Draft

Auburn Station Infill Project Draft EIR

Prepared for:

City of Auburn

AECOM

December 2025

Draft

Auburn Station Infill Project Draft EIR

Prepared for:

City of Auburn
City Hall
1225 Lincoln Way
Auburn, CA 95603

Contact:

Tia Klumpp
Planning Director
(530) 823-4211 x 140

Prepared by:

AECOM
2020 L Street, Suite 300
Sacramento, CA 95811

Contact:

Matthew Gerken
Project Manager
916/414-5800

AECOM

December 2025

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section		Page
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY		**ES-1**
ES.1	Introduction	ES-1
ES.2	Lead, Responsible, and Trustee Agencies	ES-1
ES.3	Project Characteristics	ES-1
ES.3.1	Project Location	ES-1
ES.3.2	Project Characteristics	ES-2
ES.4	Summary of Impacts and Cumulative Impacts	ES-2
ES.4.1	Impacts	ES-2
ES.4.2	Cumulative Impacts	ES-17
ES.5	Alternatives	ES-17
ES.6	Known Areas of Controversy	ES-18
ES.7	Public Participation and Additional Steps in the CEQA Review Process	ES-18
1	**INTRODUCTION**	**1-1**
1.1	Project Background	1-1
1.2	Purpose of the EIR	1-3
1.3	Public Review	1-3
1.4	Draft EIR Organization	1-4
2	**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**	**2-1**
2.1	Introduction and Project Background	2-1
2.2	Project Location, Access, and Surrounding Land Uses	2-1
2.3	Project Characteristics	2-5
2.3.1	Development	2-5
2.3.2	Zoning	2-8
2.3.3	Infrastructure	2-8
2.3.4	Circulation Network	2-8
2.3.5	Demolition and Construction	2-8
2.4	Required Project Approvals	2-9
2.5	Project Objectives	2-9
3	**ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS**	**3-1**
3.1	Scope of Analysis	3-1
3.2	Introduction to the Analysis	3-1
3.2.1	Environmental Setting	3-1
3.2.2	Regulatory Setting	3-1
3.2.3	Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures	3-2
3.a	Aesthetics	3.a-1
3.a.1	Environmental Setting	3.a-1
3.a.2	Regulatory Framework	3.a-5
3.a.3	Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures	3.a-7
3.b	Cultural Resources	3.b-1

3.b.1 Environmental Setting ... 3.b-1
3.b.2 Regulatory Setting ... 3.b-8
3.b.3 Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures ... 3.b-13
3.c Tribal Cultural Resources ... 3.c-1
3.c.1 Environmental Setting ... 3.c-1
3.c.2 Regulatory Setting ... 3.c-5
3.c.3 Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures ... 3.c-9
3.c.4 Impacts Analysis ... 3.c-10
3.d Land Use and Planning ... 3.d-1
3.d.1 Environmental Setting ... 3.d-1
3.d.2 Regulatory Framework ... 3.d-1
3.d.3 Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures ... 3.d-4
3.e Noise and Vibration ... 3.e-1
3.e.1 Environmental Setting ... 3.e-1
3.e.2 Regulatory Framework ... 3.e-13
3.e.3 Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures ... 3.e-22
3.f Population and Housing ... 3.f-1
3.f.1 Environmental Setting ... 3.f-1
3.f.2 Regulatory Framework ... 3.f-4
3.f.3 Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures ... 3.f-8
3.g Transportation ... 3.g-1
3.g.1 Environmental Setting ... 3.g-1
3.g.2 Regulatory Framework ... 3.g-4
3.g.3 Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures ... 3.g-7

4 OTHER CEQA CONSIDERATIONS ... 4-1
4.1 Cumulative Impacts ... 4-1
4.1.1 Approach ... 4-4
4.1.2 Cumulative Impact Analysis ... 4-4
4.2 Growth-Inducing Impacts ... 4-10
4.3 Significant Irreversible Environmental Changes ... 4-11
4.4 Significant and Unavoidable Adverse Impacts ... 4-12

5 ALTERNATIVES ... 5-1
5.1 Introduction ... 5-1
5.1.1 Focus of Alternatives ... 5-1
5.1.2 Reasonable Range of Alternatives ... 5-1
5.1.3 Feasibility of Alternatives ... 5-2
5.1.4 Project Objectives ... 5-3
5.2 Alternatives Eliminated from Detailed Consideration ... 5-3
5.2.1 Off-Site Alternatives ... 5-3
5.3 Alternatives Considered in Detail in this EIR ... 5-4
5.3.1 Alternative 1: No Project Alternative (No New Development) ... 5-4
5.3.2 Alternative 2: Redevelopment with a Different Mix of Land Uses ... 5-5
5.4 Alternatives Analysis ... 5-6

5.4.1 Aesthetics 5-6
5.4.2 Air Quality 5-7
5.4.3 Biological Resources 5-7
5.4.4 Cultural Resources 5-8
5.4.5 Noise and Vibration 5-8
5.4.6 Population and Housing 5-9
5.4.7 Transportation 5-9
5.4.8 Tribal Cultural Resources 5-10
5.5 Environmentally Superior Alternative 5-11

6 REFERENCES 6-1

7 LIST OF PREPARERS 7-1

Exhibits

Exhibit 2-1 Regional and Local Project Location 2-2
Exhibit 2-2 World War I Memorial and "the Domes" Building on the Project Site from Fulweiler Avenue 2-4
Exhibit 2-3 Project Site and Surrounding Area Land Uses 2-4
Exhibit 2-4 Conceptual Development Scenario – Option 1 – Preserve the Domes 2-6
Exhibit 3.a-1 World War 1 Memorial at the Entrance from Fulweiler Avenue 3.a-3
Exhibit 3.a-2 County Administrative Office Building 3.a-3
Exhibit 3.a-3 Lawn and Landscape Trees Located Along the Southern Edge of the Project Site 3.a-4
Exhibit 3.e-1 Typical Noise Levels 3.e-3
Exhibit 3.e-2 Noise Monitoring Locations Map 3.e-11
Exhibit 3.e-3 Existing Roadway Noise Contours 3.e-12
Exhibit 3.e-4 Buildout Plus Project Roadway Noise Contours 3.e-34

Tables

Table ES-1 Summary of Impacts, Mitigation, and Findings ES-3
Table 2-1 Redevelopment Option Details 2-5
Table 3.e-1 Subjective Reaction to Changes in Noise Levels of Similar Sources 3.e-2
Table 3.e-2 Reaction of People and Damage to Buildings from Continuous or Frequent Intermittent Vibration Levels 3.e-9
Table 3.e-3 Summary of Measured 24-hour Long Term Ambient Noise Levels 3.e-10
Table 3.e-4 Summary of Modeled Levels of Existing Traffic Noise - Distance from Roadway Centerline to L_{dn} Contour 3.e-10
Table 3.e-5 Land Use Noise Compatibility Guidelines 3.e-16
Table 3.e-6 Vibration Thresholds for Structural Damage 3.e-16
Table 3.e-7 Land Use Compatibility Guidelines for Development 3.e-18
Table 3.e-8 Noise Level Performance Standards (Non-Transportation Sources) 3.e-18
Table 3.e-9 Requirements for Acoustical Analysis 3.e-18
Table 3.e-10 Maximum Allowable Noise Exposure (Transportation Sources) 3.e-19
Table 3.e-11 Typical Construction Equipment Noise Levels 3.e-26

Table 3.e-12 Typical Vibration Levels for Construction Equipment 3.e-29
Table 3.e-13 Predicted Traffic Noise Levels, Buildout Plus Project Conditions, L_{dn} at 100 Feet, dB 3.e-33
Table 3.f-1 Housing Unit Allocation for Auburn 3.f-5
Table 3.g-1 Average Daily Traffic Volume Counts 3.g-2
Table 3.g-2 Future Traffic Volumes 3.g-2
Table 4-1. List of Cumulative Projects 4-2
Table 5-1. Comparison of Impacts of the Alternatives to the Proposed Project 5-11

ACRONYMS AND OTHER ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Assembly Bill
ACHP	Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
ADT	Average daily traffic
ANSI	American National Standards Institute
B.P.	before present
BIA	Bureau of Indian Affairs
C-2/OSC	Central Business District Open Space & Conservation
CalEEMod	California Emissions Estimator Model
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CALVENO	California Vehicle Noise
CCJPA	Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority
CCR	California Code of Regulations
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CEQA Guidelines	California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CHABA	Committee of Hearing, Bio Acoustics, and Bio Mechanics
City	City of Auburn
CNEL	Community Noise Equivalent Level
County	Placer County
CRHR	California Register of Historical Resources
dB	decibels
dBA	A-weighted decibels
Domes	Placer County Administrative Center
DU/AC	dwelling units per acre
EIR	environmental impact report
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
FAR	floor area ratio
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FHWA RD 77-108	FHWA Highway Traffic Noise Prediction Model
FRA	Federal Railroad Administration
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
GHG	greenhouse gas
HABS	Historic American Building Survey
HCD	Housing and Community Development
HFTAs	High Frequency Transit Areas
HUD	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Hz	hertz
IS	Initial Study
I-80	Interstate 80
in/sec	inches per second
ITE	Institute of Transportation Engineers
LDL	Larson Davis Laboratories
L_{dn}	Day-Night Noise Level
LEHD	Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics

L_{eq}	Equivalent Noise Level
L_{max}	Maximum Noise Level
L_{min}	Minimum Noise Level
LOS	Level of Service
MLD	most likely descendant
mph	miles per hour
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
MTIP	Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program
MTP	Metropolitan Transportation Plan
NCIC	North Central Information Center
NOA	Naturally Occurring Asbestos
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NOP	Notice of Preparation
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NWIC	Northwest Information Center
OHP	Office of Historic Preservation
PCT	Placer County Transit
PPV	peak particle velocity
proposed project	Auburn Domes Infill Project
RCNM	Federal Highway Construction Noise Model
RHNA	Regional Housing Needs Allocations
RHNP	regional housing needs plan
RMS	root mean square
ROW	right-of-way
RTP	Regional Transportation Plan
SACOG	Sacramento Area Council of Governments
SB	Senate Bill
SCS	Sustainable Communities Strategy
SENL	Single-Event [Impulsive] Noise Level
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Officer
SHRC	State Historical Resources Commission
SR 49	State Route 49
TCPs	Traditional cultural places
TCRs	Tribal Cultural Resources
TSM	Transportation System Management
U.S.	United States
UAIC	United Auburn Indian Community
UPRR	Union Pacific Railroad
USFS	U.S. Forest Service
VdB	vibration decibels
VMT	vehicle miles traveled
µin/sec	microinch per second

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ES.1 INTRODUCTION

This executive summary highlights the major areas of importance in the environmental analysis for the proposed Auburn Station Infill Project (hereafter: "proposed project"), as required by California Code of Regulations (CCR) Section 15123 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines (CEQA Guidelines). As stated in CCR Section 15123(a) of the CEQA Guidelines, "[a]n EIR shall contain a brief summary of the proposed action and its consequences. The language of the summary should be as clear and simple as reasonably practical." As required by the CEQA Guidelines, this executive summary includes (1) a summary description of the proposed project, (2) a synopsis of environmental impacts and recommended mitigation measures (Table ES-1), (3) a summary of cumulative impacts, (4) identification of the alternatives evaluated, and (5) a discussion of the areas of controversy associated with the proposed project.

ES.2 LEAD, RESPONSIBLE, AND TRUSTEE AGENCIES

This document is a focused draft environmental impact report (EIR) prepared for the proposed project. The City of Auburn (City) is the lead agency for the project under CEQA. Other local and regional agencies are responsible agencies under CEQA when they have jurisdiction over elements of the project.

ES.3 PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

The development proposal for the project contains enough specificity for a site-specific, project-level environmental review under CEQA, and is intended to allow the consideration of discretionary approvals for this project. The City's intent in this review is that no further CEQA documentation will be required for additional regulatory approvals following the City's approval of the project, barring the occurrence of any of the circumstances described in Section 21166 of the California Public Resources Code.

ES.3.1 PROJECT LOCATION

The project site is located in northwest Auburn, approximately 0.6 miles from the Downtown Historic District to the southeast and the Old Town Historic District to the south. The project site comprises 10.5 acres in the southern and western portions of Assessor's Parcel No. 001-032-034-000, located northeast of the intersection of Fulweiler Avenue and Nevada Street in the city of Auburn. The project site is approximately 970 feet west of State Route 49 (accessed via Fulweiler Avenue), and approximately 0.5 mile north of Interstate 80 (accessed via Nevada Street).

Surrounding land uses include an amphitheater, public library, two schools, office and commercial development, and a cemetery (Exhibit 2-3). The E.V. Cain Middle School (a public school operated by the Auburn Union School District) is within walking distance, approximately 0.25 mile northeast of the center of the project site. The Pathways Charter iLearn Academy (a public school operated by the Placer County Office of Education), which serves part-time and full-time home-schooled students, is immediately adjacent to the project site to the north, along with the Placer County Office of Education building. The Auburn Public Library is immediately adjacent to the project site to the northeast. The Auburn Garden Theater (an outdoor amphitheater) is immediately adjacent to the project site to the east. Additional office uses are present immediately adjacent to the site to the

east and southwest of the Auburn Station. The Auburn District Cemetery is across Fulweiler Avenue from the project site to the south. Auburn Station is adjacent to and just east of the office uses across from the project site on the west side of Nevada Street. Commercial land uses are present northwest of the project site along Nevada Street and Enterprise Drive, along with a United States Postal Service location.

The proposed project site is currently zoned as Mixed-Use Zoning District #6, C-2/OSC (City of Auburn 2019). The surrounding areas are designated and zoned for Mixed-Use Zoning District #7, C-3/OSC to the northeast, Commercial to the east, Mixed-Use Zoning District #8, M-1/C-1 to the west, and Open Space to the south.

ES.3.2 PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

The proposed project would include demolition of existing on-site buildings and parking areas and construction and operation of a new transit-oriented, mixed-use development on a portion of a 17.5-acre property owned by Placer County. The project site for this analysis is approximately 10.5 acres in land area and does not include the entire approximately 17.5-acre legal parcel owned by Placer County. The 10.5-acre project site includes the areas where construction and new development would occur under the proposed project.

The project proposes redevelopment of the project site with a mix of three- and four-story residential buildings with a small commercial area in the northwestern portion of the project site. The existing World War I veterans memorial at the project site would be preserved. The City has developed an option for implementation of the project that would preserve the Domes and associated parking and circulation, as well as another scenario where the Domes area would be redeveloped with additional housing opportunities and associated parking, circulation, landscaping and infrastructure connections. Option 1 contemplates preservation of the Domes and Option 2 would involve redevelopment of that portion of the project site, as well. A detailed Project Description is provided in Chapter 5 Alternatives.

ES.4 SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

ES.4.1 IMPACTS

Table ES-1 displays a summary of impacts and proposed mitigation measures that would avoid, eliminate, minimize, or reduce potential impacts. The level of significance of the impact following implementation of each mitigation measure is identified. Each impact and its significance conclusion are followed by the mitigation requirement. For detailed descriptions of project impacts and mitigation measures, please see Sections 3.a through 3.g of this EIR. The table also includes mitigation measures proposed in the Initial Study that was prepared for this project. Please refer to the Initial Study, which can be found online on the City's website, for a detailed analysis of impacts.

Table ES-1: Summary of Impacts, Mitigation, and Findings

Impacts	Significance before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Significance after Mitigation
3.a Aesthetics			
IMPACT 3.a-1: Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista. There are no scenic vistas present in the project vicinity.	No Impact	No mitigation measures are required	No Impact
IMPACT 3.a-2: Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway. The proposed project site is not visible from any state scenic highway.	No Impact	No mitigation measures are required	No Impact
IMPACT 3.a-3: Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings. The proposed project could substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.	Significant	No mitigation measures are required	Less than Significant for Option 1 Significant and Unavoidable for Option 2
IMPACT 3.a-4: Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area. The proposed project could create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.	Potentially Significant	No mitigation measures are required	Less than Significant with Mitigation
3.b Cultural Resources			
IMPACT 3.b-1: Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5. Implementation of the proposed project could result in substantial adverse change to known historical resources through demolition.	Significant	**Mitigation Measure 3.b.1a: Historic American Building Survey Recordation.** 1. Drawings: Collect as-builts of The Domes.	Less than Significant with Mitigation for Option 1 Significant and Unavoidable for Option 2
		2. Photographs: Before any site work has occurred to implement the proposed project, The Domes shall be photo documented according to Historic American Building Survey (HABS) standards for archival photography. HABS standards require large-format black-and-white photography, with the original negatives having a minimum size of 4”x5”. Digital photography, roll film, film packs, and electronic manipulation of images are not acceptable. A minimum of 24 photographs must be taken detailing the building	

Impacts	Significance before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Significance after Mitigation
		exterior, interior, and the site. Photographs must be identified and labeled using HABS standards. Color non-archival photographs of the historical building and grounds shall be taken to supplement the limited number of archival photographs required under the HABS standards described above. 3. Historical Overview: In consultation with the City, a qualified historian/architectural historian shall assemble historical background information relevant and supplemental to the prepared National Register nomination form based on HABS guidelines for historical reports. Much of this information may be drawn from previous reports, and shall detail critical information such as the property's physical history, historic context, architectural character (including inventories of key interior and exterior features), and a summary of information sources. Following completion of the HABS documentation, archival-grade materials shall be placed on file with the City of Auburn, the County of Placer, and the Auburn Library. Electronic copies will be made available for other interested parties.	
		Mitigation Measure 3.b.1b: Interpretive Signage In collaboration with HABS documentation (Mitigation Measure 3.b.1a), the City shall require installation of interpretive signage for public exhibition concerning the history of the project site with an emphasis on The Domes. The signage could be based on the photographs produced in the HABS documentation, historic archival research, and previously prepared reports and forms for the property as a whole. Interpretive signage installed on the exterior of the property shall be sufficiently durable to withstand typical Auburn weather conditions for at least ten (10) years, like fiber-glass embedment panels that meet National Park Service signage standards. The signage shall be installed at a pedestrian-friendly location and be of adequate size to attract the interested pedestrian. Maintenance of displays and/or signage shall be included in the management program on the property.	
		Mitigation Measure 3.b.1c: Website Utilizing the information developed for the HABS documentation (Mitigation Measure 3.b.1a) a website shall be developed concerning the history of the project site with an emphasis on The Domes. The format of the website should be an ArcGIS StoryMap. The City shall retain a person experienced in StoryMaps to create the website. The City shall be responsible for hosting the website. A QR-code of the	

Impacts	Significance before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Significance after Mitigation
		website shall be integrated into the Interpretive Signage (Mitigation Measure 3.b.1b).	
		Mitigation Measure 3.b.1d: Avoidance The Domes shall be avoided during construction activities by establishing a protection zone restricting heavy equipment and vehicles near The Domes during construction activities within 50 feet of The Domes. Exclusionary fencing or other methods utilizing physical barriers shall be employed to prevent inadvertent damage to the historical resource. The fencing/barriers shall be installed around The Domes before ground-disturbing construction activities.	
		Mitigation Measure 3.b.1e: Pre-Construction Assessment and Inadvertent Damage Response Ground-disturbing and construction activities implementing Option 1 adjacent to The Domes have the potential to inadvertently damage the historical resource. A pre-construction condition assessment will be conducted by a qualified architectural historian to establish a baseline of existing conditions prior to ground-disturbing activities. The assessment should focus on the conditions of The Domes, particularly character-defining features and the overall structural condition of the exterior of the historical resource. The written assessment will be accompanied by digital photography, notes, and field drawings, where appropriate. The findings and analysis will be compiled into a pre-construction condition assessment report. In the event of inadvertent damage to The Domes during ground-disturbing activities, work must be stopped and an architectural historian will be contacted to inspect the damage and prepare a response plan for the repairs to be with like and in-kind materials and finishes to match the existing. The architectural historian would provide suggestions for materials, finishes, and application/repair techniques to ensure that the repairs meet the National Park Service's Secretary of the Interior's Treatment of Historic Property Guidelines (2017).	
IMPACT 3.b-2: Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5. Ground-disturbing activities during construction could result in damage to previously unidentified archaeological resources.	Potentially Significant	**Mitigation Measure 3.b.2: Accidental Damage and Discovery Protocols** The contractor for development of the project site shall retain a qualified archaeologist to undertake the tasks specified within this mitigation measure for both Option 1 and Option 2 of the proposed project. In the event that suspected precontact or historic-period archaeological resources are encountered during demolition, excavation, and/or grading of the site, all activity within a 50-foot	Less than Significant with Mitigation

Impacts	Significance before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Significance after Mitigation
		radius of the find shall be stopped, the City shall be notified, and the qualified archaeologist shall examine the find. Project personnel shall not collect or move any cultural material. The archaeologist shall evaluate the find(s) to determine if it meets the definition of a historical, unique archaeological, and/or tribal cultural resource and follow the further procedures outlined below: ► If the finds do not meet the definition of a historical resource or unique archaeological resource, no further study or protection is necessary prior to resuming project implementation. If the finds do meet the definition of a historical resource or unique archaeological resource, then it should be avoided by project activities. If avoidance is not feasible, as determined by the City, the qualified archaeologist in consultation with the City, shall make appropriate recommendations regarding the treatment and disposition of such finds, and significant impacts to such resources shall be mitigated in accordance with the recommendations of the archaeologist prior to resuming construction activities within a 50-foot radius. ► If human remains are encountered, project work shall stop in the vicinity of the remains and, as required by law, the County Coroner would be notified immediately. An archaeologist also would be contacted to evaluate the find. If the human remains were determined of Native American origin, the County Coroner would need to notify the Native American Heritage Commission within 24 hours of that determination. Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98, the Native American Heritage Commission, in turn, would immediately contact a Most Likely Descendent (MLD). The MLD would have 48 hours to inspect the site and recommend treatment of the remains. The City shall coordinate with the MLD in good faith to find a respectful resolution to the situation and entertain all reasonable options regarding the descendants' preferences for treatment. ► Recommendations for treatment and disposition of finds could include, but are not limited to, the collection, recordation, and analysis of any significant cultural materials, or the turning over of tribal cultural resources to tribal representatives for appropriate treatment. A report of findings documenting any data recovery shall be submitted to the Northwest Information Center (NWIC).	

Impacts	Significance before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Significance after Mitigation
IMPACT 3.b-3: Disturb any Human Remains, Including those Interred Outside of Formal Cemeteries. Ground-disturbing activities during construction could impact human remains.	Potentially Significant	**Mitigation Measure 3.b.3: Avoid Impacts to Human Remains Consistent with State Law** As described therein, if human remains are uncovered during future ground-disturbing activities, the City and its contractors would be required to halt potentially damaging excavation in the area of the burial and notify the County Coroner and a professional archaeologist to determine the nature of the remains. The coroner would be required to examine all discoveries of human remains within 48 hours of receiving notice of a discovery on private or State lands (California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5[b]). If the coroner determines that the remains are those of a Native American, the coroner must contact the Native American Heritage Commission by phone within 24 hours of making that determination (California Health and Safety Code Section 7050[c]). The responsibilities for acting upon notification of a discovery of Native American human remains are identified in California Public Resources Code Section 5097.9. Following the coroner's findings, the property owner, contractor or project proponent, an archaeologist, and the Most Likely Descendant designated by the Native American Heritage Commission would determine the ultimate treatment and disposition of the remains and take appropriate steps to ensure that additional human interments are not disturbed. The Most Likely Descendant would have 48 hours to complete a site inspection and make recommendations after being granted access to the site. A range of possible treatments for the remains, including nondestructive removal and analysis, preservation in place, relinquishment of the remains and associated items to the descendants, or other culturally appropriate treatment may be discussed. Public Resources Code Section 5097.9 suggests that the concerned parties may extend discussions beyond the initial 48 hours to allow for the discovery of additional remains. The following is a list of site protection measures that could be employed: 1. record the site with the Native American Heritage Commission and the appropriate Information Center, 2. use an open-space or conservation zoning designation or easement, and 3. record a document with the county in which the property is located.	Less than Significant with Mitigation

Impacts	Significance before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Significance after Mitigation
		If the Native American Heritage Commission is unable to identify a Most Likely Descendant or the Most Likely Descendant fails to make a recommendation within 48 hours after being granted access to the site, the Native American human remains and associated grave goods would be reburied with appropriate dignity on the subject property in a location not subject to further subsurface disturbance.	
3.c Tribal Cultural Resources			
IMPACT 3.c-1: Potential for substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource. Ground-disturbing activities during construction could result in damage to previously unidentified tribal cultural resources.	Potentially Significant	**Mitigation Measure 3.c.1: Response To Unanticipated Discoveries of Tribal Cultural Resources.** If any suspected TCRs or resources of cultural significance to tribes, including but not limited to features, anthropogenic/cultural soils, cultural belongings or objects (artifacts), shell, bone, shaped stones or bone, or ash/charcoal deposits are discovered by any person during construction activities including ground disturbing activities, all work shall pause immediately within 100 feet of the find, or an agreed upon distance based on the project area and nature of the find. Work shall cease in and within the immediate vicinity of the find regardless of whether the construction is being actively monitored by a Tribal Monitor, cultural resources specialist, or professional archaeologist. A Tribal Representative and the City shall be immediately notified, and the Tribal Representative, in coordination with the City, shall determine if the find is a TCR (PRC §21074) and the Tribal Representative shall make recommendations for further evaluation and treatment as necessary. <u>Treatment and Documentation:</u> The culturally affiliated Tribe shall consult with the City to (1) identify the boundaries of the new TCR and (2) if feasible, identify appropriate preservation in place and avoidance measures, including redesign or adjustments to the existing construction process, and long-term management, or 3) if avoidance is infeasible, a reburial location in proximity of the find where no future disturbance is anticipated. Permanent curation of TCRs will not take place unless approved in writing by the culturally affiliated Tribe. The construction contractor(s) shall provide secure, on-site storage for culturally sensitive soils or objects that are components of TCRs that are found or recovered during construction. Only Tribal Representatives shall have access to the storage. Storage size shall be determined by the nature of the TCR and can range from a small lock	Less than Significant with Mitigation

Impacts	Significance before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Significance after Mitigation
		box to a Conex box (shipping container). A secure (locked), fenced area can also provide adequate on-site storage if larger amounts of material must be stored. The construction contractor(s) and City shall facilitate the respectful reburial of the culturally sensitive soils or objects. This includes providing a reburial location that is consistent with the Tribe's preferences, excavation of the reburial location, and assisting with the reburial, upon request. Any discoveries shall be documented on a Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) 523 form within 2 weeks of the discovery and submitted to the appropriate CHRIS center in a timely manner. Work at the TCR discovery location shall not resume until authorization is granted by the City in coordination with the culturally affiliated Tribe. If articulated or disarticulated human remains, or human remains in any state of decomposition or skeletal completeness are discovered during construction activities, the County Coroner and the culturally affiliated Tribe shall be contacted immediately. Upon determination by the County Coroner that the find is Native American in origin, the Native American Heritage Commission will assign the Most Likely Descendent who will work with the project proponent to define appropriate treatment and disposition of the burials.	
3.d Land Use and Planning			
IMPACT 3.d-1: Physically divide an established community. The proposed project would not physically divide an established community.	No Impact	No mitigation measures are required	No Impact
IMPACT 3.d-2: Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. The proposed project would be generally compatible with the relevant land use plans, policies, or regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.	No Impact	No mitigation measures are required	No Impact
3.e Noise and Vibrations			
IMPACT 3.e-1: Temporary, short-term exposure of sensitive receptors to construction noise. Short-term construction source noise levels could exceed the applicable City standards at nearby noise-sensitive	Significant	**Mitigation Measure 3.e-1: Implement Noise-Reducing Construction Practices.** The project applicant(s) and their primary contractors for engineering, design, and construction of all project phases and contractors for all	Significant and Unavoidable

Impacts	Significance before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Significance after Mitigation
receptors. In addition, if construction activities were to occur during more noise-sensitive hours, construction source noise levels could also result in annoyance and/or sleep disruption to occupants of existing and proposed noise-sensitive land uses and create a substantial temporary increase in ambient noise levels.		off-site improvements shall ensure that the following requirements are implemented. Measures that shall be used to limit noise shall include the measures listed below: ► Noise-generating construction operations shall be limited to the hours between 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays, and 10:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on Sundays and observed holidays when located within 500 feet of noise-sensitive uses in general or within 1,600 feet of noise-sensitive uses if the construction involves pile driving or similarly intensive equipment. ► Staging areas shall be located at the farthest practicable point within the construction site from nearby noise-sensitive land uses. ► All construction equipment shall be properly maintained and equipped with noise-reduction intake and exhaust mufflers and engine shrouds, in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations. Equipment engine shrouds shall be closed during equipment operation. ► All motorized construction equipment shall be shut down when not in use to prevent idling. ► Individual operations and techniques shall be replaced with quieter procedures (e.g., using welding instead of riveting, mixing concrete off-site instead of on-site).	

