

4.9 Population and Housing, Socioeconomics, and Environmental Justice

4.9.1 Methods and Significance Criteria

Methods

This section evaluates the effects on population and housing, socioeconomics, and environmental justice that would result from implementation of the proposed action and alternatives.

Anticipated changes in land cover/land use for each alternative are described in Chapter 2, *Proposed Action and Alternatives*. See Section 4.0, *Environmental Consequences*, for a description of the methodology used across all resource chapters for the analysis of cumulative effects.

The effects of the proposed action and alternatives on population and housing, socioeconomics, and environmental justice are analyzed qualitatively. Generally, impacts would occur if the proposed action or alternatives would result in an increase in population growth, displace a substantial amount of people or housing, result in substantial changes in wages or employment, or result in disproportionately adverse effects on minority or low-income populations. Effects could also result from the development envisioned by the Permit Applicants' long-term plans.

Significance Criteria

Population and Housing

According to Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, a proposed action would be considered to have a significant effect if it would result in any of the following.

- Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (e.g., by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (e.g., through extension of roads or other infrastructure).
- Displace a substantial number of existing housing units, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.
- Displace a substantial number of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

Socioeconomics

For the purposes of this analysis, a socioeconomic impact is considered to be adverse if it would result in any of the following.

- Substantially change economic activity within the Plan Area.
- Substantially affect property tax revenue.

Environmental Justice

Federal Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) guidance provides relevant thresholds for identification of environmental justice effects. The CEQ guidance identifies three factors to be

considered to the extent practicable when determining whether environmental effects are disproportionately high and adverse (Council on Environmental Quality 1997).

- Whether there is or would be an impact on the natural or physical environment that significantly and adversely affects a minority population or low-income population. Such effects may include ecological, cultural, human health, economic, and social impacts on minority communities, low-income communities, or Indian tribes when those impacts are interrelated to impacts on the natural or physical environment. For the purposes of this analysis, a significant and adverse effect on a minority population is found where significant environmental effects would occur in a location where minorities constitute greater than 50% of the population or low-income individuals constitute 20% or more of the population.
- Whether the environmental effects are significant and are or may have an adverse impact on minority populations or low-income populations—that is, an impact that appreciably exceeds or is likely to appreciably exceed those on the general population or other appropriate comparison group. For the purposes of this analysis, an effect appreciably exceeds the effect on the general population if it would occur in a location where minorities constitute more than 50% of the population or low-income individuals constitute 20% or more of the population.
- Whether the environmental effects occur or would occur in a minority population or low-income population affected by cumulative or multiple adverse exposures to environmental hazards that appreciably exceed the cumulative or adverse exposure of the population at large. For the purposes of this analysis, an effect appreciably exceeds the effect on the general population if the affected population is more than 50% minority or 20% or more low-income.

These standards are consistent with the standards of the California Resources Agency Environmental Justice Policy. This policy states that the Resources Agency and the constituent departments will undertake the following (California Resources Agency 2012).

- Identify relevant populations that might be adversely affected by programs or projects submitted by outside parties, as appropriate.
- Work in conjunction with other federal, state, regional, and local agencies to ensure consideration of disproportionate impacts on relevant populations.

The factors and standards described above have been summarized into the following significance criterion. For the purposes of this analysis, an impact is considered to be adverse if it would result in the following.

- Substantially disproportionately affect minority or low-income populations.

4.9.2 Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Alternative 1—No Action

As described in Section 4.0, *Environmental Consequences*, Alternative 1 includes reasonably foreseeable activities in the Plan Area associated with urbanization and associated infrastructure development, operation, and maintenance included in the various planning documents of Placer County and the City of Lincoln (the local jurisdictions) as well as future projects of the South Placer Regional Transit Authority (SPRTA) and the Placer County Water Agency (PCWA), such as local transportation and water projects.

Impact SOC-1: Creation of substantial population growth either directly or indirectly (NEPA: less than significant; CEQA: less than significant)

Development envisioned in the *Placer County General Plan* and the *City of Lincoln General Plan* would go forward under Alternative 1. As stated in Section 3.9.2, *Environmental Setting*, both Placer County and the City of Lincoln have experienced rapid growth over the past 20 years. Population in Placer County is expected to continue to grow, particularly in the incorporated cities. Because development would occur as planned for and allowed under both general plans, impacts would be the same as those identified in the EIRs prepared for those plans.

The EIR for the *Placer County General Plan* acknowledged that indirect effects would result from population growth (e.g., traffic, land use changes) but concluded that impacts on population and housing would be less than significant.

The EIR for the *City of Lincoln General Plan* concluded that impacts of growth would be accommodated by the general plan and would be less than significant. The City's growth assumptions are consistent with the land use principles/concepts of the Sacramento Area Council of Governments' (SACOG's) Blueprint Project, and its general plan discourages undesirable development in areas with sensitive natural resources, critical habitats, and important scenic resources. Orderly growth and new development are planned in areas adjacent to existing urban uses and developers are required to provide service extensions. Accordingly, the EIR concluded that, although the general plan would result in growth, its policies reduce the potential for negative impacts associated with growth that is a direct consequence of general plan implementation to a less-than-significant level.

NEPA Determination: Population growth that would occur through implementation of the local jurisdictions' general plans is planned, and the general plan EIRs found that impacts related to population growth would be less than significant. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

CEQA Determination: Population growth that would occur through implementation of the local jurisdictions' general plans is planned, and general plan EIRs found that impacts related to population growth would be less than significant. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

Impact SOC-2: Displacement of a substantial number of existing housing units, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere (NEPA: less than significant; CEQA: less than significant)

Under Alternative 1, the no action alternative, development envisioned in the *Placer County General Plan* and *City of Lincoln General Plan* as well as long-term SPRTA and PCWA plans would go forward. The EIR for the *Placer County General Plan* concluded that impacts on housing would be less than significant. The EIR for the *City of Lincoln General Plan* does not specifically address housing, but did conclude that impacts resulting from growth would be accommodated by the general plan and would be less than significant. The City's growth assumptions are consistent with the land use principles/concepts of the SACOG Blueprint Project, and the general plan discourages undesirable development in areas with sensitive natural resources, critical habitats, and important scenic resources. Orderly growth and new development are planned in areas adjacent to existing urban uses and require developers to provide service extensions. Accordingly, although the City's general

plan would result in growth, the general plan policies reduce the potential for negative impacts associated with growth to a less-than-significant level.

