17. OTHER CEQA CONSIDERATIONS

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

17.1 GROWTH INDUCING IMPACTS

The State CEQA Guidelines (§15126.2[d]) require that an EIR evaluate the growth-inducing impacts of a proposed project. Specifically, an EIR must:

> *"Discuss the ways in which the 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… Increases in the population may tax existing community service facilities, so consideration must be given to this impact. Also discuss the characteristics of some projects which may encourage and facilitate other activities that could significantly affect the environment, either individually or cumulatively. It must bot be assumed that growth in any area is necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment."*

Growth inducement, by itself, is not an environmental effect but may indirectly lead to environmental effects. Such environmental effects may include increased demand on other community and public services and infrastructure, increased traffic and noise, degradation of air or water quality, degradation or loss of plant or wildlife habitats, or conversion of agricultural and open space land to urban uses.

17.1.1 Growth Inducing Impacts of the Proposed General Plan

By definition, the General Plan is intended to provide for and address future growth in the City. However, the proposed General Plan is not proposing any specific development projects, so it would not have direct growth-inducing impacts. Indirect growth-inducing impacts would occur, however, because the land use map and designations, as well as the goals and policies, of the General Plan are designed to provide a framework to accommodate future population growth and economic growth, particularly in employment centers designed to accommodate a net influx of workers. The analysis of these indirect growth-inducing impacts for the proposed General Plan focuses on two main factors: (1) promotion of economic or population growth, and (2) elimination of obstacles to growth.

<u>Encouraging and Facilitating Other Activities</u>

This CEQA issue addresses the extent to which implementation of the General Plan 2023 would cause increased development in the area through stimulation of economic activity.

Implementation of the General Plan 2023 would directly affect growth in Manteca by allowing for construction of residential and non-residential uses. Increased employment is necessary to support increased population, so as the General Plan accommodates the expected growth to one degree or another, related job growth would result.

The General Plan 2023 is designed to promote job creation in the service, light industrial, and finance, insurance and real estate sectors in major planned employment centers. The objective of these facilities is, in part, to provide resident workers an opportunity to work in their community, thereby avoiding the long commute to work.

The land use policies encourage the development of mixed uses to promote a variety of housing and job types. The Economic Development Element goals and policies also address increasing the number of jobs in the City to help reduce vehicular trips commuting into the Silicon Valley. Indirectly, then, increases in employment and population would generate a secondary demand for other services, but could have a beneficial effect on traffic and air quality.

Removing Obstacles to Population Growth

This CEQA issue addresses the extent to which regulatory changes and/or infrastructure capacity provided to support the implementation of the General Plan, allowing additional, unforeseen development in the surrounding areas.

Whether or not growth obstacles are eliminated relates to the extent to which the proposed General Plan would increase infrastructure capacity or change the regulatory structure such that additional development in the county and region would be allowed. A physical obstacle to growth typically involves the lack of public service infrastructure or insufficient infrastructure 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.

The adoption of the General Plan 2023 is a precursor to the update of the Public Facilities Implementation Plan, a Recreation Master Plan, and other City improvement plans that enable development to occur.

17.2 SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS THAT CANNOT BE AVOIDED

CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126(b) states that an EIR must:

> *"Describe any significant impacts, including those which can be mitigated but not reduced to a level of insignificance."*

Those impacts, which cannot be feasibly mitigated to less-than-significant impacts, would remain as significant and unavoidable adverse impacts. The significant and unavoidable adverse impacts addressed in this EIR are listed below in Table 17-1.

Table 17-1

Significant and Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

	AESTHETICS AND VISUAL RESOURCES
POTENTIAL IMPACT AV-1:	Buildout of the proposed General Plan 2023 would degrade the existing scenic vistas found in the General Plan Study Area.
POTENTIAL IMPACT AV-2:	The existing visual character or quality of the area will be degraded.
	AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES
POTENTIAL IMPACT AG-1:	Implementation of the City of Manteca General Plan 2023 (Project) will result in conversion of Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, and Farmland of Local Importance to non-agricultural use.
POTENTIAL IMPACT AG-2:	Implementation of the General Plan 2023 will cause a conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract.
	AIR QUALITY
POTENTIAL IMPACT AQ-2:	Implementation of the General Plan 2023 could violate air quality standards or contribute substantially to the current nonattainment status for ozone and PM10.
POTENTIAL IMPACT AQ-3:	Implementation of the General Plan 2023 would result in a cumulatively considerable net increase in ozone and PM10 air pollutants.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

POTENTIAL IMPACT B-5: Impacts on biological resources from the buildout of the General Plan 2023 may be cumulatively significant. (SIGNIFICANT)

POPULATION AND HOUSING

POTENTIAL IMPACT H-1: Implementation of the General Plan 2023 would increase the City's population over existing conditions.