Impacts	Significance before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Significance after Mitigation
		▸ Noise-reducing enclosures shall be installed and maintained around stationary noise-generating equipment (e.g., compressors and generators) located within 500 feet of occupied residences. The enclosures shall be designed to obstruct the line of sight between outdoor gathering spaces of noise-sensitive land uses and on-site noise-generating stationary construction equipment. ▸ If pile-driving is required during construction, the following measures shall be implemented to minimize noise, and vibration impacts to nearby sensitive receptors: Use of alternative pile installation methods (e.g., vibratory pile driving or drilled piles) where feasible to reduce impact noise levels and vibration. Installation of temporary sound barriers or acoustic shrouds around pile-driving equipment to block direct line-of-sight to nearby sensitive land uses. Scheduling of pile-driving during the least noise-sensitive time periods (e.g., mid-morning to late afternoon). Advance notification to adjacent sensitive receptors, including residential uses, schools, and the public library, identifying timing and expected duration of pile-driving activity. ▸ Written notification of construction activities shall be provided to all noise-sensitive receptors located within 1,600 feet of construction activities. Notification shall include anticipated dates and hours during which construction activities are anticipated to occur and contact information, including a daytime telephone number, for the project representative to be contacted in the event that noise levels are deemed excessive. Recommendations to assist noise-sensitive land uses in reducing interior noise levels (e.g., closing windows and doors) shall also be included in the notification.	
IMPACT 3.e-2: Temporary, short-term exposure of sensitive receptors to increased traffic noise levels from construction. Construction within the project site and of the off-site improvements would result in temporary increases in on- and off-site roadway traffic noise. Construction-generated traffic would not expose sensitive receptors to noise levels along on- or off-site roadways	Less than Significant	No mitigation measures are required	Less than Significant

Impacts	Significance before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Significance after Mitigation
that would exceed the applicable noise standards and/or result in a substantial increase in ambient noise levels.			
IMPACT 3.e-3: Temporary, short-term exposure of sensitive receptors to potential groundborne noise and vibration from construction. Construction within project site and of the off-site improvements would expose sensitive receptors to groundborne noise and vibration levels that exceed applicable standards, which could cause human disturbance or damage structures. Construction could cause a temporary, short-term disruptive vibration if construction activities were to occur near sensitive receptors.	Significant	**Mitigation Measure 3.e-2: Implement Measures to Reduce Groundborne Noise and Vibration Levels.** The project applicant(s) and their primary contractors for engineering, design, and construction shall ensure that the following requirements are implemented at each work site in any year of project construction to avoid and minimize construction vibration effects on sensitive receptors. ▸ Place stationary construction equipment as far as possible from developed uses, particularly the library to the northeast and the residences to the east and southeast of the project site. ▸ Use smaller construction equipment when practical, particularly smaller vibratory rollers that are as small as practicable, or that have an adjustable vibratory force feature. ▸ Locate vibration-generating equipment, etc., as far as feasible from sensitive receptors, particularly the library to the northeast and the residences to the east and southeast of the project site. There are no known vibration-sensitive receptors to the north or west. ▸ Prohibit the use of vibratory rollers within 110 feet of any occupied residential structures. ▸ The existing structural condition of all buildings within a 300-foot radius within the immediate vicinity of proposed pile driving activities shall be recorded in the form of a preconstruction survey. The preconstruction survey shall determine conditions that exist before construction begins for use in evaluating damage caused by construction activities. Fixtures and finishes within a 500-foot radius of construction activities susceptible to damage shall be documented (photographically and in writing) before construction. All damage will be repaired to its pre-existing condition. ▸ Vibration monitoring shall be conducted before and during pile driving operations occurring within 500 feet of the sensitive receptors. Every attempt shall be made to limit construction generated vibration levels in accordance with Caltrans recommendations during pile driving and impact activities in the vicinity of the historic structures. ▸ Pile driving required within a 300-foot radius of sensitive receptors should use alternative installation methods, where possible (e.g.,	Significant and Unavoidable

Impacts	Significance before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Significance after Mitigation
		pile cushioning, jetting, predrilling, cast-in-place systems, resonance-free vibratory pile drivers). This would reduce the number and amplitude of impacts required to seat the pile.	
		Mitigation Measure 3.e-2 (with Option 1): Protection of Domes Structure from Vibration Impacts If Option 1 is selected and the existing Domes structure is retained on-site, the following measures shall be implemented to avoid vibration-related structural damage: ► Pre-Construction Survey: A preconstruction structural condition survey shall be conducted for the Domes building prior to the start of any nearby construction. The survey shall include photographic and written documentation of the building's existing conditions (e.g., foundation, walls, roof, and fixtures). This baseline will be used to assess any potential construction-related damage. The City shall require that any verified damage resulting from construction activities be repaired to its pre-existing condition. ► Vibration Threshold: A maximum vibration limit of 0.08 inches per second peak particle velocity (in/sec PPV) shall be established at the nearest point of the Domes structure, consistent with thresholds commonly applied to historic buildings. ► Vibration Modeling and Construction Setback: Construction activities predicted to generate vibration levels exceeding 0.08 in/sec PPV shall not occur within 25 feet of the Domes building unless vibration-reducing construction methods (e.g., drilled piles or dampened vibratory equipment) are used to maintain compliance with the vibration threshold. ► A disturbance coordinator shall be designated, and this person's contact information shall be posted in a location near the project site that it is clearly visible to the nearby receivers most likely to be disturbed. The director would manage complaints and concerns resulting from activities that cause vibrations. The severity of the vibration concern should be assessed by the disturbance coordinator, and if necessary, evaluated by a professional with construction vibration expertise. ► Real-Time Monitoring and Response: Real-time vibration monitoring shall be implemented during all construction activities within 100 feet of the Domes. If vibration levels exceed 0.08 in/sec PPV, all work within 50 feet of the structure shall halt immediately	Significant

Impacts	Significance before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Significance after Mitigation
		until corrective mitigation measures are implemented and compliance is re-established. ► Alternative Construction Methods: Where feasible, use lower-impact construction methods (e.g., small dozers, rubber-tired backhoes, or manual techniques) when working in close proximity to the Domes to further reduce the risk of structural vibration impacts.	
IMPACT 3.e-4: Long-term traffic noise levels at existing noise-sensitive receivers. Future development would result in an increase in vehicle trips. The increased traffic volumes would not result in a noticeable (3 dB or greater) increase in traffic noise along roadways in and within the vicinity of the project site.	Less than Significant	No mitigation measures are required	Less than Significant
IMPACT 3.e-6: Land use compatibility of off-site sensitive receptors to or generation of non-transportation noise levels in excess of local standards. Future development of new noise-sensitive land uses would occur within areas that either are currently affected by noise from non-transportation noise sources, or will be in the future. These non-transportation noise sources could exceed the applicable noise standards (hourly L_{eq} dBA) and result in a substantial increase in ambient noise levels.	Significant	**Mitigation Measure 3.e-3: Implement Measures to Reduce Potential Exposure of Sensitive Receptors to Non-Transportation Noise Source-Generated Noise** The project applicants for all project phases shall implement the following measures to reduce noise exposure for noise-sensitive receptors. ► Non-residential projects shall be designed so that on-site mechanical equipment (e.g., HVAC units, compressors, and generators) and area-source operations (e.g., loading docks, parking lots, and recreational-use areas) are located at least 200 feet from, or, if such distance cannot be achieved, are shielded from, nearby noise-sensitive land uses. ► Residential air conditioning units shall be located a minimum of 10 feet from outdoor gathering spaces for residential dwellings, shall be shielded to reduce operational noise levels at adjacent outdoor gathering spaces for residential dwellings, or shall be selected based on manufacturer specifications that demonstrate the air conditioning units will meet City standards for stationary noise sources. Shielding shall be continuous or solid, with no gaps, and shall block the line of sight to outdoor gathering spaces for residential dwellings. ► Routine testing and preventive maintenance of emergency electrical generators shall be conducted during the less sensitive daytime hours (i.e., 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.). All electrical generators shall be	Significant and Unavoidable

Impacts	Significance before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Significance after Mitigation
		equipped with noise control devices (e.g., muffler) in accordance with manufacturers' specifications. In addition, the City of Auburn should ensure that potential long-term exposure of sensitive receptors to noise generated by project-related non-transportation sources, such as public activities in parks, open-space areas, or on publicly accessible grounds, is minimized through the implementation of best management practices to reduce interior and exterior noise levels to within acceptable limits. The project includes very limited publicly accessible open space and minimal active recreational facilities. However, if these facilities are used for community events or maintenance activities, the following measures would help reduce potential adverse noise effects: ► On-site landscape maintenance equipment shall be equipped with properly operating exhaust mufflers and engine shrouds, in accordance with manufacturers' specifications. ► For maintenance areas located within 500 feet of noise-sensitive land uses, the operation of on-site landscape maintenance equipment shall be limited to the least noise-sensitive periods of the day, between the hours of 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. ► Outdoor use of amplified sound systems within 500 feet of noise-sensitive land uses shall be permitted only between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m. Sunday through Thursday, and between 7 a.m. and 11 p.m. on Friday and Saturday.	
3.f Population and Housing			
IMPACT 3.f-1: Induce Substantial Unplanned Population Growth. The proposed project would introduce new residential and limited commercial uses on an infill site within the City, requiring a rezone to allow mixed-use development. However, the site is located within the City's planned area, already served by infrastructure, and surrounded by developed land uses. The level of residential growth anticipated under either development option, ranging from 184 to 272 units, would not induce development beyond what is already planned under the City's General Plan or regional projections in the SACOG Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy. The proposed project's location, infill context, and consistency with existing infrastructure	Less than Significant	No mitigation measures are required	Less than Significant

Impacts	Significance before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Significance after Mitigation
and planning frameworks further limit the potential for indirect growth inducement.			
IMPACT 3.f-2: Displacement of a Substantial Number of Existing People or Housing. The proposed project would not displace existing housing or require the relocation of residents. The 10.5-acre site is developed with Placer County government offices and surface parking and contains no residential units, temporary or permanent dwelling structures, or facilities used for habitation. Redevelopment under either Option 1 or Option 2 would not remove housing or displace residents. The proposed project would not displace substantial numbers of people or housing, nor necessitate the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.	No Impact	No mitigation measures are required	No Impact
3.g Transportation			
IMPACT 3.g-1: Conflict with a Program, Plan, Ordinance, or Policy Addressing the Circulation System. The proposed project would not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities.	Less than Significant	No mitigation measures are required	Less than Significant
IMPACT 3.g-2: Conflict with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, Subdivision (b). The proposed project would not conflict with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b).	Less than Significant	No mitigation measures are required	Less than Significant
IMPACT 3.g-3: Substantially Increase Hazards. The proposed project would not substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature or incompatible use.	Less than Significant	No mitigation measures are required	Less than Significant
IMPACT 3.g-4: Inadequate Emergency Access. The proposed project would not result in inadequate emergency access.	Less than Significant	No mitigation measures are required	Less than Significant
Hazards and Hazardous Materials (Initial Study)			
Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials.	Potentially Significant	**Mitigation Measure HAZ-1: Site Investigation for Naturally Occurring Asbestos.** A site investigation shall be performed to determine whether and where naturally occurring asbestos is present in the soil and rock on the project site in areas that would be disturbed by the project and that are within areas “most likely” to contain naturally occurring asbestos as	Less than Significant with Mitigation

Impacts	Significance before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Significance after Mitigation
		determined by the PCAPCD's map showing the Naturally Occurring Asbestos Hazard in South Auburn and Vicinity. The site investigation shall include the collection of soil and rock samples by a California Registered geologist. If the site investigation determines that naturally occurring asbestos is not present on the project site, the project applicant shall submit a Geologic Exemption as allowed under CCR Title 17, Section 93105 (Asbestos ATCM). If the site investigation determines that naturally occurring asbestos is present on the project site, the project applicant shall submit an Asbestos Dust Mitigation Plan that includes the control measures required by the Asbestos ATCM for review and approval by the PCAPCD before beginning any ground-disturbing activity. Following approval of the Asbestos Dust Mitigation Plan by the PCAPC, the applicant shall ensure the construction contractor implements the terms of the plan throughout the construction period.	
Biological Resources (Initial Study)			
Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.	Potentially Significant	**Mitigation Measure BIO-1: Conduct Preconstruction Nesting Bird Surveys and Implement Appropriate Avoidance Buffers, as Needed.** If construction will occur during the bird nesting season (typically February 1 to August 31), a qualified biologist will conduct a preconstruction survey for nesting birds no more than 2 weeks prior to the start of ground-disturbing construction activities. The survey will include all suitable habitat within the project site and a 100-foot buffer of the project site. If nesting birds are located during the preconstruction nesting bird survey, an appropriate buffer will be established by a qualified biologist to protect the nest from project-related disturbances until the nest has fledged or is no longer active. An appropriate non-disturbance buffer will be determined based on the species, site conditions (e.g., existing level of disturbance), biologist observations, and professional judgement. Typical buffers are 50 feet for passerines and 250 feet for non-special-status raptors. Smaller buffers may be implemented if nest monitoring by a qualified biologist confirms project activities are not adversely affecting the nest; this typically requires a period of nest monitoring prior to initiation of project activities to establish baseline nest activity.	Less than Significant with Mitigation

Impacts	Significance before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Significance after Mitigation
Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance.	Potentially Significant	**Mitigation Measure BIO-2: Prepare Tree Report and Apply for Tree Permit and Mitigate for Tree Removal, as Needed.** The City will commission a tree report to be prepared by an arborist or professional forester containing information on the location, condition, potential impacts, and recommended actions and mitigation measures regarding trees with a DBH of at least 6 inches or with multiple trunks with an aggregate DBH of at least 20 inches and within 50 feet of any proposed construction activity. If any native trees, per Municipal Code Section 161, will be removed or potentially impacted by project construction, the City will apply for an appropriate tree permit and mitigate for tree removal or damage at the ratio defined in the approved permit. Project activities will follow recommendations in the tree report for the protection of native trees that will not be removed during project construction.	Less Than Significant with Mitigation

ES.4.2 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Below is a summary of cumulative impacts. The impacts are discussed in detail in Section 4 of this draft EIR.

- Aesthetics
  - **Less-than-cumulatively considerable contribution** to cumulative impacts related to scenic resources associated with a scenic highway.
  - **Less-than-cumulatively considerable contribution** to cumulative impacts related to degradation of visual character and conflicts with zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality.
  - **Less-than-cumulatively considerable contribution** to cumulative nighttime lighting and daytime glare impacts.
- Biological Resources
  - **Less-than-cumulatively considerable contribution** to cumulative impacts on nesting migratory birds and raptors protected under the Fish and Game Code with Mitigation Measure BIO-1.
  - **Less-than-cumulatively considerable contribution** to cumulative impacts on protected trees with Mitigation Measure BIO-2.
- Cultural Resources
  - **Less-than-cumulatively considerable contribution** to cumulative impacts related to historical resources.
  - **Less-than-cumulatively considerable contribution** to cumulative impacts related to archaeological resources and human remains.
- Tribal Cultural Resources: **Would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution**
- Noise
  - **Would not be considered cumulatively considerable for** construction-related cumulative noise impacts
  - **Less-than-cumulatively considerable** for operational noise impact.
- Vibration: **Would not be cumulatively considerable.**
- Population and Housing: **Would not be cumulatively considerable.**
- Transportation: **Less than cumulatively considerable** for cumulative VMT impacts.

ES.5 ALTERNATIVES

The CEQA Guidelines (Section 15126.6) require that an EIR describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the proposed project that could feasibly attain the basic objectives of the project and avoid and/or lessen the

environmental effects of the project. Two No Project Alternatives are also part of the alternatives evaluated in this EIR. See Section 5.0, "Alternatives" for additional detail.

The alternatives to the proposed project analyzed in this draft EIR are:

Alternative 1: No-Project (No New Development). This alternative is required under CEQA.

Alternative 2: Redevelopment with a Different Mix of Land Uses. Alternative 2 was developed to reduce the significant and unavoidable aesthetics impact and historical resources impact of Option 2 related to the demolition of the Domes and to reduce the level of construction and operational noise impacts as compared to Options 1 and 2 under the proposed project. Under Alternative 2, the project site would be developed with a slightly different mix of land uses with a slightly different arrangement at the project site.

ES.6 KNOWN AREAS OF CONTROVERSY

The CEQA Guidelines (Section 15123) require that the summary of an EIR identify areas of controversy known to the lead agency, including issues raised by agencies and the public. Based on comments and input received to date, areas of interest that are related to adverse physical environmental effects include:

- Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources
- Noise and Vibration

ES.7 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND ADDITIONAL STEPS IN THE CEQA REVIEW PROCESS

This draft EIR is being distributed to interested agencies, stakeholder organizations, and individuals. This distribution ensures that interested parties have an opportunity to express their views regarding the environmental impacts of the project, and to ensure that information pertinent to permits, authorizations, and approvals is provided to decision makers for the lead agencies and CEQA responsible and trustee agencies.

Comments should be sent to:

Tia Klumpp, Planning Director
City of Auburn, Planning Division
1225 Lincoln Way
Auburn, CA 95603
Email: tklumpp@auburn.ca.gov

A copy of the draft EIR is available for public review at the City of Auburn at the address listed above and is available on the City's Web site: https://www.auburn.ca.gov/690/Public-Notice-CEQA-Filings

If comments are provided via e-mail, please include the project title in the subject line and include the commenter's U.S. Postal Service mailing address.

Once all comments have been assembled and reviewed, responses will be prepared to address topics related to adverse physical environmental impacts of the project. The responses will be included in a final EIR.

1 INTRODUCTION

The City of Auburn (City), as the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), is proposing to implement the Auburn Domes Infill Project (proposed project). The proposed project would include demolition of existing on-site buildings and parking areas and construction and operation of a new transit-oriented, mixed-use development on a portion of a 17.5-acre property owned by Placer County, located northeast of the intersection of Nevada Street and Fulweiler Avenue in the city of Auburn. The project site for this analysis is approximately 10.5 acres in land area and does not include the entire approximately 17.5-acre legal parcel owned by Placer County. The 10.5-acre project site includes the areas where construction and new development would occur under the proposed project.

This draft environmental impact report (EIR) has been prepared by the City to evaluate the potential environmental effects of the proposed project. This document has been prepared in accordance with the CEQA (Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations Section 15000 et seq.).

1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

The City has asked for input from federal, state, and local agencies; organizations; and members of the public regarding the issues that should be evaluated in the draft EIR. On July 23, 2025, the City circulated a Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the draft EIR for public review. A total of nine written comment letters were received on the NOP during this time.

The City also prepared an Initial Study (IS) for the proposed project. An initial study is prepared by a lead agency to determine if a project may have a significant effect on the environment (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15063[a]) and is required by Public Resources Code Section 21152(c)(1). As provided in section 15063 of the CEQA Guidelines, the City has determined that an EIR would be prepared for the project, and the IS attached to the NOP has identified key issues that would be evaluated in the EIR.

The following summarizes the issues raised through comments on the NOP, and directs readers to the appropriate section(s) of the draft EIR where such issues are addressed:

- **Highway operations, collection of a transportation impact fee, and vehicular travel demand (normally measured according to daily vehicle miles traveled).** As noted in the IS, the project site is in a transit priority area and proposes higher-density residential development adjacent to multiple types of public transit. As such, the proposed project would help to reduce the rate of vehicle miles traveled in Auburn. In addition, please see Section 3.G Transportation of this draft EIR.
- **Increased Traffic.** Several comment letters state concerns about increased traffic, both vehicular and pedestrian, in the project area. Section 3.G Transportation of this draft EIR discusses and analyzes traffic.
- **Emergency Services.** The comment states that due to increased development, there could be disruptions to emergency services. The IS analyzes these impacts. Per CEQA significance thresholds, all environmental issues related to public and emergency services were at a less than significant or no impact level, and hence

have not been discussed further in this draft EIR. Please refer to IS Section 3.15 Public Services for more information.

- **Naturally Occurring Asbestos.** The comment states that the project site is located in an area identified as moderately and most likely to contain Naturally Occurring Asbestos (NOA) and that the draft EIR should address this potential and set forth appropriate mitigation measures. Based on a review of the Placer County Air Pollution Control District's (PCAPCD) map showing the *Naturally Occurring Asbestos Hazard in South Auburn and Vicinity*, the southern half of the project site is situated within an area that is "moderately likely" and the northern half is within an area that is "most likely" to contain naturally occurring asbestos. Table ES-1 in the Executive Summary section identifies mitigation that will be required to address the potential for NOA.

- **Biological Resources.** One response to the NOP suggests that an assessment, analysis of impacts (direct, indirect, and cumulative), and mitigation measures to biological resources should be discussed in the EIR. Another comment states that wildlife habitat could be disrupted due to increased development. The IS Section 3.4 Biological Resources discusses Biological Resources including plants, special status species, and wildlife potential to occur in the project area. The Initial Study states that no special status plant or wildlife species have the potential to occur in the project vicinity and imposes two mitigation measures to ensure a less-than-significant impact. The comment letter states that based on review of project materials, aerial photography, and on-site observations, native wildlife nursery sites, including but not limited to bat maternity roots were observed.

  Taking this comment into consideration, a site daytime habitat assessment was conducted to evaluate bat nursery sites in the project area. Both buildings being considered for demolition at the project site, the County Administrative Government Offices (the Human Resources building) and "The Domes" used by the Placer County Board of Supervisors were inspected with a flashlight, binoculars, and the naked eye for physical features that could provide suitable bat roosting habitat. All trees located around the buildings, within the parking lots to the north, and within the adjacent Auburn Garden Theater were inspected, as well. While both buildings had minor features that could provide appropriate physical structure for a small number of roosting bats, no evidence of bat roosting was detected in or around any of these features, and neither maternity roosting nor colonial winter roosting is expected. If individual bats were to occasionally use these features for roosting, they would be expected to move away from any construction related disturbance, and no significant impact would occur.
  All trees were healthy and well maintained, and no large cavities or flaking bark suitable for maternity roosting or colonial winter roosting were observed. One small olive tree located in a landscaping strip on the south side of the Human Resources building has several dead limbs with sloughing bark that could provide occasional roosting habitat for individual bats. However, if individual bats were to occasionally use these features for roosting, they would be expected to move away from any construction related disturbance, and no significant impact would occur.

- **Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources.** Comment letters received were related to preservation of the Domes structure and early consultation with California Native American Tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area to avoid inadvertent discoveries of Native American human remains and tribal

cultural resources. Please see Sections 3.B Cultural Resources and 3.C Tribal Cultural Resources of this draft EIR for more information.

- **Wildfire.** The comment received highlighted the high wildfire risk in the project area. Section 3.20 of the IS analyzes this risk in the project area. Per CEQA significance thresholds, all environmental issues related to wildfire were at a less than significant or no impact level, hence Wildfire has not been discussed further in this draft EIR. Please refer to IS Section 3.20 Wildfire for more information.

- **Increased Water demand.** The comment states that water demand would be higher due to the dense development proposed by the project. IS Section 3.19 Utilities analyzed whether there would be sufficient water supply or would require relocation of construction of new or expanded water facilities. Per CEQA significance thresholds, all environmental issues related to water demand were at a less than significant or no impact level, hence Utilities have not been discussed further in this draft EIR. Please refer to IS Section 3.19 Utilities for more information.

