

# 3 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING, IMPACTS, AND MITIGATION MEASURES

## FORMAT OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Sections 3.1 through 3.14 of this draft EIR disclose the potential environmental impacts that could result from the approval of the Bilby Ridge Sphere of Influence Amendment (SOIA). Each section begins with descriptions of the pertinent environmental and regulatory settings. The setting description in each section is followed by an impacts and mitigation discussion. The degree to which the identified mitigation measure(s) would reduce the impact is also described.

### Environmental Setting

According to Section 15125 of the State CEQA Guidelines, an EIR must include a description of the existing physical environmental conditions near the project to provide the “baseline condition” against which project-related impacts are compared. The baseline condition is typically the physical condition that exists when the Notice of Preparation (NOP) is published. The NOP for the Bilby Ridge SOIA was published on April 27, 2017. This baseline condition is utilized in the environmental impact analysis.

The proposed Bilby Ridge SOIA would expand the City of Elk Grove’s current sphere of influence boundary, but does not include a request for annexation or the establishment of urban land use zoning that would allow development of the area. Approval of this project would not change current allowed land uses (currently designated and zoned for agricultural uses) or change the local land use authority that resides with Sacramento County. The request for annexation to the City would be a subsequent request that could be initiated by the landowners, or the City, if this project is approved.

### Regulatory Framework

This section describes the federal, State, and local regulations that would apply to the project and that could reduce or eliminate potentially significant impacts. This section also informs the reader of the applicable Sacramento County and City of Elk Grove General Plan policies.

### Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

This section includes subsections that describe the methodology used in the analysis, the thresholds used to determine impact significance, and an impact analysis. The significance criteria are based on the environmental checklist in Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines; best available data; and regulatory standards of federal, state, and local agencies. The potential impacts of the Bilby Ridge SOIA are determined by comparing the project to the baseline condition, as described in the environmental setting, considering the established thresholds. Project impacts are numbered sequentially in each section (e.g., Impact 3.1-2, Impact 3.1-2, Impact 3.1-3). A summary precedes a more detailed discussion of the environmental impact. The discussion includes the analysis, rationale, and substantial evidence upon which conclusions are drawn. The determination of level of significance of the impact is defined in bold text.

The impact analyses are generally two-fold. The analyses first consider the effects of implementing the project itself (i.e., the SOIA), then consider the anticipated effects of annexation and implementing the conceptual land use plan. Although annexation and development are not proposed at this time, this

additional analysis serves to inform readers and decisionmakers about the impacts that can be reasonably anticipated to result from approval of the SOIA.

Where an existing law, regulation, or permit specifies mandatory and prescriptive actions about how to fulfill the regulatory requirement as part of the project definition, leaving little discretion in its implementation, and would avoid an impact or maintain it at a less-than-significant level, the environmental protection afforded by the regulation is considered before determining impact significance. Where existing laws or regulations specify a mandatory permit process for future projects, performance standards without prescriptive actions to accomplish them, or other requirements that allow substantial discretion in how they are accomplished, or have a substantial compensatory component, the level of significance is determined before applying the influence of the regulatory requirements. In this circumstance, the impact would be potentially significant or significant, and the regulatory requirements would be included as a mitigation measure.

Mitigation measures are provided where potentially significant impacts are identified. The measures are numbered to correspond with the impacts they mitigate. In accordance with Public Resources Code Section 21081.6(b), mitigation measures must be fully enforceable through permit conditions, agreements, other legally binding instruments, or by incorporating the measures into the project design.