8.0 CEQA CONSIDERATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

Section 15126 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines requires that all aspects of a project must be considered when evaluating its impact on the environment, including planning, acquisition, development, and operation. As part of this analysis, the EIR must also identify (1) significant environmental effects of the proposed project, (2) significant environmental effects that cannot be avoided if the proposed project is implemented, (3) significant irreversible environmental changes that would result from implementation of the proposed project, and (4) growth-inducing impacts of the proposed project.

Significant Environmental Effects

Chapter 3 of this EIR, Summary of Impacts and Mitigation Measures, and Sections 6.1 through 6.12 of this EIR provide a comprehensive identification of the proposed project's environmental effects, including the level of significance both before and after mitigation.

Significant-and-Unavoidable Impacts

Section 15126.2(b) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that an EIR describe any significant impacts that cannot be avoided, even with the implementation of feasible mitigation measures. The environmental effects of the proposed project on various aspects of the environment are discussed in detail in Chapter 6 of this EIR. Project-specific and cumulative impacts that cannot be avoided if the project is approved as proposed are listed below:

Project-Specific Significant and Unavoidable Impacts

Project-specific significant and unavoidable impacts identified for the proposed project include:

6.1-1 Development of the proposed project could be incompatible with the agricultural character of the natural landscape in the project site and its surrounding areas.

6.1-2 Development of the proposed project could introduce new sources of light and glare to the specific plan and surrounding areas, which could contribute to the discomfort glare or disability glare experienced by adjacent residences and other uses.

6.2-1 The proposed project could convert Important Farmland (Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Local Importance) as defined in the California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program to non-agricultural use.

6.2-2 The proposed project could create potential conflicts with County goals, policies, and standards that may lead to physical impacts on the environment.

6.2-3 The proposed project could conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or with a Williamson Act contract.

6.3-1 The proposed project could generate PM_{10} through land-clearing and other earth-moving activities during construction.

6.3-2 The proposed project could generate emissions of ROG, NO_x, and CO during construction.

6.3-3 The proposed project could generate $PM_{2.5}$ through the use of heavy-duty equipment during construction.

6.3-4 The proposed project's long-term operational emissions could exceed PCAPCD thresholds of significance for PM_{10}, ROG, NO_x, and CO.

6.4-1 Development of the proposed project, including off-site infrastructure, could result in the conversion of the project site to another use, which could affect the availability of habitat and biological function.

6.4-2 The proposed project could result in the filling or adverse modification of jurisdictional wetlands, non-jurisdictional wetlands, and other "waters of the U.S."

6.4-3 Development of the proposed project could result in the loss of special-status vernal pool crustacean and amphibian species and degradation and/or loss of their habitat.

6.4-8 The proposed project could result in the loss of foraging habitat for Swainson's hawk, white tailed kite, burrowing owl, and other raptors.

6.4-12 Development of the proposed project could result in habitat fragmentation and wildlife population isolation.

6.5-1 The proposed project could cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a unique archaeological resource or an historical resource as defined in section 21083.2 of CEQA and section 15064.5 of the State CEQA Guidelines.

6.9-5 Noise from the University athletic facilities, including a stadium, that could be developed as part of the proposed project could affect sensitive receptors.

6.12-1 The proposed project could contribute to traffic volumes that exceed the capacity of the regional roadway network under existing plus project conditions.

6.12-2 The proposed project could increase daily traffic volumes using City of Roseville roadway segments, resulting in unacceptable LOS conditions under existing plus project conditions.

6.12-3 The proposed project could increase daily traffic volumes using Sacramento County roadway segments, exacerbating unacceptable LOS conditions under existing plus project conditions.

6.12-4 The proposed project could increase daily traffic volumes using Caltrans roadway segments, exacerbating unacceptable LOS conditions under existing plus project conditions.

6.12-6 The proposed project could increase peak hour traffic volumes using City of Roseville intersections, resulting in unacceptable LOS conditions under existing plus project conditions.

6.12-7 The proposed project could increase peak hour traffic volumes using Sutter County intersections, resulting in unacceptable LOS conditions under existing plus project conditions.

6.12-8 The proposed project could increase peak hour traffic volumes using Sacramento County intersections, resulting in unacceptable LOS conditions under existing plus project conditions.

6.12-9 The proposed project could increase peak hour traffic volumes using Caltrans intersections resulting in unacceptable LOS conditions under existing plus project conditions.

6.12-10 The proposed project could increase peak hour traffic volumes using Caltrans ramp junctions, resulting in unacceptable LOS conditions under existing plus project conditions.

