
7.0 LONG-TERM IMPLICATIONS

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. A growth-inducing impact is defined by the CEQA Guidelines as:

The way 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 is not 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 proposed City of Lone General Plan update and other project components (proposed project) is intended to serve as the overall plan for the physical development of the City of Lone (City). While the proposed project 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 would refine existing land use designations in the City and establish new policies, actions and design guidelines to direct and manage future development and land uses in the city. This management would also include policy direction on roadway facility improvements, public service improvements, and the extension and expansion of utilities.

The proposed project would induce further population growth and job expansion in the city as well as potentially induce growth outside of the existing city limits. The proposed project could indirectly induce growth if it were to remove an obstacle to additional growth and development, such as removing a constraint on a required public service, such as sewer service. Proposed roadway improvements would support such growth within the city and the proposed General Plan Planning Area (Planning Area). The General Plan Update and associated project components would also encourage the development of infrastructure, including extension of infrastructure into currently unserved areas, to support the projected development.

For the year 2008, population for the city was estimated at 7,416 persons and housing units were estimated to be around 1,495 units. The proposed project would result in approximately 7,475 residential units, 12,800 jobs, and a population of approximately 18,182 for the city by 2030. The reader is referred to Section 4.3, Population and Housing, for a discussion of impacts associated with increases in population and housing under the General Plan Update.

The City's existing 1992 General Plan allows for LOS C on the roadways identified under the 1992 General Plan. The proposed project includes proposed roadway improvements that have been designed to support the General Plan Land Use Policy Map and maintain the city's proposed Level of Service (LOS) standard of LOS D, where feasible and appropriate. The proposed project does not include any provisions requiring the oversizing of infrastructure facilities to serve growth not anticipated in the General Plan Land Use Policy Map. The physical environmental effects of the proposed roadway improvements within the Planning Area and any off-site impacts that could result from the proposed roadway improvements, where the roads continue into other jurisdictions, have been disclosed in Section 4.4, Traffic and Circulation, of this Draft EIR (DEIR).

Infrastructure improvements proposed under the proposed project would incorporate existing sewer trunk lines that currently exist in urban areas within the city limits and Sphere of Influence (SOI). Though these areas are proposed to be developed mainly with single-family residential uses, it is feasible that the availability of portions of infrastructure lines in place could promote the development of these areas before development in other single-family residential areas identified within the Planning Area. The reader is referred to Section 4.13, Public Services and Utilities, for a discussion of impacts associated with increased utility infrastructure needs under the proposed project.

The specific environmental effects resulting from the proposed land use patterns and associated extension of public services are discussed in the environmental issue areas in Sections 4.1 through 4.13, and the project's cumulative impacts (Section 5.0, Cumulative Impacts) would be in addition to the following additional environmental effects of growth in the region:

- **Agricultural Resources** – Continued loss of farmland to urban uses as well as increased conflicts with agricultural operations and urban uses.
- **Air Quality** – Increases in air pollutant emissions potentially conflicting with air quality attainment efforts under state and federal Clean Air Acts and increased potential for the exposure to toxic air contaminants.
- **Biological Resources** – Loss of special-status plant and animal species habitats, degradation of habitats, and loss of special-status species.
- **Cultural and Paleontological Resources** – Impacts to known and unknown archaeological and historic resources in the region.
- **Geology and Soils** – Loss of access to known valuable mineral resources.
- **Hydrology and Water Quality** – Additional sources of point and non-point sources of surface water quality pollutants to region waterways. Further demand on groundwater resources and potential overdraft issues.
- **Noise** – Increased transportation noise levels from increased traffic volumes.
- **Public Services and Utilities** – Increased demand for the development and expansion of public services and facilities and associated environmental issues.
- **Transportation and Circulation** – Increased traffic volumes on the region's highways and regional roadways resulting in deficient levels of service of operation.
- **Visual Resources** – Further conversion of rural, agricultural, and natural open space landscape characteristics to urban conditions.

It is anticipated that agricultural areas to the east, west, and south of the existing city limits may be pressured to develop if adjacent lands are developed and infrastructure extended under the proposed project. While the General Plan designates lands within the city limits for urbanization, the intensity of development and identification of urbanization of the existing and proposed SOIs (which are currently under Amador County jurisdiction) would exceed the existing and proposed development potential set forth by the City's 1992 General Plan and the Amador County (County) General Plan. This DEIR provides an evaluation of environmental effects of project growth.

Annexation of land beyond the City's current borders would add growth pressures to areas within and surrounding the City's proposed Planning Area. In addition, the extension of infrastructure and would place growth pressure on adjoining land areas. Ultimately, the City would continue to control land use and growth within the city through its General Plan and zoning provisions while the County would also continue to control land use and growth through its General Plan and zoning provisions.