- **Aesthetics.** The comment states that the unique scenic beauty of the Sierra foothills could be disrupted due to increased development. Please see Section 3.A Aesthetics of this draft EIR.

- **Water Resources.** A comment letter was received to the Notice of Preparation summarizing existing regulatory requirements by the Regional Water Quality Control Board. Another comment was received noting that a perennial stream, historically named Spanish Ravine, is located 450 feet west of the western boundary of the project site, which was not mentioned in the IS prepared for the project. Hydrology and Water Quality impacts were analyzed in the IS. Per CEQA significance thresholds, all environmental issues related to hydrology and water quality were at a less than significant or no impact level, hence these impacts have not been discussed further in this draft EIR. Please refer to IS Section 3.10 Hydrology and Water Quality for more information.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE EIR

This document is a draft EIR prepared for the proposed project for purposes of compliance with CEQA. This draft EIR has been prepared by the City, as the lead agency under CEQA. A detailed description of the proposed project is included in Chapter 2, “Project Description.”

In its initial form, an EIR is composed primarily of a draft document known as a draft EIR, and the lead agency’s written responses to public and public agency comments on the draft document in the final EIR. This draft EIR evaluates the potential physical adverse impacts on the environment resulting from implementation of the proposed project. The draft EIR proposes mitigation measures and alternatives that may reduce or avoid potentially significant impacts. Following public review of the draft EIR, a final EIR is prepared, in which the City will provide responses to comments on the environmental analysis provided in the draft EIR.

The City has prepared this draft EIR to provide responsible and trustee agencies and the public with information about the potential environmental effects associated with implementation of the proposed project. This draft EIR was prepared in compliance with CEQA (as amended through California Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations [CCR] Section 15000 et seq.).

The purpose of an EIR is not to recommend either approval or denial of a project, but to disclose the potentially significant environmental impacts of a project and potential methods to mitigate those impacts. According to the State CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR Section 15064[f][1]), preparation of an EIR is required whenever a project may result in a significant environmental impact. An EIR is an informational document used to inform public agency decision makers and the general public of the significant environmental effects of a project, identify possible ways to minimize the significant effects, and describe alternatives to the project that could feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project, while substantially lessening or avoiding any of the significant environmental impacts. Public agencies are required to consider the information presented in the EIR when determining whether to approve a project.

CEQA requires that state, regional, and local government agencies consider the environmental effects of projects over which they have discretionary authority before taking action on those projects (Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.). CEQA also requires that each public agency avoid or reduce to less-than-significant levels, wherever feasible, the significant environmental effects of projects it approves or implements. If a project would result in significant and unavoidable environmental impacts that cannot be feasibly reduced to less-than-significant levels, the project can still be approved, but the lead agency must issue a "statement of overriding considerations," explaining in writing the specific economic, social, or other considerations that it believes would make significant effects acceptable.

1.3 PUBLIC REVIEW

The draft EIR is circulated for public comment via a Notice of Availability, which includes the dates of circulation and comment. This draft EIR is circulated to local, state, and federal agencies, and to interested organizations and individuals who may wish to review and comment on the document.

A physical copy of the draft EIR is available for public review at the City of Auburn at the address listed below and is available on the City's Web site: https://www.auburn.ca.gov/690/Public-Notice-CEQA-Filings.

Written comments regarding the draft EIR should be submitted to:

Tia Klumpp, Planning Director
City of Auburn, Planning Division
1225 Lincoln Way
Auburn, CA 95603
Email: tklumpp@auburn.ca.gov

The City will respond in writing to each comment that relates to an environmental issue. The final EIR will include written comments, responses, and any necessary changes to the draft EIR that are made either in response to comments or as a result of staff review.

The City is responsible for certifying that the EIR has been adequately prepared, in compliance with CEQA. After certification, responsible agencies may use the EIR in making their determination whether to approve any discretionary actions over which they have jurisdiction.

1.4 DRAFT EIR ORGANIZATION

This draft EIR is organized into chapters, as identified and briefly described below. Chapters are further divided into sections (e.g., Section 3.a, "Aesthetics").

- **Executive Summary** presents an overview of the project and alternatives and associated environmental impacts/consequences; a listing of environmental impacts/consequences and mitigation measures; and known areas of controversy and issues to be resolved.

- **Chapter 1, Introduction** (present chapter) gives a brief summary of the project being evaluated, summarizes comments received during the NOP period, describes the purpose of an EIR, provides information on public participation; and outlines the organization of the document.

- **Chapter 2, Project Description** describes the project location, background, project characteristics, and project objectives.

- **Chapter 3 Environmental Analysis** is divided into topic-specific sections that describe the environmental baseline (i.e., existing conditions), and the regulatory setting, then provides an analysis of impacts and mitigation measures that would avoid or eliminate significant impacts or reduce them to a less-than-significant level, where feasible and available. The topic specific sections are listed below:

  - 3.a Aesthetics
  - 3.b Cultural Resources
  - 3.c Tribal Cultural Resources
  - 3.d Land Use and Planning
  - 3.e Noise and Vibration
  - 3.f Population and Housing
  - 3.g Transportation

- **Chapter 4 Other CEQA Considerations** discusses cumulative impacts, growth-inducing impacts, and significant and unavoidable adverse impacts that would result from project implementation.

- **Chapter 5 Alternatives** describes a range of reasonable alternatives to the project (consistent with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6[a]) that are feasible (i.e., that may be accomplished in a successful manner within a reasonable period of time) and that take economic, environmental, social, and technological factors into account.

This page intentionally left blank with the exception of this text

2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT BACKGROUND

The City of Auburn (City), as the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), is proposing to implement the Auburn Station Infill Project (proposed project). The proposed project would include demolition of existing on-site buildings and parking areas and construction and operation of a new transit-oriented, mixed-use development on a portion of a 17.5-acre property owned by Placer County, located northeast of the intersection of Nevada Street and Fulweiler Avenue in the city of Auburn. The project site for this analysis is approximately 10.5 acres in land area, and does not include the entire approximately 17.5-acre legal parcel owned by Placer County. The 10.5-acre project site includes the areas where construction and new development would occur under the proposed project.

The project site is currently developed with two Placer County administrative buildings, along with paved parking areas and landscaping.

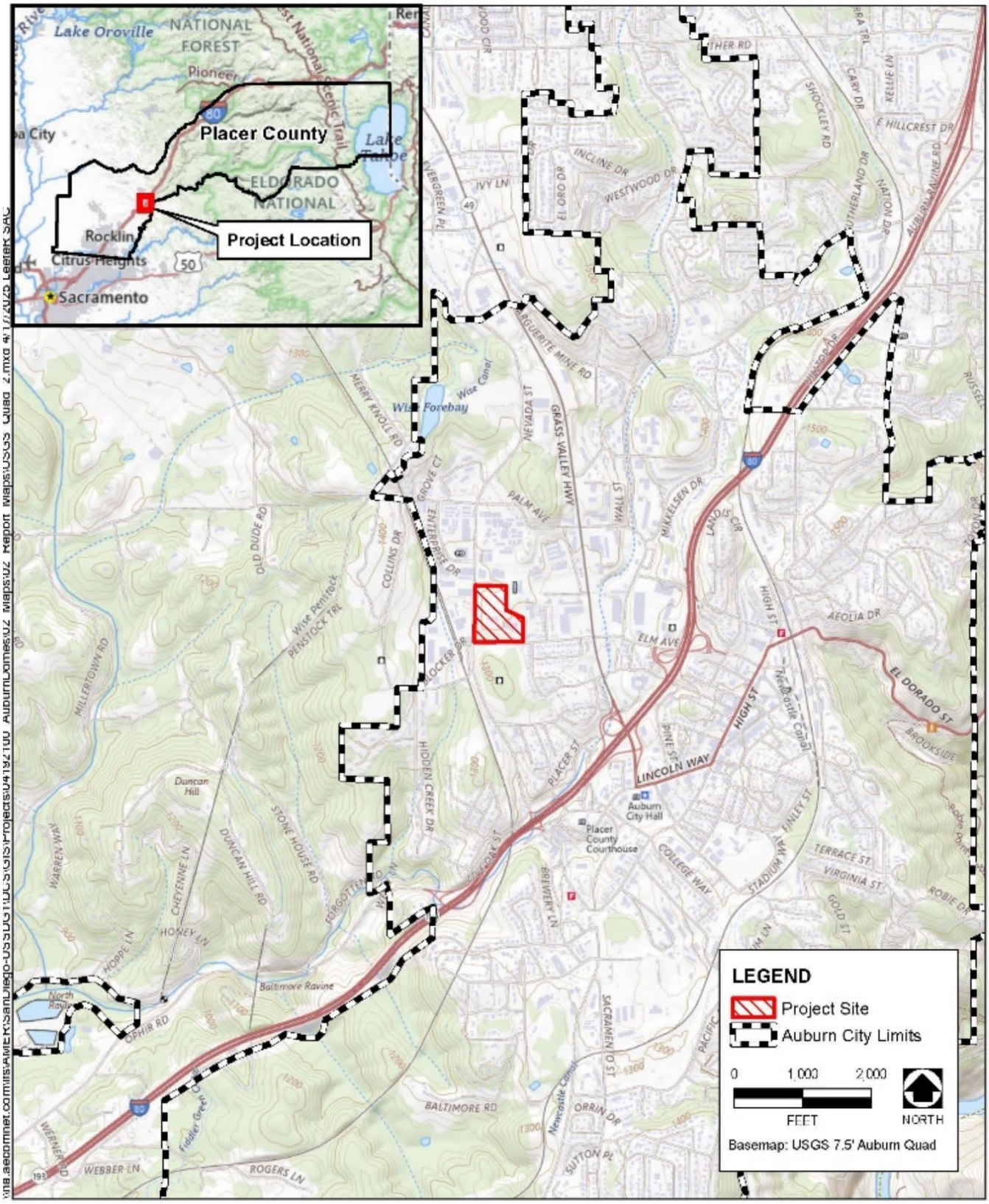
The project site is part of the Domes, Fulweiler, Nevada Street Redevelopment Green Zone under the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) Green Means Go pilot initiative that aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the region. Green Zones are areas targeted for projects that promote the use of alternative transportation options, increase housing near multi-modal transportation facilities and other amenities, and make it easier for the region to access electric vehicles. In support of this initiative, the City has identified the project site as an appropriate location for new transit-oriented housing.

2.2 PROJECT LOCATION, ACCESS, AND SURROUNDING LAND USES

The project site is located in northwest Auburn, approximately 0.6 miles from the Downtown Historic District to the southeast and the Old Town Historic District to the south. The project site comprises 10.5 acres in the southern and western portions of Assessor's Parcel No. 001-032-034-000, located northeast of the intersection of Fulweiler Avenue and Nevada Street in the city of Auburn (see Exhibit 2-1). The project site is approximately 970 feet west of State Route 49 (accessed via Fulweiler Avenue), and approximately 0.5 mile north of Interstate 80 (accessed via Nevada Street).

In addition to the vehicular access described above, the project site can be accessed by a variety of public transit options as described below:

- **Rail: Auburn Station (the Robert F. Conheim Auburn Train Station):** is directly across the street, on the west side of Nevada Street (see Exhibit 2-1). Auburn Station is an unstaffed station and serves as the northern terminus of the Capitol Corridor line. The Capitol Corridor Line connects Auburn with Sacramento, Emeryville, Oakland, and San Jose with one daily afternoon trip. All Capitol Corridor trains include on-board bicycle racks. Placer County Transit operates an hourly rail service to Sierra College, Roseville, and Sacramento on weekdays and Saturdays; one-way travel time is an hour or less, depending on the destination.



Source: AECOM 2025

Exhibit 2-1: Regional and Local Project Location

- **Bus:** Bus service is also available from Auburn Station. Placer County Transit operates five bus routes that serve the project site, including the Auburn to Light Rail (10), Highway 49 (30), Commuter Express (60), Taylor Road Shuttle (50), and Alta/Colfax (40). The Auburn Loop was a former fixed-route bus service serving the site, which is now out of operation.

- **On-Demand:** Auburn Transit Services operates Auburn OnDemand, which serves the site.

Nevada Street and Fulweiler Avenue have sidewalks adjacent to the project site, and a signalized crossing at the intersection of these streets provides pedestrian access to Auburn Station.

The project site currently includes two buildings: (1) the Placer County Government Administrative Office building; and (2) "the Domes" building, which houses the Placer County Board of Supervisors, among other County departments. Approximately 192 employees work in the two existing on-site buildings. The project site also includes a memorial dedicated to World War I veterans (consisting of a sculpture, water feature, U.S. flag, landscaping, and bench seating) at the entrance from Fulweiler Avenue (Exhibit 2-2 and Exhibit 2-3). The project site includes multiple paved parking areas and two paved entryways, along with landscaping that consists of mature trees, shrubs, and turf grass.

Surrounding land uses include an amphitheater, public library, two schools, office and commercial development, and a cemetery (Exhibit 2-3). The E.V. Cain Middle School (a public school operated by the Auburn Union School District) is within walking distance, approximately 0.25 mile northeast of the center of the project site. The Pathways Charter iLearn Academy (a public school operated by the Placer County Office of Education), which serves part-time and full-time home-schooled students, is immediately adjacent to the project site to the north, along with the Placer County Office of Education building. The Auburn Public Library is immediately adjacent to the project site to the northeast. The Auburn Garden Theater (an outdoor amphitheater) is immediately adjacent to the project site to the east. Additional office uses are present immediately adjacent to the site to the east and southwest of the Auburn Station. The Auburn District Cemetery is across Fulweiler Avenue from the project site to the south. Auburn Station is adjacent to and just east of the office uses across from the project site on the west side of Nevada Street. Commercial land uses are present northwest of the project site along Nevada Street and Enterprise Drive, along with a United States Postal Service location.

The project site (10.5 acres shown as "Focus Area" in Exhibit 2-3) and the remaining property housing the Placer County Government Center buildings to the northeast/north (7 acres) are designated and zoned for Commercial/Public uses. The surrounding areas are designated and zoned for Mixed Use to the northeast, Commercial to the east and west, and Open Space/School to the south.

Source: Google Earth 2025

Exhibit 2-2: World War I Memorial and "the Domes" Building on the Project Site from Fulweiler Avenue

Source: AECOM 2025

Exhibit 2-3: Project Site and Surrounding Area Land Uses

2.3 PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

2.3.1 DEVELOPMENT

The project proposes redevelopment of the project site with a mix of three- and four-story residential buildings with a small commercial area in the northwestern portion of the project site. The existing World War I veterans memorial at the project site would be preserved.

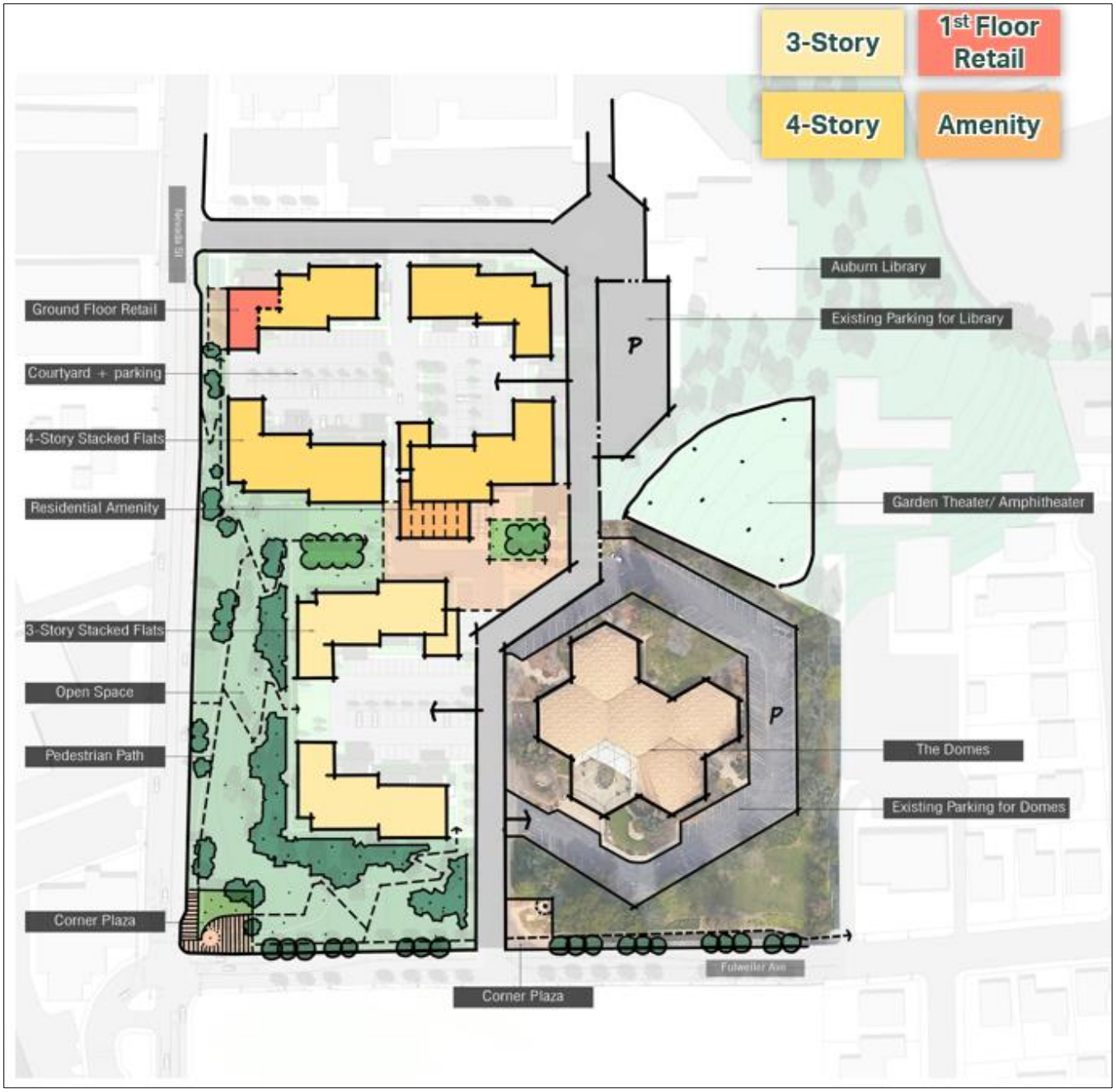
As shown in Exhibit 2-4a and 2-4b and described below, the City has developed an option for implementation of the project that would preserve the Domes and associated parking and circulation, as well as another scenario where the Domes area would be redeveloped with additional housing opportunities and associated parking, circulation, landscaping and infrastructure connections. Option 1 contemplates preservation of the Domes and Option 2 would involve redevelopment of that portion of the project site, as well.

Option 1 would preserve "the Domes" building on the project site; however, the Placer County Government Administrative Office building would be demolished, along with most of the on-site surface parking areas. The western half of the project site would be redeveloped with apartment buildings and a central common-use building for recreation and gatherings, or meetings. Private open space areas would be provided for residents. Most of the existing mature landscape trees and the associated landscape buffer along the western and southern sides of the project site would be preserved. The existing vehicular entrance/egress from Fulweiler Avenue would be preserved or reconstructed, as necessary, to serve the circulation and emergency access needs of the proposed project. Option 1 could also serve as a first phase of redevelopment, if desired.

Option 2 would involve demolishing both existing buildings and parking areas. The project site would be redeveloped with apartment buildings and a central common-use building (also called "community space") for recreation and gatherings, or meetings. Private open space areas would be provided for residents. The existing mature landscape trees and the associated landscape buffer along the western and southern sides of the project site would be preserved. The existing vehicular entrance/egress from Fulweiler Avenue would be preserved or reconstructed, as necessary, to serve the circulation and emergency access needs of the proposed project. It is possible that, if Option 2 is advanced, that the County would identify existing or new office space on the subject property or a different property to house operations currently occurring at the project site. No plans are available at this time, and therefore it is not possible to evaluate potential effects attributable to future unknown relocations.

Table 2-1. Redevelopment Option Details

Land Use	Option 1 – Preserve the Domes	Option 2 – Redevelop the Entire Site
Multi-Family Residential	245,410 square feet	361,318 square feet
Impervious Surfaces (parking, drive aisles)	94,759 square feet	89,646 square feet
Office (existing Domes)	22,000 square feet	-
Units	238 units	315 units
Parking for Proposed Residences	295 spaces	390 spaces
Parking for Amphitheater	0 spaces	55 spaces
Landscaping	160,113 square feet	111,740 square feet
Community Space	5,500 square feet	5,500 square feet
Retail/Commercial	3,375 square feet	3,375 square feet



Source: AECOM 2025

Exhibit 2-4: Conceptual Development Scenario – Option 1 – Preserve the Domes

Source: AECOM 2025

Exhibit 2-4: Conceptual Development Scenario – Option 2 – Redevelop the Entire Site

2.3.2 ZONING

The proposed project includes a request for a rezone from the current Commercial/Public designation to add an overlay that would allow the proposed mix of uses.

2.3.3 INFRASTRUCTURE

The project site has existing stormwater drainage, wastewater conveyance, and water supply networks that connect to larger off-site pipelines. Stormwater drainage and water quality at the project site, along with wastewater conveyance and treatment, are regulated by the City. The existing on-site infrastructure would be modified as necessary to serve the proposed new development and would connect to existing off-site supply lines in Nevada Street and Fulweiler Avenue, as appropriate.

The following providers serve the project site:

- Placer County Water Agency provides potable water supply;
- Pioneer Community Energy and Pacific Gas & Electric Company provide electric and natural gas; and
- Recology Auburn Placer provides trash removal.

2.3.4 CIRCULATION NETWORK

The proposed on-site circulation networks for the conceptual development scenarios are shown in Exhibits 2-4a and 2-4b. The existing vehicular entrances/egress points from Nevada Street and Fulweiler Avenue would be preserved and improved as a part of the project. The project may add wide sidewalks along the south side of the entrance from Nevada Street and on both sides of the entrance from Fulweiler Avenue and to provide other points of entry from pathways along the edges of the site.

The project site would include on-site pedestrian and bicycle paths to ensure connectivity for alternative modes of travel. Preserved landscaped areas along the western and southern portions of the project site would have improved pedestrian pathways connecting the Nevada Street and Fulweiler Avenue corridors to the proposed on-site residential buildings. A separated bikeway is recommended along both Nevada Street and along Fulweiler Avenue along the project site frontages, which would be a part of the project construction.

2.3.5 DEMOLITION AND CONSTRUCTION

DEMOLITION

Demolition of on-site facilities would be performed to maximize the salvage and recycling of materials. A minimum of 65 percent, by weight, of the solid waste generated would be diverted from landfill disposal through re-use and recycling, as required by the most current version of the California Green Building Standards Code.

The project site is not a Cortese-listed hazardous materials site. The demolition phase would include the abatement of any hazardous materials that may be present within the existing buildings on the site, which, due to their age, may include asbestos-containing materials, lead-based paint, electrical equipment containing polychlorinated biphenyls, and fluorescent tubes containing mercury vapors and lights. Construction worker health and safety regulations and hazardous materials removal and disposal protocols would be required to be implemented per applicable federal and state standards, including the California Division of Occupational Safety

and Health and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's regulations under the Asbestos National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants. The construction contractor/s would be required by law to comply with all local, state, and federal requirements regarding handling and storage of hazardous materials, and disposal in an approved facility.

CONSTRUCTION PERIOD

For the purposes of analysis, construction is anticipated to begin in 2027, and the construction period is expected to last approximately 2 years in total. This project schedule is dependent on collaboration between the City and Placer County on the disposition of this property, construction costs, and the construction financing environment, and other factors, and therefore is subject to change.

Construction activities would generally be limited to between 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. If necessary, construction could also occur between 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on Saturdays, and between 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on Sundays.

2.4 REQUIRED PROJECT APPROVALS

The proposed project would include the development of a new zoning overlay or new zoning district to be added to the City of Auburn Zoning Code to accommodate the development of the proposed mix of uses and appropriate development standards (building heights, setbacks, etc.). Approval and buildout of the proposed project are anticipated to require the following approvals and actions:

- City of Auburn certification of the EIR and adoption of the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, revised zoning, tree removal permit, and, potentially, a joint development agreement with Placer County and a request for developer interest;
- Future additional entitlements from the City, which could include a parcel map, lot line adjustment/s, design review, and/or a conditional use permit/s, approval of improvement plans, and issuance of grading and building permits;
- Placer County Water Agency for approval of proposed water service and compliance with applicable water conveyance design standards;
- Placer County for declaration of the property as surplus property or determination that the subject property qualifies as exempt surplus land under the California Surplus Lands Act, and other approvals related to the ultimate disposition of this County-owned property; and
- Placer County Air Pollution Control District approval of authority to construct.

2.5 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The objectives for the Auburn Station Infill project are listed below.

- Provide economically feasible redevelopment of the site, supported by market and proforma analyses.

- Achieve a housing density that sufficiently supports existing adjacent transit services and provides new patrons for existing and future businesses.
- Create a new “sense of place” and civic hub with a mix of public open space, residential, institutional, and commercial uses.
- Complement and enhance existing City and County assets on and near the site.
- Serve as a model for future infill development under the new General Plan.

3 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

3.1 SCOPE OF ANALYSIS

This chapter of the EIR discusses the environmental and regulatory setting, impacts, and mitigation measures for each of the following technical issue areas (Sections 3.a through 3.g):

- 3.a Aesthetics
- 3.b Cultural Resources
- 3.c Tribal Cultural Resources
- 3.d Land Use and Planning
- 3.e Noise and Vibration
- 3.f Population and Housing
- 3.g Transportation

3.2 INTRODUCTION TO THE ANALYSIS

The technical sections within Chapter 3 of this EIR include the following three primary subsections:

- Environmental Setting
- Regulatory Setting
- Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Each subsection is described in more detail below.

