

2 REPORT SUMMARY

This summary presents an overview of the analysis contained in *Chapter 4: Environmental Evaluation*. CEQA requires that this chapter summarize the following: 1) areas of controversy; 2) significant impacts; 3) unavoidable significant impacts; 4) implementation of mitigation measures; and 5) alternatives to the project.

A. Project Under Review

This EIR provides an assessment of the potential environmental consequences of adoption of the Butte County General Plan 2030 and Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP) override. The General Plan is the principal policy document for future conservation and development in the county, and it has a 20-year planning horizon. Because General Plan 2030 includes densities that are not consistent with the Airport Land Use Compatibility Zones in the ALUCP, adoption of this document requires an override of the ALUCP. The proposed project is described in a greater level of detail in Chapter 3.

B. Areas of Controversy

The County issued an official Notice of Preparation on September 15, 2008 and held a scoping meeting on October 1, 2008. The official Notice of Preparation for this Program EIR was issued to the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, and forwarded to federal, State, and local agencies, and interested parties. The official scoping period for this EIR was between September 15, 2008 and October 14, 2008, during which interested agencies and the public could submit comments about the proposed project. The comments received focused primarily on the following issues:

- ◆ Impacts related to farmland conversion and conflicts with Williamson Act contracts, and mitigation options, such as conservation easements and mitigation fees;
- ◆ Impacts related to air pollution;

- ◆ Impacts related to historical and archaeological resources;
- ◆ Impacts related to hazards;
- ◆ Impacts related to stormwater quality and drainage;
- ◆ Consistency with municipal plans;
- ◆ Impacts on public services;
- ◆ Impacts on the State Highway System;
- ◆ Strategies to reduce vehicle miles traveled and increase use of transit and alternative modes of transportation;
- ◆ Impacts related to rail safety;
- ◆ Wastewater treatment capacity; and
- ◆ Impacts related to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

All of these issues were addressed in the General Plan 2030 process. To the extent that these issues have environmental impacts, they are also addressed in this EIR.

C. Significant Impacts

Under CEQA, a significant impact on the environment is defined as a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project, including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic and aesthetic significance.

As described in Chapter 3, Project Description, implementation of the proposed General Plan 2030 and ALUCP override is anticipated to result in the development of approximately 13,700 new dwelling units and the addition of 33,800 new residents, as well as the development of 1.8 million square feet of new retail and office space and 1.1 million square feet of new industrial space by 2030. This development, in combination with long-term, region-wide

growth and development, has the potential to generate environmental impacts in a number of areas, including direct construction impacts on biological and cultural resources; indirect impacts associated with use of this built environment on areas such as transportation, air quality, and noise; and capacity impacts to utilities and public services, such as water service, wastewater, solid waste, school, and parks.

However, by incorporating policies intended to avoid environmental impacts and by steering development to existing incorporated and unincorporated cities and communities, General Plan 2030 is largely self-mitigating. Rather than mitigating impacts from implementation of General Plan 2030 through mitigation measures in this EIR, the policies and land use map in General Plan 2030 are intended to prevent the majority of environmental impacts altogether.

The ALUCP override also has the potential to generate environmental impacts within the county; however, the ALUCP override is not a policy document and therefore is not self-mitigating.

The implementation of the proposed General Plan 2030 has the potential to generate 26 significant environmental impacts. Of these impacts, 19 are the result of the proposed General Plan 2030 and ALUCP override, six are the result of General Plan 2030 combined with other cumulative development in the larger region, and one is considered an impact of both the proposed General Plan 2030 and cumulative development. Throughout this EIR, the terms “project” or “proposed project,” are used to refer to the implementation of General Plan 2030 and the ALUCP override, which will govern all development in unincorporated Butte County over the life of the document. The term “cumulative” refers to General Plan 2030 *as well as* development that will happen in the incorporated municipalities and the surrounding region.¹

¹ See also Section B in Chapter 4.0, Environmental Evaluation, and Section D in Chapter 6, CEQA Required Assessment Conclusions, for an expanded discussion about the cumulative analysis.

