

3.7 POPULATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND HOUSING

This section describes the existing population and housing conditions in the Planning Area. Descriptions and analysis in this section are based on information provided by the Elk Grove General Plan, the California Department of Finance (DOF), and the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG). The analysis includes a description of the methods used for assessment, as well as the potential direct and indirect impacts of Project implementation. The primary source of information used for this analysis is the General Plan EIR (City of Elk Grove 2018, 2019a).

No comments pertaining to population and housing were received in response to the notice of preparation (NOP).

3.7.1 Regulatory Setting

FEDERAL

There are no federal plans, policies, regulations, or laws related to population and housing that are applicable to the Project.

STATE

There are no State plans, policies, regulations, or laws related to population and housing that are applicable to the Project.

LOCAL

Sacramento Area Council of Governments' Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy

In 2019, SACOG adopted the 2020 Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS). The MTP/SCS forecasts that the Sacramento region will add 620,000 people, as well as the jobs and housing to support them, between 2016 and 2040 (SACOG 2019a:24).

The majority of the Planning Area is located in an area identified as an Established Community in the MTP/SCS and the southern portion of the Planning Area is identified as Developing Community (SACOG 2019a:Figure 3.5). Local land use plans generally aim to maintain the existing character and land use pattern in these areas, many of which are suburbs. Selective infill development, consistent with existing planning designations, is projected to occur gradually. Nearly two-thirds of the region's new housing and 85 percent of its job growth between 2016 and 2040 is expected to be in Center and Corridor (i.e., downtowns and commercial corridors) and Established Communities (SACOG 2019a:39). Developing Communities are the next increment of urban expansion and identified in local plans as special plan areas, specific plans, or master plans as areas identified for growth (SACOG 2019a:40).

City of Elk Grove General Plan

The 2019 City General Plan is a broad framework for planning the future of Elk Grove. It is the official policy statement of the City Council that is used to guide the private and public development of the City in a manner to gain the maximum social and economic benefit to the citizens. At buildout under the General Plan, the City is expected to have 102,865 dwelling units, 332,254 residents, and 122,155 jobs (City of Elk Grove 2019a:Table 3-2).

The following General Plan policies are applicable to this analysis:

- ▶ **Policy ED-2-1:** Continue to improve Elk Grove's jobs/housing ratio by expanding local employment opportunities, with an emphasis on attracting jobs in sectors and industries that are well matched for the skills of the local workforce.
- ▶ **Policy ED-2-2:** Maximize the use of nonresidential land for employment-generating and revenue-generating uses.

- ▶ **Policy ED-2-4:** Provide for a range of housing options that match the anticipated preferences and income levels of potential workers associated with planned employment-generating projects.
- ▶ **Policy ED-2-5:** Support the creation and retention of jobs that provide sustainable wages and benefits.
- ▶ **Policy RC-3-1:** Integrate economic development and land use planning in Elk Grove with planning for regional transportation systems.
- ▶ **Policy LU-1-2:** Foster development patterns that will achieve a complete community in Elk Grove, particularly with respect to increasing jobs and economic development and increasing the City's jobs-to-employed resident ratio while recognizing the importance of housing and a resident workforce.
- ▶ **Policy LU-1-6:** Support the development of neighborhood-serving commercial uses adjacent to residential areas that provide quality, convenient, and community-serving retail choices in a manner that does not impact neighborhood character.
- ▶ **Policy LU-1-8:** Seek to designate sufficient land in all employment-generating categories to provide opportunities for Elk Grove's working population and jobs in categories matching resident's employment level.
- ▶ **Policy LU-2-1:** Promote a greater concentration of high-density residential, office commercial or mixed-use sites and the population along identified transit corridors and existing commercial corridors, in activity centers, and at other appropriate locations.

3.7.2 Environmental Setting

During the 1990s, Elk Grove's population grew by more than 70 percent, while corresponding job growth during that period occurred primarily in other parts of Sacramento County and the region. Before Elk Grove was incorporated, Sacramento County's General Plan vision for the unincorporated Laguna and Elk Grove Community Plan Areas was primarily that those communities would continue to function as suburbs of Sacramento (City of Elk Grove 2019:5-7). Following incorporation, the City has attracted more businesses, although it still largely serves as a suburb of the City of Sacramento.

POPULATION

The population of the City was estimated to be 176,972 on January 1, 2022 (DOF 2022). The City has an estimated development capacity of 332,254 residents (City of Elk Grove 2019a: Table 3-2). This figure reflects the maximum possible population, as determined by the number of residential units possible at the different maximum densities allowed for each land use designation and the amount of land area within those designations. However, the General Plan does not specify a specific date for development potential, and states that the development capacity is unlikely to be reached because it would require that every lot in Elk Grove be developed to its maximum potential (City of Elk Grove 2019a:3-20).

