

8.0 OTHER CEQA CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 SIGNIFICANT AND UNAVOIDABLE IMPACTS

Section 15126(b) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines requires an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to discuss the significant impacts of a proposed project that cannot be reduced to a *less than significant* level. These impacts are referred to as *significant and unavoidable* impacts of the project.

In Sections 5.1 through 5.18 of this EIR, the issue areas were analyzed to determine whether project implementation would result in a significant adverse environmental impact. Refer to those discussions for further details and analysis of the *significant and unavoidable* impacts identified below. Should Shasta County approve the proposed project, the County shall be required to cite its findings in accordance with State *CEQA Guidelines* §15091 and prepare a Statement of Overriding Considerations in accordance with State *CEQA Guidelines* §15093.

AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES (Section 5.2)

IMPACT 5.2-3	<i>Development of the proposed project, as well as buildout in accordance with the County's General Plan, may result in the cumulative loss of farmland.</i>
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The proposed project would result in the loss of approximately 533.27 acres of Grazing Land as mapped by the FMMP, which represents approximately ±0.13 percent of designated Grazing Land in Shasta County. The County's *General Plan* acknowledges that agricultural land uses are a major component of the County's resource land base and are also a major element in defining the quality of life available to the residents of Shasta County. Were agriculture to lose its land-based prominence in the County, the rural character and country living so valued by its residents and so important to its economy would likely decline.

The County's *General Plan* recognizes that agricultural land is a non-renewable resource. Although **MM 5.2-1** requires a permanent conservation easement be established to provide for agricultural use of offsite lands; and **MM 5.2-2** helps maintain the viability of agricultural lands near the development site, the conversion of Grazing Land is an irreversible loss and remains cumulatively considerable and, therefore, a *significant and unavoidable* impact.

AIR QUALITY (Section 5.3)

IMPACT 5.3-8	<i>Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is nonattainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors).</i>
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Because of the region's nonattainment status for ozone and PM₁₀, if a project generates ozone-precursor pollutants (i.e., ROG and NO_x) or PM₁₀ in quantities that would be considered to result in significant air quality impacts under individual project conditions, the project's cumulative impacts would be considered

significant as well. Construction-generated emissions associated with the development of the proposed project would not exceed the SCAQMD Level B significance threshold, and while the Level A significance threshold would be surpassed for NO_x emissions, feasible SMM and appropriate BMM would be implemented per SCAQMD guidance as required by **MM 5.3-1**. As a result, impacts from construction-generated air pollutants would be considered *less than significant*. Implementation of **MM 5.3-2** would reduce ROG levels to below the Level B significance threshold, and in order to address NO_x emissions, feasible SMM would be implemented per SCAQMD guidance as required by **MM 5.3-3**. However, as long-term mitigated NO_x emissions would exceed the SCAQMD's Level A significance threshold, and NO_x is a precursor pollutant for ozone (Shasta County is a nonattainment area for State ozone standards; refer to Table 5.3-4), the project's long-term operational NO_x emissions are cumulatively considerable. Therefore, this impact would be cumulatively *significant*.

As discussed in Section 5.3, AIR QUALITY, Tables 5.3-8 and 5.3-9, the project's construction and operational emissions would be below Level B significance thresholds with implementation of **MM 5.3-1**, **MM 5.3-2**, and **MM 5.3-3**. Despite implementation of these mitigation measures identified for this proposed project, the project's long-term NO_x emissions would be cumulatively considerable, and would result in *significant and unavoidable* cumulative air quality impacts.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES (Section 5.4)

IMPACT 5-4-5	<i>Cumulative development within the project area may affect sensitive biological resources, including special-status species, wetland habitat, and oak woodlands.</i>
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Development of the proposed project would result in the conversion of approximately 46.2 acres of annual grassland to urban uses; fragmentation of approximately 42 acres of annual grassland; conversion of approximately 146.24 acre of oak woodland to urban uses; and fragmentation of approximately 300.4 acres of oak woodland, thereby contributing to the cumulative regional loss of grasslands and oak woodlands that may support special-status plant and animal species, nesting bird habitat, migration corridors, and general wildlife habitat.

Whereas **MM 5.4-1a** requires a permanent conservation easement to be established to partially offset the loss of oak woodlands, and **MM 5.4-1b** and **MM 5.4-1c** require permanent conservation easements and deed restrictions for the open space areas and RMAs for the protection of oak woodlands and habitat values, the conversion and fragmentation of annual grasslands and oak woodlands are irreversible losses of wildlife habitat and remain cumulatively considerable, and therefore, *significant and unavoidable* impacts.