6.12-11 The proposed project could generate substantial vehicle traffic flows before and after special events at the stadium that may exceed the typical weekday peak hour operational capacity of the local and regional roadways.

6.12-12 The proposed project could generate vehicle parking demand that may exceed available supply during special events at the stadium.

Cumulative Significant and Unavoidable Impacts

The cumulative impacts associated with various categories of environmental impacts are discussed at the end of each chapter addressing environmental impact. In summary, the cumulative significant and unavoidable impacts identified for the proposed project include:

6.1-3 The proposed project, in combination with other cumulative development in west Placer County, could be incompatible with the agricultural character of the natural landscape in the project site and its surrounding areas.

6.1-4 The proposed project, in combination with other cumulative development in west Placer County, could contribute to sky glow and diminished views of the night sky experienced by residents of west Placer County.

6.2-4 The proposed project, in conjunction with other development in Placer County, could convert Important Farmland (Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Local Importance) as defined in the California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, to non-agricultural uses.

6.2-5 The proposed project, in conjunction with other development in Placer County, could create potential conflicts with County goals, policies, and standards that may lead to physical impacts on the environment.

6.2-6 The proposed project, in conjunction with other development in west Placer County, could conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or with a Williamson Act contract.

6.3-9 Construction of the proposed project, in combination with other construction and agricultural activities in the vicinity of the Plan Area, could add to cumulative levels of PM_{10} during construction.

6.3-10 Construction of the proposed project, in combination with other sources of criteria pollutants in the region, could temporarily add to criteria pollutant levels in the air basin.

6.3-11 The proposed project could contribute to cumulative levels of $PM_{2.5}$.

6.3-12 The proposed project's long-term operational emissions could add to the cumulative levels of criteria pollutant levels in the air basin.

6.4-13 Construction of the proposed project, in combination with other development in the county, could contribute to the loss of native plant communities, wildlife habitat values, special-status species and their potential habitat, and wetland resources in the region.

6.5-4 The proposed project, in combination with other development in the Sacramento region, could adversely affect unique archaeological resources or historical resources as defined in section 21083.2 of CEQA and section 15064.5 of the State CEQA Guidelines.

6.8-10 The proposed project, in combination with the buildout of Placer County and the City of Roseville General Plans, could result in degradation of water quality from stormwater runoff.

6.8-11 The proposed project, in combination with the buildout of Placer County and the City of Roseville General Plans, could result in the construction of residences and other structures within the pre-construction 100-year FEMA floodplain.

6.11-7 The proposed project, in combination with other development, could require the construction of new or expansion of the existing landfill and MRF, which could result in significant adverse environmental effects.

6.12-13 The proposed project could increase daily traffic volumes using City of Roseville roadway segments, resulting in unacceptable LOS conditions under cumulative plus project conditions.

6.12-14 The proposed project could increase daily traffic volumes using Sacramento County roadway segments, resulting in unacceptable LOS conditions under cumulative plus project conditions.

6.12-15 The proposed project could increase daily traffic volumes using Caltrans roadway segments, exacerbating unacceptable LOS conditions under cumulative plus project conditions.

6.12-16 The proposed project could increase peak hour traffic volumes using Placer County intersections, resulting in unacceptable LOS conditions under cumulative plus project conditions.

6.12-17 The proposed project could increase peak hour traffic volumes using City of Roseville intersections, resulting in unacceptable LOS conditions under cumulative plus project conditions.

6.12-18 The proposed project could increase peak hour traffic volumes using Sutter County intersections, resulting in unacceptable LOS conditions under cumulative plus project conditions.

6.12-19 The proposed project could increase peak hour traffic volumes using Sacramento County intersections, resulting in unacceptable LOS conditions under cumulative plus project conditions.

6.12-20 The proposed project could increase peak hour traffic volumes using Caltrans intersections, resulting in unacceptable LOS conditions under cumulative plus project conditions.

6.12-21 The proposed project could increase peak hour traffic volumes using Caltrans ramp junctions, resulting in unacceptable LOS conditions under cumulative plus project conditions.

6.12-22 The proposed project could increase peak hour traffic volumes using Roseville CIP intersections, resulting in unacceptable LOS conditions under 2020 conditions plus the RUSP with an extension of Watt Avenue to the project site.

6.12-23 The proposed project could increase peak hour traffic volumes using Roseville CIP intersections, resulting in unacceptable LOS conditions under 2020 conditions plus the RUSP with an extension of Watt Avenue to Blue Oaks Boulevard.

6.12-24 The proposed project could increase demand for public transit service beyond that currently planned and may result in unmet transit needs.

6.12-26 Mitigation measures implemented to reduce transportation impacts could adversely affect traffic in other jurisdictions.