3.2.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

This subsection of each technical section includes a description of the relevant existing physical environmental conditions to provide the "baseline condition" against which project-related impacts are compared. In general, the baseline conditions are the physical conditions that existed when the NOP of an EIR was published. An NOP for this EIR was published on July 23, 2025. For analytical purposes, impacts of the proposed project are generally compared against this baseline environmental setting. Cumulative impacts associated with implementation of the proposed project are assessed against list of past, present, and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts. These impacts are further discussed in Chapter 4 for each resource area analyzed in this EIR.

3.2.2 REGULATORY SETTING

This subsection of each technical section provides the federal, state, regional, and local regulations that are applicable to the proposed project. This section also informs the reader of relevant goals and policies included in the City of Auburn 1993 General Plan (1993 General Plan). The proposed project was initiated with the 1993 General Plan in effect.

3.2.3 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

This subsection of each technical section provides the methodology used during the impact analysis. The discussion of impact assessment methodology is followed by the thresholds of significance used to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project. The State CEQA Guidelines define a significant effect on the physical environment 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" (State CEQA Guidelines California Code of Regulations [CCR] Section 15382). The thresholds of significance set forth in this EIR were developed based on the standards of significance included in the State CEQA Guidelines.

The discussion of project impacts and mitigation measures follows. For each environmental topic area, the analysis first summarizes the project-specific impact and reaches an impact conclusion prior to incorporation of any mitigation. In many instances, compliance with applicable laws, policies, or regulations would reduce the significance of an impact.

Potential project-specific impact conclusions prior to incorporation of any mitigation include:

- **No Impact.** This impact conclusion indicates that the proposed project would not have any direct or indirect effects on the physical environment. This impact level does not require mitigation under CEQA.
- **Less-than-Significant Impact.** This conclusion indicates that a substantial or potentially substantial adverse change in the physical environment would not occur and that the impact would not be considered significant under CEQA in consideration of the applicable threshold of significance. This impact level does not require mitigation, even if feasible, under CEQA.
- **Significant Impact.** This impact conclusion is defined by CEQA Section 21068 as one that would cause a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project. Levels of significance can vary by project element, based on the change in the existing physical condition and the applicable threshold of significance. Under CEQA, mitigation measures must be identified, where feasible and available, to reduce the magnitude of significant impacts.
- **Potentially Significant Impact.** This impact conclusion, if it were to occur, would be considered a significant impact, as described above; however, the occurrence of the impact cannot be immediately determined with certainty. For CEQA purposes, a potentially significant impact is treated as if it were a significant impact and requires that mitigation measures or alternatives to the proposed project be provided, where feasible, to reduce the magnitude of potentially significant impacts.

If mitigation is required, the EIR also reaches an impact conclusion assuming implementation of identified mitigation. State CEQA Guidelines CCR Section 15370 defines mitigation as:

a. avoiding the impact altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action;

b. minimizing impacts by limiting the degree of magnitude of the action and its implementation;

c. rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment;

d. reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action; or

e. compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.

Impact conclusions assuming incorporation of identified mitigation include:

- **Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation:** This conclusion indicates that a substantial adverse change in the physical environment would not occur after implementation of the proposed mitigation measures and the impact, as mitigated, would not be considered significant under CEQA in consideration of the applicable threshold of significance.

- **Significant and Unavoidable Impact:** This conclusion indicates a substantial adverse effect on the physical environment, and that could not be reduced to a less-than-significant level even with any available, feasible mitigation. A significant and unavoidable impact can also result if there are no feasible mitigation measures or alternatives available to reduce the magnitude of the impact to a less-than-significant level. Under CEQA, a project with significant and unavoidable impacts may proceed, but the lead agency is required to prepare a "statement of overriding considerations" in accordance with State CEQA Guidelines CCR Section 15093, explaining why the lead agency would proceed with the project despite the potential for significant and unavoidable impacts.

This page intentionally left blank with the exception of this text

3.A AESTHETICS

3.a.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

This chapter of the EIR presents a description and photographs of the existing visual character of the project site and surrounding area. This chapter also evaluates potential impacts of the proposed project on scenic highways; aesthetics impacts of the proposed project from public viewpoints related to degradation of visual character and quality; and compliance with the City of Auburn Zoning Code, along with other applicable plans and policies intended to regulate visual character and quality. Finally, this chapter examines the effect of new sources of nighttime lighting as related to light trespass, glare, and skyglow.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Visual Resource Evaluation Concepts

Aesthetic resources consist of the objects (artificial and natural, moving and stationary) and features (e.g., landforms and waterbodies) that are visible on a landscape. These resources add to or detract from the visual appeal of the landscape. A visual change can be perceived by an individual or group as either positive or negative, depending on a variety of factors or conditions (e.g., type of viewer, sensitivity to visual change, distance from the visual change, or seasonal conditions).

Visual character is defined by the relationships between the existing visible natural and built landscape features. Landscape characteristics influencing visual character include geologic, hydrologic, botanical, wildlife, recreation, and urban features.

In addition to visual character, the overall visual experience also encompasses viewer response, including viewer exposure and sensitivity. Visual perception is the basic act of seeing or recognizing an object. Landscape elements are considered higher or lower in visual importance based on their proximity to the viewer. Generally, the closer a resource is to the viewer, the more dominant, and therefore visually important, it is to the viewer. The primary public viewpoints of the project site would be from the adjacent roadways, Fulweiler Avenue and Nevada Street.

Visual Character of the Project Site

The project site consists of a gently to steeply sloping plateau covered with urban land uses that consist primarily of buildings and paved parking areas. The project site currently includes two buildings: (1) the Placer County Government Administrative Office building; and (2) “the Domes” building, which houses the Placer County Board of Supervisors, among other County departments. The Placer County office building was constructed in 1963 and reflects the typical architecture of the period, with a block style, composed of mixed concrete and stone. The building is two stories, and is cream-colored with tan accents. The Domes building is a historic property consisting of five geodesic domes, built in 1966. This building has a unique shape and architectural style that stands out the context of the surrounding visual landscape. The roof and arched metal entryway are a distinctive orange-cream color. Landscaping around the Domes building has been designed in five “pods” that mimic the five geodesic domes. A wide arched metal entryway with cream-colored steps and pavers compliments the Domes building and provides a clearly defined “gateway” entry to the building.

In addition to the two buildings, the project site also includes more than 3 acres of parking areas covered with black asphalt pavement. High-mast light standards are present along the edges of the parking areas throughout the project site.

The project site also includes a memorial dedicated to World War I veterans (consisting of a white sculpture, small water feature with multi-colored cobbles and a commemorative plaque, U.S. flag, landscaping, and bench seating) at the entrance from Fulweiler Avenue.

The project site currently includes a mixture of landscaped and native vegetation. Non-native ornamental trees and shrubs (e.g., deodar cedar [*Cedrus deodara*], crepe myrtle [*Lagerstroemia* spp.], olive [*Olea europaea*]) surround the administrative buildings and parking areas in the southern portion of the project site. Native incense cedar (*Calocedrus decurrens*) and oaks (interior live oak [*Quercus wislizeni*], valley oak [*Quercus lobata*], blue oak [*Quercus douglasii*], and black oak [*Quercus kelloggii*]) are minimally interspersed among the ornamental trees in these areas and comprise most trees in the landscape strips lining the parking areas in the northern portion of the project site. Most native trees appear to have been planted after the site was developed, although a few mature valley oak likely preceded site development. The project site slopes steeply along the western and southern edges, and these areas consist of turf grass, along with most of the tree species listed above.

Representative site photos are provided below.

Source: Placer County 2018

Exhibit 3.a: The Domes Building

Exhibit 3.a-1: World War 1 Memorial at the Entrance from Fulweiler Avenue

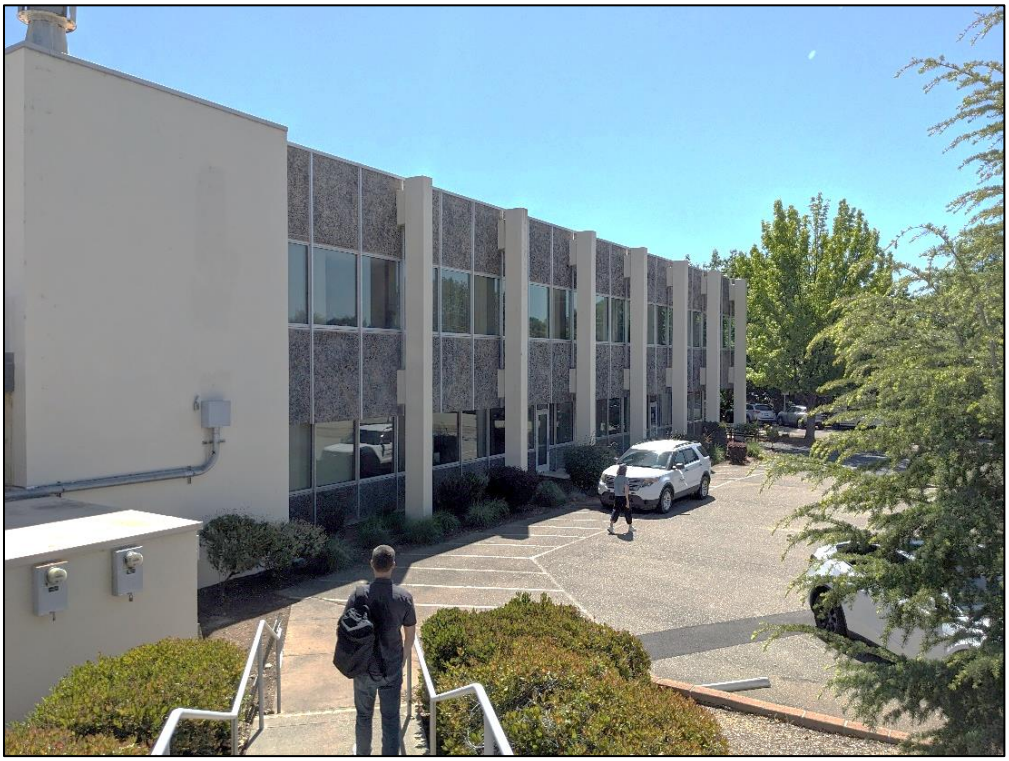


Exhibit 3.a-2: County Administrative Office Building

Exhibit 3.a-3: Lawn and Landscape Trees Located Along the Southern Edge of the Project Site

Visual Character of the Surrounding Area

The project site is situated within the urbanized area of the City of Auburn. Land to the north, east, and west of the project site consists of buildings with associated urban landscaping, paved parking areas, paved roadways, and overhead power and telecommunications lines. The buildings were developed at various times over a period of many years, and represent a variety of uses such as commercial, office, and education. The project site and surrounding area were not part of a master planned community (as that concept is known today) and therefore exhibit a variety of architectural styles. The Auburn Transit Center (train and bus station) is immediately southwest of the project site; this building incorporates a more recent architectural style with integrated landscaping that reflects the Auburn community heritage. The Old Auburn Cemetery (which contains burials that date back to the 1800s) is immediately across the street (Fulweiler Avenue) to the south of the project site. Views of the cemetery consist primarily of turf grass and monuments, with landscape trees around the perimeter. Finally, the Auburn Garden Theater (an outdoor amphitheater composed of a stage and open turf grass area surrounded by landscape trees) is present immediately adjacent to the project site to the northeast.

Light and Glare

The project site includes existing sources of nighttime lighting, consisting of high-mast lighting in the parking areas, and security lighting at the buildings. Because the project site is situated within the urbanized area of the City of Auburn, nighttime light and glare associated with urbanized development are present immediately adjacent to the site to the west, north, and east, and throughout the City limits, in the form of overhead street lighting, lighted signage, and nighttime security lighting at the urban businesses, residences, schools, and parks.

DESIGNATED SCENIC HIGHWAYS

The closest State-designated scenic highway is State Route (SR) 174 north of Colfax, which is approximately 17 miles to the northeast (California Department of Transportation [Caltrans] 2025). Due to the intervening distance and topography, the project site is not visible from SR 174.

SR 49 from Tuolumne County in the south through Nevada County in the north (including the City of Auburn) is designated by Caltrans as "Eligible" for designation. SR 49 is approximately 975 feet east of the project site.

The current City of Auburn (1992) General Plan considers SR 49 throughout Placer County to be a "scenic route." The 1992 General Plan states, "This route is an important link in the 'Golden Chain' which winds through the historic Mother Lode country and is included in the State Scenic Highway Master Plan. Within the planning area, Highway 49 is characterized by urban landscapes both in the city and county, and rural, native landscapes north of Joeger Road to the Nevada County line" (City of Auburn 1992).

3.a.2 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

FEDERAL

There are no federal policies, plans, laws, or regulations related to aesthetics that are pertinent to the proposed project.

STATE

California Scenic Highway Program

California's Scenic Highway Program was created by the Legislature in 1963 to preserve and protect scenic highway corridors from change that would diminish the aesthetic value of lands adjacent to highways. The state laws governing the Scenic Highway Program are found in the Streets and Highways Code, Section 260 et seq.

Senate Bill 743 (SB 743)

The Legislature adopted a CEQA streamlining bill, Senate Bill No. 743 (SB 743), for residential, mixed-use residential, or employment center projects on infill sites within transit priority areas (Public Resources Code Section 21099[(d]). The proposed project qualifies for CEQA streamlining benefits provided by SB 743, on the basis that it is within one-half mile of a planned major transit stop, and is therefore within a transit priority area, as defined by Section 21064.3 of the California Public Resources Code. According to Figure 3.8 of SACOG's 2020 Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy, the project area falls within a qualifying transit priority area (SACOG 2020).

As a qualifying project, SB 743 provides that the proposed project's aesthetic impacts shall not be considered significant impacts on the environment and parking impacts shall not be considered significant impacts on the environment (Public Resources Code Section 21099[d][1]).

Local

City of Auburn General Plan

The current General Plan, *City of Auburn General Plan 1992 – 2012* (City of Auburn 1992), contains the following policies related to aesthetics that apply to the proposed project.

Land Use Element

- **Policy 1.2:** Design multi-family residential projects to minimize impacts on adjacent land uses.
- **Policy 3.1:** Minimize disturbance to terrain by limiting "pads" on steep slopes to reduce cut and fill.
- **Policy 3.3:** Utilize the policies in the Open Space and Conservation Element to create and maintain a visual variety.
- **Policy 5.3:** Promote use of Planned Unit Developments to provide for clustering and open space areas.
- **Policy 6.1:** Avoid linear commercial development designs.
- **Policy 6.2:** Encourage commercial design that utilizes existing topography, minimizing cut and fill.
- **Policy 6.3:** Promote aesthetics suitable to the foothill environment.

Conservation and Open Space Element

- **Policy 6.1:** Enhance and protect scenic resources visible from scenic routes [described on General Plan pages VII-33 and VII-34] in the Auburn area.
- **Policy 6.5:** Encourage and use existing City and County programs for protection and enhancement of scenic corridors, including, but not limited to, design review, sign control, landscaping and mounding, undergrounding utilities, scenic setbacks, density limitations, planned unit developments, grading and tree removal standards, open space easements, and land conservation contracts.
- **Policy 6.6:** The City shall require that all landscape plantings are to be maintained continually in a healthy and attractive condition.

Historic Element

Goal 1: Preserve all historical sites and enhance the character of the historic districts.

- **Policy 1.1:** Implement the Historic Development Guidelines listed in the Historic Element.

City of Auburn Design Review Process

The City of Auburn Zoning Ordinance Requires all new buildings and most alterations or remodeling, with the exception of single-family residences, secure approval from the City in regards to exterior construction, styling, and site design. The City has adopted Design Guidelines for projects located in the Downtown and Oldtown areas. As noted by the City in the Design Review Permit Application Information, “While there are no strict guidelines

for remaining City areas [including the project site], the Commission may use the Western California development manual as a general standard of review and will look for design that compliments the City, as well as the specific neighborhood or locale. The Planning Commission has the authority to approve, approve with conditions or modifications, or deny any design review permit request" (City of Auburn, undated). The Design Review Permit Application must include a site plan, landscaping plan, grading plan, and proposed exterior building elevations, proposed building materials, building heights and setbacks, colors, fences, signage, and exterior lighting. The application must also include representations showing the visual appearance of the proposed development together with the existing surrounding development.

3.a.3 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

This EIR evaluates the potential aesthetic impacts of the proposed project using criteria derived from Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. Under CEQA, the proposed project would result in a significant impact related to aesthetics if it would:

- Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista;
- Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings, within a state scenic highway;
- In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings (public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point); or, if the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality; or
- Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

IMPACT ANALYSIS

IMPACT 3.a-1 **Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.** *There are no scenic vistas present at the project site, and the site is not visible from any nearby scenic vistas such as the American River Canyon. There would be* ***no impact****.*

A scenic vista is defined as a viewpoint that provides expansive views of a highly valued landscape for the benefit of the general public. While the existing Domes building at the project site has intrinsic aesthetic value, the project site does not contain any unique geologic features, major waterfalls, unique rock outcroppings, gorges, mountains, or other features that could be regarded as outstanding scenic features. Furthermore, the project site is not visible in the scenic vistas available from the American River canyon. Therefore, the proposed project would have **no impact** on a scenic vista.

IMPACT 3.a-2 **Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings, within a state or locally designated scenic highway.** *The tops of new buildings associated with redevelopment at the project site may be visible from SR 49 east of the project site, depending on the final site design. However, both sides of SR 49 in this area already consist of urban development in the form of commercial, office, and school buildings with paved parking*

areas; therefore, the proposed redevelopment would be consistent with the visual environment along this portion of SR 49, and would not affect the State eligible or City designated scenic highway designation. This impact would be ***less than significant****.*

There are no State designated scenic highway segments in the project area (Caltrans 2025). The closest State-designated scenic highway is SR 174 north of Colfax, which is approximately 17 miles to the northeast (Caltrans 2025). Due to the intervening distance and topography, the project site is not visible from SR 174. However, SR 49 from Tuolumne County in the south through Nevada County in the north (including through the City of Auburn) is designated by Caltrans as "Eligible" for designation (Caltrans 2025). SR 49 is approximately 975 feet east of the project site. Furthermore, the current City of Auburn (1992) General Plan considers SR 49 throughout Placer County to be a "scenic route." However, the tall landscape trees along the eastern edge of the project site, which would be retained under the proposed project, would block most views from motorists traveling on SR 49. Furthermore, in the project vicinity, the land uses surrounding SR 49 are heavily urbanized, consisting of commercial, office, and school buildings, with paved parking areas and roadways, overhead power and telecommunications lines, and high-mast light standards. Therefore, if the top stories of the proposed residential buildings on the project site are visible to motorists on SR 49 (depending on the final site design), the project's visual appearance would be consistent with the existing urban development on this portion of SR 49, and therefore would not degrade the State or City scenic designations. Therefore, this impact would be **less than significant**.

IMPACT 3.a-3 **Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings, or conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality.** *Redevelopment of the project site would substantially alter the existing visual character and quality of the project site, particularly under project Option 2 that includes demolishing the Domes building (which is a historic structure). Furthermore, project Option 2 would conflict with the City's applicable regulations and policies governing scenic quality. Therefore, the impact of project Option 2 is considered* ***significant****.*

The proposed project would change the existing visual character and quality of the project site and would alter the building composition, landscape, and certain views of and through the project site compared to existing conditions. The architectural design style has not been determined, but it would likely include modern, energy-efficient building materials, and would be similar in appearance to contemporary developments throughout northern California.

The proposed layout includes the following elements under Option 1:

- Demolish the existing Placer County Administrative Office building;
- Construct four, 4-story flats (residential buildings), including one building with ground floor retail, and one building with residential amenities;
- Construct two, 3-story flats;
- Install open space with landscaped vegetation, ornamental trees, and lawns throughout the project site; and
- Construct two corner plazas with minor commercial uses along the southern edge of the project site.

The following elements would be included under Option 2:

- Demolish the existing Domes building and the existing Placer County Administrative Office building;
- Construct four, 4-story flats, including one building with ground floor retail, and one building with residential amenities;
- Construct six, 3-story flats;
- Install open space with landscaped vegetation, ornamental trees, and lawns throughout the project site; and
- Construct two corner plazas with minor commercial uses along the southern edge of the project site.

The project site was developed with urban uses in the 1960s comprising two buildings and paved parking areas, and is surrounded by existing urban development including commercial, office, and school buildings, along with a cemetery and an outdoor amphitheater. The project site would be redeveloped with multi-family housing, which would change the site's appearance as viewed from nearby areas. The existing County buildings on the project site are one and two stories, respectively, and the buildings surrounding the site range from one to two stories. The primary visual features of the proposed project would be the six proposed residential buildings under Option 1, 10 proposed residential buildings under Option 2, and site landscaping under both Options. While the proposed landscaping would be similar to existing conditions, the proposed residential buildings would differ both in height and massing from the existing buildings on and surrounding the project site. The existing visual landscape of the project site does not contain any buildings taller than one to two stories. The proposed project would include three to four story buildings, and substantially more buildings than under existing conditions, and therefore the proposed redevelopment would be more visually prominent as compared to existing conditions. Vegetation on the project site is predominantly composed of ornamental non-native trees, shrubs, and lawns which define the landscape along the site's western and southern edges. Construction of the proposed project would result in the removal of some non-native ornamental and native trees, as well as strips of landscaped vegetation throughout the project site. However, the proposed project would include new landscaping that would consist of trees, shrubs, flowering plants, and small areas of turf grass around the perimeter of the new residential buildings and the associated parking areas, common areas, and small commercial area, consistent with City standards. As described above, the proposed project would substantially change the views of the site for motorists on Fulweiler Avenue and Nevada Avenue, as well as workers in nearby commercial and office buildings, and visitors to the cemetery south of Fulweiler Avenue and the Auburn Garden Theater.

The project site is situated in an urban area (U.S. Census Bureau 2025), along the west side of the City. The proposed project would adhere to the requirements California Building Code, California Green Building Code, and the City of Auburn's Municipal Code and Zoning Code. The City's Municipal and Zoning Code Title XV (Land Use) contains standards that influence the visual appearance of the proposed project through regulations such as building heights, setbacks, fencing, signage, parking, tree preservation, and historic preservation. While the City of Auburn does not have explicit design guidelines for new development that is outside of the Downtown and Historic Districts, the proposed project would require a Design Review Permit to be issued by the City of Auburn. As part of the permit process, the project would undergo Design Review by the Planning Commission, including a review of the proposed site plan, grading plan, and landscaping plan, along with proposed exterior building elevations, building materials, building heights and setbacks, colors, fences, signage, and exterior lighting. The application must also include representations showing the visual appearance of the proposed development together with the existing surrounding development, to ensure the degradation of visual character and quality of the project site and immediate vicinity would not occur.

Project Option 1 would demolish the Placer County Administrative Office Building, which is not a historic structure and does not represent an example of unique visual character or quality. The building is typical of office structures from the 1960s, and views of the building from the surrounding streets and buildings are partially blocked by the existing tall evergreen trees along the west and south sides of the project site. Project Option 1 would preserve the Domes building. Redevelopment of the western and northern portions of the project site with the proposed residential buildings and landscaping would be consistent with surrounding urban development, and would be subject to the City's design standards enforced through the Design Review Permitting process. Project Option 1 would not substantially degrade the existing visual character and quality of the project site, and would not conflict with City policies and design review guidelines governing scenic quality. Therefore, project Option 1 would result in a **less-than-significant** impact.

Project Option 2 would also include demolition of the Domes building on the east side of the project site, which is a historic structure (as discussed in DEIR Section 3.b, "Cultural Resources"), and is a unique visual resource in the City as described in the *Community Design White Paper* and the *Arts and Culture White Paper* (Genevieve Marsh Design Group and Barry Miller Consulting 2024) prepared for the Auburn General Plan update (Envision Auburn 2045). The Domes building is a historic property consisting of five geodesic domes, built in 1966. As shown in Exhibit 3a.1, this building has a unique shape and architectural style that stands out the context of the surrounding visual landscape. It is the only example of a TEMCOR geodesic dome office complex in California, and may be the only example nationwide. The construction and design of the building is directly associated with the notable inventor, engineer, and architect Richard Buckminster Fuller, who popularized and vigorously promoted the geodesic dome for residential and commercial uses. The Domes is a distinctive building that contributes to Placer County history. The Domes building and its history have been featured in a variety of newspaper articles over the years, and represent a visitor attraction for those interested in architecture. As discussed in DEIR Section 3.b ("Cultural Resources"), while not explicit in the National Register nomination, the presumed character-defining features of the Domes are the size, scale, and footprint of the building arranged in a honeycomb plan with a gold geodesic domes anodized exterior. The associated landscape and parking areas were not included in the National Register nomination, and are not recommended as character-defining features of the resource. The Domes building with its associated landscaping represents an outstanding example of high-quality and unique design. Furthermore, City General Plan policies and City Design Guidelines direct that historic structures should be preserved. Because Option 2 would demolish the Domes and its landscaping and replace it with new multi-story residential buildings, Option 2 would substantially degrade the existing visual character and quality of the project site, and would conflict with City policies and design review guidelines governing scenic quality. Therefore, project Option 2 would result in a **significant** impact.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required for project Option 1.

No feasible mitigation measures are available for the degradation of visual character and quality and conflicts with City policies and design review guidelines that would occur from demolishing the Domes under project Option 2.

Significance after Mitigation

Project Option 1 would preserve the Domes building and would implement City Design Review requirements related to architectural design; therefore, project Option 1 would result in **less-than-significant** impacts from

degradation of visual character and quality and conflicts with City policies and design review guidelines governing scenic quality.

Project Option 2 would demolish the Domes building. No feasible mitigation measures are available to reduce the significant impact under project Option 2. Therefore, project Option 2 would result in **significant and unavoidable** impacts from degradation of visual character and quality, and conflicts with City policies and design review guidelines, that would occur from demolishing the Domes building, both as a unique visual resource exhibiting high visual character and quality, and a historical resource.