NEPA Determination: Housing developed in accordance with the general plans would be concentrated in areas adjacent to existing urban uses and would not result in a substantial displacement of housing. Therefore, Alternative 1 would have a less-than-significant impact on housing.

CEQA Determination: Housing developed in accordance with the general plans would be concentrated in areas adjacent to existing urban uses and would not result in a substantial displacement of housing. Therefore, Alternative 1 would have a less-than-significant impact on housing.

Impact SOC-3: Displacement of a substantial number of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere (NEPA: less than significant; CEQA: less than significant)

Impacts of Alternative 1, the no action alternative, regarding displacement of people would be the same as those described for Impacts SOC-1 and SOC-2. This alternative would not directly result in the displacement of a substantial amount of people or housing.

NEPA Determination: Alternative 1 would not result in the displacement of a substantial number of people that would necessitate the construction of replacement housing. This impact would be less than significant.

CEQA Determination: Alternative 1 would not result in the displacement of a substantial number of people that would necessitate the construction of replacement housing. This impact would be less than significant.

Impact SOC-4: Substantially change economic activity in the Plan Area (NEPA: less than significant)

Under Alternative 1, the no action alternative, permits would be granted on a project-by-project basis. There would be no comprehensive means to coordinate and standardize mitigation and compensation requirements within the Plan Area. This approach is anticipated to result in a more costly, less equitable, and less efficient project review process.

Economic activity would result from planned growth, development, employment, and industry within the local jurisdictions and the Plan Area. Under the local general plans, development, employment, and industry are expected to grow. The no action alternative would not substantially change economic activity in the Plan Area.

NEPA Determination: Economic activity in the Plan Area would continue to increase, as planned in the local jurisdictions' general plans. Alternative 1 would not substantially change economic activity in the Plan Area. This impact would be less than significant.

CEQA Determination: This impact is not subject to analysis under CEQA.

Impact SOC-5: Substantially affect property tax revenue (NEPA: less than significant)

Economic activity would result from planned growth, development, employment, and industry within the local jurisdictions and the Plan Area; such activity is accounted for in the local

jurisdictions' general plans. Alternative 1, the no action alternative, would not substantially affect property tax revenue in the Plan Area.

NEPA Determination: Alternative 1 is not anticipated to substantially affect development and property tax revenue in the Plan Area. This impact would be less than significant.

CEQA Determination: This impact is not subject to analysis under CEQA.

Impact SOC-6: Substantially disproportionately affect minority or low-income populations (NEPA: less than significant)

To determine whether the no action alternative would result in a substantially disproportionate effect on minority populations or low-income populations, the significant effects of the proposed action that would affect people were examined to determine whether these effects would occur disproportionately in areas with a higher proportion of such demographic populations. As described in Table 3.9-8, Placer County and Lincoln have lower percentages of minority and low-income residents than does the rest of the state. Figure 3.9-1 shows that minority populations are located in the southwest portion of the Plan Area. One census tract in Lincoln has more than 50% minority residents.

Alternative 1 was determined to have significant and unavoidable impacts on air quality, noise, and transportation. These conclusions are summarized below. Because development would occur as planned and allowed under the local jurisdictions' general plans, impacts would be the same as those identified for the general plans.

Agricultural Resources

Under Alternative 1 implementing the local jurisdictions' general plans would result in the conversion of Important Farmland to nonagricultural use; future SPRTA and PCWA projects could also result in the conversion of Important Farmland to nonagricultural use. Accordingly, this impact would be significant and unavoidable.

Air Quality

Under Alternative 1, individual projects could conflict with the applicable air district air quality plans and violate applicable air quality standards. General conformity *de minimis* thresholds could be exceeded. Future projects would undergo project-specific analysis and would need to mitigate potentially significant fugitive particulate matter emission impacts to less-than-significant levels. However, construction activities associated with this alternative could result in exposure of sensitive receptors to substantial diesel particulate matter pollutant concentrations even after CEQA/NEPA review and implementation of possible mitigation measures. Therefore, air quality impacts from Alternative 1 would be significant and unavoidable.

Noise

Under Alternative 1, individual projects could result in the exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in a local general plan or noise ordinance. No mitigation available would ensure that potential impacts would be reduced to less-than-significant levels. Consequently, noise impacts from Alternative 1 would be significant and unavoidable.

Transportation

Alternative 1 would result in impacts on traffic and transportation from reasonably foreseeable activities in the Plan Area associated with urbanization and associated infrastructure development, operation, and maintenance included in the various planning documents of the local jurisdictions as well as future SPRTA and PCWA projects, such as local transportation and water projects. Specifically, implementation of the local jurisdictions' general plans would result in significant impacts on traffic and transportation that cannot be avoided. Therefore, Alternative 1 would have a significant and unavoidable effect on traffic and roadway capacity.

NEPA Determination: Under Alternative 1, impacts would be experienced throughout the Plan Area, not disproportionately in the few areas with concentrated minority populations and low-income populations. Impacts on minority and low-income persons would not be disproportionately high and adverse. This impact would be less than significant.

CEQA Determination: This impact is not subject to analysis under CEQA.