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SECONDARY EFFECTS OF GROWTH

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

This EIR discusses the environmental effects associated with the implementation of the project. Environmental effects of growth on adjacent properties resulting in conversion of existing land uses especially on lands beyond the City's proposed Planning Area would be similar to those associated with the proposed project evaluated in Sections 4.1 through 4.13, which include impacts associated with traffic, noise, air quality, hydrology and water quality, hazards, public services and utilities, cultural resources, geological resources, biological resources, land use, agricultural resources, and visual resources. However, this growth would further contribute to these local and regional environmental impacts beyond the effects of the project.

7.2 SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

CEQA Sections 21100(b)(2) and 21100.1(a) require that EIRs prepared for the adoption of plan, policy, or ordinance of a public agency must include a discussion of significant irreversible environmental changes of project implementation. In addition, CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(c) describes irreversible environmental changes as:

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.

Implementation of the proposed City of Lone General Plan update and associated project components would result in the conversion of undeveloped open space land areas to residential, commercial, industrial, office, public and recreational uses. Development of the Planning Area would constitute a long-term commitment to residential land uses. It is unlikely that circumstances would arise that would justify the return of the land to its original condition.

Development of the Planning Area would irretrievably commit building materials and energy to the construction and maintenance of buildings and infrastructure proposed. Renewable, nonrenewable, and limited resources that would likely be consumed as part of the development of the proposed project would include, but are not limited to: oil, gasoline, lumber, sand and gravel, asphalt, water, steel, and similar materials. In addition, development of the project would result in an increased demand on public services and utilities (see Section 4.13 Public Facilities and Utilities).

7.3 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 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.

The following significant and unavoidable impacts are specifically identified in Sections 4.1 through 4.13 of this EIR. The reader is referred to these sections for further details and analysis of the significant and unavoidable impacts identified below.

SECTION 4.1 LAND USE AND PLANNING

Conflicts with Relevant Land Use Plans, Policies, or Regulations

Impact 4.1.3 Implementation of the project has the potential to conflict with applicable land use plans, policies, or regulations of agencies with jurisdiction over parts of the Planning Area, including Amador County. This is considered a **potentially significant** impact.

Cumulative Land Use Effects

Impact 4.1.4 When considered with existing, proposed, planned, and approved development in the region, implementation of the proposed project has the potential to contribute to cumulative land use conditions in the region that result in significant impacts to the physical environment. This is considered a **cumulatively considerable** impact as a result of the increased environmental effects of growth beyond current adopted land use plans.

SECTION 4.2 AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

Loss and Conversion of Agricultural Land

Impact 4.2.1 Implementation of the proposed General Plan update and its associated project components would result in the loss of Important Farmlands (Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance) as designated by the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. This is considered a **significant** impact.

Agricultural/Urban Interface Conflicts

Impact 4.2.2 Implementation of the proposed project could result in the placement of urban uses adjacent to agricultural uses within and adjacent to the city. This is considered a **potentially significant** impact.

Conflicts with Williamson Act Contracts

Impact 4.2.3 Implementation of the proposed General Plan could result in a conflict with active Williamson Act contracts. This is considered a **potentially significant** impact.

Cumulative Impacts to Agricultural Resources

Impact 4.2.4 Implementation of the proposed project, along with other proposed development in Amador County, would contribute to the cumulative conversion of Important Farmlands to other uses and may increase

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agriculture/urban interface conflicts. This is a **cumulatively considerable** impact.

SECTION 4.3 POPULATION AND HOUSING

Population, Housing, and Employment Increases

Impact 4.3.1 Implementation of the proposed General Plan Land Use Map and other project components would result in land uses that promote an increase in population, housing, and employment in the Planning Area and thus induce substantial growth. Development associated with substantial growth could result in significant impacts on the environment. This is a **significant** impact.

Jobs-to-Housing Balance

Impact 4.3.3 Implementation of the proposed project would create numerous new jobs within the Planning Area, potentially resulting in an unbalanced jobs-to-housing ratio. This impact would be **significant**.

Cumulative Population and Housing Impacts

Impact 4.3.4 Development under the proposed General Plan update and associated project components would include substantial population, housing unit, and employment increases. This is considered a **cumulatively considerable** impact.

SECTION 4.4 TRAFFIC AND CIRCULATION

Deficient LOS Conditions on Study Roadway Segments

Impact 4.4.1 Implementation of the proposed project would result in an increase in traffic volumes beyond traffic volumes associated with the existing General Plan that would result in deficient level of service conditions and conflict with Amador County and Caltrans standards for level of service. This is a **significant** impact.