IMPACT 3.a-4 **Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.** *No nighttime construction lighting would be necessary. However, the proposed project would increase the amount of nighttime lighting and the potential for daytime glare from reflective surfaces. Therefore, the impact is considered* ***potentially significant****.*

Existing sources of nighttime lighting that result in skyglow are present immediately adjacent to the project site to the north, east, and west, and throughout the city of Auburn, as a result of existing urban commercial, office, schools, and residential development, along with overhead street lighting. The two existing government buildings on the site are also a source of nighttime lighting (i.e., building safety lighting) and daytime glare, due to the reflection of sunlight from surfaces such as windows. The project site also includes high-mast light standards in the parking areas throughout the site, which provide nighttime lighting. The proposed project would replace one or both of the existing government buildings with new three to four-story residential buildings, along with associated parking areas, which would increase the amount of nighttime light generated and potential glare from building windows and exterior building materials. New lighting fixtures (interior and exterior) would be installed that could increase the amount of nighttime lighting on the project site. The use of glass and other reflective materials on the proposed residential buildings could cause daytime glare. Specifically, increased daytime glare could originate from exterior glass, both windows and architectural glass, which could be used to construct the proposed three to four-story residential buildings. Therefore, this impact is considered **potentially significant**.

Mitigation Measure 3.a-4: Prepare and Implement a Lighting Plan

Prior to the issuance of building permits, project applicants shall demonstrate to the City that no substantially reflective materials would be used in locations that could reflect glare into publicly accessible areas, and that substantial new nighttime skyglow effects would not occur. A lighting plan shall be prepared for the proposed redevelopment, to be approved by the City, which shall include the following elements.

- All exterior fixtures shall have full shielding to minimize light spillover and glare.
- Outdoor light fixtures used to illuminate architectural and landscape features shall use a narrow cone of light for the purpose of confining the light to the object.
- Artificial illumination of signs shall be designed to eliminate light spillover and glare on surrounding rights-of-way and properties.
- Nonglare glass shall be used in all nonresidential buildings to minimize and reduce impacts from glare. Any buildings that are allowed to use semi-reflective glass shall be oriented so that the reflection of sunlight is minimized.
- Daytime and nighttime glare from new buildings shall be reduced or eliminated by using appropriate building materials and architectural coatings, roof overhangs, and proper structural design.

Significance after Mitigation

Given the existing sources of the nighttime lighting and daytime glare at the project site and the immediately surrounding area, and the small amount of proposed redevelopment at the project site, implementing Mitigation Measure 3.a-4 would reduce adverse effects related to nighttime lighting and daytime glare under both project Options 1 and 2 to a **less-than-significant level** by preparing a lighting plan for City approval would that includes shielding of all exterior lighting, and minimizing the use of reflective materials.

3.B CULTURAL RESOURCES

This section describes the environmental and regulatory setting for cultural resources (historical resources, archaeological resources, and human remains) in the project area, identifies and analyzes impacts related to cultural resources from implementation of the proposed project, and recommends mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate significant impacts, if feasible. Tribal Cultural Resources (TCRs) are separate and distinct from cultural resources – tribal cultural resources are discussed in Section 3.c, "Tribal Cultural Resources."

During the public comment period after the July 23, 2025 publication date of the Notice of Preparation (NOP) of the City's intent to prepare a draft environmental impact report, the Placer County Historical Society provided comment on the Auburn Domes. President April McDonald-Loomis urged the City to preserve The Domes, which was recently placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

3.b.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The proposed project site is generally northwest of State Highway 49 and Interstate 80 in the city of Auburn in Placer County, California. Specifically, the project site includes part of the Placer County Administrative Center, which was developed in the 1960s northeast of the intersection of Nevada Street and Fulweiler Avenue. Historically, the project area was known as Spanish Flat, which was a long-time productive mining endeavor that began during the early days of the Gold Rush. The city of Auburn is situated within the lands occupied and traditionally used by the Nisenan, sometimes referred to as the Southern Maidu.

PRECONTACT SETTING

Archaeological research within the Sierra Nevada and lower foothill regions over the past half century has resulted in a substantial amount of new information about the precontact era. Researchers have proposed numerous cultural systems and related chronologies in an attempt to trace cultural and technological change through time. While some overlap, others postulate differing interpretations based upon archaeological data gathered over the past 50 years. While not all archaeologists agree on discrete cultural chronologies, three distinct periods have been described within Placer County: the Early Sierran Period (ca. 3,200–1,400 before present [B.P.]), the Middle Sierran Period (ca. 1,400–600 B.P.), and the Late Sierran Period (ca. 600–150 B.P.), each of which is described below (Placer County 2024).

EARLY SIERRAN PERIOD

This period (ca. 1,400–600 B.P.) is marked by the abundant presence of milling slabs and handstones, a substantial increase in the production of obsidian tools, and a climatic shift to cool, wet environmental conditions. Small social and residential groups moved within the area in response to the presence of resources, exploiting resources within range of each site. There is evidence at site CA-PLA-101 near Auburn indicating this was a period of seasonal occupation and land use with similarities in artifact types (i.e., projectile points) found in contexts east of the Sierra Nevada crest, but that this similarity decreases below 2,500 feet in elevation – an area that includes the project site (Ritter 1971).

MIDDLE SIERRAN PERIOD

This period (ca. 1,400–600 B.P.) corresponds with a dramatic decrease in the use of obsidian, not only in the subregion, but throughout the Sierra Nevada. During this time, there is a major improvement associated with the introduction of bow and arrow technology. Widespread changes occur at similar time frames throughout central California and the western Great Basin. Social disruption is inferred from changes in artifact assemblages and land use patterns, and a high incidence of violent death. This pattern is followed by relatively intensive land use, active trade, and the establishment of permanent settlements in some regions, as reflected in increased populations (Jackson and Ballard 1999).

LATE SIERRAN PERIOD

Regionally, this period (ca. 600–150 B.P.) is characterized by continued intensive use of the western slope of the Sierra Nevada, including significant use of acorns, but with less of a focus on seeds; exploitation of fauna, including deer and rabbits; year-round occupation of sites below 3,500 feet; and short-term seasonal occupation of mid- to high-elevation Sierra Nevada sites. The presence of single-component sites dating to this period is given as evidence for this intensified use (Jackson and Ballard 1999).

For the ethnohistoric setting and contemporary Native American contexts, see Section 3.c "Tribal Cultural Resources."

HISTORICAL SETTING

Initial Euro-American incursion into what became Auburn did not occur until after the discovery of gold near Coloma in 1848 (approximately 11 miles to the southeast of the proposed project site). Although Spanish missionaries and later American trappers entered the general region, no accounts of these early excursions to the Auburn vicinity are recorded. With the Gold Rush, however, the region became heavily populated with prospectors, entrepreneurs, and others seeking their fortune in the goldfields (Placer County 2018).

Gold Rush Era and Early Auburn Development

Gold was first discovered at Sutter's Mill in Coloma in January 1848, triggering the world rushing in. In May 1848, Frenchman Claude Chana discovered gold in Auburn Ravine, approximately a quarter mile south of the historic center of Auburn. By early 1849, Auburn was developing into a mining camp of considerable importance. By summer 1849, the settlement, which was sited along the route to Sacramento, became the principal trading post for a large number of mines in the hinterlands along the North Fork of the American River and dry diggings. This new community was allegedly named by a group of miners hailing from Auburn, New York (Placer County 2018).

Spanish Flat, historically sited near the proposed project site, was one of the most important mining areas in Auburn and remained productive for many years. The Spanish Flat area extended from the cemetery south of Fulweiler Avenue, northward approximately a half mile to Mt. Vernon Road, and was centered around the mining activities with a hotel, some houses, stores, and other commercial ventures. By 1924, Spanish Flat was considered "worked out" and was transformed into a "fertile garden spot" (Lardner and Brock 1924:129). The location of Spanish Flat is commemorated with a sign installed by the Placer County Historical Society on Nevada Street in 2024 (Gold Country Media 2024).

By 1851, Auburn became the seat of the newly created Placer County, which was carved out of the original Sutter County boundary. The first county governmental center was built on Court Street and comprised a courthouse constructed of wood and canvas, with a log-built jail at the rear. Having risen to this new prominence as the county seat, the citizens decided court proceedings and county administration facilities required a more permanent structure in a better location than the temporary makeshift structure on Court Street. In 1852, plans were made for a new two-story wooden courthouse at a new location on a knoll above the town, where the current courthouse stands with its commanding view (Lardner and Brock 1924:129).

To make way for a third iteration of the county courthouse, the wooden two-story courthouse was placed on rollers and moved thirty feet to make room for its replacement. While the new courthouse was under construction, the old courthouse remained in service. The cornerstone was laid on July 4, 1894 and the formal dedication occurred four years later to the day (Placer County Historical Society n.d.).

When the railroad reached Auburn in 1865, geographical features led the Central Pacific to locate the station a quarter mile west from the town center, parallel to modern-day Nevada Street and near the intersection of Fulweiler Avenue, in close proximity to the project site. New hotels and other businesses serving travelers sprang up, and a petition circulated to consolidate and relocate the courthouse and county administration offices to this newly developed area of town, but it was unsuccessful.

While many Gold Rush-era towns floundered as mines were exhausted, Auburn was unique with its location on the road to Sacramento and served as a crossroads for a network of routes to the surrounding mines. In addition, its position as the county seat allowed the town to prosper well into the twentieth century.

Post-War Auburn Development

At the turn of the twentieth century, Auburn's population was 2,050, and had grown to 4,653 by 1950. By the end of the 1950s, the City annexed 185 acres to the south and north as the community expanded with new development. The number of building permits increased from 424 in 1951 to 928 in 1963. By 1964, Auburn developed a general plan with the community goals to continue as the Placer County seat of government, serve as a gateway to Sierra Nevada recreation, serve as a major trading center for the county and travelers, and be a desirable place to live and work. The general plan anticipated the population of Auburn tripling over the next thirty years (Gilberg 1986:118).

The following are summaries of the two County-owned, historic-age buildings within the proposed project site built in the post-war period.

Placer County Government Administrative Office – 145 Fulweiler Avenue

As part of the City's 1964 General Plan with the community goal continuing as the Placer County seat of government, the City and County had long recognized the need for a centralized county administration center. A committee appointed by the county Board of Supervisors in the late 1950s and an independent report both recommended replacing the scattered County government buildings throughout Auburn with a central location. In March 1960, San Francisco-based architect Harold M. Hansen was chosen by the Board of Supervisors to draw up a master plan of a 23-acre property northwest of town. Hansen's plan called for staged development to occur over time to prevent burdensome costs to taxpayers all at once (*Auburn Journal* 1960 Mar 31; *Auburn Journal* 1960 Oct 20).

The City and the County were both involved in the proposed site change of County government operations. The master plan for the new Placer County government center was presented to city and county commissions for review and recommendation before presentation of the final plan to the Board of Supervisors (*Auburn Journal* 1960 Oct 27). The Board of Supervisors approved the master plan with a vote of four to one, and Hansen and his firm, Hansen and Akol, AIA, were authorized to start designing the first building in the new government center, the Health & Welfare Building (now called the Placer County Administrative Office) (*Auburn Journal* 1962 May 10).

Once the design was completed and approved, invitations to bid were published in August 1962. The new Health & Welfare Building was dedicated in December 1963 as the first unit constructed a part of the phased development of the new county government center. Originally estimated to cost $581,000, the actual construction cost was over $100,00 more at $693,500. The Welfare Department occupied the upper level, and the Health Department occupied the ground floor. When completed, the Modern-style building was a sharp contrast in design to the classical domed county courthouse (*Auburn Journal* 1963 Dec 19).

The first occupants in the new building were the offices of the Division of Environmental Health and the Division of Public Health Nursing, led by County Health Officer Dr. Gordon Sack and his team. The Division of Environmental Health was responsible for the inspection of water, food, waste, and other sanitary issues within various communities in the county. The Division of Public Health was led by nurse Henrietta Gustka and her staff conducted major services such as communicable disease control, maternal and child health services, disabled childcare, school and home nursing, and health education. The upper-story Welfare Division was led by David C. Echols and his staff which administered a $3 million program (*Auburn Journal* 1963 Dec 19).

Hansen and Akol's firm was a brief partnership that only lasted between 1961 to 1964. Harold Martin Hansen was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1914. He earned an architecture degree from Columbia University and was Hansen self-identified his Placer County Administrative Center Master Plan as one of his principal works (AIA 1962). Haluk Alan Akol was born in Istanbul, Turkey in 1925 and earned a M.S. from the University of California in 1957. Akol did self-identify the Placer County Health & Welfare Building as one of his principal works (AIA 1970).

The 1963-construced Placer County Government Administrative Office building at 145 Fulweiler Avenue is not recommended as meeting the requirements as a historical resource under CEQA. While the building was the first in a series of phased developments of a new Placer County government administrative center, it does not appear to rise the significance threshold under any National Register or California Register evaluation criteria. In comparison to the adjacent The Domes building, the Placer County Administrative Building lacks engineering and design significance as a distinctive building that contributes to Placer County history. Architects Harold Hansen and Haluk Alan Akol designed the building as part of a short-term architecture firm partnership, and while they both identified the Placer County Administrative Center as their principal works, neither Hansen nor Akol appear to have risen to the level of master architects. In addition, none of the activities within the building, or persons associated with the initial use and development of the Placer County Administrative Building appear to be historically significant within local, state, or nationwide contexts of importance.

The Domes-175 Fulweiler Avenue

The Placer County Administrative Center Building, commonly known as "The Domes" was the next phase of development for the Placer County Administrative Center. Constructed in 1966 as a series of five hexagonal

5,000-square-foot domes, the building was nominated for listing on the National Register of Historic Places in 2024. The building was recommended as eligible under National Register Criterion C as a unique example of geodesic dome architecture in northern California. It is the only example of a TEMCOR geodesic dome office complex in California, and may be the only example nationwide. The construction and design of the building is directly associated with the notable inventor, engineer, and architect Richard Buckminster Fuller, who popularized and vigorously promoted the geodesic dome for residential and commercial uses. The Domes is a distinctive building contributing to Placer County history and continues to function as the administrative home for Placer County government and the Board of Supervisors' offices and meeting chamber (Placer County Historical Society 2024).

The National Register nomination for the Placer County Administrative Center (The Domes) was presented to the State Historical Resources Commission at a meeting on May 9, 2025. The commission unanimously accepted the nomination and recommended that the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) forward the nomination to the Keeper of the National Register for listing. As such, it is considered a historical resource for the purposes of CEQA.

LATER DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLACER COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER

The County continued to develop the government administrative center north of the two 1960s constructed buildings with additional phases of construction. The Auburn Branch of the Place County Library at 350 Nevada Street was constructed in 1971, the Auburn Garden Theater just northeast of The Domes was completed circa 1987-88, the building at 364 Nevada Street used as charter school was built circa 1982-4, and the Office of Education building at 360 Nevada Street was built circa 1981. A World War I memorial sculpture designed and cast by Dr. Kenneth Fox was also installed at an entrance into the property in 1967 (Placer County Historical Society 2024).

While the Placer County Government Center was developed in phases from the 1960s to 1980s, as envisioned by architect Harold M. Hansen, who also designed the 1963-constructed Placer County Administrative Building, the larger County-owned property as a whole is recommended as lacking historical significance under any of the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) criteria under the local, state, and national levels.

Historical Resources on the Proposed Project Site

AECOM's analysis of the two historic-age properties within the 10.5-acre County-owned project site affirms the conclusion in the 2024 NRHP nomination form for The Domes is eligible for listing for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C as a unique example of geodesic dome architecture in northern California, the only example of a TEMCOR geodesic dome office complex in California, and the construction and design of the building is directly associated with the notable inventor, engineer and architect Richard Buckminster Fuller, who popularized and vigorously promoted the geodesic dome for residential and commercial uses. At the local level of significance, The Domes is a distinctive building contributing to Placer County history and continues to function as the administrative home for Placer County government and the Board of Supervisors' offices and meeting chamber (Placer County Historical Society 2024). While not explicit in the National Register nomination, the presumed character-defining features of The Domes are the size, scale, and footprint of the building arranged in a honeycomb plan with a gold geodesic domes anodized exterior. The associated landscape and parking areas were not included in the National Register nomination, and are not recommended as character-defining features of the

resource. The period of significance of The Domes is 1966, the year it was constructed, and it retains sufficient integrity to physically convey its historic significance. The Placer County Administrative Center Building (The Domes) is a historical resource for the purposes of CEQA.

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Research to identify cultural resources within the proposed project site and vicinity included a records search, archival and background research, examination of data collected from earlier efforts, Native American consultation, and archaeological and built environment field surveys of the project site.

RECORDS SEARCH

A records search of the project site and a 0.25-mile radius was completed by staff at the North Central Information Center (NCIC) of the California Historic Resources Information System at California State University, Sacramento on May 1, 2025 to identify previously recorded cultural resources. The records search included reviews of previously conducted studies and recorded resources, and the Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) Built Environment Resource Directory and Archaeology Resource Directory (NCIC File No. PLA-25-42). The NCIC records search identified two previously recorded built-environment resources within the project site and an additional 11 cultural resources within 0.25 miles of the project site.

The two previously recorded resources on the proposed project site are the extant The Domes (P-31-004054) at 175 Fulweiler Avenue, and the Placer County Administrative Office Building (P-31-001798) at 145 Fulweiler Avenue. The Domes was recorded on a Historic Resources Inventory form in 1986 for a local historic survey. At that time, the building was designated a status code of 4 "Might become eligible for listing on the National Register," as the building was not yet of historic age (50 years). The status code of the building as reported in the OHP Built Environment Resource Directory as 7N "Needs to be reevaluated (former status code of 4) – may become National Register eligible with restoration or other specific conditions."

The Placer County Administrative Office building was recorded in 1997 on a California Department of Transportation Architectural Inventory/Evaluation Form as part of a previous study that overlaps the proposed project site. The Placer County Administrative Building was recorded as part of a cultural resources study utilizing Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Caltrans funds. At that time, the building was not yet of historic age, but was recommended as ineligible for listing in the National Register (PAR Environmental 1997). The status code of the building as reported in the OHP Built Environment Resource Directory is 6Y "Determined ineligible for National Register by consensus through Section 106 process – Not evaluated for California Register or local listing" as a result of the study in 1998.

The Placer County Administrative Office building is now of historic age, so because of the passage of time since the previous evaluation of ineligibility, the Placer County Administrative Office building is being evaluated for historical significance as part of the proposed project.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A National Register nomination form was prepared for The Domes by the Placer County Historical Foundation and submitted to the State Historical Resources Commission (SHRC). At a meeting held on May 9, 2025, the

SHRC accepted the nomination for official listing on the National Register. The Domes was placed on the NRHP on July 7, 2025, and, therefore, was also listed on the California Register of Historical Resources (SHPO 2025).

The City of Auburn's *Register of Historic Places* and *Historic Design Review District Map* were also reviewed. Neither of the historic-age properties in the proposed project site are included (City of Auburn 2022; City of Auburn n.d.a). The City of Auburn Historic Properties by Parcel map identifies the proposed project site as a "Historic Parcel," which appears to correspond with the *City of Auburn Historic Resources Survey Master List of Historic Properties* with a Survey Status of 4; however, there is no additional information or justification for its designation as a Historic Parcel (City of Auburn n.d.b; City of Auburn n.d.c.)

AECOM cultural resources staff also conducted research at the Sacramento Room at the Central Branch of the Sacramento Public Library reviewing primary and secondary source materials for development of the Auburn area.

SURVEY RESULTS

Archaeology

On May 5, 2025, AECOM Archaeologist John Nessman, MSc, RPA conducted an intensive pedestrian survey of the proposed project area utilizing parallel transects of widths no greater than 10 meters; however, survey transect width was adjusted based on ground visibility. Areas in which exposed soil was visible, including rodent back dirt piles, dead grass, and cut slopes, were closely scrutinized. No archaeological resources were identified in the records search. No precontact resources were identified in the pedestrian survey, nor were any historical archaeological resources potentially associated with the Spanish Flat mining operations or other historic periods, were encountered.

Environmental conditions on the proposed project site were highly variable. Ground visibility was contingent upon location and ranged from 0 percent to 100 percent. Approximately 75 percent of the survey area is paved or built upon, and ground visibility ranged from 0-5 percent in these areas. The remaining 25 percent of the survey area was composed of grass fields, mixed vegetation, and exposed soil. Within the grass fields and vegetation, ground visibility ranged from 15-25 percent, and up to 100 percent where larger patches of bare surface were present. Boot scrapes were utilized in areas with exposed soil. Vegetation on site included various California native trees, grasses, and low-lying shrubs. Additionally, other native and non-native shrubs and flowering plants were in close proximity to buildings on the project site.

Built Environment

On May 5, 2025, AECOM Architectural Historian Evan Mackall, MA conducted an intensive survey of the historic-age built environment on the proposed project site. Two historic-age buildings, the extant The Domes (P-31-004054) and the Placer County Administrative Office Building (P-31-001798), which were previously recorded and identified in the records search, were investigated in the field and documented with digital photographs and detailed notes. The site visit confirmed the descriptions of the Placer County Administrative Office Building in 1997, and the description of The Domes in the 2024 National Register nomination remain unchanged.

3.b.2 REGULATORY SETTING

FEDERAL

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, 1966

Federal regulations for cultural resources are governed primarily by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 (as amended). Section 106 of the NHPA requires federal agencies to take into account the effects of their undertakings on historic properties and affords the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) a reasonable opportunity to comment on such undertakings. The ACHP's implementing regulations are the "Protection of Historic Properties" 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 800. The federal agency first must determine whether it has an undertaking that is a type of activity that could affect historic properties. Historic properties are those that meet the criteria for or are listed in the NRHP.

National Register of Historic Places

"Historic properties," as defined by the ACHP, include any "prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structure, or object included in, or eligible for inclusion in the NRHP maintained by the Secretary of the Interior" (CFR Section 800.16(I)). Eligibility for inclusion in the NRHP is determined by applying the following criteria, developed by the National Park Service in accordance with the NHPA:

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:

A. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or

B. That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or

C. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or

D. That have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Integrity is defined in NRHP guidance as "the ability of a property to convey its significance. To be listed in the NRHP, a property must not only be shown to be significant under the NRHP criteria, but it also must have integrity" (National Parks Service 1990). NRHP guidance further asserts that properties must have been completed at least 50 years before evaluation to be considered for eligibility. Properties with construction completed fewer than 50 years before evaluation must be proven to be "exceptionally important" (criteria consideration G) to be considered for listing.

STATE

California Environmental Quality Act and the California Register of Historical Resources

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), lead agencies must consider the effects of their projects on historical resources. CEQA defines a "historical resource" as a resource listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing in, the CRHR, a resource included in a local register of historical resources, and any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript which a lead agency determines to be historically significant (Section 15064.5[a] of the Guidelines). The City has *Register of Historic Places* (City of Auburn 2022) and a *City of Auburn Historic Resources Survey Master List of Historic Properties* that serve as local registers. Public Resources Code Section 5024.1 requires that any properties that can be expected to be directly or indirectly affected by a proposed project be evaluated for CRHR eligibility. According to Public Resources Code Section 5024.1(c) (1–4), a resource may be considered historically significant if it retains integrity and meets at least one of the following criteria. A property may be listed in the CRHR if the resource:

1. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage;
2. Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past;
3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of installation, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values; or
4. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

To be considered eligible, a resource must meet one of the above-stated criteria and also retain integrity. Integrity has been defined by the National Park Service as consisting of seven elements: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Impacts to historical resources that materially impair those characteristics that convey its historical significance and justify its inclusion or eligibility for the NRHP or CRHR are considered a significant effect on the environment (CEQA Guidelines 15064.5).

In addition to historically significant resources, which can include archaeological resources that meet the criteria listed above, an archeological site may meet the definition of a "unique archeological resource" as defined in Public Resources Code Section 21083.2(g):

An archaeological artifact, object, or site about which it can be clearly demonstrated that, without merely adding to the current body of knowledge, there is a high probability that it meets any of the following criteria:

1. Contains information needed to answer important scientific research questions and that there is a demonstrable public interest in that information.
2. Has a special and particular quality such as being the oldest of its type or the best available example of its type.
3. Is directly associated with a scientifically recognized important prehistoric or historic event or person.

If it can be demonstrated that a project will cause damage to a unique archaeological resource, the lead agency may require reasonable efforts to be made to permit any or all of these resources to be preserved in place or left in an undisturbed state. To the extent that they cannot be left undisturbed, mitigation measures are required (Public Resources Code Section 21083.2 [a], [b] and [c]). CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5, subdivision (e), requires that excavation activities be stopped whenever human remains are uncovered, and that the county coroner be called in to assess the remains. If the county coroner determines that the remains are those of Native Americans, the Native American Heritage Commission must be contacted within 24 hours. At that time, the lead agency must consult with the appropriate Native Americans, if any, as timely identified by the Native American Heritage Commission. Section 15064.5 directs the lead agency (or applicant), under certain circumstances, to develop an agreement with the Native Americans for the treatment and disposition of the remains.

Public Resources Code, Section 5097.5

Public Resources Code Section 5097 specifies the procedures to follow in the event of the unexpected discovery of human remains on nonfederal land. The disposition of Native American burial falls within the jurisdiction of the Native American Heritage Commission. Public Resources Code Section 5097.5 states the following:

No person shall knowingly and willfully excavate upon, or remove, destroy, injure, or deface any historic or prehistoric ruins, burial grounds, archaeological or vertebrate paleontological site, including fossilized footprints, inscriptions made by human agency, or any other archaeological, paleontological or historical feature, situated on public lands, except with the express permission of the public agency having jurisdiction over such lands. Violation of this section is a misdemeanor.

Public Resources Code, Section 5097.98

Public Resources Code Section 5097.98 states that, whenever the Native American Heritage Commission receives notification of Native American human remains from a county coroner, the Native American Heritage Commission shall immediately notify the most likely descendant (MLD). The MLD may, with permission from the owner of the land in which the human remains were found, inspect the site and recommend to the owner or the responsible party conducting the excavation work a means for treating and/or disposing of the human remains and any associated grave goods. The MLD is required to complete their site inspection and make their recommendation within 48 hours of their notification from the Native American Heritage Commission.