Alternative 2—Proposed Action

Impact SOC-1: Creation of substantial population growth either directly or indirectly (NEPA: less than significant; CEQA: less than significant)

Population growth results when new homes, businesses, or roads or other infrastructure are constructed. Projects in rural areas are less likely to result in substantive growth impacts because the population density and economic activity are lower in those areas. Implementation of Alternative 2, the proposed action, would require construction activities such as earthmoving for and re-contouring of vernal pools and excavating ponds and channels. These activities would not result in substantial land use changes and would not cause growth-related impacts.

Within the Plan Area, the proposed action could serve to streamline the development envisioned in the *Placer County General Plan* and *City of Lincoln General Plan* as well as future projects of SPRTA and PCWA. The EIR for the *Placer County General Plan* acknowledged effects resulting from population growth (e.g., traffic, land use changes) but concluded that impacts on population and housing would be less than significant (Placer County 1994). The EIR for the *City of Lincoln General Plan* concluded that impacts associated with growth would be accommodated by the general plan and would be less than significant because the City's growth assumptions are consistent with the land use principles/concepts of the SACOG Blueprint Project and because the general plan discourages undesirable development in areas with sensitive natural resources, critical habitats, and important scenic resources (City of Lincoln 2006). Orderly growth and new development are planned in areas adjacent to existing urban uses and developers are required to provide service extensions. Accordingly, the EIR concluded that although the City's general plan would result in growth, the general plan policies reduce potential negative impacts associated with growth that is a direct consequence of general plan implementation to a less-than-significant level.

NEPA Determination: Alternative 2, the proposed action, would not result in effects on population growth attributable to Plan implementation. Effects resulting from the implementation of Covered Activities would be less than significant.

CEQA Determination: Alternative 2, the proposed action, would not result in effects on population growth attributable to Plan implementation. Effects resulting from the implementation of Covered Activities would be less than significant. No mitigation has been identified.

Impact SOC-2: Displacement of a substantial number of existing housing units, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere (NEPA: less than significant; CEQA: less than significant)

Implementation of Alternative 2, the proposed action, would involve activities such as obtaining fee title or conservation easements for reserve acquisitions and performing construction activities related to restoration and habitat enhancement. PCCP activities associated with the conservation strategy and measures are not anticipated to displace existing housing because they would involve either placing easements on existing agricultural lands or restoring habitat in rural and open space areas. These activities would not result in the displacement of a substantial number of existing housing units. Although most lands that would be acquired and added to the Reserve System have land use designations for a limited amount of residential development (typically one dwelling unit per 80 acres), the amount of land that would be unavailable for housing as a result of establishing the Reserve System, compared with the inventory of housing that is and will be available, would be inconsequential. Additionally, for some reserve acquisitions, homes would already be present or may be allowed, further reducing the potential to affect the housing supply, particularly in rural areas.

Within the Plan Area, the proposed action could serve to streamline the development envisioned in the *Placer County General Plan* and *City of Lincoln General Plan* as well as future SPRTA and PCWA projects. The EIR for the *Placer County General Plan* concluded that impacts on housing would be less than significant. The EIR for the *City of Lincoln General Plan* does not specifically address housing, but it did conclude that impacts resulting from growth would be accommodated by the general plan and would be less than significant. The City's growth assumptions are consistent with the land use principles/concepts of the SACOG Blueprint Project, and the general plan discourages undesirable development in areas with sensitive natural resources, critical habitats, and important scenic resources. Orderly growth and new development are planned in areas adjacent to existing urban uses and developers are required to provide service extensions. Accordingly, although the City's general plan would result in an increase in growth, the general plan policies reduce potential negative impacts associated with growth to a less-than-significant level.

NEPA Determination: Under Alternative 2, the proposed action, implementation of the PCCP would not result in impacts related to housing. Housing development in accordance with the general plans would be concentrated in areas adjacent to existing urban uses and would not result in a substantial displacement of housing. Covered Activities of SPRTA and PCWA would be unlikely to result in removal of housing. Therefore, the proposed action would have a less-than-significant impact on housing.

CEQA Determination: Under Alternative 2, the proposed action, implementation of the PCCP would not result in impacts related to housing. Housing developed in accordance with the general plans would be concentrated in areas adjacent to existing urban uses and would not result in a substantial displacement of housing. Covered Activities of SPRTA and PCWA would be unlikely to result in removal of housing. Therefore, the proposed action would have a less-than-significant impact on housing. No mitigation has been identified.

Impact SOC-3: Displacement of a substantial number of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere (NEPA: less than significant; CEQA: less than significant)

Impacts regarding displacement of people would be the same as those described above under Impact SOC-2. Under Alternative 2, the proposed action, PCCP implementation would not result in the displacement of a substantial amount of people or housing. The EIRs for the local jurisdictions' general plans found that implementation of the general plans would have a less-than-significant impact related to displacement of a substantial number of people. Covered Activities of SPRTA and PCWA would be unlikely to result in removal of housing and, therefore, would be unlikely to displace a substantial number of people.

NEPA Determination: Under Alternative 2, the proposed action, PCCP implementation and Covered Activities would not result in the displacement of a substantial number of people that would necessitate the construction of replacement housing. This impact would be less than significant.

CEQA Determination: Under Alternative 2, the proposed action, PCCP implementation and Covered Activities would not result in the displacement of a substantial number of people that would necessitate the construction of replacement housing. This impact would be less than significant. No mitigation has been identified.

Impact SOC-4: Substantially change economic activity in the Plan Area (NEPA: less than significant)

Because the PCCP is programmatic in nature, there is some uncertainty regarding the extent of the proposed action's effects on economic activity in the Plan Area. Indirect economic activity would result from development, employment, and industry within the local jurisdictions and the Plan Area. As discussed in Section 4.1, *Agricultural and Forestry Resources*, the Plan could result in conversions of up to 8,050 acres of Important Farmland to nonagricultural uses within the Reserve Acquisition Area (RAA), potentially reducing agricultural productivity. Grazing would still be a compatible use on acquired farmland, but changes in agricultural practices could occur under Alternative 2. This potential conversion of farmland would take place over the 50-year life of the Plan and would be substantially less than the amount of conversion of farmland that would be anticipated to occur in the same time period for other reasons. As described in Section 3.1.2, *Environmental Setting*, 13,140 acres of Important Farmland were converted to nonagricultural uses in the 10 years from 2006 to 2016. This amount of farmland conversion over a long period of time would not be expected to substantially change economic activity in the Plan Area.

