacts due to the potential loss of raptor nesting and foraging habitat, which are reduced to a less than significant level with implementation of mitigation measures identified in Section 4.3. It was concluded that the Project's cumulative impacts to biological and natural resources, including special-status species and their habitat, would be cumulative considerable and significant and unavoidable. While potential direct impacts on biological resources are negligible, the increased human presence would be anticipated to cause potential indirect impacts.

Section 4.4 (Cultural Resources) evaluates in detail the Project's potential impacts cultural resources. There are no known important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory present on the Project site. Mitigation measures are identified to reduce potentially significant impacts to undiscovered resources.

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The project has the potential to achieve short-term environmental goals to the disadvantage of long-term environmental goals.

As noted in Sections 4.1 through 4.12 of the Draft EIR, the Project would result in significant and unavoidable impacts, which would have long-term environmental effects. When feasible, mitigation measures would be required to reduce impacts to less than significant levels. None of the mitigation measures are anticipated to achieve short-term environmental goals, but have negative long-term environmental effects. Mitigation measures are identified both for the construction and operation of the Project, in order to address the short-term and long-term (operational) effects of the Project.

The project has possible environmental effects that are individually limited but cumulatively considerable. "Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of an individual project are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.

The cumulative effect of developing the Project site along with other development anticipated to occur in the area is addressed in Section 5.0 (Cumulative Impacts Summary) and Sections 4.1 through 4.12. This Draft EIR evaluates cumulative environmental impacts associated with the Project and determines whether the Project's contribution is cumulatively considerable. Mitigation measures and project alternatives are identified to reduce the Project's contribution to cumulative impacts. However, the Draft EIR does specifically note that the Project (as proposed) would result in some significant and unavoidable cumulative impacts even with the implementation of mitigation measures.

The environmental effects of a project will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly.

Section 4.6 (Human Health and Hazards) discusses the potential for human beings to be exposed to hazardous materials or conditions, both directly and indirectly. Section 4.9 (Noise) addresses the potential for human beings to be exposed to unacceptable noise levels, both from direct noise levels caused by the Project and indirect noise effects. Section 4.2 (Air Quality) identifies emissions of air pollutants that the Project would subject people to, both directly and indirectly. Section 4.1 (Aesthetics) evaluates direct and indirect adverse effects on humans that may result from light and glare. Mitigation measures and project alternatives are identified to reduce identified significant impacts to less than significant in these resource areas.