Health and Safety Code, Section 7052 and 7050.5

Section 7052 of the Health and Safety Code states that the disturbance, mutilation, or removal of interred human remains is a felony if the remains are within a dedicated cemetery and a misdemeanor if interred outside of a dedicated cemetery. Section 7050.5 requires that construction or excavation be stopped in the vicinity of discovered human remains until the coroner examines the find and determines whether the remains are subject to various laws, including recognizing whether the remains are or may be those of a Native American. If determined to be Native American, the coroner must contact the Native American Heritage Commission.

California Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, Health and Safety Code Section 8010 through 8030

In the California Health and Safety Code, Division 7, Part 2, Chapter 5 broad provisions are made for the protection of Native American cultural resources. The Act sets the state policy to ensure that all California Native

American human remains and cultural items are treated with due respect and dignity. Likewise, the Act outlines the mechanism with which California Native American tribes not recognized by the federal government may file claims to human remains and cultural items held in agencies or museums.

California Native American Historical, Cultural, and Sacred Sites Act

The California Native American Historical, Cultural, and Sacred Sites Act applies to both state and private lands. This law requires that if human remains are discovered, construction or excavation activity must cease, and the County Coroner must be notified. If the remains are of a Native American, the coroner must notify the Native American Heritage Commission. The Native American Heritage Commission then notifies those persons most likely to be descended from the Native American whose remains were discovered. The California Native American Historical, Cultural, and Sacred Sites Act stipulates the procedures the descendants may follow for treating or disposing of the remains and associated grave goods.

California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5

California law protects Native American burials, skeletal remains, and associated grave goods, regardless of their antiquity, and provides for the sensitive treatment and disposition of those remains. Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 requires that if human remains are discovered in any place other than a dedicated cemetery, no further disturbance or excavation of the site or nearby area reasonably suspected to contain human remains can occur until the county coroner has examined the remains (Section 7050.5b). If the coroner determines or has reason to believe the remains are those of a Native American, the coroner must contact the California Native American Heritage Commission within 24 hours (Section 7050.5c). The Native American Heritage Commission will notify the MLD. With the permission of the landowner, the MLD may inspect the site of discovery. The inspection must be completed within 48 hours of notification of the MLD by the Native American Heritage Commission. The MLD may recommend means of treating or disposing of, with appropriate dignity, the human remains, and items associated with Native Americans.

California Government Code Section 6254.10

The California Public Records Act, described in Government Code Sections 6250 through 6270 requires that public records be accessible to the public at large for inspection purposes. Government Code Section 6254.10 clarifies that the California Public Records Act does not require disclosure of records that relate to archaeological site information and reports maintained by, or in the possession of, the Department of Parks and Recreation, the State Historical Resources Commission, the State Lands Commission, the Native American Heritage Commission, another State agency, or a local agency, including the records that the agency obtains through a consultation process between a California Native American tribe and a State or local agency.

LOCAL

City of Auburn General Plan

The *City of Auburn General Plan 1992 – 2012* is the currently adopted general plan (City of Auburn 1993). The purpose of the Historic Element is to identify the structures and areas of Auburn that should be preserved due to their historical, architectural, cultural, or archaeological significance and to present programs to effect preservation.

As described in the Historic Element of the General Plan, the City has established two historic districts: the Old Town Historic District, which includes buildings constructed between 1850 and 1900, and the Downtown Historic District, which includes buildings constructed between 1900 and 1940. The project site is not within or adjacent to either district.

The goal and policies of the Historic Element are the following:

- **Goal 1:** Preserve all historical sites and enhance the character of the historic districts.
  - **Policy 1.1:** Implement the Historic Development Guidelines listed in the Historic Element.
  - **Policy 1.2:** Preserve existing Indian and Chinese cemeteries and other historic sites.

Placer County General Plan

The proposed project would be developed with the City as a lead agency; however, the County owns the property and would be considered a responsible agency. The Placer County General Plan (updated 2013) includes goals and policies for cultural resources. Relevant policies applicable to the proposed project are provided below.

- **Goal 5.D:** To identify, protect, and enhance Placer County's important historical, archaeological, paleontological, and cultural sites and their contributing environment.
  - **Policy 5.D.3:** The County shall solicit the views of the Native American Heritage Commission, State Office of Historic Preservation, North Central Information Center, and/or the local Native American community in cases where development may result in disturbance to sites containing evidence of Native American activity and/or to sites of cultural importance.
  - **Policy 5.D.6:** The County shall require that discretionary development projects identify and protect from damage, destruction, and abuse, important historical, archaeological, paleontological, and cultural sites and their contributing environment. Such assessments shall be incorporated into a Countywide cultural resource data base, to be maintained by the Division of Museums.
  - **Policy 5.D.7:** The County shall require that discretionary development projects are designed to avoid potential impacts to significant paleontological or cultural resources whenever possible. Unavoidable impacts, whenever possible, shall be reduced to a less-than-significant level and/or shall be mitigated by extracting maximum recoverable data. Determinations of impacts, significance, and mitigation shall be made by qualified archaeological (in consultation with recognized local Native American groups), historical, or paleontological consultants, depending on the type of resource in question

3.b.3 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

METHODOLOGY

THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

The significance criteria used to evaluate a project's impacts to cultural resources under CEQA are based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. According to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, a significant impact related to cultural resources would occur if the project would:

- cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5.
- cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5.
- disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries.

IMPACTS ANALYSIS

IMPACT 3.b-1 Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5. *Implementation of the proposed project could result in substantial adverse change to known historical resources through demolition. This impact is* ***significant****.*

The City has developed Option 1 for implementation of the proposed project that would preserve The Domes on the site; however, the Placer County Government Administrative Office building and most of the on-site surface parking areas would be demolished. The western half of the project site would be redeveloped with apartment buildings and a central common-use building for recreation and gatherings, or meetings. Private open space areas would be provided for residents. Most of the existing mature landscape trees and the associated landscape buffer along the western and southern sides of the project site would be preserved. The existing vehicular entrance/egress from Fulweiler Avenue would be preserved or reconstructed, as necessary, to serve the circulation and emergency access needs of the proposed project.

Option 2 would involve demolishing the existing 1963-constructed Placer County Government Administrative Office building, "The Domes" building, and associated parking areas for the redevelopment of the property with additional housing opportunities and associated parking, circulation, landscaping, and infrastructure connections. The proposed project site would be redeveloped with apartment buildings and a central common-use building (also called "community space") for recreation and gatherings, or meetings. Private open space areas would be provided for residents. The existing mature landscape trees and the associated landscape buffering the western and southern sides of the project site would be preserved. The existing vehicular entrance/egress from Fulweiler Avenue would be preserved or reconstructed, as necessary, to serve the circulation and emergency access needs of the proposed project.

Option 1 would result in a potential loss of integrity for The Domes; however, the building derives its historical significance from its engineering and architecture not its setting. While Option 1 results in a change of setting and association in the immediate vicinity from a governmental center to a mixed-use development, this would not result in a substantial adverse change to the historical resource that it would no longer be able to physically convey its significance. Therefore, the impact would be **less than significant**.

Option 2 would cause a significant and unavoidable impact to a historical resource through the demolition of The Domes, which is a historical resource for the purposes of CEQA.

Mitigation Measures

In order to reduce the significance of the impacts to the historical resource associated with the proposed project, the City shall implement Mitigation Measures 3.b.1a and 3.b.1c for Option 1 and Option 2. Because inadvertent damage may occur to The Dome during demolition and construction in Option 1, this may result in a substantial adverse change to the physical characteristics of the historical resource that are significant. Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.b.1d and 3.b.1e for Option 1 only would minimize this potential impact to historical resources to less-than-significant with mitigation incorporated.

Mitigation Measure 3.b.1a: Historic American Building Survey Recordation

1. **Drawings:** Collect as-builts of The Domes.

2. **Photographs:** Before any site work has occurred to implement the proposed project, The Domes shall be photo documented according to Historic American Building Survey (HABS) standards for archival photography. HABS standards require large-format black- and-white photography, with the original negatives having a minimum size of 4”x5”. Digital photography, roll film, film packs, and electronic manipulation of images are not acceptable. A minimum of 24 photographs must be taken detailing the building exterior, interior, and the site. Photographs must be identified and labeled using HABS standards. Color non-archival photographs of the historical building and grounds shall be taken to supplement the limited number of archival photographs required under the HABS standards described above.

3. **Historical Overview:** In consultation with the City, a qualified historian/architectural historian shall assemble historical background information relevant and supplemental to the prepared National Register nomination form based on HABS guidelines for historical reports. Much of this information may be drawn from previous reports, and shall detail critical information such as the property’s physical history, historic context, architectural character (including inventories of key interior and exterior features), and a summary of information sources. Following completion of the HABS documentation, archival-grade materials shall be placed on file with the City of Auburn, the County of Placer, and the Auburn Library. Electronic copies will be made available for other interested parties.

Mitigation Measure 3.b.1b: Interpretive Signage

In collaboration with HABS documentation (Mitigation Measure 3.b.1a), the City shall require installation of interpretive signage for public exhibition concerning the history of the project site with an emphasis on The Domes. The signage could be based on the photographs produced in the HABS documentation, historic archival research, and previously prepared reports and forms for the property as a whole. Interpretive signage installed on the exterior of the property shall be sufficiently durable to withstand typical Auburn weather conditions for at least ten (10) years, like fiber-glass embedment panels that meet National Park Service signage standards. The signage shall be installed at a pedestrian-friendly

location and be of adequate size to attract the interested pedestrian. Maintenance of displays and/or signage shall be included in the management program on the property.

Mitigation Measure 3.b.1c: Website

Utilizing the information developed for the HABS documentation (Mitigation Measure 3.b.1a) a website shall be developed concerning the history of the project site with an emphasis on The Domes. The format of the website should be an ArcGIS StoryMap. The City shall retain a person experienced in StoryMaps to create the website. The City shall be responsible for hosting the website. A QR-code of the website shall be integrated into the Interpretive Signage (Mitigation Measure 3.b.1b).

Mitigation Measure 3.b.1d: Avoidance

The Domes shall be avoided during construction activities by establishing a protection zone restricting heavy equipment and vehicles near The Domes during construction activities within 50 feet of The Domes. Exclusionary fencing or other methods utilizing physical barriers shall be employed to prevent inadvertent damage to the historical resource. The fencing/barriers shall be installed around The Domes before ground-disturbing construction activities.

Mitigation Measure 3.b.1e: Pre-Construction Assessment and Inadvertent Damage Response

Ground-disturbing and construction activities implementing Option 1 adjacent to The Domes have the potential to inadvertently damage the historical resource. A pre-construction condition assessment will be conducted by a qualified architectural historian to establish a baseline of existing conditions prior to ground-disturbing activities. The assessment should focus on the conditions of The Domes, particularly character-defining features and the overall structural condition of the exterior of the historical resource. The written assessment will be accompanied by digital photography, notes, and field drawings, where appropriate. The findings and analysis will be compiled into a pre-construction condition assessment report. In the event of inadvertent damage to The Domes during ground-disturbing activities, work must be stopped and an architectural historian will be contacted to inspect the damage and prepare a response plan for the repairs to be with like and in-kind materials and finishes to match the existing. The architectural historian would provide suggestions for materials, finishes, and application/repair techniques to ensure that the repairs meet the National Park Service's Secretary of the Interior's Treatment of Historic Property Guidelines (2017).

Significance after Mitigation

Option 1 proposes building demolition and new construction on the project site adjacent to The Domes. Historic American Building Survey Recordation (Mitigation Measure 3.b.1a), Interpretive Signage (Mitigation Measure 3.b.1b), and Website (Mitigation Measure 3.b.1c) would reduce potential adverse effects of the change of setting and association of The Domes with the implementation of Option 1. Documentation of historical and engineering information of The Domes before ground-disturbing activities on the project site would reduce adverse effects. Avoidance (Mitigation Measure 3.b.1d) and Pre-Construction Assessment and Inadvertent Damage Response (Mitigation Measure 3.b.1e) would reduce potential impacts to The Domes. Therefore, implementation of Mitigation Measures 3.b.1a through 3.b.1e would reduce the impact to **Less than Significant with Mitigation.**

Option 2 proposes the demolition of The Domes. The demolition of a historical resource constitutes a significant adverse impact that cannot be mitigated to a less-than-significant level. However, CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation be undertaken even if it does not mitigate below a level of a significant effect on the environment. Accordingly, Historic American Building Survey Recordation (Mitigation Measure 3.b.1a), Interpretive Signage (Mitigation Measure 3.b.1b), and Website (Mitigation Measure 3.b.1c) would reduce impacts of the demolition of The Domes (and the loss of historical and engineering information) through data collection and public interpretation, but it would not mitigate the adverse effect of physical loss of a significant historical resource. Therefore, per CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(b), Option 2 of the proposed project would cause a significant impact to a historical resource that cannot be mitigated to a level of less than significant. As a result, impacts would remain **significant and unavoidable.**

IMPACT 3.b-2 Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5. *Ground-disturbing activities during construction could result in damage to previously unidentified archaeological resources. This impact is considered* ***potentially significant.***

No archaeological cultural resources were identified in the project site as a result of the records search (NCIC file no: PLA-25-42), literature review, field survey, or Native American consultation. However, previously unknown archaeological resources could be encountered during ground-disturbing activities, so this impact could be **potentially significant**.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure 3.b.2: Accidental Damage and Discovery Protocols

The contractor for development of the project site shall retain a qualified archaeologist to undertake the tasks specified within this mitigation measure for both Option 1 and Option 2 of the proposed project. In the event that suspected precontact or historic-period archaeological resources are encountered during demolition, excavation, and/or grading of the site, all activity within a 50-foot radius of the find shall be stopped, the City shall be notified, and the qualified archaeologist shall examine the find. Project personnel shall not collect or move any cultural material. The archaeologist shall evaluate the find(s) to determine if it meets the definition of a historical, unique archaeological, and/or tribal cultural resource and follow the further procedures outlined below:

- If the finds do not meet the definition of a historical resource or unique archaeological resource, no further study or protection is necessary prior to resuming project implementation.

If the finds do meet the definition of a historical resource or unique archaeological resource, then it should be avoided by project activities. If avoidance is not feasible, as determined by the City, the qualified archaeologist in consultation with the City, shall make appropriate recommendations regarding the treatment and disposition of such finds, and significant impacts to such resources shall be mitigated in accordance with the recommendations of the archaeologist prior to resuming construction activities within a 50-foot radius.

- If human remains are encountered, project work shall stop in the vicinity of the remains and, as required by law, the County Coroner would be notified immediately. An archaeologist also would be contacted to evaluate the find. If the human remains were determined of Native American origin, the

County Coroner would need to notify the Native American Heritage Commission within 24 hours of that determination. Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98, the Native American Heritage Commission, in turn, would immediately contact a Most Likely Descendent (MLD). The MLD would have 48 hours to inspect the site and recommend treatment of the remains. The City shall coordinate with the MLD in good faith to find a respectful resolution to the situation and entertain all reasonable options regarding the descendants' preferences for treatment.

- Recommendations for treatment and disposition of finds could include, but are not limited to, the collection, recordation, and analysis of any significant cultural materials, or the turning over of tribal cultural resources to tribal representatives for appropriate treatment. A report of findings documenting any data recovery shall be submitted to the Northwest Information Center (NWIC).

Significance after Mitigation

The record search, literature review, field survey, Native American consultation, combined with the previous ground-disturbing activities for the current development on the project site, any buried archaeological resources (precontact or historical) were likely already disturbed. Therefore, the potential for previously undiscovered archaeological resources (surface or buried) in the project site is low. Because this mitigation measure requires stopping work within the area of any potential find(s), and requires that a qualified archaeologist inspect the find and, in consultation with the City, make recommendations for avoiding or reducing impacts, implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.b.2 would reduce inadvertent impacts of the proposed project to undiscovered archaeological resources to **Less than Significant with Mitigation**.

IMPACT 3.b-3 Disturb any Human Remains, Including those Interred Outside of Formal Cemeteries. *Ground-disturbing activities during construction could impact human remains. This impact is considered* ***potentially significant.***

As described previously, the project site has been developed in the past, and ground-disturbing activities likely already disturbed or resulted in the discovery of any buried human remains that may have existed on the site. Nonetheless, it is possible that unknown human remains could be discovered through ground-disturbing construction activities associated with the proposed project under both Option 1 and Option 2. However, the City is required to follow State regulations and implement associated procedures that are designed to reduce impacts in the unlikely event human remains are found.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure 3.b.3: Avoid Impacts to Human Remains Consistent with State Law

As described therein, if human remains are uncovered during future ground-disturbing activities, the City and its contractors would be required to halt potentially damaging excavation in the area of the burial and notify the County Coroner and a professional archaeologist to determine the nature of the remains. The coroner would be required to examine all discoveries of human remains within 48 hours of receiving notice of a discovery on private or State lands (California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5[b]). If the coroner determines that the remains are those of a Native American, the coroner must contact the Native American Heritage Commission by phone within 24 hours of making that determination (California Health and Safety Code Section 7050[c]). The responsibilities for acting upon notification of a

discovery of Native American human remains are identified in California Public Resources Code Section 5097.9.

Following the coroner's findings, the property owner, contractor or project proponent, an archaeologist, and the Most Likely Descendant designated by the Native American Heritage Commission would determine the ultimate treatment and disposition of the remains and take appropriate steps to ensure that additional human interments are not disturbed. The Most Likely Descendant would have 48 hours to complete a site inspection and make recommendations after being granted access to the site. A range of possible treatments for the remains, including nondestructive removal and analysis, preservation in place, relinquishment of the remains and associated items to the descendants, or other culturally appropriate treatment may be discussed. Public Resources Code Section 5097.9 suggests that the concerned parties may extend discussions beyond the initial 48 hours to allow for the discovery of additional remains. The following is a list of site protection measures that could be employed:

1. record the site with the Native American Heritage Commission and the appropriate Information Center,

2. use an open-space or conservation zoning designation or easement, and

3. record a document with the county in which the property is located.

If the Native American Heritage Commission is unable to identify a Most Likely Descendant or the Most Likely Descendant fails to make a recommendation within 48 hours after being granted access to the site, the Native American human remains and associated grave goods would be reburied with appropriate dignity on the subject property in a location not subject to further subsurface disturbance.

Significance after Mitigation

Because the City is required to comply with the State regulations related to human remains, which are designed to reduce or avoid any significant effect, implementation of this mitigation measure includes provisions compliant with the Public Resource Code and Health and Safety Code that would reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level by notifying the proper authorities and implementing the proper handling and care of unknown human remains inadvertently discovered. Therefore, with the proposed project implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.b.3, the impact would be **Less than Significant with Mitigation**.

3.C TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

This section describes the environmental and regulatory setting for Tribal Cultural Resources (TCRs) within the proposed project site and surrounding area, identifies and analyzes potential impacts to TCRs from implementation of the project, and recommends mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate significant impacts.

During the public comment period after the July 23, 2025 publication date of the Notice of Preparation (NOP) of the City's intent to prepare a draft environmental impact report, the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) provided comment on August 8. The NAHC recommended early consultation with California Native American Tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area to avoid inadvertent discoveries of Native American human remains and tribal cultural resources. The City incorporated this recommendation.

3.c.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

A TCR defined by CEQA includes sites, features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places, and objects with cultural value to California Native American tribes. Tribal cultural resources may contain physical cultural remains or may be places within a landscape, such as gathering places, sacred sites, landscape features, plants, or other locations that help maintain religious and cultural practices, traditions, beliefs, lifeways, arts, crafts, or social institutions of a living tribal community.

This category of resources under CEQA is to recognize that tribes have unique knowledge and information about sensitive resources important to the self-identity of tribal communities and can only be identified by members of the Native American community, thus requiring consultation under CEQA. Historical resources, unique archaeological resources, or non-unique archaeological resources may also be tribal cultural resources if they meet these criteria. Cultural resources other than TCRs are discussed in Section 3.b, "Cultural Resources."

Refer to the "Environmental Setting" in Section 3.b, "Cultural Resources," of this EIR for an overview of the pre-contact Native American history and subsequent historic-era land use history of the project site. The project site is currently developed with two Placer County administrative buildings, along with paved parking areas and landscaping. Below is relevant information for understanding TCRs.

ETHNOHISTORIC CONTEXT

The city of Auburn is situated within the lands occupied and traditionally used by the Nisenan, sometimes referred to as the Southern Maidu. The language of the Nisenan, which includes several dialects, is classified within the Maiduan family of the Penutian linguistic stock (Kroeber 1925; Shipley 1978). The western boundary of Nisenan territory was the western bank of the Sacramento River (Valley Nisenan). The eastern boundary was "the line in the Sierra Nevada mountains where the snow lay on the ground all winter" (Hill Nisenan). Hill Nisenan would typically travel east and west seasonally from the crest of the Sierra Nevada to the eastern edge of the Sacramento Valley following the drainage of the American River (Littlejohn 1928:13; Sommers et al 2015:11).

Nisenan settlement locations depended primarily on elevation, exposure, and proximity to water and other resources. Permanent villages were usually sited on low rises along major watercourses. Several Nisenan

villages were near present-day Auburn (Wilson and Towne 1978: Figure 1). Wilson and Towne indicate that two larger villages contained dance houses, which were often semi-subterranean structures covered in earth and tule or brush, with a central smoke hole at the top, and an east-facing entrance (Wilson and Towne 1978).

The Nisenan occupied permanent settlements from which specific task groups set out to harvest the seasonal bounty of flora and fauna that the rich valley environment provided. The Valley Nisenan economy involved riparian resources, in contrast to the Hill Nisenan, whose resource base consisted primarily of acorns and game procurement. The only domestic plant was native tobacco (*Nicotiana* sp.), but many wild species were closely husbanded. The acorn crop from the blue oak (*Quercus douglasii*) and black oak (*q. Kelloggii*) was so carefully managed that use of this plant food can be considered the equivalent of agriculture. Acorns could be stored in anticipation of winter shortfalls in resource abundance. Deer, rabbit, and salmon were the chief sources of animal protein in the aboriginal diet, but many insects and other animal species were taken when available.

Compared to the Valley Nisenan, the Hill Nisenan were largely spared from disease and decimation from early European contact in the 1830s by Hudson Bay trappers and later smallpox brought by miners in the early 1850s. Not until the discovery of gold at nearby Sutter's Mill were the lifeways and livelihoods of the Hill Nisenan devastated. Miners hunted game almost to extinction, waterways were clogged with mining debris and sediment, preventing fish from thriving in the rivers, and oak trees that provided acorns were cut down to provide a fuel source in mining camps. Within twenty years, the Hill Nisenan were surviving around Auburn by working for Europeans or white Americans in mining, agriculture, logging, and ranching (Sommers et al 2015: 11).

The decimation of the Nisenan culture in the latter half of the nineteenth century as a result of European colonization, coupled with a reluctance to discuss Nisenan spiritual beliefs and practices, makes it difficult to describe these practices in any detail. However, historic records document a number of observances and dances, some of which are still performed today, that were important ceremonies in early historic times. The Kuksu religion, the basic religious system noted throughout central California, appeared among the Nisenan.

Membership was restricted to those initiated in its spirit and deity-impersonating rites. However, the Kuksu was only one of several levels of religious practice among the Nisenan. Various dances associated with mourning and the change of seasons were also important. One of the last major additions to Nisenan spiritual life occurred sometime shortly after 1872 with a revival of the Kuksu as an adaptation to the ghost dance religion (Wilson and Towne 1978). Today, Nisenan descendants are reinvesting in their traditions and represent a growing and thriving community.

CONTEMPORARY NATIVE AMERICAN SETTING

Archaeologists routinely focus on traditional Native American culture and ignore current and vibrant Native American culture. This approach is not sufficient to provide a context or set of values maintained by the current Native American community in relation to their history and the landscape. Tribes view themselves as contemporary stewards of their culture and the landscape, representing a continuum from the past to the present. They are resilient, vibrant, and active in the community. Tribes maintain their connection to their history and ongoing culture by practicing traditional ceremonies, engaging in traditional practices (e.g., basketry), and conducting public education and interpretation. The acknowledgement of Native American history and the persistence of tribes cannot be overlooked and should be recognized.

Today, Nisenan descendants and other tribes are reinvesting in their traditions and represent a growing and thriving community that is actively involved in defining their role as stewards of their ancestors' sites including the identification of TCRs. TCRs provide the backdrop to religious understanding, traditional stories, knowledge of resources such as varying landscapes, bodies of water, animals and plants, and self-identity. Knowledge of place is central to the continuation and persistence of culture, even if former Nisenan and Miwok occupants live removed from their traditional homeland. Consulting tribes view these interconnected sites and places as living entities; their associations and feelings persist and connect with descendant communities (UAIC 2025).

Below is a summary of the two tribes that responded to Assembly Bill (AB 52) consultation, which are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area.

United Auburn Indian Community

The United Auburn Indian Community (UAIC) is a federally recognized tribe comprised of both Miwok and Maidu (Nisenan) tribal members who are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the greater Sacramento area. The tribe has deep spiritual, cultural, and physical ties to their ancestral land and are contemporary stewards of their culture and landscapes. The tribal community represents the continuity and endurance of their ancestors by maintaining connections to their history and culture. The tribe's goal is to ensure the preservation and continuance of their cultural heritage for current and future generations.

The reestablishment of the United Auburn Indian Tribe began when the United States Department of the Interior documented the existence of a separate, cohesive band of Maidu and Miwok Indians, occupying a village on the outskirts of Auburn. In 1917, the United States acquired land in trust for the Auburn Band near Auburn and formally established a reservation, known as the Auburn Rancheria. Tribal members continued to live on the reservation as a community despite great adversity (UAIC 2025).

In 1953, the United States Congress enacted the Rancheria Act, authorizing the termination of federal trust responsibilities to a number of California tribes, including the Auburn Band. With the exception of a 2.8-acre parcel containing a tribal church and a park, the government sold the land comprising the Auburn Rancheria. The United States terminated federal recognition of the Auburn Band in 1967 (UAIC 2025).