EMPLOYMENT

Elk Grove has historically functioned as a bedroom community. Many residents work elsewhere, and the City has fewer jobs than residents. According to the City's 2019 Employment Dynamics Report, there were 9,577 business establishments offering employment opportunities in the City as of July 2018, primarily in technology, education, health care, and social services; retail; and administrative services industries (City of Elk Grove 2019b). The number of jobs in the City is projected to increase from 54,359 in 2018 to as many as 122,155 with buildout of the General Plan (City of Elk Grove 2019b: Table B5; City of Elk Grove 2019a: Table 3-2).

HOUSING

The U.S. Census Bureau defines a housing unit as a house, an apartment, a group of rooms, or a single room occupied or intended for occupancy as separate living quarters. College dormitories are considered noninstitutional group quarters and are excluded from the housing unit inventory. For the purpose of population surveys in the

decennial census, individuals are counted at their “usual residence.” “Usual” is defined as the place where the person lives and sleeps most of the time, or the place he or she considers to be his or her usual residence. Therefore, most students living in dormitories would not be included (U.S. Census Bureau 2021).

The total number of housing units in the City was 57,468 as of January 2022, with an average household size of 3.14 persons per unit, compared to an average household size of 2.70 persons in Sacramento County (DOF 2022). Approximately 90 percent of these housing units were attached and detached single-family houses, compared to 71 percent countywide. At buildout of the General Plan, the City has the potential to accommodate 102,865 dwelling units (City of Elk Grove 2019a: Table 3-2).

JOBS/HOUSING BALANCE

A jobs/housing ratio is a calculation of jobs per housing unit available in an area; a perfect balance is expressed as 1:1, or 1.0. A low jobs/housing ratio (less than 1.0) describes a housing-rich community with fewer available jobs for residents, while a high ratio (more than 1.1) describes a jobs-rich area with more jobs available for residents. In a community with a low jobs/housing ratio, working-age residents are more likely to need to commute to work (City of Elk Grove 2019a: 3-9).

Elk Grove is located near Sacramento, which is a large employment center, and generally offers more amenities, services, and a higher quality of life than locations closer to the capital. These factors make the City an attractive housing location for many families and, along with other factors, contribute to a lower jobs/housing ratio (0.84) in Elk Grove than in locations more proximate to the region’s existing employment centers (City of Elk Grove 2019a: 3-9).

The Land Use Plan in the *Elk Grove General Plan* has been designed to support opportunities that would result in a jobs/housing ratio of approximately 1.2 at buildout. This ratio is considerably higher than existing conditions but still below SACOG’s planned regional average of 1.4, indicating that the City will increase its employment base while also continuing to serve an important role as a residential community for employees throughout the region (City of Elk Grove 2019a: 3-10).

3.7.3 Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

METHODOLOGY

Impacts on population and housing were assessed by reviewing existing and anticipated population and housing projections prepared by the *Elk Grove General Plan*, DOF, and SACOG. The Project’s impacts were evaluated by determining their consistency with these estimates and projections. Population and employment growth, as an economic or social change, is not considered a significant effect on the environment (pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15131). Growth that is consistent with planning documents that have undergone separate environmental evaluation would generally result in similar potential for environmental impacts and the requisite demand for infrastructure would typically be incorporated into the plans of the respective utilities. However, where growth could lead to physical changes, the potential for effects is evaluated. For further discussion of growth-inducing effects, see Chapter 6, “Other CEQA-Mandated Sections.”

THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

A population, employment, and housing impact is considered significant if implementation of the Project would do any of the following:

- ▶ induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure); and/or
- ▶ displace substantial numbers of existing people or homes, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

ISSUES NOT DISCUSSED FURTHER

The purpose of the Project is to amend the City's General Plan land use designations to support residential and commercial growth in Elk Grove, specifically in the LEA Community Plan Area, Old Town Policy Area, and West and South Study Areas. The Project would develop the framework for walkable communities with amenities, such as commercial businesses. The update to the City's VMT thresholds and revisions to General Plan EIR Mitigation Measure MM 5.5.1a and MM 5.5.1b would not result in physical development. Therefore, the Project would not remove housing or otherwise displace substantial numbers of people or homes beyond what was evaluated in the General Plan EIR. The Project would have no impact related to the displacement of a substantial number of people or homes and this issue is not discussed further in this SEIR.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Impact 3.7-1: Induce Substantial Population Growth

General Plan EIR Section 3.3 determined that implementation of the General Plan would exceed SACOG's population and housing projections for Elk Grove. The Project would accommodate up to 1,851 net new dwelling units, 123,923 jobs, and approximately 5,979 net new persons beyond the General Plan. This growth would exceed projections assumed under the City's General Plan and regional planning efforts completed by SACOG. The Project would not indirectly induce unplanned population growth or residential development. Therefore, there is no new significant effect and the impact is not more severe than the impact identified in the General Plan EIR. Growth inducement impacts would remain **less than significant**.