The significant project impacts are in the following topic areas:

- ◆ Agriculture (two project impacts)
- ◆ Hydrology and Water Quality (two project impacts)
- ◆ Land Use (one project impact)
- ◆ Noise (one project impact)
- ◆ Transportation and Circulation (13 project impacts).

The significant cumulative impacts are in the following topic areas:

- ◆ Agriculture
- ◆ Biological Resources
- ◆ Hydrology and Water Quality
- ◆ Land Use
- ◆ Noise
- ◆ Transportation and Circulation.

The significant impact considered to result from both the project and cumulative development in the region is in the GHG emissions analysis. This is because climate change is the result of cumulative global emissions. There is no single project, when taken in isolation, that can “cause” climate change, as a single project’s emissions are insufficient to change the radiative balance of the atmosphere. Because climate change is the result of GHG emissions, and GHGs are emitted by innumerable sources worldwide, global climate change is a significant cumulative impact of human development and activity. The global increase in GHG emissions that has occurred and will occur in the future are the result of the actions and choices of individuals, businesses, local governments, states, and nations. Therefore, the analysis in Chapter 4.15 addresses project and cumulative impacts in combination.

General Plan 2030 contributes to all of the impacts on a programmatic level, while the ALUCP override contributes only to the project and cumulative impact in the land use topic.

All of the impacts are considered significant and unavoidable. They are discussed in the following two sections and summarized in Table 2-1.

D. Mitigation Measures

This EIR suggests specific mitigation measures to reduce the significant impacts of General Plan 2030. Of the 26 significant impacts, Impacts TRAF-1 through TRAF-13 provide mitigation measures. However, they are found to be significant and unavoidable after mitigation. The mitigation measures in this EIR will form the basis of a Mitigation Monitoring Program to be implemented in accordance with State law.

E. Unavoidable Significant Impacts

Section 15126.2(b) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that an EIR describe any significant impacts that cannot be avoided, even with the implementation of feasible mitigation measures. As described in Chapter 4, and shown in Table 2-1, 26 significant unavoidable impacts were identified in the areas of agriculture, biological resources, hydrology and water quality, land use, noise, transportation and circulation, and greenhouse gas emissions.

F. Alternatives to the Project

This EIR analyzes alternatives to the proposed project. Three alternatives to the proposed project are considered and described in detail in Chapter 5:

- ◆ No Project Alternative
- ◆ Concentrated Growth Alternative
- ◆ Rural Extension Alternative

As shown in the alternatives analysis in Chapter 5, the Concentrated Growth Alternative has the least environmental impact and is therefore the environmentally superior alternative. By focusing growth into the spheres of influence (SOI) of the county's municipalities and into existing unincorporated communities, the Concentrated Growth Alternative would make the least contribution to the significant and unavoidable impacts that have been identi-

fied in relation to biological resources, hydrology and water quality, noise, transportation and circulation, and greenhouse gas emissions. The Rural Extension Alternative and the No Project Alternative would have greater impacts than General Plan 2030 and the ALUCP override.

G. Summary Table

Table 2-1 presents a summary of impacts and mitigation measures identified in this report. It is organized to correspond with the environmental issues discussed in Chapter 4. Table 2-1 distinguishes between two types of significant impacts: on the one hand impacts that directly result from the proposed project, which is the implementation of General Plan 2030 and the ALUCP override and which will govern all development in unincorporated Butte County over the life of the document; and on the other hand, impacts that result from the combination of General Plan 2030 and other regional development, including in the incorporated municipalities and the surrounding region.² Although this is a programmatic EIR, CEQA defines a “project” as any action that “has the potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment (CEQA Guidelines Section 15378). Impacts that are the result of the proposed project are termed “project impacts,” while impacts that are the result of the cumulative condition are termed “cumulative impacts.”

The table is arranged into six columns: 1) significant impacts; 2) classification as a project impact, as discussed above; 3) classification as a cumulative impact, as discussed above; 4) significance prior to mitigation; 5) mitigation measures; and 6) significance after mitigation. For a complete description of potential impacts, please refer to the specific discussions in Chapter 4.

² See also Section B in Chapter 4.0, Environmental Evaluation, and Section D in Chapter 6, CEQA Required Assessment Conclusions, for an expanded discussion about the cumulative analysis.