6.12-27 Mitigation measures implemented to reduce transportation impacts could adversely affect the natural environment.

6.13-1 Development of the RUSP could potentially result in a cumulatively considerable incremental contribution to the significant cumulative impact of global climate change.

Significant Irreversible Environmental Effects

Section 15126.2(c) of the CEQA Guidelines requires a discussion of any significant irreversible environmental changes that would be caused by the proposed project. Section 15126.2(c) states:

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

Generally, a project would result in significant irreversible environmental changes if:

- The primary and secondary impacts would generally commit future generations to similar uses;
- The project would involve uses in which irreversible damage could result from any potential environmental accidents associated with the project;

- The project would involve a large commitment of nonrenewable resources; or
- The proposed consumption of resources is not justified (e.g., the project involves the wasteful use of energy).

Implementation of the proposed project would result in the long-term commitment of resources of the project site to urban land use. The development of the proposed project would likely result in or contribute to the following irreversible environmental changes:

- Conversion of existing undeveloped land, approximately 1,024 acres both on-site and off-site currently used for agricultural uses to urban land uses, thus precluding other alternate land uses in the future.
- Conversion of existing habitat both on and off-site (approximately 1,026 acres) and irreversible loss of wildlife (foraging habitat for raptors).
- Irreversible consumption of goods and services associated with the future population.
- Irreversible consumption of energy and natural resources associated with the future residential and employee population.
- Degradation of air quality associated with project construction and operation after mitigation.

Development of the proposed project would result in the continued commitment of the entire project site to urban development, thereby precluding any other uses for the lifespan of the project. Restoration of the site to pre-developed conditions would not be feasible given the degree of disturbance, the urbanization of the area, and the level of capital investment.

Resources that would be permanently and continually consumed by project implementation include water, electricity, natural gas, and fossil fuels; however, the amount and rate of consumption of these resources would not result in the unnecessary, inefficient, or wasteful use of resources. With respect to operational activities, compliance with all applicable building codes, as well as mitigation measures, planning policies, and standard conservation features, would ensure that all natural resources are conserved to the maximum extent possible. It is also possible that new technologies or systems would emerge, or would become more cost-effective or user-friendly, to further reduce the reliance upon nonrenewable natural resources. For example, mobile emissions associated with automobiles and trucks are anticipated to be less polluting in the future due to new technology designed to improve the efficiency of engines. Nonetheless, construction activities related to the proposed project would result in the irretrievable commitment of nonrenewable energy resources, primarily in the form of fossil fuels (including fuel oil), natural gas, and gasoline for automobiles and construction equipment.

The CEQA Guidelines also require a discussion of the potential for irreversible environmental damage caused by an accident associated with the project. While the project would result in the use, transport, storage, and disposal of hazardous wastes, as described in Section 6.7 (Hazardous Materials and Public Safety), all activities would comply with applicable State and federal laws related to hazardous materials, which significantly reduces the likelihood and severity of accidents that could result in irreversible environmental damage. In addition, the project does not include any uniquely hazardous uses that would require any special handling or storage.

Implementation of the proposed project would result in the long-term commitment of resources to urban development. The most notable significant irreversible impacts are a reduction in natural vegetation and wildlife communities; increased generation of pollutants; and the short-term

commitment of non-renewable and/or slowly renewable natural and energy resources, such as lumber and other forest products, mineral resources, and water resources during construction activities. Operations associated with future uses would also consume natural gas and electrical energy. These irreversible impacts, which are, as yet, unavoidable consequences of urban growth, are described in detail in the appropriate technical sections of this EIR (see Chapter 6).

Growth-Inducing Impacts

As required by Section 15126.2(d) of the CEQA Guidelines, an EIR must discuss 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. Also, the EIR must discuss the characteristics of the project that could encourage and facilitate other activities that could significantly affect the environment, either individually or cumulatively. Growth can be induced in a number of ways, such as through the elimination of obstacles to growth, through the stimulation of economic activity within the region, or through the establishment of policies or other precedents that directly or indirectly encourage additional growth. Under CEQA, this growth is not to be considered necessarily detrimental, beneficial, or of significant consequence. Induced growth would be considered a significant impact if it can be demonstrated that the potential growth, directly or indirectly, significantly affects the environment.

In general, a project may foster spatial, economic, or population growth in a geographic area if the project removes an impediment to growth (e.g., the establishment of an essential public service, the provision of the new access to an area; a change in zoning or general plan amendment approval); or economic expansion or growth occurs in an area in response to the project (e.g., changes in revenue base, employment expansion, etc). These circumstances are further described below:

Elimination of Obstacles to Growth: This refers to the extent to which a proposed project removes infrastructure limitations or provides infrastructure capacity, or removes regulatory constraints that could result in growth unforeseen at the time of project approval.