GREENHOUSE GASES AND CLIMATE CHANGE (Section 5.7)

IMPACT 5-7-1	<i>Greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, generated by the proposed project may have a significant impact on the environment.</i>
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As depicted in Impact 5.7-1, the project's GHG emissions would be 3,755.92 MTCO₂eq/yr without the implementation of any reduction measures. Implementation of proposed energy efficiency measures, water conservation measures, and **MM 5.7-1** would reduce project GHG emissions to 3,453.10 MTCO₂eq,

resulting in an 8.1 percent reduction; refer to Table 5.7-3. It should be noted that the Project Design Features and **MM 5.7-1** represent all feasible mitigation measures available to reduce project related GHG emissions. Despite the implementation of the Project Design Features and **MM 5.7-1**, project related GHG emissions would not meet the reduction targets established by AB 32 or SB 32, and impacts would remain *significant and unavoidable*.

IMPACT	<i>Implementation of the proposed project could potentially conflict with an applicable greenhouse gas reduction plan, policy, or regulation.</i>
5.7-2	

Shasta County is also subject to compliance with AB 32, which is a legal mandate requiring that statewide GHG emissions be reduced to 1990 levels by 2020. In adopting AB 32, the legislature determined the necessary GHG reductions for the state to make in order to sufficiently offset its contribution to the cumulative climate change problem to reach 1990 levels. As discussed in Section 5.7, GREENHOUSE GASES AND CLIMATE CHANGE, the proposed project would not achieve the County’s Regional Climate Action Plan (RCAP) 2035 reduction target of 49 percent. Compliance with this reduction threshold is part of the solution to the cumulative GHG emissions problem, rather than a hindrance of the State’s ability to meet its goals of reduced statewide GHG emissions under AB 32. Therefore, the proposed project would potentially conflict with the County’s RCAP and AB 32 despite the implementation of the Project Design Features and **MM 5.7-1**. Impacts would be *significant and unavoidable*.

IMPACT	<i>Greenhouse gas emissions generated by the project could potentially have a significant impact on global climate change.</i>
5.7-3	

It is generally the case that an individual project of this size and nature is of insufficient magnitude by itself to influence climate change or result in a substantial contribution to the global GHG inventory. GHG impacts are recognized as exclusively cumulative impacts; there are no non-cumulative GHG emission impacts from a climate change perspective. The additive effect of project-related GHGs would not result in a reasonably foreseeable cumulatively considerable contribution to global climate change. In addition, the proposed project as well as other cumulative related projects would also be subject to all applicable regulatory requirements, which would further reduce GHG emissions. However as stated above, the proposed project would not achieve the County’s 2035 reduction target of 49 percent despite the implementation of Project Design Features and **MM 5.7-1**. Therefore, the project’s cumulative GHG impacts would be *significant and unavoidable*.

TRAFFIC AND CIRCULATION (Section 5.16)

IMPACT	<i>Implementation of the proposed project could result in increased traffic volumes at study area intersections under Year 2035 cumulative plus project conditions.</i>
5.16-5	

The Old Alturas Road and Old Oregon Trail intersection is projected to operate at an unacceptable LOS F in the weekday AM and PM peak hours. Although this intersection operates at an unacceptable LOS F in the *No Project* condition, the proposed project creates a *potentially significant* impact by causing the delay to increase by more than 5 seconds per vehicle. Implementation of **MM 5.16-3** would mitigate AM and PM peak hour intersection operations to a *less than significant* level (LOS B).

The Boyle Road and Deschutes Road intersection is projected to operate at an unacceptable LOS F during the AM peak hour. Although this intersection operates at an unacceptable LOS F in the *No Project* condition, the proposed project creates a *potentially significant* impact by causing the delay to increase by more than 5 seconds per vehicle. Implementation of **MM 5.16-4** would mitigate AM peak hour intersection operations to an acceptable LOS (LOS C).

The improvements identified for the intersections of *Old Alturas Road & Old Oregon Trail (Intersection #8)* and *Boyle Road & Deschutes Road (Intersection #13)* are not currently part of any current Shasta County improvement plan or fee program. As a result, full implementation as described in **MM 5.16-3** and **MM 5.16-4** cannot be assured by the project applicant. This is considered to be a cumulatively considerable and *significant and unavoidable* impact.

The Shasta County Department of Public Works operates a county-wide traffic impact fee program based on residential units or non-residential building square footage. The proposed project may contribute to this program as described in **MM 5.16-3** and **MM 5.16-4**, should Shasta County update the fee program to include the *Old Alturas Road & Old Oregon Trail (Intersection #8)* and *Boyle Road & Deschutes Road (Intersection #13)* intersections. The payment of applicable fair-share costs towards a programmed improvement would result in a cumulatively *less than significant* impact at each intersection.

8.2 SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE CHANGES

Section 15126.2(c) of the State *CEQA Guidelines* requires an EIR to discuss the significant irreversible environmental changes that would result from implementation of a proposed project. These may include current or future uses of non-renewable resources, and secondary or growth-inducing impacts that commit future generations to similar uses. CEQA dictates that irretrievable commitments of resources should be evaluated to assure that such current consumption is justified. The State *CEQA Guidelines* describe three distinct categories of significant irreversible changes: 1) changes in land use that would commit future generations; 2) irreversible changes from environmental actions; and 3) consumption of nonrenewable resources.