TABLE 2-1 SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Significant Impact	Project Impact	Cumulative Impact	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Significance With Mitigation
AESTHETICS					
<i>General Plan 2030 goals, policies, and actions are found to avoid significant impacts related to aesthetics.</i>					
AGRICULTURE					
AG-1: Although the goals, policies, actions and regulations of General Plan 2030 would reduce and partially offset the conversion of farmland, the proposed project designates approximately 4,700 acres of farmlands of concern under CEQA for non-agricultural uses.	✓		SU	These parcels are small, so they may no longer be viable for current agricultural practices. They are also located close to existing urbanized areas, which General Plan 2030 targets as appropriate locations for future growth. Placing or keeping an agricultural designation on these scattered parcels would make General Plan 2030 internally inconsistent. Therefore, this impact is <i>significant and unavoidable</i> .	SU
AG-2: Although the goals, policies, actions and regulations of General Plan 2030 would reduce and partially offset conflicts with Williamson Act contracts, the proposed project designates approximately 90 acres of lands with existing Williamson Act contracts for residential or industrial uses.	✓		SU	The parcels with Williamson Act conflicts are small, and many are located close to existing urbanized areas or established unincorporated communities, which General Plan 2030 targets as appropriate locations for future growth. Small parcels may no longer be viable for current agricultural practices. Placing or keeping an agricultural designation on these parcels would make General Plan 2030 internally inconsistent. Therefore, this impact is <i>significant and unavoidable</i> .	SU
AG-3: Although the goals, policies, actions and regulations of General Plan 2030 would reduce and partially offset regional agricultural impacts, the proposed project would contribute to cumulatively significant agricultural impacts in the region.		✓	SU	The amount of growth foreseen in the region and the decisions of surrounding counties regarding conversion of agricultural land are outside the control of Butte County. Therefore, this impact is <i>significant and unavoidable</i> .	SU

LTS = Less Than Significant S = Significant SU = Significant Unavoidable Impact

TABLE 2-1 SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES (CONTINUED)

Significant Impact	Project Impact	Cumulative Impact	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Significance With Mitigation
AIR QUALITY					
<i>General Plan 2030 goals, policies, and actions are found to avoid significant impacts related to air quality.</i>					
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES					
BIO-1: General Plan 2030 contains extensive goals, policies, and actions that mitigate impacts to undeveloped lands that support sensitive biological resources, including special-status species, sensitive natural communities, federally-protected wetlands, and wildlife and fish movement corridors, to a less-than-significant level and that additionally minimize the effects of development on biological resources in general. Development resulting under General Plan 2030 would contribute to the on-going loss of undeveloped lands that support such sensitive biological resources in Butte County. The cumulative loss of habitat and sensitive natural communities in Butte County could potentially contribute to a general decline for the region, and might result in the loss or displacement of wildlife that would have to compete for suitable habitats with existing adjacent populations.			SU	This change would occur as an intrinsic part of the land use changes allowed under General Plan 2030 to accommodate the expected continued growth of population and economic activity in Butte County over the next 20 years, and development outside Butte County would be beyond the County's ability to regulate or control. Therefore, there is no feasible mitigation available to reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level, and the impact is considered <i>significant and unavoidable</i> .	SU
CULTURAL RESOURCES					
<i>General Plan 2030 goals, policies, and actions are found to avoid significant impacts related to cultural resources.</i>					
GEOLOGY, SOILS, AND MINERAL RESOURCES					
<i>General Plan 2030 goals, policies, and actions are found to avoid significant impacts related to geology, soils, and mineral resources.</i>					

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TABLE 2-1 SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES (CONTINUED)