Economic Effects: This refers to the extent to which a proposed project could cause increased activity in the local or regional economy. Economic effects can include such effects as the Multiplier Effect. A “multiplier” is an economic term used to describe inter-relationships among various sectors of the economy. The multiplier effect provides a quantitative description of the direct employment effect of a project, as well as indirect and induced employment growth. The multiplier effect acknowledges that the on-site employment and population growth of each project is not the complete picture of growth caused by the project.

Elimination of Obstacles to Growth

The elimination of either physical or regulatory obstacles to growth is considered to be a growth-inducing effect. A physical obstacle to growth typically involves the lack of public service infrastructure. The extension of public service infrastructure, including roadways, water mains, 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.

Removal of Infrastructure Limitations or Provision of Capacity

The elimination of physical obstacles to growth is considered a growth-inducing effect. A number of physical constraints to growth currently exist in the vicinity of the project. In summary, the primary

growth obstacles in the area today include the lack of infrastructure on the site. A portion of the site can be accessed directly from Brewer Road. There is no sewer, water, or utilities infrastructure on the site or in the areas immediately adjacent to the site. The proposed project would include road access to the site and infrastructure to serve the future population at the site.

The proposed project includes sizing of infrastructure to serve development approved under the plan. Development of infrastructure could precede development of certain phases of the project; that is, some infrastructure improvements would be sized to accommodate more than demand at the time of implementation. However, in some cases, such as for storm drainage, the County may require the construction of infrastructure beyond the capacity required for the project. While this could be considered growth inducing, the areas adjacent to the project site have been identified in the County General Plan as a Future Study Area, which it has defined as an area suitable for development at urban or suburban intensities. Although the area has been identified by the County as suitable for future development, the proposed project could eliminate some of the infrastructure constraints that are currently obstacles to growth in the southwestern Placer County area and hasten the development of the area.

Economic Effects

In addition to the employment generated by the proposed project, additional local employment can be generated through what is commonly referred to as the "multiplier effect." The multiplier effect tends to be greater in regions with larger diverse economies due to a decrease in the requirement to import goods and services from outside the region.

Two different types of additional employment are tracked through the multiplier effect. *Indirect* employment includes those additional jobs that are generated through the expenditure patterns of direct employment associated with the project. Workers and students associated with University operations would spend money in the local economy, and the expenditure of that money would result in additional jobs. Indirect jobs tend to be in relatively close proximity to the places of employment and residence.

The multiplier effect also calculates *induced* employment. Induced employment follows the economic effect of employment beyond the expenditures of the employees within the proposed project area to include jobs created by the stream of goods and services necessary to support businesses within the proposed project. For example, when a manufacturer buys products or sells products, the employment associated with those inputs or outputs are considered *induced* employment.

For example, when an employee of the University, student, or resident of the Community goes out to lunch, the person who serves the project employee lunch holds a job that was *indirectly* caused by the proposed project. When the server then goes out and spends money in the economy, the jobs generated by this third-tier effect are considered *induced* employment.

The multiplier effect also considers the secondary effect of employee, student or resident expenditures. Thus, it includes the economic effect of the dollars spent by those employees, students and residents who support the employees of the project.

Increased future employment generated by resident and employee spending ultimately results in physical development of space to accommodate those employees. It is the characteristics of this physical space and its specific location that will determine the type and magnitude of environmental impacts of this additional economic activity. Although the economic effect can be predicted, the

actual environmental implications of this type of economic growth are too speculative to predict or evaluate, since they can be spread throughout the southwestern Placer County region and beyond.

Impacts of Induced Growth

The growth induced directly and indirectly by the proposed project would contribute to a number of environmental impacts in Placer County and the nearby City of Roseville, as well as the greater regional area, including: traffic congestion; air quality deterioration; loss of agricultural land and open space; loss of habitat; and increased demand for housing.

Indirect and induced employment and population growth would further contribute to the loss of open space because it would encourage the conversion of undeveloped land to urban uses for additional housing and infrastructure. The construction of more roadways and infrastructure within the southwestern Placer County area would help to promote growth in the area.

Cumulative Impacts

CEQA requires that an EIR contain an assessment of the cumulative impacts that could be associated with the proposed project. This assessment involves examining project-related effects on the environment in the context of similar effects that have been caused by past or existing projects, and the anticipated effects of future projects. Although project-related impacts may be individually minor, the cumulative effects of these impacts, in combination with the impacts of other projects, could be significant under CEQA and must be addressed. (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15130(a).) Where a lead agency concludes that the cumulative effects of a project, taken together with the impacts of past, present, and probable future projects, are significant, the lead agency then must determine whether the project's incremental contribution to such significant cumulative impact is "cumulatively considerable" (and thus significant in and of itself).