NEPA Determination: Implementation of the Plan would have indirect, beneficial impacts on the economy of the Plan Area due to enhanced economic opportunities, visitor spending, and increased efficiency, as detailed in a draft report by Hausrath Economic Group (2005). Conversion of farmland as a result of reserve acquisition could have an effect on economic activity, but the amount of conversion over the life of the Plan would not result in substantial changes.

CEQA Determination: This impact is not subject to analysis under CEQA.

Impact SOC-5: Substantially affect property tax revenue (NEPA: less than significant)

A draft report by Hausrath Economic Group (2005) concluded that the Plan would result in a larger reserve system and more reserve land transactions. Some of the land anticipated to be acquired for the Reserve System is currently being used for agricultural purposes and is expected to be privately owned. Lands would be acquired in fee title or through placement of conservation easements.

Transfer of fee title interest in these properties would result in the full loss of the property tax revenue currently generated by these properties. While the short-term loss may be minimal, the impact would be greater over the long term, because the loss of revenue would include any future growth potential on these properties. The Hausrath assessment concluded that the impacts could be offset by leasing the properties or transferring the fee title of a property with a conservation easement to private ownership. However, the analysis also pointed out that implementation of the Plan would have indirect, beneficial impacts on public revenue due to enhanced economic opportunities, visitor spending, and increased efficiency.

NEPA Determination: Although implementation of the Plan could result in beneficial economic impacts, there could potentially be reductions in property tax revenues due to the removal of lands from the tax rolls. The overall effect is not anticipated to be substantial.

CEQA Determination: This impact is not subject to analysis under CEQA.

Impact SOC-6: Substantially disproportionately affect minority or low-income populations (NEPA: less than significant)

To determine whether Alternative 2, the proposed action, would result in a substantially disproportionate effect on minority populations or low-income populations, the significant effects of the proposed action that would affect people were examined to determine if these effects would occur disproportionately in areas with a higher proportion of such demographic populations. As described in Table 3.9-8, Placer County and Lincoln have lower percentages of minority and low-income residents than does the rest of the state. Figure 3.9-1 shows that minority populations are located in the southwest portion of the Plan Area. One census tract in Lincoln has more than 50% minority residents.

Alternative 2, the proposed action, was determined to have significant and unavoidable impacts on air quality, noise, and transportation. These conclusions are summarized below. However, these impacts would be experienced throughout the Plan Area, not disproportionately in the few areas with concentrated minority populations and low-income populations. Impacts on minority and low-income persons would not be disproportionately high and adverse.

Agricultural Resources

Under Alternative 2, the proposed action, up to 8,050 acres of Important Farmland within the RAA could be converted to nonagricultural uses. Accordingly, this impact would be significant and unavoidable.

Air Quality

PCCP conservation measures and Covered Activities would result in air pollutant emissions. Conflicts with applicable air quality plans and violations of applicable air quality standards would be less than significant with implementation of the best management practices (BMPs) described in the Plan. Some construction activity could occur near sensitive receptors in Lincoln, as well as near scattered rural residences and other sensitive receptors throughout the Plan Area. All construction projects in the region must abide by air district rules and regulatory measures adopted to reduce emissions, reducing the potential for substantial pollutant emissions and minimizing air pollution impacts on sensitive receptors. However, there may be instances where project-specific conditions preclude the reduction of health risks from diesel particulate matter to below adopted thresholds.

Therefore, impacts related to the exposure of sensitive receptors during construction would be significant and unavoidable.

Noise

Throughout the Plan Area, it is expected that some construction activity associated with implementation of PCCP conservation measures could occur near noise-sensitive land uses such as rural residences. BMPs and Mitigation Measures NOI-1 and NOI-2 would help reduce effects on sensitive receptors in the vicinity of noise- and vibration-generating work associated with PCCP implementation. However, it would not be possible to reduce the noise impacts associated with Covered Activities to less-than-significant levels, because the Placer Conservation Authority (PCA) would not be the approving authority for these activities. Therefore, this impact would be significant and unavoidable.

Transportation

Construction activities associated with implementation of the PCCP in the Plan Area would be short-term and typically on lightly traveled rural roadways, and they would not result in permanent changes in safety conditions or affect emergency access. As described for Alternative 1, the no action alternative, impacts from reasonably foreseeable activities in the Plan Area associated with urbanization and associated infrastructure development, operation, and maintenance included in the various planning documents of the local jurisdictions as well as future SPRTA and PCWA projects, such as local transportation and water projects, would result in significant impacts that cannot be avoided. Therefore, Alternative 2, the proposed action, would result in a significant effect on traffic and roadway capacity.

NEPA Determination: Alternative 2, impacts would be experienced throughout the Plan Area, not disproportionately in the few areas with concentrated minority and low-income populations. Impacts on minority and low-income persons would not be disproportionately high and adverse. This impact would be less than significant.

CEQA Determination: This impact is not subject to analysis under CEQA.

Alternative 3—Reduced Take/Reduced Fill

Impact SOC-1: Creation of substantial population growth either directly or indirectly (NEPA: less than significant; CEQA: less than significant)

Under Alternative 3, the total extent of land conversion in the Valley Potential Future Growth Area (PFG) would be reduced by 1,000 acres, from that under the proposed action. It is assumed that the extent of the Reserve System in the Valley RAA would probably be reduced by 3,000 acres from that assumed for implementation of the proposed action, and the extent of Reserve System in the Valley PFG would probably be increased by approximately 2,000 acres from that assumed for implementation of the proposed action.

