

# 3 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING, IMPACTS, AND MITIGATION MEASURES

This chapter is organized by environmental resource topic. Each resource topic is addressed in a separate section that presents an integrated discussion of the existing conditions (including environmental setting and regulatory setting) associated with the resource, potential environmental effects of the Project on the resource, and mitigation measures to reduce significant effects.

Cumulative and growth-inducing impacts are discussed in Chapter 4, "Cumulative Impacts," and Chapter 6, "Other CEQA-Mandated Sections," respectively.

## APPROACH TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

This draft subsequent environmental impact report (Draft SEIR) evaluates the environmental impacts of the proposed City of Elk Grove 2021-2029 Housing Element Update and Safety Element Update (Housing Element and Safety Element Update or Project). It has been prepared under the direction of the City of Elk Grove (City) in accordance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 21000 et seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15000 et seq.).

Sections 3.1 through 3.14 of this Draft SEIR present a discussion of regulatory background, existing conditions, environmental impacts associated with construction and operation of the Project, mitigation measures to reduce the level of impact, and residual level of significance (i.e., after application of mitigation, including impacts that would remain significant and unavoidable after application of all feasible mitigation measures). Issues evaluated in these sections consist of the environmental topics identified for review in the notice of preparation (NOP) prepared for the project (see Appendix A of this Draft SEIR). Chapter 4 of this Draft SEIR, "Cumulative Impacts," presents an analysis of the Project's impacts considered together with other past, present, and probable future projects producing related impacts, as required by Section 15130 of the State CEQA Guidelines. Chapter 5, "Alternatives," presents a reasonable range of alternatives and evaluates the environmental effects of those alternatives relative to the Project, as required by Section 15126.6 of the State CEQA Guidelines. Chapter 6, "Other CEQA Sections," includes an analysis of the Project's growth inducing impacts, as required by Section 21100(b)(5) of CEQA.

The remainder of this chapter addresses the following resource topics:

- ▶ Section 3.1, "Aesthetics";
- ▶ Section 3.2, "Air Quality";
- ▶ Section 3.3, "Archaeological, Historical, and Tribal Cultural Resources";
- ▶ Section 3.4, "Biological Resources";
- ▶ Section 3.5, "Energy";
- ▶ Section 3.6, "Geology and Soils";
- ▶ Section 3.7, "Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Change";
- ▶ Section 3.8, "Hazards and Hazardous Materials";
- ▶ Section 3.9, "Hydrology and Water Quality";
- ▶ Section 3.10, "Land Use, Planning, Population, and Housing";
- ▶ Section 3.11, "Noise and Vibration";
- ▶ Section 3.12, "Public Services";

- ▶ Section 3.13, "Transportation"; and
- ▶ Section 3.14, "Utilities and Service Systems."

Sections 3.1 through 3.14 of this Draft SEIR each include the following components.

**Regulatory Setting:** This subsection presents information on the laws, regulations, plans, and policies relevant to each resource topic, including federal, State, regional, and City regulations that address potentially adverse environmental impacts.

**Environmental Setting:** This subsection describes existing environmental conditions at the Project site and in the surrounding area, in accordance with the State CEQA Guidelines (CCR Section 15125). This setting generally serves as the baseline against which environmental impacts are evaluated. The NOP for the Project was issued on June 19, 2020. Typically, and in accordance with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15125, the date on which the NOP is issued is considered appropriate for establishing the baseline. This includes the planned development potential and policy provisions set forth in the adopted General Plan.

**Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures:** In accordance with the State CEQA Guidelines (CCR Sections 15126, 15126.2, and 15143), this section identifies the method of analysis to determine whether an impact may occur, and the thresholds of significance used to determine the level of significance of the environmental impacts for each resource topic. The thresholds of significance are based on the checklist presented in Appendix G of the most recently adopted State CEQA Guidelines (December 28, 2018), best available data, applicable regulatory standards, and local practice and standards. The level of each impact is determined by analyzing the effect of the Project on the defined baseline conditions and comparing it to the applicable significance threshold. Each impact discussion also includes a summary of the relevant impact analysis and conclusion provided in the General Plan EIR and determines whether the project would result in a new significant effect or more severe impact than what was identified in the General Plan EIR pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines 15162.

Project impacts and mitigation measures are numbered sequentially in each subsection (e.g., Impact 3.2-1, Impact 3.2-2, Impact 3.2-3, etc.). A summary impact statement precedes a more detailed discussion of each environmental impact. The discussion presents the analysis, rationale, and substantial evidence upon which conclusions are drawn regarding the level of significance of the impact.

An impact would be considered "less than significant" if it would not involve a substantial adverse change in the physical environment. An impact would be "potentially significant" or "significant" if it could or clearly would, respectively, result in a substantial adverse change in the physical environment; both are treated the same under CEQA in terms of procedural requirements and the need to identify feasible mitigation.

This SEIR identifies feasible mitigation measures that could avoid, minimize, rectify, reduce, or compensate for potentially significant or significant adverse impacts (PRC Section 21081.6[b]). Mitigation measures are not required for effects found to be less than significant. Where feasible mitigation for a significant or potentially significant impact is available, it is described in this SEIR following the impact, along with its effectiveness at addressing the impact. Each identified mitigation measure is labeled numerically to correspond with the impact it addresses. Where feasible mitigation is not sufficient to reduce an impact to a less-than-significant level, the impact is identified as significant and unavoidable. The final determination of the level of significance of each impact is presented in bold text in the impact summary and at the end of each impact discussion.

It is important to note that environmental impact analyses under CEQA generally are not required to analyze the impact of existing environmental conditions on a project's future users or residents unless the proposed project might cause or risk exacerbating environmental hazards or conditions that already exist (CCR Section 15126.2[a]). In those specific instances, it is the project's impact on the environment and not the environment's impact on the project that compels an evaluation of how future residents or users could be affected by exacerbated conditions (*California Building Industry Association v. Bay Area Air Quality Management District* [2015] 62 Cal. 4th 369).

**References:** The full references associated with the parenthetical references found throughout Sections 3.1 through 3.14 can be found in Chapter 8, "References," organized by section number.

## EFFECTS FOUND NOT TO BE SIGNIFICANT

CEQA allows a lead agency to limit the detail of discussion of environmental effects that are not potentially significant (PRC Section 21100, CCR Section 15128). Following research and analysis of technical studies and data, it was determined that the Project would not result in significant environmental impacts on the resources identified below. Accordingly, these resources are not addressed in later sections of this Draft SEIR.

### Agriculture and Forestry Resources

No forestry resources or timberlands are in the City or its Planning Area. The EIR certified for the City's 2019 General Plan Update evaluated the potential for impacts on agricultural resources in the City's Planning Area. Because this issue was evaluated in that document and no additional agricultural impacts would occur as a result of implementing the Housing Element Update, this issue is not discussed in this Draft SEIR.

### Mineral Resources

No significant mineral resources have been identified in the City. None of the candidate housing sites are used for mineral extraction, nor are any of the sites designated as an important mineral recovery site. Therefore, there would be no impact on mineral resources, and this impact is not discussed in this Draft SEIR.

### Seiche, Tsunami, and Mudflow

The City's location (inland, away from any water bodies) and topography (relatively flat) ensure that there would be no impact related to seiche, tsunami, or mudflow. Therefore, this impact is not discussed in this Draft SEIR.

### Wildfire

The City is not located in or near a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone. Therefore, there would not be a significant impact related to wildfire, and this issue is not discussed in this Draft SEIR.

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