Cumulative Context

The general cumulative impact context for the RUSP considers development identified in the 1994 Placer County General Plan and proposed and approved projects, including the RUSP, in West Placer County.

The basis of the cumulative analysis varies by technical area. For example, traffic and traffic-related air emissions and noise analyses assume development that is planned and/or anticipated in south Placer County and other neighboring jurisdictions, including the cities of Roseville and Lincoln, because each of these jurisdictions contribute to traffic on local and regional roadways. Air quality impacts are evaluated against conditions in the Sacramento air basin. Similarly, the hydrology and water quality cumulative analysis considers the watersheds that receive runoff from the project site. Other cumulative analyses, such as biological resources, consider the potential loss of resources in a broader, more regional context. The cumulative analysis in each of the technical sections evaluates the proposed project's contribution to the cumulative scenario.

While the cumulative context may differ for each of the technical topics addressed in the Draft EIR, the following projects were generally considered in the cumulative analysis for the proposed project.

West Roseville Specific Plan

The West Roseville Specific Plan, east of the RUSP in the City of Roseville, includes approximately 3,150 acres. At buildout, the West Roseville Specific Plan area will include approximately 8,500 dwelling units, 200 acres of commercial/office development, and approximately 1,200 acres of public facilities, including open space. The West Roseville Specific Plan area is now under construction.

Sierra Vista Specific Plan

The 2,175-acre Sierra Vista Specific Plan, southeast of the RUSP, is located along the western edge of the City of Roseville in unincorporated Placer County and nearly entirely within the City of Roseville's Sphere of Influence. At buildout, the Sierra Vista Specific Plan will provide for approximately 10,500 dwelling units, approximately 2.3 million square feet of retail and office uses, and approximately 440 acres of public facilities, including parks and open space. The Sierra Vista Specific Plan is currently in preparation.

Placer Vineyards Specific Plan

The Placer Vineyards Specific Plan, south of the RUSP in unincorporated Placer County, includes approximately 5,230 acres. At buildout, the Placer Vineyards Specific Plan will include 14,132 dwelling units, 274 acres of commercial uses, 641 acres of quasi-public (public facilities/services, religious facilities, schools, and major roadways) land uses, and 919 acres of park and open space land. The Placer County Board of Supervisors approved the Placer Vineyards Specific Plan in July 2007 and construction is projected to occur over a 20 to 30-year time frame.

Riolo Vineyards Specific Plan

The Riolo Vineyards Specific Plan, southeast of the RUSP in unincorporated Placer County, includes approximately 527.5 acres. At buildout, the Riolo Vineyards Specific Plan will include 932 dwelling units, approximately 7 acres of commercial development, and approximately 204 acres of public facilities including open space, infrastructure, and agricultural uses. The Riolo Vineyards Specific Plan EIR is currently in preparation for Placer County.

Curry Creek Community Plan Area

The Curry Creek Community Plan Area encompasses a portion of the RUSP and is within a Future Study Area identified by the Placer County General Plan as an appropriate location for consideration of potential future urban or suburban growth. Although the entire Plan Area lies within the Curry Creek Community Plan, the RUSP is independent of the Curry Creek Community Plan.

Creekview Specific Plan

The approximately 570-acre Creekview Specific Plan area is in the initial planning stages and would be located northeast of the RUSP. If approved, the Creekview Specific Plan would consist of approximately 2,160 dwelling units, 38 acres of industrial land use, a 14-acre school, and a community clubhouse on three acres.

Placer Ranch Specific Plan

The Placer Ranch Specific Plan, northeast of the RUSP in unincorporated Placer County, includes approximately 6,793 acres. The Placer Ranch Specific Plan would include 6,793 residential dwelling units, 527 acres of business park and light industrial uses, 150 acres of office professional uses, 99 acres of commercial uses; 275 acres of parks, landscape corridors, and open space; two new elementary schools; and a new middle school. In addition, the proposed project includes a 300-acre branch campus of California State University Sacramento, with an estimated total enrollment of 25,000 students. An EIR is currently being prepared for this project for Placer County.

Lincoln Crossing

Lincoln Crossing, northeast of the RUSP, along the west side of Highway 65, is an approved residential development in the City of Lincoln. This development is 1,070 acres, and at buildout, will consist of approximately 2,958 dwelling units.