However, these activities would neither result in substantial land use changes nor cause growth-related impacts. Implementation of Covered Activities, as well as the conservation strategy and conservation measures, would not induce population growth.

Within the Plan Area, implementation of this alternative would serve to streamline the development envisioned in the *Placer County General Plan* and *City of Lincoln General Plan* as well as future SPRTA

and PCWA projects. The EIR for the *Placer County General Plan* acknowledged effects resulting from population growth (e.g., traffic, land use changes) but concluded that impacts on population and housing would be less than significant (Placer County 1994). The EIR for the *City of Lincoln General Plan* concluded that impacts associated with growth would be accommodated by the general plan and would be less than significant because the City's growth assumptions are consistent with the land use principles/concepts of the SACOG Blueprint Project and because the general plan discourages undesirable development in areas with sensitive natural resources, critical habitats, and important scenic resources (City of Lincoln 2006). Orderly growth and new development are planned in areas adjacent to existing urban uses and developers are required to provide service extensions. Accordingly, the EIR concluded that although the City's general plan would result in growth, the general plan policies reduce potential negative impacts associated with growth that is a direct consequence of general plan implementation to a less-than-significant level.

NEPA Determination: Alternative 3 would not result in effects on population growth attributable to Plan implementation. Effects resulting from Covered Activities would be less than significant.

CEQA Determination: Alternative 3 would not result in effects on population growth attributable to Plan implementation. Effects resulting from Covered Activities would be less than significant. No mitigation has been identified.

Impact SOC-2: Displacement of a substantial number of existing housing units, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere (NEPA: less than significant; CEQA: less than significant)

Implementation of Alternative 3 would involve activities such as obtaining conservation easements and performing construction activities related to restoration and habitat enhancement. Covered activities associated with the conservation strategy and measures are not anticipated to displace existing housing because they would involve either placing easements on existing agricultural lands or restoring habitat in rural and open space areas. These activities would not result in the displacement of a substantial number of existing housing units. Although most lands that would be acquired and added to the Reserve System have land use designations for a limited amount of residential development (typically one dwelling unit per 80 acres), the amount of land that would be unavailable for housing as a result of establishing the Reserve System, compared with the inventory of housing that is and will be available, would be inconsequential. Additionally, for some reserve acquisitions, homes would already be present or may be allowed, further reducing the potential to affect the housing supply, particularly in rural areas.

Within the Plan Area, implementation of this alternative would serve to streamline the development envisioned in the *Placer County General Plan* and *City of Lincoln General Plan* as well as future SPRTA and PCWA projects. The EIR for the *Placer County General Plan* concluded that impacts on housing would be less than significant. The EIR for the *City of Lincoln General Plan* does not specifically address housing, but it did conclude that impacts resulting from growth would be accommodated by the general plan and would be less than significant. The City's growth assumptions are consistent with the land use principles/concepts of the SACOG Blueprint Project, and the general plan discourages undesirable development in areas with sensitive natural resources, critical habitats, and important scenic resources. Orderly growth and new development are planned in areas adjacent to existing urban uses and developers are required to provide service extensions. Accordingly, although the City's general plan would result in an increase in growth, the general plan policies reduce potential negative impacts associated with growth to a less-than-significant level.

NEPA Determination: Housing development in accordance with the general plans would be concentrated in areas adjacent to existing urban uses and would not result in a substantial displacement of housing. Therefore Alternative 3, would have a less-than-significant impact on housing.

CEQA Determination: Housing development in accordance with the general plans would be concentrated in areas adjacent to existing urban uses and would not result in a substantial displacement of housing. Therefore, Alternative 3 would have a less than significant impact on housing. No mitigation has been identified.

Impact SOC-3: Displacement of a substantial number of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere (NEPA: less than significant; CEQA: less than significant)

Impacts regarding displacement of people would be the same as those described above for Impact SOC-2. Alternative 3 would not result in the displacement of a substantial amount of people or housing.

NEPA Determination: Alternative 3 would not cause effects that would result in the displacement of a substantial number of people necessitating the construction of replacement housing. This impact would be less than significant.

CEQA Determination: Alternative 3 would not cause effects that would result in the displacement of a substantial number of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing. This impact would be less than significant. No mitigation has been identified.

Impact SOC-4: Substantially change economic activity in the Plan Area (NEPA: less than significant)

Because the PCCP is programmatic in nature, there is some uncertainty regarding the extent of the proposed action's effects on economic activity in the Plan Area. Indirect economic activity under Alternative 3 would result from development, employment, and industry within the local jurisdictions and the Plan Area. As discussed in Section 4.1, *Agricultural and Forestry Resources*, the Plan could result in conversions of up to 8,050 acres of Important Farmland to nonagricultural uses within the RAA, potentially reducing agricultural productivity. Grazing would still be a compatible use on acquired farmland, but changes in agricultural practices could occur under Alternative 3. This potential conversion of farmland would take place over the 50-year life of the Plan, and would be substantially less than the amount of conversion of farmland that would be anticipated to occur in the same time period for other reasons. As described in Section 3.1.2, *Environmental Setting*, 13,140 acres of Important Farmland were converted to non-agricultural uses in the 10 years from 2006 to 2016. This amount of farmland conversion over a long period of time would not be expected to substantially change economic activity in the Plan Area.

NEPA Determination: Implementation of the Plan would have indirect, beneficial impacts on the economy of the Plan Area due to enhanced economic opportunities, visitor spending, and increased efficiency, as detailed in a draft report by Hausrath Economic Group (2005). Conversion of farmland as a result of reserve acquisition could have an effect on economic activity, but the amount of conversion over the life of the Plan would not result in substantial changes.

CEQA Determination: This impact is not subject to analysis under CEQA.