Significant Impact	Project Impact	Cumulative Impact	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Significance With Mitigation
HAZARDS AND SAFETY					
<i>General Plan 2030 goals, policies, and actions are found to avoid significant impacts related to hazards and safety.</i>					
HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY					
HYDRO-1: Although General Plan 2030 polices and actions reduce risks associated with levee failure, they do not eliminate risks to people and property. In addition, recently-adopted policies by FEMA would de-certify a number of levees in Butte County, which indicates that larger areas of Butte County are subject to levee inundation than realized under previous policies.	✓		SU	It is not within Butte County's power to require or complete maintenance and improvements to levees in the county owned and maintained by private individuals and other public agencies. Therefore, the impact is considered <i>significant and unavoidable</i> .	SU
HYDRO-2: Although General Plan 2030 polices and actions reduce risks associated with dam failure, they do not eliminate risks to people and property.	✓		SU	It is not within Butte County's power to require or complete maintenance and improvements to dams in and around the county owned and maintained by other agencies. Therefore, the impact is considered <i>significant and unavoidable</i> .	SU
HYDRO-3: General Plan 2030 would contribute to development in levee and dam inundation areas, resulting in a significant cumulative impact.		✓	SU	It is not within Butte County's power to require or complete maintenance and improvements to levees or dams in the county owned and maintained by private individuals and other public agencies. Therefore, the impact is considered <i>significant and unavoidable</i> .	SU

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TABLE 2-1 SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES (CONTINUED)

Significant Impact	Project Impact	Cumulative Impact	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Significance With Mitigation
LAND USE					
LU-1 General Plan 2030 includes residential densities that are inconsistent with the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan, which necessitates the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan override.	✓		SU	Much of the areas that are inconsistent with the ALUCP are already parcelized to a density that is similar to the General Plan 2030 designations. General Plan 2030 policies and actions would promote consistency with land use plans, policies, and regulations, but would not mitigate the significant impacts from inconsistencies with the ALUCP. Therefore, the impact is <i>significant and unavoidable</i> .	SU
LU-2: General Plan 2030 and the Chico General Plan include residential densities that are inconsistent with the ALUCP, which necessitates the ALUCP override. This contributes to a significant cumulative impact.		✓	SU	Although General Plan 2030 policies and actions would promote consistency with land use plans, policies, and regulations, they would not mitigate the significant impacts from inconsistency with the ALUCP. Furthermore, decisions of the City of Chico regarding consistency with the ALUCP are outside the control of Butte County. Therefore, this cumulative impact is considered <i>significant and unavoidable</i> .	SU
NOISE					
NOISE-1: Implementation of General Plan 2030 would cause a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels because more people would be living, driving and flying in Butte County.	✓		SU	General Plan 2030 Health and Safety Element policies would reduce many noise exposure impacts to a less-than-significant level, but would not mitigate the significant impacts from traffic noise increases and aircraft noise increases on ambient noise levels in all cases. Since this traffic and aircraft operation is an unavoidable outcome	SU

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TABLE 2-1 SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES (CONTINUED)

Significant Impact	Project Impact	Cumulative Impact	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Significance With Mitigation
NOISE-1 <i>continued</i>				of the type of residential and commercial growth foreseen in Butte County, there is no feasible mitigation measure to reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, this impact is <i>significant and unavoidable</i> .	
NOISE-2: Implementation of General Plan 2030 would contribute to conditions that exceed County noise standards and that cause a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels, causing a significant cumulative noise impact.		✓	SU	General Plan 2030 would contribute to cumulative traffic noise conditions that exceed County noise standards. Since this traffic is an unavoidable outcome of the type of residential and commercial growth foreseen in Butte County and the surrounding counties, this impact is <i>significant and unavoidable</i> .	SU
POPULATION AND HOUSING					
<i>General Plan 2030 goals, policies, and actions are found to avoid significant impacts related to population and housing.</i>					
PUBLIC SERVICES AND RECREATION					
<i>General Plan 2030 goals, policies, and actions are found to avoid significant impacts related to public services and recreation.</i>					
TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION					
TRAF-1: Implementation of General Plan 2030 would lead to unacceptable LOS F operations on State Route 32 between Muir Avenue and W. 1 st Street.	✓		S	TRAF-1: Widen State Route 32 to four lanes through this section.	SU
TRAF-2: Implementation of General Plan 2030 would lead to unacceptable LOS F operations on State Route 99 between the Sutter County Line and East Biggs Highway.	✓		S	TRAF-2: Widen and convert State Route 99 to a four-lane conventional highway through this section.	SU

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TABLE 2-1 SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES (CONTINUED)