Cumulative Impacts to Study Roadway Segments

Impact 4.4.5 When considered with existing, proposed, approved and planned development in the region, implementation of the proposed project has the potential to contribute to an increase in traffic volumes that would result in deficient level of service conditions under cumulative conditions (including buildout of the Planning Area) resulting in significant impacts to the physical environment. This is considered a **cumulatively considerable** impact.

SECTION 4.5 AIR QUALITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Conflict with Implementation of Applicable Air Quality Plans or Contribute Substantially to an Existing Air Quality Violation

Impact 4.5.1 The proposed project would accommodate future growth in population, housing, commercial development, and jobs in the City of Lone. These

activities would result in the emission of non-attainment pollutants within Amador County. Specific to the production of the pollutant, ozone, implementation of the General Plan and its associated project components would allow for population growth that may exceed projections assumed in the 2004 Amador County Regional Transportation Plan. Although there presently is no ozone attainment standard, traffic congestion in excess of projections may impair compliance with any ozone attainment plan adopted in the future. The traffic congestion could also increase particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5) emissions in excess of State and federal standards. This impact is considered to be **potentially significant**.

Cumulative Air Quality Impacts on Attainment Plans

Impact 4.5.6 Implementation of the proposed project, in combination with cumulative development in the Air Basin, would contribute to a cumulative air quality impacts and could conflict with ozone and particulate matter attainment efforts. This is considered a **cumulatively considerable** impact.

Conflict or Obstruct with Implementation of Greenhouse Gas Reduction Measures

Impact 4.5.7 Implementation of the proposed project would substantially increase emissions of CO₂e over existing (2008) conditions. This increase in GHG emissions would be inconsistent with state efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This impact is considered to be **cumulatively considerable**.

SECTION 4.6 NOISE

Exposure to Surface Transportation Noise

Impact 4.6.2 The proposed General Plan update and other project components would result in increased traffic noise levels along area roadways that could adversely affect noise-sensitive land uses. In addition, future development of industrial uses within the southern portion of the city could result in resumed railroad traffic and increased noise levels along the existing UP Railroad corridor. Increases in surface transportation noise could result in increased noise levels at noise-sensitive land uses in excess of City noise standards. This impact would be considered **significant**.

Exposure to Non-Transportation Noise

Impact 4.6.3 As additional development occurs throughout the city, the potential exists for new noise-sensitive land uses to encroach upon existing or proposed stationary noise sources. As a result, this impact is considered to be **significant**.

Noise Impacts Associated with Increased Traffic Resulting from Buildout of the Proposed General Plan

Impact 4.6.5 Implementation of the proposed project along with potential development of the Planning Area could result in increased noise conflicts. This is considered a **cumulatively considerable** impact.

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SECTION 4.7 HAZARDS AND HUMAN HEALTH

No significant and unavoidable impacts were identified related to hazards and human health.

SECTION 4.8 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Cumulative Biological Resources

Impact 4.8.6 Implementation of the proposed General Plan and associated project components, together with past, present, and probable future projects in the Planning Area and larger regional context, would result in a cumulatively significant loss of biological resources in the region. The project's incremental contribution to this significant cumulative impact is **cumulatively considerable**.

SECTION 4.9 CULTURAL RESOURCES

No significant and unavoidable impacts were identified related to cultural resources.

SECTION 4.10 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

No significant and unavoidable impacts were identified related to hydrology and water quality.

SECTION 4.11 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Loss of Mineral Resources

Impact 4.11.5 Implementation of the proposed project could result in the loss of availability of a potentially valuable mineral resource. This impact is considered **significant**.

Cumulative Mineral Resource Impacts

Impact 4.11.8 Implementation of the proposed project, along with other planned, proposed, recently approved, and reasonably foreseeable development in the region, could result in a cumulatively significant loss of mineral resources in the region. The General Plan's incremental contribution to the loss of mineral resources is **cumulatively considerable**.

SECTION 4.12 VISUAL RESOURCES

Alteration of Visual Character

Impact 4.12.3 Conversion of existing agricultural lands and undeveloped lands to urban uses from implementation of the proposed project would result in a substantial visual change and **significant** impact to the visual character of the Planning Area.

Cumulative Visual Resources Impacts

Impact 4.12.5 Implementation of the proposed General Plan update and other project components in combination with other reasonably foreseeable development projects within Amador County would result in significant cumulative impacts to the visual character and scenic vistas of the region. This impact is considered to be **cumulatively considerable** impact.

SECTION 4.13 PUBLIC SERVICES AND UTILITIES

No significant and unavoidable impacts were identified related to public services and utilities.