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

POTENTIAL IMPACT PFS-7: The General Plan 2023 would require expanded energy sources and infrastructure for expanded urban development.

17.3 SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

Section 15126.2(c) of the State CEQA Guidelines requires that this EIR consider significant irreversible environmental changes that would be caused by the General Plan. An impact would be determined to be a significant and irreversible change in the environment if:

- development enabled by the General Plan would involve a large commitment of nonrenewable resources;
- the primary and secondary impacts of development would generally commit future generations to similar uses (e.g., a highway provides access to a previously remote area);
- development of the General Plan would involve uses in which irreversible damage could result from any potential environmental accidents associated with the plan;
- or the development of the General Plan land uses would result in an unjustified consumption of resources (e.g., the wasteful use of energy).

This EIR addresses the commitment of nonrenewable resources (e.g., development vs. retention of agricultural resources), commitment of future generations to similar uses (e.g., development of designated land uses), the potential for environmental accidents (e.g., exposure to hazards), and the consumption of energy (e.g., the use of electricity).

The implementation of the proposed General Plan would likely result in or contribute to the following irreversible environmental changes:

1. Relatively low-density (primarily residential) suburban land use patterns that would likely preclude future higher density development except where designated. This could limit opportunities for efficient, cost-effective full-service transit services.

2. Conversion of existing undeveloped land and open vistas to developed land uses, thus precluding other alternate land uses in the future, and precluding preservation of the existing land use pattern and vistas.

3. Irreversible loss of agricultural land (see Section 4.).

4. Commitment of water resources to serve development and degradation of water quality from suburban runoff (see Section 10).

5. Commitment of municipal resources to the provision of services and operations of infrastructure for future development (see Sections 14).

6. Increased ambient noise and background air emissions (Sections 12 and 5, respectively).

7. Conversion of existing habitat and irreversible loss of wildlife (see Section 6).

8. In addition to these irreversible changes, other more general irreversible changes would be expected, and the magnitude would be generally tied to population growth. General, population related, irreversible changes would include:
   - Irreversible consumption of goods and services associated with the future population.
   - Irreversible consumption of energy and natural resources associated with the future population.
   - Possible demand for and use of goods, services, and resources by the county to the exclusion of development in other locations in the region.

17.4 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

17.4.1 Requirements for Cumulative Impact Analysis

This EIR provides an analysis of cumulative impacts of the proposed General Plan, as required by §15130 of the CEQA Guidelines (State CEQA Guidelines). Cumulative impacts are defined in State CEQA Guidelines §15355 as two or more individual effects that together create a considerable environmental impact or that compound or increase other impacts. "A cumulative impact occurs from the change in the environment, which results from the incremental impact of the project when added to other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time" (Guidelines §15355[b]). By requiring an

evaluation of cumulative impacts, CEQA attempts to ensure that large-scale environmental impacts will not be ignored. Consistent with State CEQA Guidelines §15130(a), the discussion of cumulative impacts in this EIR focuses on significant and potentially significant cumulative impacts. According to State CEQA Guidelines §15130(b), "The 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. The discussion should be guided by the standards of practicality and reasonableness, and should focus on the cumulative impact to which the identified other projects contribute rather than the attributes of other projects which do not contribute to the cumulative impact."

All of the following elements are necessary to an adequate discussion of cumulative impacts (Guidelines §15130[b]):

> Either: (A) a list of past, present, and reasonably anticipated future projects producing related or cumulative impacts, including those projects outside the control of the agency; or: (B) a summary of projections contained in an adopted general plan or related planning document that is designed to evaluate regional or areawide conditions. Any such planning document shall be referenced and made available to the public at a location specified by the lead agency.
>
> A summary of the expected environmental effects to be produced by those projects with specific reference to additional information stating where that information is available.
>
> A reasonable analysis of the cumulative impacts of the relevant projects. An EIR shall examine reasonable options for mitigating or avoiding any significant cumulative effects of the proposed projects.

The environmental impact analysis in this EIR is citywide in scope, so it already presents detailed analysis of environmental effects over a broad area, comprising most of the contribution relevant to cumulative environmental effects. For instance, significance conclusions and mitigation measures described for the impacts of the General Plan alternatives may also be applicable to cumulative impacts. Therefore, when warranted, cross-references to analysis or mitigation measures in Sections 3 through 15 (inclusive) are provided to avoid repetition.