CHANGES IN LAND USE WHICH WOULD COMMIT FUTURE GENERATIONS

The Shasta County *General Plan*, last amended in 2004, serves as the principal land use planning and policy document for the County. It identifies strategies, policies, and implementation recommendations for land use within its planning area. The Shasta County *General Plan* is a long-range comprehensive plan that governs growth and development in the unincorporated areas of Shasta County, including the proposed project site. The Shasta County *General Plan* consists of three primary groups: public safety, resources, and community development. The current Shasta County *General Plan* land use designation for the entire proposed project site is Rural Residential A (RA), which allows a maximum density of one dwelling unit per two acres.

The Shasta County *Zoning Plan* identifies APNs 061-240-001 and 061-210-001 as Rural Residential (R-R), with a minimum lot area of three to five acres (R-R-BA-3 and R-R-BA-5). Existing zoning on APNs 078-250-002, 078-060-036 and 078-060-039 is Unclassified (U). In the R-R-BA-3 and R-R-BA-5 zones, the maximum density for land greater than 30 percent slope is one dwelling unit per 10 acres and the maximum density for land less than 30 percent slope is one dwelling unit per three to five acres. In all cases, each building site area shall contain at least one contiguous acre not exceeding a 30 percent slope. Required building

setbacks include 30 feet on the front, side, and rear. Maximum allowable structural height for the homes is 35 feet in the R-R zoning district.

The purpose of the proposed project is to develop 166 single-family residential parcels ranging from 1.38 acres to 6.81 acres in size on approximately 471.92 acres of the 715.4-acre site. The development of the proposed project site would constitute a permanent commitment of land that would be physically altered to support the proposed residential development. It is unlikely that circumstances would arise that would justify the return of the land to its original condition. Alteration of the proposed project site is consistent with the land use designation, goals, objectives, and policies of the Shasta County *General Plan*.

IRREVERSIBLE CHANGES FROM ENVIRONMENTAL ACCIDENTS

No significant irreversible environmental damage, such as what could occur as a result of an accidental spill or explosion of hazardous materials, is anticipated due to implementation of the proposed project. Construction of the project would result in the use of commercially-available hazardous materials, such as gas, oil, paints, and solvents. Compliance with federal, State and local regulations would reduce to a *less than significant* level the possibility that the use of hazardous substances within the proposed project site would cause significant environmental damage. Operation of the proposed project would not be expected to result in the substantial use of hazardous materials although commercially-available household hazardous materials such as gas, oil, paints, solvents, and fertilizers are anticipated to be used similar to other households in the area. Therefore, operation of the proposed project would not be expected to pose a significant threat of an environmental accident.

CONSUMPTION OF NONRENEWABLE RESOURCES

Consumption of nonrenewable resources includes conversion of agricultural lands, loss of access to mining reserves, and use of nonrenewable energy sources. Although the proposed project would not impact Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), Grazing Land is considered Farmland of Local Importance in Shasta County because it is important to the local economy, as determined by the County Board of Supervisors and a local advisory committee. Shasta County does not currently have an in-lieu fee mechanism in place to provide for the acquisition of agricultural easements. However, the County can require the applicant to purchase a conservation easement to protect offsite agricultural lands. Establishment of such an easement would provide mitigation for the loss of Grazing Land. **MM 5.2-1** in Section 5.2, AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES, requires establishment of a conservation easement to offset the loss of Grazing Land associated with project implementation, although the proposed project would contribute to a *significant and unavoidable* cumulative loss of Grazing Land in Shasta County.

The proposed project would not result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a County's *General Plan* or other land use plan. The proposed project is not identified in the *General Plan* as having any known mineral resource value, or as being located within any "Critical Mineral Resource Overlay" area.

Construction of the proposed project would require the use of energy, including energy produced from non-renewable resources. Energy consumption would also occur during the operational period of the proposed project due to the use of automobiles and appliances, and for heating and cooling. Therefore, new structures would increase consumption of nonrenewable fuel sources when compared to existing conditions.

The proposed project would be expected to demand 1,259 megawatt hours (MWh) of electricity and 4.3 million kiloBritish Thermal Units (kBTU) of natural gas per year. The proposed project is estimated to consume approximately 1,039 gallons of fuel daily. Implementation of the project's design features (i.e., high efficiency lighting and air conditioning units, passive solar design, grey water diverter systems, etc.) would serve to minimize energy consumption. The project would be required to adhere to all federal, State, and local requirements for energy efficiency, including the Title 24 standards, as well as the project's design features and mitigation measures. The proposed project would not result in the inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary consumption of building energy. For the reasons described above, the proposed project would not consume a significant amount of nonrenewable energy resources.