Impact SOC-5: Substantially affect property tax revenue (NEPA: less than significant)

A draft report by Hausrath Economic Group (2005) concluded that the Plan would result in a larger reserve system and more reserve land transactions. Some of the land anticipated to be acquired for the Reserve System is currently being used for agricultural purposes and is expected to be privately owned. Lands would be acquired in fee title or through placement of conservation easements. Transfer of fee title interest in these properties would result in the full loss of the property tax revenue currently generated by these properties. While the short-term loss may be minimal, the impact would be greater over the long term, because the loss of revenue would include any future growth potential on these properties. The Hausrath assessment concluded that the impacts could be offset by leasing the properties or transferring the fee title of a property with a conservation easement to private ownership. However, the analysis also pointed out that implementation of the Plan would have indirect, beneficial impacts on public revenue due to enhanced economic opportunities, visitor spending, and increased efficiency.

NEPA Determination: Although implementation of the Plan under Alternative 3 could result in beneficial economic impacts, there could potentially be reductions in property tax revenues due to the removal of lands from the tax rolls. The overall effect is not anticipated to be substantial.

CEQA Determination: This impact is not subject to analysis under CEQA.

Impact SOC-6: Substantially disproportionately affect minority or low-income populations (NEPA: less than significant)

To determine whether Alternative 3 would result in a substantial disproportionate effect on minority populations or low-income populations, the significant effects of the proposed action that would affect people were examined to determine if these effects would occur disproportionately in areas with a higher proportion of such demographic populations. As described in Table 3.9-8, Placer County and Lincoln have lower percentages of minority and low-income residents than does the rest of the state. Figure 3.9-1 shows that minority populations are located in the southwest portion of the Plan Area. One census tract in Lincoln has more than 50% minority residents.

Alternative 3 was determined to have significant and unavoidable impacts on agricultural resources, air quality, noise, and transportation. These conclusions are summarized below. However, these impacts would be experienced throughout the Plan Area, not disproportionately in the few areas with concentrated minority populations and low-income populations. Impacts on minority and low-income persons would not be disproportionately high and adverse.

Agricultural Resources

Under Alternative 3, up to 8,050 acres of Important Farmland within the RAA could be converted to nonagricultural uses. Accordingly, this impact would be significant and unavoidable.

Air Quality

PCCP conservation measures and Covered Activities would result in air pollutant emissions. As under Alternative 2, conflicts with applicable air quality plans and violations of applicable air quality standards would be less than significant with implementation of the BMPs described in the Plan. Some construction activity could occur near sensitive receptors in Lincoln, as well as near scattered rural residences and other sensitive receptors throughout the Plan Area. All construction projects in the region must abide by air district rules and regulatory measures adopted to reduce emissions,

reducing the potential for substantial pollutant emissions and minimizing air pollution impacts on sensitive receptors. However, there may be instances where project-specific conditions preclude the reduction of health risks from diesel particulate matter to below adopted thresholds. Therefore, impacts related to the exposure of sensitive receptors during construction would be significant and unavoidable.

Noise

Throughout the Plan Area, it is expected that some construction activity associated with implementation of PCCP conservation measures under Alternative 3 could occur near noise-sensitive land uses such as rural residences. BMPs and Mitigation Measures NOI-1 and NOI-2 would help reduce effects on sensitive receptors in the vicinity of noise- and vibration-generating work associated with PCCP implementation. However, it would not be possible to reduce the noise impacts associated with Covered Activities to less-than-significant levels, because the PCA would not be the approving authority for these activities. Therefore, this impact would be significant and unavoidable.

Transportation

Construction activities associated with implementation of the PCCP under Alternative 3 would be short-term and typically on lightly traveled rural roadways, and would not result in permanent changes in safety conditions or affect emergency access. As described for Alternative 1, the no action alternative, impacts from reasonably foreseeable activities in the Plan Area associated with urbanization and associated infrastructure development, operation, and maintenance included in the various planning documents of the local jurisdictions as well as future SPRTA and PCWA projects, such as local transportation and water projects, would result in significant impacts that cannot be avoided. Therefore, Alternative 3 would have a significant and unavoidable impact on traffic and roadway capacity.

NEPA Determination: Under Alternative 3, impacts would be experienced throughout the Plan Area, not disproportionately in the few areas with concentrated minority populations and low-income populations. Impacts on minority and low-income persons would not be disproportionately high and adverse. This impact would be less than significant.

CEQA Determination: This impact is not subject to analysis under CEQA.

Alternative 4—Reduced Permit Term

Impact SOC-1: Creation of substantial population growth either directly or indirectly (NEPA: less than significant; CEQA: less than significant)

Like Alternative 2, the proposed action, Alternative 4 would not cause growth-related impacts.

Within the Plan Area, implementation of this alternative would serve to streamline the development envisioned in the *Placer County General Plan* and *City of Lincoln General Plan* as well as future projects of SPRTA and PCWA. The EIR for the *Placer County General Plan* acknowledged effects resulting from population growth (e.g., traffic, land use changes) but concluded that impacts on population and housing would be less than significant (Placer County 1994). The EIR for the *City of Lincoln General Plan* concluded that impacts associated with growth would be accommodated by the general plan and would be less than significant because the City's growth assumptions are

consistent with the land use principles/concepts of the SACOG Blueprint Project and because the general plan discourages undesirable development in areas with sensitive natural resources, critical habitats, and important scenic resources (City of Lincoln 2006). Orderly growth and new development are planned in areas adjacent to existing urban uses and developers are required to provide service extensions. Accordingly, the EIR concluded that although the City's general plan would result in growth, the general plan policies reduce potential negative impacts associated with growth that is a direct consequence of general plan implementation to a less-than-significant level.

NEPA Determination: Alternative 4 would not result in effects on population growth attributable to Plan implementation. Effects resulting from Covered Activities would be less than significant.

CEQA Determination: Alternative 4 would not result in effects on population growth attributable to Plan implementation. Effects resulting from Covered Activities would be less than significant. No mitigation has been identified.