This loss of federal recognition proved even more devastating twenty years later, as only "federally recognized" tribes had access to the opportunities for economic improvement created by the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act passed by Congress in 1988. This act required states to negotiate in good faith for the operation of gambling casinos by tribes whose sovereignty had been recognized by the federal government. A number of Indian bands brought suit to have their recognition restored, claiming that it had been illegally withdrawn. In 1991, surviving members of the Auburn Band reorganized their tribal government as the United Auburn Indian Community and requested the United States to formally restore their federal recognition.

In 1994, Congress passed the Auburn Indian Restoration Act, which restored the tribe's federal recognition. The act provided that the tribe may acquire land in Placer County to establish a new reservation (UAIC 2025). In 2002, UAIC acquired 49.21 acres under a land trust with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to build and operate a casino (BIA 2002). In 2018, UAIC entered into another land trust with the BIA, for 1,100 acres in Placer County to build 110 single-family homes and other amenities for tribal members (*Indian Country Today* 2022). Almost once driven to the edge of extinction, today the descendants of the

Auburn Nisenan not only contribute millions of dollars to worthy local charities, but are the fourth largest employer in Placer County (Placer County Historical Society n.d.).

Wilton Rancheria

Members of Wilton Rancheria are descendants of the Penutian linguistic family identified as speaking the Miwok dialect. The tribe's indigenous territory encompasses Placer and Sacramento counties and the land the tribe's ancestors inhabited were located along a path of massive death and destruction of California Indians caused by Spanish, Mexican, and American military incursions, disease, and slavery, and the violence accompanying mining and settlements (Wilton Rancheria 2024). Between March 1851 and January 1852, three commissioners hastily negotiated eighteen treaties with representatives of some of the indigenous population in California. The Treaty of the Forks of the Cosumnes River ceded the lands on which the Wilton Rancheria was later established, but promised to establish a rancheria on the Cosumnes River.

The tribe's ancestors came back from nearly being annihilated only to have their children taken to boarding schools that stripped their indigenous language and culture further. Finally, in July 1928, the United States acquired a 38.77-acre tract of land in the rural community of Wilton from the Cosumnes Company, which formally established the Wilton Rancheria. However, under the California Rancheria Act of 1958, the federal government terminated federal recognition of the tribe in 1964 (Wilton Rancheria 2024).

In 1991, surviving members of Wilton Rancheria reorganized their tribal government and in 1999 requested the United States formally restore their federal recognition. A U.S. District Court judge restored Wilton Rancheria as a federally recognized tribe in 2009. The tribe passed its constitution in 2011. It stated its four branches of government that include the office of the chair and vice chair, the tribal council, a tribal court, and the general

council. The tribe's administration office is located in the city of Elk Grove, Sacramento County in California (Wilton Rancheria 2024).

RECORD SEARCHES AND CONSULTATION

Records Search

UAIC conducted a background search for the identification of TCRs for this project, which included a review of pertinent literature, historic maps, and a records search using UAIC's Tribal Historic Information System (THRIS). UAIC's THRIS database is composed of UAIC's areas of oral history, ethnographic history, and places of cultural and religious significance, including UAIC Sacred Lands that are submitted to the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC). The THRIS resources shown in this region also include previously recorded indigenous resources identified through the California Historical Resources Information System Center (CHRIS), as well as historic resources and survey data. According to THRIS data, the village of *Koto* is in the general vicinity, but no other known TCRs are shown in or directly adjacent to the project area.

A records search of the project site and a 0.25-mile search radius was completed by staff at the North Central Information Center (NCIC) of the California Historical Resources Information System, located at California State University, Sacramento, on May 1, 2025 to identify cultural resources and TCRs (NCIC file no. PLA-25-42). The records search included reviews of previously conducted studies and reports, previous site records, and the archaeological resources directory.

The records search did not identify any previously recorded ancestral Native American archaeological sites or resources that satisfy the definition of a TCR under Public Resources Code Sections 21074 and 5024.1.

Native American Heritage Commission Consultation and Sacred Lands File Search

The Native American Heritage Commission was contacted by AECOM on behalf of the City via email on April 29, 2025, for a sacred lands file search and a Native American contacts list for the project site. The Native American Heritage Commission responded via email on April 30, 2025, with negative results of the sacred lands file and attached a list of five Native American tribes who may have knowledge of tribal cultural resources in the project area.

CEQA – AB 52 Tribal Consultation

The City conducted government-to-government consultation with the five traditionally culturally affiliated tribes in accordance with Assembly Bill (AB) 52. Tribal consultation was initiated on May 14, 2025 with the five tribes identified by the Native American Heritage Commission with traditional cultural affiliation with the project area:

- Colfax-Todds Valley Consolidated Tribe
- Nevada City Rancheria Nisenan Tribe
- Tsi-Akim Maidu Band of the Taylorsville Rancheria
- United Auburn Indian Community of the Auburn Rancheria (UAIC)
- Wilton Rancheria

Wilton Rancheria responded via email on May 14, 2025 that although the project is within the ancestral territory of the Wilton Rancheria, they do not have any comments and do not wish to open consultation at this time. Wilton Rancheria requested continued outreach and/or consultation for future projects and to be contacted if there are any project updates or changes.

The UAIC responded via email on May 14, 2025 that the tribe will be consulting with the City. No other tribes responded to the request to consult.

3.c.2 REGULATORY SETTING

FEDERAL

The proposed project is not subject to any federal approvals, and the federal portion of the regulatory setting, therefore, is presently merely for context.

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, 1966

Federal regulations for cultural resources are governed primarily by section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 (as amended). Section 106 of the NHPA requires federal agencies to take into account the effects of their undertakings on historic properties and affords the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) a reasonable opportunity to comment on such undertakings. The ACHP's implementing

regulations are the "protection of historic properties" 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) part 800. The federal agency first must determine whether it has an undertaking that is a type of activity that could affect historic properties. Historic properties are those that meet the criteria for or are listed in the NRHP.

Traditional Cultural Places

Traditional cultural places (TCPs) are resources eligible for the NRHP based on cultural significance derived from a traditional group identity expressed in indigenous knowledge, religious beliefs, customs, practices, language, and other intangible aspects of culture (NPS 2024). TCPs embrace a wide range of historic properties, such as the location associated with a Native American group's origin or the origin of the world (cosmogony), or an urban neighborhood that is the traditional home of a particular cultural group and that still reflects and is associated with their beliefs and practices. Other examples include places where traditional people historically have gone and continue to visit for ceremonial practices or objects imbued with particular cultural significance. These examples are not intended to be exhaustive, but instead to illustrate the range of possible TCPs. The NPS National Register Bulletin 38 defines a traditional cultural place as a building, structure, object, site, or district that may be listed or eligible for listing in the National Register for its significance to a living community because of its association with cultural beliefs, customs, or practices that are rooted in the community's history and that are important in maintaining the community's cultural identity (NPS 2024). The identification and evaluation of TCPs can be conducted only by consultation with members of the relevant group of people that ascribe value to the resource, or through other forms of ethnographic research.

Evaluation of TCPs

Federal agencies must evaluate TCPs for eligibility for listing in the NRHP to determine if they are historic properties subject to management as required under section 106 of the NHPA. As with any resource that is evaluated for listing in the NRHP, the TCP must be a tangible district, site, building, structure, or object (NPS 2024). This consideration requires merely that the TCP be a physical place or tangible object, in the broadest sense, rather than the intangible beliefs or values alone. Evaluation of TCPs requires two major steps: evaluation

of the integrity of the resource as a TCP and its eligibility for listing on the NRHP under the process for assessing the significance of historic properties. The four NRHP criteria for assessing significance include properties:

A. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or

B. That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or

C. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or

D. That have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

STATE

California Environmental Quality Act

CEQA requires lead agencies to consider the effects of their actions on historical resources, unique archaeological resources, and TCRs. Under Public Resources Code Section 21084.1, a "project that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment." Under Public Resources Code Section 21084.2, a "project with an effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment." Section 21083.2 requires agencies to determine whether projects would have effects on unique archaeological resources.

Tribal Cultural Resources

TCRs may or may not manifest as archaeological sites. In some cases, TCRs are viewsheds, plant gathering areas, or other sacred spaces or objects that are not readily identifiable to non-tribal members but that meet the statutory definition of a TCR in that it is a significant resource under Public Resources Code section 5024.1. In many cases, TCRs also include an archaeological component, such as artifacts, features, and sites (with or without human remains). Public Resources Code Section 21074 states the following:

(a) "tribal cultural resources" are either of the following:

(1) Sites, features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places, and objects with cultural value to a California Native American tribe that are either of the following:

(A) Included or determined to be eligible for inclusion in the California Register Of Historical Resources.

(B) Included in a local register of historical resources as defined in subdivision (k) of section 5020.1.

(2) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of section 5024.1 [see below]. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of section 5024.1 for the purposes of this paragraph, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

(b) A cultural landscape that meets the criteria of subdivision (a) is a tribal cultural resource to the extent that the landscape is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape.

(c) A historical resource described in section 21084.1, a unique archaeological resource as defined in subdivision (g) of section 21083.2, or a "non-unique archaeological resource" as defined in subdivision

(h) of section 21083.2 may also be a tribal cultural resource if it conforms to the criteria of subdivision (a).

Subdivision (c) of Section 5024.1 states that a resource is eligible for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources (i.e., "significant"), if it meets any of the following criteria:

(1) is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage.

(2) is associated with the lives of persons important in our past.

(3) embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values.

(4) has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Assembly Bill (AB) 52

AB 52 (effective July 1, 2015) added public resources code sections 21073, 21074, 21080.3.1, 21080.3.2, 21082.3, 21083.09, 21084.2, and 21084.3 to CEQA, relating to intergovernmental consultation with California Native American tribes, consideration of TCRs, and confidentiality. AB 52 provides procedural and substantive requirements for lead agency consultation with California Native American tribes and consideration of effects on TCRs, as well as examples of mitigation measures to avoid or minimize impacts to TCRs. AB 52 establishes that if a project may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a TCR, that project may have a significant effect on the environment. Lead agencies must avoid damaging effects to TCRs, when feasible, and shall keep information submitted by tribes confidential.

AB 52 requires a lead agency to consult with California Native American tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of the proposed project, if the tribe requested the lead agency, in writing, to be informed by the lead agency of proposed projects in that geographic area and the tribe requests consultation. Public Resources Code Section 21080.3.1(d) states that within 14 days of determining that an application for a project is complete or a decision by a public agency to undertake a project, the lead agency shall provide formal notification to the designated contact of, or tribal representative of, traditionally and culturally affiliated California Native American tribes that have requested notice, which shall be accomplished by means of at least one written notification that includes a brief description of the proposed project location and its location, the lead agency contact information, and a notification that the California Native American tribe has 30 days to requests consultation pursuant to this section.

Public Resources Code Section 5097.98

Public Resources Code Section 5097.98 states that whenever the Native American Heritage Commission receives notification of Native American human remains from a county coroner, the Native American Heritage Commission shall immediately notify the most likely descendant (MLD). The MLD may, with permission from the owner of the land in which the human remains were found, inspect the site and recommend to the owner or the responsible party conducting the excavation work a means for treating and/or disposing of the human remains and any associated grave goods. The MLD is required to complete their site inspection and make their recommendation within 48 hours of their notification from the Native American Heritage Commission.

California Health and Safety Code, Section 7052 and 7050.5

Section 7052 of the California Health And Safety Code states that the disturbance, mutilation, or removal of interred human remains is a felony if the remains are within a dedicated cemetery and a misdemeanor if interred outside of a dedicated cemetery. Section 7050.5 requires that construction or excavation be stopped in

the vicinity of discovered human remains until the coroner examines the find and determines whether the remains are subject to various laws, including recognizing whether the remains are or may be those of a Native American. If determined to be Native American, the coroner must contact the Native American Heritage Commission.

California Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, Health and Safety Code Section 8010 Through 8030

In the California Health and Safety Code, Division 7, Part 2, Chapter 5 broad provisions are made for the protection of Native American cultural resources. The act sets the state policy to ensure that all California Native American human remains, and cultural items are treated with due respect and dignity. The act also provides the mechanism for disclosure and return of human remains and cultural items held by publicly funded agencies and museums in California. Likewise, the act outlines the mechanism with which California Native American tribes not recognized by the federal government may file claims to human remains and cultural items held in agencies or museums.

California Native American Historical, Cultural, and Sacred Sites Act

The California Native American Historical, Cultural, and Sacred Sites Act applies to both state and private lands. This law requires that if human remains are discovered, construction or excavation activity must cease, and the County Coroner must be notified. If the remains are of a Native American, the coroner must notify the Native American Heritage Commission. The Native American Heritage Commission then notifies those persons most likely to be descended from the Native American whose remains were discovered. The act stipulates the procedures the descendants may follow for treating or disposing of the remains and associated grave goods.

LOCAL

City of Auburn General Plan (1993)

The City of Auburn General Plan does not include goals and/or policies for tribal cultural resources.

3.c.3 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

METHODOLOGY

The analysis of tribal cultural resources provided in this section is based on tribal traditional knowledge obtained through a cultural resources records search through the California historical resources information system of the NCIC and a sacred lands file search through the Native American Heritage Commission. The City also submitted notification and request-to-consult letters to all interested Native American individuals and organizations on the Native American Heritage Commission's AB 52 notification list and conducted Native American consultation, as requested, pursuant to AB 52, on May 14, 2025. As of the writing of this document, the City has invited, but has had no input from the UAIC.

CEQA requires intergovernmental consultation to occur early in the CEQA process to allow tribal governments, public lead agencies, and project applicants to exchange information to inform the CEQA lead agency's identification of TCRs that may be impacted by the project, determine the significance of any potential adverse impacts to TCRs, and identify feasible avoidance and mitigation measures. The

intergovernmental consultation process is intended to reduce the potential for delay and conflict in the environmental review process through a good-faith negotiation on the part of all participants. AB 52 defines "consultation" as "the meaningful and timely process of seeking, discussing, and considering carefully the views of others, in a manner that is cognizant of all parties' cultural values and, where feasible, seeking agreement." (Public Resources Code Section 21080.3.1[b], citing government code section 65352.4) "consultation between government agencies and Native American tribes shall be conducted in a way that is mutually respectful of each party's sovereignty. Consultation shall also recognize the tribes' potential needs for confidentiality with respect to places that have traditional tribal cultural significance." (Public Resources Code Section 21080.3.1[b], citing Government Code Section 65352.4.)

THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Based on Appendix G of the CEQA guidelines, a project may have a significant impact on TCRs if it would:

- Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a TCR, defined in public resources code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:

  i) Listed or eligible for listing in the California register of historical resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code Section 5020.1(k), or

  ii) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

3.c.4 IMPACTS ANALYSIS

IMPACT 3.c-1 Potential for substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource. *Ground-disturbing activities during construction could result in damage to previously unidentified tribal cultural resources. The impact is considered* ***potentially significant.***

No tribal cultural resources were identified in the project site as a result of tribal consultation. Additionally, the records search (NCIC file no: PLA- 25-42), Native American Heritage Commission sacred land file search, literature review, field survey, or through UAIC's THRIS review.

Because specific locations of potential TCRs are unknown, mitigation focuses on preventative measures that reduce the probability of impacting the integrity of a resource, as well as plans and processes for properly handling unanticipated discoveries. In the case that an object resembling a tribal or cultural resource is uncovered, construction can halt while the resource is investigated, and a conclusion reached for appropriate next steps.

Since the project site has been previously developed and is largely covered with impervious surfaces, landscaping, and built environment, ground-disturbing activities associated with the prior construction likely already disturbed or resulted in the discovery of any subsurface TCRs, archeological/tribal cultural resources

that may have existed on the site. However, because specific locations of potential tribal cultural resources are unknown, the impact is considered **potentially significant**. The following mitigation is required for both Option 1 and Option 2.

MITIGATION MEASURES

Mitigation Measure 3.c.1: Response To Unanticipated Discoveries of Tribal Cultural Resources.

If any suspected TCRs or resources of cultural significance to tribes, including but not limited to features, anthropogenic/cultural soils, cultural belongings or objects (artifacts), shell, bone, shaped stones or bone, or ash/charcoal deposits are discovered by any person during construction activities including ground disturbing activities, all work shall pause immediately within 100 feet of the find, or an agreed upon distance based on the project area and nature of the find. Work shall cease in and within the immediate vicinity of the find regardless of whether the construction is being actively monitored by a Tribal Monitor, cultural resources specialist, or professional archaeologist.

A Tribal Representative and the City shall be immediately notified, and the Tribal Representative in coordination with the City, shall determine if the find is a TCR (PRC §21074) and the Tribal Representative shall make recommendations for further evaluation and treatment as necessary.

Treatment and Documentation:

The culturally affiliated Tribe shall consult with the City to (1) identify the boundaries of the new TCR and (2) if feasible, identify appropriate preservation in place and avoidance measures, including redesign or adjustments to the existing construction process, and long-term management, or 3) if avoidance is infeasible, a reburial location in proximity of the find where no future disturbance is anticipated. Permanent curation of TCRs will not take place unless approved in writing by the culturally affiliated Tribe.

The construction contractor(s) shall provide secure, on-site storage for culturally sensitive soils or objects that are components of TCRs that are found or recovered during construction. Only Tribal Representatives shall have access to the storage. Storage size shall be determined by the nature of the TCR and can range from a small lock box to a Conex box (shipping container). A secure (locked), fenced area can also provide adequate on-site storage if larger amounts of material must be stored.

The construction contractor(s) and City shall facilitate the respectful reburial of the culturally sensitive soils or objects. This includes providing a reburial location that is consistent with the Tribe's preferences, excavation of the reburial location, and assisting with the reburial, upon request.

Any discoveries shall be documented on a Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) 523 form within 2 weeks of the discovery and submitted to the appropriate CHRIS center in a timely manner.

Work at the TCR discovery location shall not resume until authorization is granted by the City in coordination with the culturally affiliated Tribe.

If articulated or disarticulated human remains, or human remains in any state of decomposition or skeletal completeness are discovered during construction activities, the County Coroner and the culturally

affiliated Tribe shall be contacted immediately. Upon determination by the County Coroner that the find is Native American in origin, the Native American Heritage Commission will assign the Most Likely Descendent who will work with the project proponent to define appropriate treatment and disposition of the burials.

Significance after Mitigation

Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.c.1 would reduce project-related impacts to unanticipated discoveries of TCRs through affording tribes the opportunity to identify and recommend treatment to **less than significant with mitigation**.

3.D LAND USE AND PLANNING

3.d.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

This chapter of the EIR discusses existing and cumulative conditions associated with the Auburn Domes Infill Project (proposed project) in relation to land use and planning. The information contained within this chapter is primarily based on the City of Auburn Land Use White Paper, and the City of Auburn Housing Element 2021 – 2029. The analysis presented in this section evaluates potential conflicts of the proposed project with applicable policies, zoning requirements, and other relevant planning and policy documents, specifically regarding policies and standards the City of Auburn has adopted for the intent of reducing physical environmental effects. The section also discusses the potential for the proposed project to divide existing communities.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Land Use

The proposed project is located in the city of Auburn within Placer County. The project site is located solely on Assessor's Parcel No. 001-032-034-000, and is developed with two County government buildings. The immediate land uses surrounding the site include an amphitheater, public library, two schools, office and commercial development, and a cemetery, as detailed in Chapter 2 of this EIR, Project Description. Land uses beyond the immediate vicinity include a mixture of single-family residential, transportation, commercial, and government.

The existing General Plan land use designation is Commercial with a Public overlay. The project site is currently zoned as Mixed Use Zoning District #6, Central Business District Open Space & Conservation (C-2/OSC) [City of Auburn 1993]. According to the Auburn General Plan 2045 Draft Land Use Map, the project site is classified as Mixed Use – General (1.5 floor area ratio [FAR], 30 dwelling units per acre [DU/AC]). The 2045 Draft Land Use Map is only that – a draft that has not been adopted by the City Council.

3.d.2 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Sacramento Area Council of Governments Metropolitan Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy

The Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) is responsible for the preparation of, and updates to, the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and the corresponding Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP) for the six-county Sacramento region. The MTP provides a 20-year transportation vision and corresponding list of projects. The MTIP identifies short-term projects (7-year horizon) in more detail. The current MTP, the 2020 MTP/SCS, was adopted in November 2019 (SACOG 2019). SACOG is also responsible for the oversight and distribution of most federal and State transportation funding sources. An update to the MTP/SCS is underway as of the writing of this EIR. In June of 2024, SACOG adopted land use assumptions to use in the MTP/SCS update, otherwise known as the 2025 Blueprint.

The MTP/SCS identifies the project site and surrounding area as a Center/Corridor Community Type. The Center/Corridor Community Type includes areas of the region with relative dense and mixed-use development patterns, such as historic downtowns, main streets, commercial corridors, rail station areas, central business districts, town centers, or other high-density destinations. Development within the Center/Corridor Community

Type is relatively more compact, has a greater mix of uses, and has a wider variety of transportation infrastructure compared to the rest of the region.

The project site is located in a "SB 375 Transit Priority Project Area," and a 2040 planned High Frequency Transit Area, as identified by SACOG in the 2020 Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy. The project site is located in an area identified by SACOG both as "Qualifying Areas for SB 375 Sustainable Communities Projects" and "Qualifying Areas for SB 375 Transit Priority Projects" (SACOG 2019, Figure 3.7, page 51). The project site is also identified as being within an existing Transit Priority Area (SACOG 2019, Figure 3.8, page 52). In order to demonstration that the region can meet the passenger vehicle greenhouse gas emissions mandates of SB 375, the MTP/SCS emphasizes development such as the proposed project:

> "…the region needs to develop land more efficiently in the next 20 years compared to the way it developed over the last 60 years. More compact development will…make it more reliable and affordable for people to get to their daily destinations…We are required to look at the both the transportation and land use impacts of the forecasted new jobs, homes and people. … By 2040 there will be 490,000 homes and 658,000 jobs close to high-frequency transit service… An increased emphasis on compact development and better coordination of that development with transportation projects show significant benefits for travel in 2040…" (SACOG 2019, pages 30-31).

City of Auburn General Plan/Land Use White Paper

The City of Auburn General Plan is currently undergoing an update, titled *Envision Auburn 2045*. This will result in the adoption of the new General Plan, *Auburn General Plan 2045.* The last General Plan, *City of Auburn General Plan 1992 – 2012,* was adopted in 1992. While the full draft General Plan is not available for public review at this time, the City of Auburn has released a Land Use White Paper to provide land use data and related background information (City of Auburn 2025a). According to the Land Use White Paper, High Density Residential makes up only four percent of existing land uses within the City of Auburn Planning Area. Conversely, Low Density Residential makes up 62 percent.

The proposed project is referenced in the Land Use White Paper as the Domes Infill Accelerator Project. According to the Land Use White Paper, the site represents an important opportunity for infill development "given the proximity of this site to the Amtrak station, the I-80 freeway interchanges, and the Downtown/Old Town districts," and is has the potential for "multi-family residential uses, townhomes, commercial development, or mixed uses, and is an important revenue-generating opportunity for the City."

While *City of Auburn General Plan 1992 – 2012* is soon to be superseded by *Auburn General Plan 2045*, it is still the adopted General Plan for the City at this time. The following goals and policies of its Land Use Element are considered relevant to the proposed project (City of Auburn 1993):

- **Goal 1:** Guide development in a pattern that will minimize land use conflicts between adjacent land users.
  - **Policy 1.1:** Design industrial/commercial business uses to be compatible with adjacent land uses, including, but not limited to, siting, height, orientation, materials, landscaping, circulation, grading, setbacks proportion, and architecture.

- **Policy 1.2:** Design multi-family residential projects to minimize impacts on adjacent land uses.

- **Goal 3:** Guide development so that it takes advantage of Auburn's unique character including, but not limited to, terrain and vegetation.
  - **Policy 3.3:** Utilize the policies in the Open Space and Conservation Element to create and maintain a visual variety.
- **Goal 4:** Enhance air quality.
  - **Policy 4.1:** Review proposed development projects for their potential adverse impacts on air quality.
- **Goal 5:** Establish a variety of residential densities which will provide for different housing types and levels of cost.
- **Goal 9:** Develop a land use pattern which can be adequately served with community facilities (such as schools, libraries, and community recreation), urban services, and transportation facilities.

CITY OF AUBURN ZONING CODE

The proposed project site is currently zoned as Mixed Use Zoning District #6, C-2/OSC (City of Auburn 2019). The land uses allowed under the C-2 zoning district are extensive, and include apartments and rental housing by right.

CITY OF AUBURN HOUSING ELEMENT

The most recent City of Auburn General Plan Housing Element was adopted in 2021, and provides an inventory of existing housing needs, as well as proposed actions to facilitate the provision of housing to meet those needs at all income levels (City of Auburn 2021). The following goals and policies of the Housing Element are considered relevant to the proposed project:

- **Goal 1:** The City shall provide a range of housing choices that meets the needs of all Auburn residents in terms of type, density, and cost.
  - **Policy 1.1:** The City shall maintain an adequate supply of land in appropriate land use designations and zoning categories to accommodate the projected growth in the number of households.
  - **Policy 1.2:** While promoting the provision of housing for all economic segments of the community, the City shall seek to ensure high quality in all new residential developments.
  - **Policy 1.4:** The City shall identify areas where infrastructure exists or propose to support residential development.

According to the Housing Element's quantified objectives, the City expects the construction of approximately 310 new housing units within the period of June 30, 2021, to August 31, 2029.

3.d.3 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

This EIR evaluates Land Use and Planning impacts using criteria derived from Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. Under CEQA, the proposed project would result in a significant transportation impact if it would:

- Physically divide an established community; or
- Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.

IMPACT ANALYSIS

IMPACT 3.d-1 **Physically divide an established community.** *The proposed project would not physically divide an established community. There would be* ***no impact****.*

The proposed project would demolish one or both existing government buildings on the project site. It would construct 238 new units of housing if the domes are preserved, or 315 units if they are demolished. The project does not include development that could be considered a barrier, nor would access or circulation to the surrounding community be modified. The proposed project would serve to increase the housing stock of the City of Auburn as well as the amount of high density multifamily housing. Therefore, there would be **no impact**.