LEA Community Plan Area

The Project would increase development capacity in the City through amendments to the land use designations in the City's General Plan. Table 2-2 in Chapter 2, "Project Description," indicates growth projections associated with the Project. While no specific development projects are proposed at this time, subsequent development throughout the General Plan Planning Area, including in the LEA Community Plan Area, would be considered additional population and housing growth above that projected in the General Plan and analyzed in the General Plan EIR. The General Plan EIR disclosed impacts to population and housing and determined there would be a 92 percent increase in population over the City's 2017 population.

Buildout of the Project would add an additional estimated 1,851 new dwelling units, an increase in 1.7 percent over General Plan projections. Total population under Project buildout, within the Planning Area, would increase by 5,979 persons or 1.8 percent as compared to the General Plan. The majority of new dwelling units would occur in the LEA Community Plan Area, which would be built out at a higher density than included in the existing General Plan. The Project would not change the development boundaries of the City's Planning Area. The majority of estimated growth would occur in the LEA Community Plan Area, which would create a more efficient and beneficial use of the area by adding development potential in an area already planned for development. This strategy is consistent with the vision of the MTP/SCS prepared by SACOG.

The difference between existing (2022), existing General Plan forecast, and project forecasts for the Planning Area are shown in Table 3.7-1. SACOGs 2040 projections for Elk Grove estimate that the City will have a population of 202,630 people accommodating 66,508 dwelling units (SACOG 2019b). The anticipated growth under the Project within the City limits is 76,906 dwelling units and a population of 248,406 persons.

Table 3.7-1 Comparison of General Plan and General Plan Amendment Projections

Existing Conditions (2022)	Existing General Plan Projections	General Plan Amendment Projections	Difference	Percent Increase
Residential Units	102,865	104,716	1,851 units	1.7
Population	332,254	338,233	5,979 persons	1.8

Source: See Table 2-2 in Chapter 2, "Project Description."

Changes in population anticipated for the Project may result in the need for construction of infrastructure and services above what was anticipated in the General Plan to accommodate increases in population. Where growth could lead to physical changes beyond those anticipated in the General Plan, the potential for effects are evaluated throughout this SEIR. Specifically, the environmental impacts of population and residential growth associated with increased development beyond that analyzed for the General Plan is evaluated in Sections 3.1 through 3.10 of this SEIR.

The Project would facilitate development beyond SACOG's population and housing projections. However, SACOG estimates population projections for 2040. The Project does not assume full buildout by 2040. Development of proposed housing associated with the Project is anticipated to meet population needs and would occur over Project buildout (30 years or greater). The General Plan does not specify a specific date for development potential, and states that the development capacity is unlikely to be reached because it would require that every lot in Elk Grove be developed to its maximum potential (City of Elk Grove 2019a: 3-20). Additionally, SACOG would update their population projections to reflect new forecasts for each city in the region during the next update. Since the State is currently in an ongoing housing crisis, due to an insufficient housing supply, the Project would assist in meeting the housing needs of the City over the next 30 years or more.

Future development under the Project would be dispersed throughout the Planning Area to specific growth areas, such as the LEA Community Plan Area and would not change the boundaries of the Planning Area. The General Plan EIR disclosed growth projections, the impacts of which were determined to have significant effects for several environmental issue areas analyzed in the General Plan EIR. Although the General Plan EIR did not identify an impact finding for population and housing, impacts associated with buildout of the General Plan related to increased population and housing would have potentially significant effects. Project impacts would not be more severe than the impact identified in the General Plan EIR as analyzed throughout this SEIR. There would be no new significant growth effects. The Project would not indirectly induce unplanned population growth or residential development beyond what was analyzed in the General Plan EIR and impacts would remain **less than significant**.

General Plan Land Use Designation Amendments

Population growth anticipated from proposed land use amendments in the Old Town Policy Area are included in the overall population growth associated with the Project. As discussed above under, LEA Community Plan, impacts to population growth would remain **less than significant**. There is no new significant effect and the impact is not more severe than the impact identified in the General Plan EIR.

Grant Line Road Precise Roadway Study

The Precise Study was prepared to analyze potential geometric layouts along Grant Line Road. Buildout of roadway configurations, including all alternatives of the Precise Study, would not result in an increase in population or housing. There would be **no impact** from development of the Precise Plan. There is no new significant effect and the impact is not more severe than the impact identified in the General Plan EIR.

South and West Study Areas

Population growth anticipated within the South and West Study Areas is included in the overall population growth associated with the Project. As discussed above under, LEA Community Plan, impacts to population growth would remain **less than significant**. There is no new significant effect and the impact is not more severe than the impact identified in the General Plan EIR.

Mitigation Measures

No new mitigation is required.

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