Impact SOC-2: Displacement of a substantial number of existing housing units, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere (NEPA: less than significant; CEQA: less than significant)

Implementation of Alternative 4 would involve activities such as obtaining conservation easements and performing construction activities related to restoration and habitat enhancement. PCCP activities associated with the conservation strategy and measures are not anticipated to displace existing housing because they would involve either placing easements on existing agricultural lands or restoring habitat in rural and open space areas. These activities would not result in the displacement of a substantial number of existing housing units. Although most lands that would be acquired and added to the Reserve System have land use designations for a limited amount of residential development (typically one dwelling unit per 80 acres), the amount of land that would be unavailable for housing as a result of establishing the Reserve System, compared with the inventory of housing that is and will be available, would be inconsequential. Additionally, for some reserve acquisitions, homes would already be present or may be allowed, further reducing the potential to affect the housing supply, particularly in rural areas.

Within the Plan Area, implementation of this alternative would serve to streamline the development envisioned in the *Placer County General Plan* and *City of Lincoln General Plan* as well as future projects of SPRTA and PCWA. The EIR for the *Placer County General Plan* concluded that impacts on housing would be less than significant. The EIR for the *City of Lincoln General Plan* does not specifically address housing, but it did conclude that impacts resulting from growth would be accommodated by the general plan and would be less than significant. The City's growth assumptions are consistent with the land use principles/concepts of the SACOG Blueprint Project, and the general plan discourages undesirable development in areas with sensitive natural resources, critical habitats, and important scenic resources. Orderly growth and new development are planned in areas adjacent to existing urban uses and developers are required to provide service extensions. Accordingly, although the City's general plan would result in an increase in growth, the general plan policies reduce potential negative impacts associated with growth to a less-than-significant level.

NEPA Determination: Housing development in accordance with the general plans would be concentrated in areas adjacent to existing urban uses and would not result in a substantial displacement of housing. Covered Activities of SPRTA and PCWA would be unlikely to result in removal of housing. Therefore, Alternative 4 would have a less-than-significant impact on housing.

CEQA Determination: Housing development in accordance with the general plans would be concentrated in areas adjacent to existing urban uses and would not result in a substantial displacement of housing. Covered Activities of SPRTA and PCWA would be unlikely to result in removal of housing. Therefore, Alternative 4 would have a less-than-significant impact on housing. No mitigation has been identified.

Impact SOC-3: Displacement of a substantial number of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere (NEPA: less than significant; CEQA: less than significant)

Impacts regarding displacement of people would be the same as those described above under Impact SOC-2. Alternative 4 would not result in the displacement of a substantial amount of people or housing.

NEPA Determination: Alternative 4 would not result in the displacement of a substantial number of people necessitating the construction of replacement housing. This impact would be less than significant.

CEQA Determination: Alternative 4 would not result in the displacement of a substantial number of people necessitating the construction of replacement housing. This impact would be less than significant. No mitigation has been identified.

Impact SOC-4: Substantially change economic activity in the Plan Area (NEPA: less than significant)

Under Alternative 4, indirect economic activity would result from development, employment, and industry within the jurisdictions of the Permit Applicants and the Plan Area. As discussed in Section 4.1, *Agricultural and Forestry Resources*, the Plan could result in conversions of agricultural land to nonagricultural uses within the RAA, although because of the reduced permit term, a lesser amount of conversion would occur than under the proposed action.

Because the PCCP is programmatic in nature, there is some uncertainty regarding the extent of the proposed action's effects on economic activity in the Plan Area. This potential conversion of farmland would take place over the 30-year life of the Plan under Alternative 4, and would be substantially less than the amount of conversion of farmland that would be anticipated to occur in the same time period for other reasons. As described in Section 3.12, *Environmental Setting*, 13,140 acres of Important Farmland were converted to non-agricultural uses in the 10 years from 2006 to 2016. This amount of farmland conversion over a long period of time would not be expected to substantially change economic activity in the Plan Area.

NEPA Determination: Implementation of the Plan would have indirect, beneficial impacts on the economy of the Plan Area due to enhanced economic opportunities, visitor spending, and increased efficiency, as detailed in a draft report by Hausrath Economic Group (2005). Conversion of farmland as a result of reserve acquisition could have an effect on economic activity, but the amount of conversion over the life of the Plan under Alternative 4 would not result in substantial changes.

CEQA Determination: This impact is not subject to analysis under CEQA.

Impact SOC-5: Substantially affect property tax revenue (NEPA: less than significant)

A draft report by Hausrath Economic Group (2005) concluded that the Plan would result in a larger reserve system and more reserve land transactions. Some of the land anticipated to be acquired for

the Reserve System is currently being used for agricultural purposes and is expected to be privately owned. Lands would be acquired in fee title or through placement of conservation easements. Transfer of fee title interest in these properties would result in the full loss of the property tax revenue currently generated by these properties. While the short-term loss may be minimal, the impact would be greater over the long term, because the loss of revenue would include any future growth potential on these properties. The Hausrath assessment concluded that the impacts could be offset by leasing the properties or transferring the fee title of a property with a conservation easement to private ownership. However, the analysis also pointed out that implementation of the Plan would have indirect, beneficial impacts on public revenue due to enhanced economic opportunities, visitor spending, and increased efficiency.

NEPA Determination: Although implementation of the Plan could result in beneficial economic impacts, there could potentially be reductions in property tax revenues due to the removal of lands from the tax rolls. The overall effect is not anticipated to be substantial.

CEQA Determination: This impact is not subject to analysis under CEQA.

Impact SOC-6: Substantially disproportionately affect minority or low-income populations (NEPA: less than significant)

To determine whether Alternative 4 would result in a substantial disproportionate effect on minority populations or low-income populations, the significant effects of the proposed action that would affect people were examined to determine if these effects would occur disproportionately in areas with a higher proportion of such demographic populations. As described in Table 3.9-8, Placer County and Lincoln have lower percentages of minority and low-income residents than does the rest of the state. Figure 3.9-1 shows that minority populations are located in the southwest portion of the Plan Area. One census tract in Lincoln has more than 50% minority residents.