Significant Impact	Project Impact	Cumulative Impact	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Significance With Mitigation
TRAF-3: Implementation of General Plan 2030 would lead to unacceptable LOS F operations on State Route 99 between State Route 149 and the Skyway.	✓		S	TRAF-3: Convert State Route 99 to a grade separated, limited access freeway facility through this section.	SU
TRAF-4: Implementation of General Plan 2030 would lead to unacceptable LOS F operations on State Route 99 between East 20 th Street and Cohasset Road.	✓		S	TRAF-4: Widen State Route 99 to six lanes through this section.	SU
TRAF-5: Implementation of General Plan 2030 would lead to unacceptable LOS F operations on State Route 99 between Eaton Road and Keefer Road.	✓		S	TRAF-5: Widen State Route 99 to four lanes through this section.	SU
TRAF-6: Implementation of General Plan 2030 would lead to unacceptable LOS E operations on State Route 162 between Larkin Road and State Route 70.	✓		S	TRAF-6: Widen State Route 162 to four lanes through this section.	SU
TRAF-7: Implementation of General Plan 2030 would lead to unacceptable LOS F operations on State Route 162 between State Route 70 and Lower Wyandotte Road.	✓		S	TRAF-7: Widen State Route 162 to six lanes through this section.	SU
TRAF-8: Implementation of General Plan 2030 would lead to unacceptable LOS E operations on State Route 162 between Foothill Boulevard and Canyon Drive.	✓		S	TRAF-8: Widen State Route 162 to four lanes through this section.	SU
TRAF-9: Implementation of General Plan 2030 would lead to unacceptable LOS F operations on Cohasset Road between State Route 99 and East Avenue.	✓		S	TRAF-9: Construct a raised median on this roadway section to enhance capacity.	SU

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TABLE 2-1 SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES (CONTINUED)

Significant Impact	Project Impact	Cumulative Impact	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Significance With Mitigation
TRAF-10: Implementation of General Plan 2030 would lead to unacceptable LOS D operations on Midway between Hegan Lane and the planned Southgate Extension.	✓		S	TRAF-10: Widen Midway to four lanes through this section.	SU
TRAF-11: Implementation of the Implementation of General Plan 2030 would lead to unacceptable LOS F operations on the Skyway between State Route 99 and Notre Dame Boulevard.	✓		S	TRAF-11: Construct a raised median on this roadway section to enhance capacity.	SU
TRAF-12: Implementation of General Plan 2030 would lead to unacceptable LOS D/E operations on the Skyway between Neal Road and Bille Road.	✓		S	TRAF-12: Convert this section of the Skyway to a four-lane limited access expressway.	SU
TRAF-13: Implementation of General Plan 2030 would lead to unacceptable LOS D/E operations on the Skyway between Bille Road and Pentz Road.	✓		S	TRAF-13: Widen the section of the Skyway between Bille Road and Wagstaff Road to a four-lane, divided arterial, and widen the section of the Skyway from Wagstaff Road to Pentz Road to a four-lane, undivided arterial.	SU
TRAF-14: Implementation of General Plan 2030 would cause increased traffic that would exacerbate existing deficiencies along regional roadways, contributing to a cumulatively significant transportation impact.		✓	SU	Because mitigation for these deficiencies is not identified and would be outside the control of Butte County, the impact is considered <i>significant and unavoidable</i> .	SU

UTILITIES

General Plan 2030 goals, policies, and actions are found to avoid significant impacts related to utilities.

TABLE 2-1 SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES (CONTINUED)

Significant Impact	Project Impact	Cumulative Impact	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Significance With Mitigation
GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS					
CC-1: Implementation of General Plan 2030 would result in GHG emissions that would contribute to cumulative GHG emissions and global climate change. The 2020 GHG forecast for the county indicates that emissions would be greater than 85 percent of current (2006) conditions, creating a significant contribution to GHG emissions and associated climate change impacts. Policies and actions would provide a comprehensive framework for reducing GHG emissions in the county, but they would not ensure that the County can meet the reduction goal.	✓	✓	SU	As part of the General Plan 2030 process, the County considered a wide range of policies and actions to reduce GHG emissions, and all feasible measures are included. However, they do not ensure that the County will meet its reduction goal, so the impact is considered <i>cumulatively significant and unavoidable</i> .	SU

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