17.4.2 Local and Regional Context of Cumulative Impacts

As described above, the State CEQA Guidelines identify two basic methods for establishing the cumulative environment in which the project is to be considered: the use of a list of past, present, and reasonably anticipated future projects, or the use of adopted projections from a general plan or other regional planning document. The evaluation of the cumulative environment for this EIR is based on projections in existing county-wide planning documents.

Regional Planning Documents

The regional cumulative analysis prepared covers the incorporated cities within San Joaquin County and includes the following plans:

San Joaquin County Council of Governments Regional Transportation Plan

San Joaquin County General Plan

City of Lathrop General Plan

City of Ripon General Plan

City of Stockton General Plan

Projected Growth in the South San Joaquin County Area

The County's population, housing, and employment have increased over the past decade as a result of statewide trends, the expansion of employment opportunities in the San Francisco Bay Area, and continued growth throughout the region. The following sections discuss the existing setting and future trends with regard to population, housing, and employment in San Joaquin County. **(1)**

The population in San Joaquin County increased from 480,628 persons in 1990 to 563,598 in 2000 according to the U.S. Census. This represents an increase of 17 percent over the 10-year period, and 62 percent since 1980. Most of this growth has occurred in the southern portion of the County and in the City of Stockton. That growth has been the result of dramatic job growth in Silicon Valley during the last 10 years. The City of Tracy has experienced the most dramatic growth of any jurisdiction of the County, increasing its population by over 23,000 residents or 70 percent since 1990; while, the City of Stockton experienced the largest numerical increase of almost 33,000 residents.

The south San Joaquin County area that includes the south area of Stockton, and Ripon, Lathrop, and Manteca have experienced substantial growth in population in recent decades. Population growth is driven by job growth outside of the area. Despite predictions for rapid and diversified employment growth in the Central Valley for many years, technology related employment had largely bypassed San Joaquin County in favor of areas like Sacramento. The location decisions of firms like Apple Computers, Hewlett-Packard, and Intel have demonstrated that proximity to the Silicon Valley is less important to high technology employers than access to other benefits, including a large and well educated labor force, a broad housing supply that meets the needs of both low income households and executives, and a host of recreational amenities. Central Valley cities like Manteca will need to provide similar amenities in order to compete with other employment centers in Northern California. **(2)**

Over the next 20 years, the San Joaquin area economy would likely be steered by three potential trends: 1) if transportation infrastructure capabilities continue to expand, major real estate investments will respond with growth in the high-end manufacturing sector; 2) if growth in the manufacturing sector occurs, associated R&D and administrative functions will also expand; and 3) as growth in Tri-Valley and Silicon Valley labor markets continues, residents will continue to "spillover" to San Joaquin County, increasing the number of skilled workers that will be considered in corporate location decisions.

Each of the cities in the south county area is poised to accommodate additional growth. General Plan updates are underway in Manteca, Ripon, and Stockton.

17.4.3 Assessment of Cumulative Impacts

Land Use and Housing

In the absence of a major new employment center the region is likely to continue to fulfill the role of housing workers from the Bay Area. The demand for housing remains strong. The housing market has demanded relatively large homes in residential subdivisions that consume large land areas. The cumulative effects include conversion of agricultural land.

Visual Resources

As the cities grow outward, they could ultimately connect to one another forming a contiguous urban area. Currently, the cities of Lathrop and Manteca share a common, urbanized boundary. As Ripon and Manteca continue to expand the undeveloped ground that separates them diminishes. Similarly, Stockton to the north has the potential to expand to Manteca's northern boundary. The cumulative effect could be the loss of the open agricultural land that separates the communities and contributes to each community's sense of identity and place.

Agriculture

The conversion of agricultural land to urban uses is unavoidable in the south San Joaquin area. Although the Prime Farmlands are more prevalent in other parts of the county, development in this area will inevitably impact Farmlands of Statewide Importance. The cumulative effect of incremental conversion of farmland is a continuing loss of farm operations due to the encroachment of urban uses that conflict with farm activities.

Air Quality

Air quality is inherently a regional consideration. As a non-attainment area, all incremental growth contributes to the degradation of air quality.

Biological Resources

The General Plan Study Area is within the area examined in the countywide Habitat Conservation Plan. The effects of implementing the General Plan 2023 and the other plans in the area are to further restrict the habitat options for the affected species.

Traffic and Circulation

Traffic analysis for the General Plan 2023 used the SJCOG regional traffic model. The results of that analysis reflect the cumulative effect of all traffic in the region.

References

(1) 2001 RTP Program EIR, San Joaquin Council of Governments September 2001

(2) Economic Planning Systems Draft Technical Memorandum, May 2003

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