Alternative 4 was determined to have significant and unavoidable impacts on agricultural resources, air quality, noise, and transportation. These conclusions are summarized below. However, these impacts would be experienced throughout the Plan Area, not disproportionately in the few areas with concentrated minority and low-income populations. Impacts on minority populations and low-income persons would not be disproportionately high and adverse.

Agricultural Resources

Under Alternative 4, a considerable but as yet undetermined amount of Important Farmland within the RAA could be converted to nonagricultural uses. Accordingly, this impact would be significant and unavoidable.

Air Quality

PCCP conservation measures and Covered Activities under Alternative 4 would result in air pollutant emissions. As under Alternatives 2 and 3, conflicts with applicable air quality plans and violations of applicable air quality standards would be less than significant with implementation of the BMPs described in the Plan. Some construction activity could occur near sensitive receptors in Lincoln, as well as near scattered rural residences and other sensitive receptors throughout the Plan Area. All construction projects in the region must abide by air district rules and regulatory measures adopted to reduce emissions, reducing the potential for substantial pollutant emissions and minimizing air pollution impacts on sensitive receptors. However, there may be instances where

project-specific conditions preclude the reduction of health risks from diesel particulate matter to below adopted thresholds. Therefore, impacts related to the exposure of sensitive receptors during construction would be significant and unavoidable.

Noise

Throughout the Plan Area, it is expected that some construction activity associated with implementation of PCCP conservation measures under Alternative 4 could occur near noise-sensitive land uses such as rural residences. BMPs and Mitigation Measures NOI-1 and NOI-2 would help reduce effects on sensitive receptors in the vicinity of noise- and vibration-generating work associated with PCCP implementation. However, it would not be possible to reduce the noise impacts associated with Covered Activities to less-than-significant levels, because the PCA would not be the approving authority for these activities. Therefore, this impact would be significant and unavoidable.

Transportation

Construction activities associated with implementation of the PCCP under Alternative 4 would be short-term and typically on lightly traveled rural roadways, and would not result in permanent changes in safety conditions or affect emergency access. As described for Alternative 1, the no action alternative, impacts from reasonably foreseeable activities in the Plan Area associated with urbanization and associated infrastructure development, operation, and maintenance included in the various planning documents of the local jurisdictions as well as future SPRTA and PCWA projects, such as local transportation and water projects, would result in significant impacts that cannot be avoided. Therefore, Alternative 4 would have a significant and unavoidable impact on traffic and roadway capacity.

NEPA Determination: Under Alternative 4, impacts would be experienced throughout the Plan Area, not disproportionately in the few areas with concentrated minority populations and low-income populations. Impacts on minority and low-income persons would not be disproportionately high and adverse. This impact would be less than significant.

CEQA Determination: This impact is not subject to analysis under CEQA.

4.9.3 Cumulative Analysis

Alternative 1—No Action

The local jurisdictions determined that population and housing impacts pursuant to their general plans would be less than significant and that there would be no cumulative impact. Under Alternative 1, the no action alternative, population growth and housing development would be accounted for under the general plans. The Plan Area does not contain meaningfully larger populations of minority or low-income residents, and environmental justice impacts would be less than significant.

Alternative 2—Proposed Action

The proposed action would not cause population growth or result in housing development aside from that accounted for under the general plans. The local jurisdictions determined that population and housing impacts would be less than significant and there would be no cumulative impact. There are

no known substantial impacts to the economy of the Plan Area that the changes economic activity resulting from implementation of the PCCP and Covered Activities could contribute to. Because the Plan Area does not contain meaningfully larger populations of minority or low-income residents, and because activities under the proposed action would occur throughout the Plan Area, environmental justice impacts resulting from the Proposed Action would not contribute to a cumulative impact.

Alternative 3—Reduced Take/Reduced Fill

Cumulative impacts under Alternative 3 would be similar to those described under Alternative 2. Alternative 3 would not cause population growth or result in housing development aside from that accounted for under the general plans. The local jurisdictions determined that population and housing impacts would be less than significant and there would be no cumulative impact. There are no known substantial impacts to the economy of the Plan Area that the changes economic activity resulting from implementation of the PCCP and Covered Activities under Alternative 3 could contribute to. Because the Plan Area does not contain meaningfully larger populations of minority or low-income residents, and because activities under Alternative 3 would occur throughout the Plan Area, environmental justice impacts resulting from Alternative 3 would not contribute to a cumulative impact.

Alternative 4—Reduced Permit Term

Cumulative impacts under Alternative 4 would be similar to those described under Alternative 2. Alternative 4 would not cause population growth or result in housing development aside from that accounted for under the general plans. The local jurisdictions determined that population and housing impacts would be less than significant and there would be no cumulative impact. There are no known substantial impacts to the economy of the Plan Area that the changes economic activity resulting from implementation of the PCCP and Covered Activities under Alternative 4 could contribute to. Because the Plan Area does not contain meaningfully larger populations of minority or low-income residents, and because activities under the proposed action would occur throughout the Plan Area, environmental justice impacts resulting from Alternative 4 would not contribute to a cumulative impact.

4.9.4 References Cited

- California Resources Agency. 2012. *Environmental Justice Policy*, California Resources Agency. Sacramento, CA.
- City of Lincoln. 2006. *City of Lincoln General Plan Draft Environmental Impact Report*. Volume 1. State Clearinghouse No. 2005112003. October.
- Council on Environmental Quality. 1997. *Environmental Justice: Guidance under the National Environmental Policy Act*. Washington, DC.
- Hausrath Economics Group. 2005. *Local Government Impacts of the Placer County Conservation Plan—A Draft Report to the County of Placer*. April 12. Oakland, CA. Available: <https://www.placer.ca.gov>. Accessed: March 27, 2018.

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