IMPACT 3.d-2 **Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.** *The proposed project would be generally compatible with the relevant land use plans, policies, or regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. There would be* ***no impact****.*

Sacramento Area Council of Governments Metropolitan Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy Consistency

As noted previously, the MTP/SCS identifies the project site and surrounding area as a Center/Corridor Community Type, where development is relatively more compact, has a greater mix of uses, and has a wider variety of transportation infrastructure compared to the rest of the region. The project site is located in a "SB 375 Transit Priority Project Area," and a 2040 planned High Frequency Transit Area, as identified by SACOG in the 2020 MTP/SCS. The project site is located in an area identified by SACOG both as "Qualifying Areas for SB 375 Sustainable Communities Projects" and "Qualifying Areas for SB 375 Transit Priority Projects" (SACOG 2019, Figure 3.7, page 51). The project site is also identified as being within an existing Transit Priority Area (SACOG 2019, Figure 3.8, page 52). The proposed project is consistent with, and advances the goals of the MTP/SCS.

General Plan Consistency

As stated above, *City of Auburn General Plan 1992 – 2012* is still the adopted general plan until it is superseded by *Auburn General Plan 2045.* The existing land use designation for the project site according to the 1992 General Plan is Commercial with a Public Overlay. The Commercial Land Use Designation in the City's General Plan allows development at a maximum intensity of 3.0 – the proposed project – both Option 1 and Option 2 would be significantly less than this maximum (General Plan, Table IV-4, page IV-18). The Commercial Land

Use Designation is intended to provide opportunity for a "full range of commercial uses (General Plan, page IV-20). The Public overlay designation is intended by the City to denote publicly owned property, and is just for informational purposes, and this overlay does not convey any additional requirements for development. (General Plan, page IV-22).

The City has developed for public and decision maker review and input the 2045 Draft Land Use Map, which shows the project site being designated Mixed Use – General. The proposed project would be consistent with how this conceptual land use designation is described. According to the *Envision Auburn 2045* Land Use Categories, the Mixed Use – General designation is applied in two settings, one of which is "larger vacant and underutilized properties with development potential, such as the Domes site near the Auburn Train Station and portions of the DeWitt Campus in the Placer County Government Center. The designation recognizes the potential for these areas to support significant new commercial, residential, and/or mixed-use development" (City of Auburn 2025b).

Additionally, the project is referenced as a priority in the new City of Auburn Land Use White Paper, which is a core component of the larger General Plan Update. The site is valued for infill housing development due to its proximity to Amtrak station, the I-80 freeway interchanges, and the Downtown/Old Town districts.

Zoning Code Consistency

The project site is within Mixed Use Zoning District #6, Central Business District Open Space & Conservation (C-2/OSC). The project would include multi-family residential, office (if Option 1 – Preserve the Domes is selected), and limited retail/commercial uses. According to City of Auburn Municipal Code 159.034, all of these uses are permitted by right within C-2 zoning districts. While the uses described above are compatible with the existing Zoning Code, certain aspects of the project, including its proposed height, would not be compatible. This would be addressed through the development of a new zoning overlay for the project site, which is discussed under Section 2.4, "Required Project Approvals." It appears the Open Space & Conservation (OSC) component of this combining zoning district is attributable to the County's ownership of the project site. The City's Zoning Code provides a process for public agencies such as the County to declare surplus land and convert to a new zoning district, and remove the OSC zoning classification after a report by the Planning Commission and determination by the City Council (City of Auburn Zoning Code Section 159.044[J]).

Housing Element Consistency

The project would increase the stock of multi-family residential housing within the City of Auburn. As stated above, the project would either create 238 or 315 new housing units, depending on whether Option 1 or Option 2 is pursued. The number of units proposed by the project with Option 2 (Redevelop the Entire Site) would be greater than the City's regional housing needs allocation used in the City's Housing Element (City of Auburn 2021, page HE-25). The City's regional housing needs allocation for the 2021-2029 period is 310 dwelling units. However, the regional housing needs allocation is not policy, but merely a minimum number of housing units that should be accommodated through the City's zoning and infrastructure provision. The proposed project is consistent with the goals and policies of the General Plan Housing Element, and is accounted for in other City of Auburn planning documents, including the Land Use White Paper.

The project is relevant to several goals and implementation programs of the most recent General Plan Housing Element, including Goal 1, providing "a range of housing choices that meets the needs of all Auburn residents in terms of type, density, and cost" as well as Goal 5, the promotion of "equal opportunity to secure safe, sanitary,

and affordable housing for all members of the community regardless of age, race, religion, sex, marital status, national origin, or color" (City of Auburn 2021). Further, the project would be required to adhere to Implementation Program B, which addresses residential zoning and development standards. As stated in Section 2.4, "Required Project Approvals," the project would include the development of a new zoning overlay to be added to the City of Auburn Zoning Code to accommodate the appropriate development standards (building heights, setbacks, etc.) The project would also undergo design review to ensure that the proposed site plan, grading plan, and landscape plan are compatible with the California Building Code, California Green Building Code, and any additional local standards that may apply.

Conclusion

The project would be generally consistent with the policies of the City of Auburn General Plan. Additionally, its proposed land uses are permitted under the relevant zoning district. The proposed project would include a zoning action by the City to ensure that the proposed building height is allowed under the City's Zoning Code. To the extent that the proposed project would exceed height limits of the existing zoning district, these exceedances are examined in detail throughout the technical sections of this EIR. In other words, this Focused EIR analyzes impacts of the project as proposed, regardless of the existing height or density limits present in the existing zoning for the site. There is no conflict with any regulation or policy adopted with the intent to reduce an environmental impact. There is **no impact**.

3.E NOISE AND VIBRATION

This section includes a description of existing ambient noise conditions, a summary of applicable regulations related to noise and vibration, and an analysis of the potential impacts resulting from the implementation of the proposed project. Mitigation measures are identified, as necessary, to reduce significant and potentially significant noise and vibration impacts.

3.e.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

ACOUSTIC FUNDAMENTALS

Noise is sound that is loud, disagreeable, unexpected, or unwanted. Sound, as described in more detail below, is mechanical energy transmitted in the form of a wave because of a disturbance or vibration, and as any pressure variation in air that the human ear can detect.

Sound Properties

A sound wave is introduced into a medium (air) by a vibrating object. The vibrating object (e.g., vocal cords, the string and sound board of a guitar, the diaphragm of a radio speaker) is the source of the disturbance that moves through the medium. Regardless of the type of source that creates the sound wave, the particles of the medium through which the sound moves are vibrating in a back-and-forth motion at a given frequency (pitch).[1] A commonly used unit for frequency is cycles per second, called hertz (Hz).[2]

A wave is an energy transport phenomenon that transports energy along a medium. The amount of energy carried by a wave is related to the amplitude (loudness) of the wave. A high-energy wave is characterized by high amplitude; a low-energy wave is characterized by low amplitude. The amplitude of a wave refers to the maximum amount of displacement of a particle from its rest position. The energy transported by a wave is directly proportional to the square of the amplitude of the wave. This means that a doubling of the amplitude of a wave is indicative of a quadrupling of the energy transported by the wave.

---

[1] The frequency of a wave refers to how often the particles vibrate when a wave passes through the medium. The frequency of a wave is measured as the number of complete back-and-forth vibrations of a particle per unit of time. If a particle of air undergoes 1,000 longitudinal vibrations in 2 seconds, then the frequency of the wave would be 500 vibrations per second.

[2] Each particle vibrates as a result of the motion of its nearest neighbor. For example, the first particle of the medium begins vibrating at 500 Hz and sets the second particle of the medium into motion at the same frequency (500 Hz). The second particle begins vibrating at 500 Hz and sets the third particle into motion at 500 Hz. The process continues throughout the medium; hence each particle vibrates at the same frequency, which is the frequency of the original source. A guitar string vibrating at 500 Hz will set the air particles in the room vibrating at the same frequency (500 Hz), which carries a sound signal to the ear of a listener that is detected as a 500-Hz sound wave. The back-and-forth vibration motion of the particles of the medium would not be the only observable phenomenon occurring at a given frequency. Because a sound wave is a pressure wave, a detector could be used to detect oscillations in pressure from high to low and back to high pressure. As the compression (high-pressure) and rarefaction (low-pressure) disturbances move through the medium, they would reach the detector at a given frequency. For example, a compression would reach the detector 500 times per second if the frequency of the wave were 500 Hz. Similarly, a rarefaction would reach the detector 500 times per second if the frequency of the wave were 500 Hz. Thus, the frequency of a sound wave refers not only to the number of back-and-forth vibrations of the particles per unit of time, but also to the number of compression or rarefaction disturbances that pass a given point per unit of time. A detector could be used to detect the frequency of these pressure oscillations over a given period of time. The period of the sound wave can be found by measuring the time between successive high-pressure points (corresponding to the compressions) or the time between successive low-pressure points (corresponding to the rarefactions). The frequency is simply the reciprocal of the period; thus, an inverse relationship exists so that as frequency increases, the period decreases, and vice versa.

Sound and the Human Ear

Because of the ability of the human ear to detect a wide range of sound-pressure fluctuations, sound-pressure levels are expressed in logarithmic units called decibels (dB) to avoid a very large and awkward range in numbers. The sound-pressure level in decibels is calculated by taking the log of the ratio between the actual sound pressure and the reference sound pressure squared. The reference sound pressure is considered the absolute hearing threshold (Caltrans 2013). Use of this logarithmic scale reveals that the total sound from two individual sources, each measured at 65 A-weighted decibels (dBA), is 68 dBA, not 130 dBA; that is, doubling the source strength increases the sound pressure by 3 dBA.

Because the human ear is not equally sensitive to all sound frequencies, a specific frequency-dependent rating scale was devised to relate noise to human sensitivity. A dBA scale performs this compensation by discriminating against frequencies in a manner approximating the sensitivity of the human ear. The basis for compensation is the faintest sound audible to the average ear at the frequency of maximum sensitivity. This dBA scale has been chosen by most authorities to regulate environmental noise. Typical indoor and outdoor noise levels are presented in Exhibit 3.e-1.

With respect to how humans perceive and react to changes in noise levels, a 1-dBA increase is imperceptible, a 3-dBA increase is barely perceptible, a 6-dBA increase is clearly noticeable, and a 10-dBA increase is subjectively perceived as approximately twice as loud (Caltrans 2013), as presented in Table 3.e-1.[3]

Table 3.e-1. Subjective Reaction to Changes in Noise Levels of Similar Sources

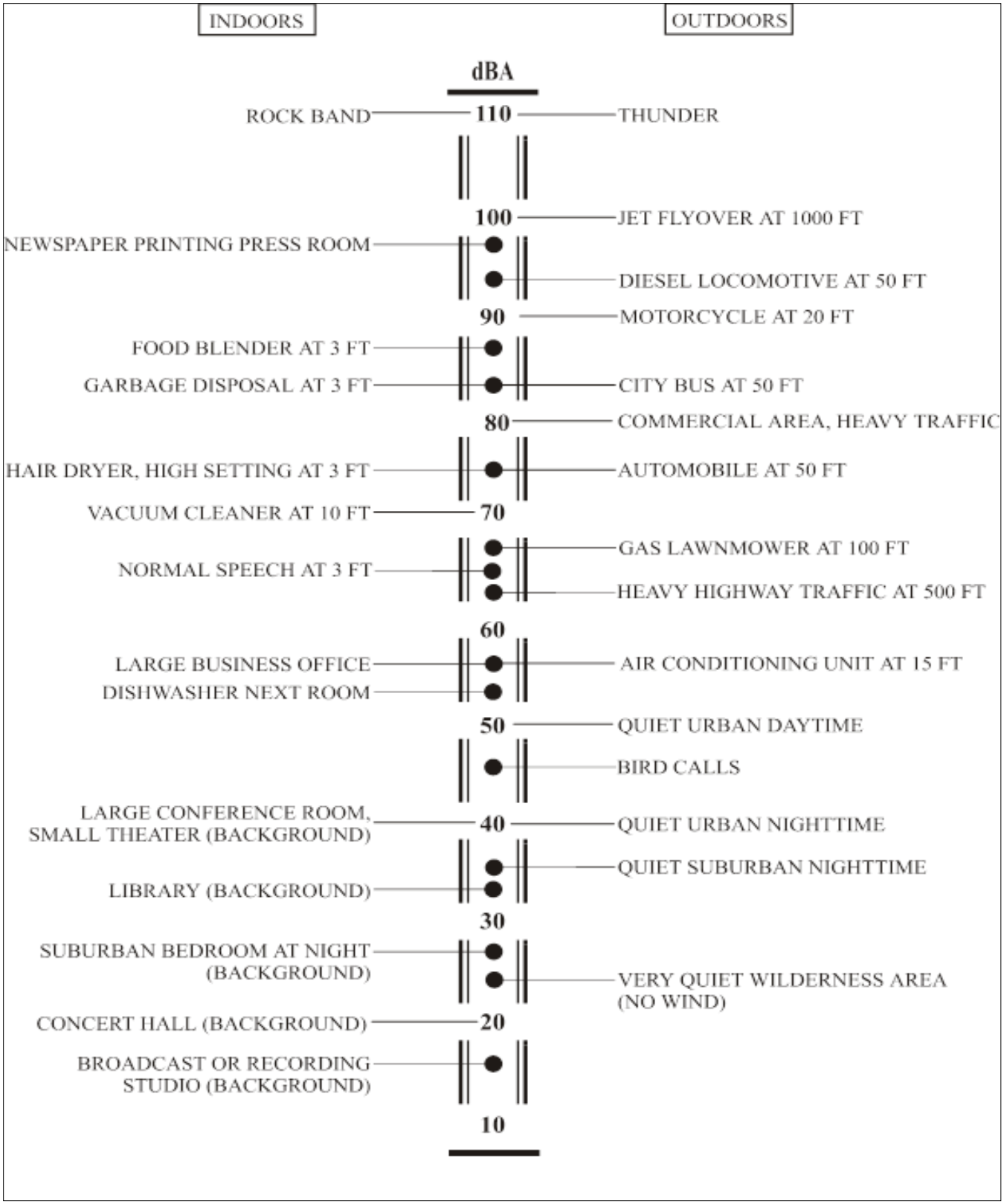
Change in Level, dBA	Subjective Reaction	Factor Change in Acoustical Energy
1	Imperceptible (except for tones)	1.3
3	Just barely perceptible	2.0
6	Clearly noticeable	4.0
10	About twice (or half) as loud	10.0

Note: dBA = A-weighted decibels
Source: Caltrans 2013

Sound Propagation and Attenuation

As sound (noise) propagates from the source to the receptor, the attenuation, or manner of noise reduction in relation to distance, is dependent on surface characteristics, atmospheric conditions, and the presence of physical barriers. The inverse-square law describes the attenuation caused by the pattern in which sound travels from the source to the receptor. Sound travels uniformly outward from a point source in a spherical pattern with an attenuation rate of 6 dBA per doubling of distance. However, from a line source (e.g., a road), sound travels uniformly outward in a cylindrical pattern with an attenuation rate of 3 dBA per doubling of distance. The characteristics of the surface between the source and the receptor may result in additional sound absorption and/or reflection.

[3] Table 3.9-1 was developed according to the reactions of test subjects to changes in the levels of steady-state pure tones or broadband noise and to changes in levels of a given noise source. It is most applicable to noise levels in the range of 50–70 dBA, as this is the usual range of voice and interior noise levels.



Note: dBA = A-weighted decibels

Source: Caltrans 2013

Exhibit 3.e-1 Typical Noise Levels

Atmospheric conditions such as wind speed, temperature, and humidity may affect noise levels. The presence of a barrier between the source and the receptor may also attenuate noise levels. The actual amount of attenuation depends on the size of the barrier and the frequency of the noise. A noise barrier may be any natural or human-made feature such as a hill, tree, building, wall, or berm (Caltrans 2013).

All buildings provide some exterior-to-interior noise reduction. A building constructed with a wood frame and a stucco or wood sheathing exterior typically provides an approximate exterior-to-interior noise reduction of 25 dBA with its windows closed. A building constructed of a steel or concrete frame, a curtain wall or masonry exterior wall, and fixed plate glass windows of one-quarter-inch thickness typically provides an exterior-to-interior noise reduction of 30–40 dBA when its windows are closed (Caltrans 2013).

Noise Descriptors

The selection of a proper noise descriptor for a specific source depends on the spatial and temporal distribution, duration, and fluctuation of the noise. The noise descriptors most often encountered when dealing with traffic, community, and environmental noise are defined below (Caltrans 2013).

- **L_{max} (Maximum Noise Level):** The maximum instantaneous noise level during a specific period of time. The L_{max} may also be referred to as the "peak (noise) level."
- **L_{min} (Minimum Noise Level):** The minimum instantaneous noise level during a specific period of time.
- **L_{eq} (Equivalent Noise Level):** The energy mean (average) noise level. The instantaneous noise levels during a specific period of time in dBA are converted to relative energy values. From the sum of the relative energy values, an average energy value is calculated, which is then converted back to dBA to determine the L_{eq}. In noise environments that are determined by major noise events, such as aircraft overflights, the L_{eq} value is heavily influenced by the magnitude and number of single events that produce the high noise levels.
- **L_{dn} (Day-Night Noise Level):** The 24-hour L_{eq} with a 10-dBA "penalty" for noise events that occur during the noise-sensitive hours between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. In other words, 10 dBA is "added" to noise events that occur in the nighttime hours, and this generates a higher reported noise level when determining compliance with noise standards. The L_{dn} accounts for the fact that noise during this specific period of time is a potential source of disturbance with respect to normal sleeping hours.
- **CNEL (Community Noise Equivalent Level):** Similar to the L_{dn} described above, but with an additional 5-dBA "penalty" added to noise events that occur during the noise-sensitive hours between 7:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m., which are typically reserved for activities that require quiet. When the same 24-hour noise data are used, the reported CNEL is typically approximately 0.5 dBA higher than the L_{dn}.
- **SENL (Single-Event [Impulsive] Noise Level):** A receiver's cumulative noise exposure from a single impulsive noise event, which is defined as an acoustical event of short duration and involves a change in sound pressure above some reference value. SENLs typically represent the noise events used to calculate the L_{eq}, L_{dn}, and CNEL.

Community noise is commonly described in terms of the ambient noise level, which is defined as the all-encompassing noise level associated with a given noise environment. A common statistical tool to measure the ambient noise level is the average, or equivalent, sound level L_{eq}, which corresponds to a steady-state, A-weighted

sound level containing the same total energy as a time-varying signal over a given time period (usually 1 hour). The L_{eq} is the foundation of the composite noise descriptors such as L_{dn} and CNEL, as defined above, and correlates well with community response to environmental noise.

Negative Effects of Noise on Humans

Negative effects of noise exposure include physical damage to the human auditory system, interference, and disease. Exposure to noise may result in physical damage to the auditory system, which may lead to gradual or traumatic hearing loss. Gradual hearing loss is caused by sustained exposure to moderately high noise levels over a period of time; traumatic hearing loss is caused by sudden exposure to extremely high noise levels over a short period. Gradual and traumatic hearing loss both may result in permanent hearing damage. In addition, noise may interfere with or interrupt sleep, relaxation, recreation, and communication. Although most interference may be classified as annoying, the inability to hear a warning signal may be considered dangerous. Noise may also be a contributor to diseases associated with stress, such as hypertension, anxiety, and heart disease. The degree to which noise contributes to such diseases depends on the frequency, bandwidth, and level of the noise, and the exposure time (Caltrans 2013).

Fundamental Noise Control Options

Any noise problem is generally composed of three basic elements: the noise source, a transmission path, and a receiver. The appropriate acoustical treatment for a given project should consider the nature of the noise source and the sensitivity of the receiver. The problem should be defined in terms of appropriate criteria (L_{dn}, L_{eq}, or L_{max}); the location of the sensitive receiver (inside or outside); and the time that the problem occurs (daytime or nighttime). Noise control techniques should then be selected to provide an acceptable noise environment for the receiving property while remaining consistent with local accessibility, safety, and aesthetic standards, as well as practical structural and economic limits. Fundamental noise control options are described below.

Setbacks

Noise exposure may be reduced by increasing the distance between the noise source and the receiving use. Setback areas can, for example, take the form of open space, frontage roads, recreational areas, and storage yards. The available noise attenuation from this technique is limited by the characteristics of the noise source, but is generally about 4–6 dBA.

Barriers

Shielding by barriers can be obtained by placing walls, berms, or other structures (such as buildings) between the noise source and the receiver. The effectiveness of a barrier depends on blocking the line of sight between the source and receiver; effectiveness is improved when the sound must travel a longer distance to pass over the barrier than if it were traveling in a straight line from source to receiver. The difference between the distance over a barrier and a straight line between source and receiver is called the “path length difference,” and is the basis for calculating barrier noise reduction.

Barrier effectiveness depends upon the relative heights of the source, barrier, and receiver. In general, barriers are most effective when placed close to either the receiver or the source. An intermediate barrier location yields a

smaller path length difference for a given increase in barrier height than does a location closer to either source or receiver.[4]

There are practical limits to the noise reduction provided by barriers. For vehicle traffic or railroad noise, a noise reduction of 5–10 dBA may often be reasonably attained. A 15-dBA noise reduction is sometimes possible, but a 20-dBA noise reduction is extremely difficult to achieve. Barriers usually are provided in the form of walls, berms, or berm/wall combinations. The use of an earth berm in lieu of a solid wall may provide up to 3 dBA additional attenuation over that attained by a solid wall alone, because of the absorption provided by the earth.

Site Design

Buildings can be placed on a project site to shield other structures or areas from areas affected by noise, and to prevent an increase in noise level caused by reflections. The use of one building to shield another can significantly reduce a project's overall noise control costs, particularly if the shielding structure is insensitive to noise.

Site design should guard against creating reflecting surfaces that may increase on-site noise levels. For example, two buildings placed at an angle facing a noise source may cause noise levels within that angle to increase by up to 3 dBA. The open end of U-shaped buildings should point away from noise sources for the same reason. Landscaping walls or noise barriers located within a development may inadvertently reflect noise back to a noise-sensitive area unless located carefully.

Building Façades

When interior noise levels are of concern in a noisy environment, noise reduction may be obtained through acoustical design of building façades. Standard construction practices provide a noise reduction of 10–15 dBA for building façades with open windows and a noise reduction of approximately 25 dBA when windows are closed. Thus, an exterior-to-interior noise reduction of 25 dBA can be obtained by requiring that building design include adequate ventilation systems, which allows windows on a noise-affected façade to remain closed under any weather condition.

Where greater noise reduction is required, acoustical treatment of the building façade is necessary. Reducing relative window area is the most effective control technique, followed by providing acoustical glazing (thicker glass or increased air space between panes) in frames with low air infiltration rates, using fixed (nonmovable) acoustical glazing, or eliminating windows. Noise transmitted through walls can be reduced by increasing wall mass (using stucco or brick in lieu of wood siding), isolating wall members by using double or staggered stud walls, or mounting interior walls on resilient channels. Noise control for exterior doorways is provided by reducing door area, using solid-core doors, and by acoustically sealing door perimeters with suitable gaskets. Roof treatments may include the use of plywood sheathing under roofing materials.

Vegetation

Trees and other vegetation are often thought to provide significant noise attenuation. However, approximately 100 feet of dense foliage (so that no visual path extends through the foliage) is required to achieve a 5-dBA

[4] For maximum effectiveness, barriers must be continuous and relatively airtight along their length and height. To ensure that sound transmission through the barrier is insignificant, barrier mass should be about four pounds per square foot, although a lesser mass may be acceptable if the barrier material provides sufficient transmission loss. Satisfaction of the above criteria requires substantial and well-fitted barrier materials, placed to intercept the line of sight to all significant noise sources.

attenuation of traffic noise (Caltrans 2013). Thus, the use of vegetation as a noise barrier should not be considered a practical method of noise control unless large tracts of dense foliage are part of the existing landscape.

Vegetation can be used to acoustically "soften" intervening ground between a noise source and a receiver, increasing ground absorption of sound and thus increasing the attenuation of sound with distance. Planting trees and shrubs also offers aesthetic and psychological value, and it may reduce adverse public reaction to a noise source by removing the source from view, even though noise levels will be largely unaffected. However, trees planted on the top of a noise-control berm can slightly degrade the acoustical performance of the barrier. This effect can occur when high-frequency sounds are diffracted (bent) by foliage and directed downward over a barrier.

The effects of vegetation on noise transmission are minor, and are primarily limited to increased absorption of high-frequency sounds and to reducing adverse public reaction to the noise by providing aesthetic benefits.

Vibration Fundamentals

Vibration is the periodic oscillation of a medium or object. The rumbling sound caused by the vibration of room surfaces is called structureborne noise. Similar to noise, groundborne vibration and groundborne noise can be generated from construction and operational sources. If vibration levels are high enough, groundborne vibration has the potential to damage structures, cause cosmetic damage (e.g., crack plaster), or disrupt the operation of vibration-sensitive equipment. Groundborne vibration and groundborne noise can also be a source of annoyance to individuals who live or work close to vibration-generating activities.

Groundborne noise is noise generated by the indoor movement of room surfaces, such as walls, resulting from groundborne vibration.

Vibration Descriptors

As is the case with airborne sound, groundborne vibrations may be described by amplitude and frequency. Vibration levels are usually expressed as a single-number measure of vibration magnitude in terms of velocity or acceleration, which describes the severity of the vibration without the frequency variable. Vibration amplitudes are usually expressed in peak particle velocity (PPV) or root mean square (RMS), as in RMS vibration velocity. PPV is defined as the maximum instantaneous positive or negative peak of a vibration signal. PPV is defined as the maximum instantaneous positive or negative peak of a vibration signal. PPV and RMS are normally described in inches per second (in/sec). PPV is often used in monitoring of blasting vibration because it is related to the stresses that are experienced by buildings (FTA 2018).

Although PPV is appropriate for evaluating the potential for building damage, it is not always suitable for evaluating human response. It takes some time for the human body to respond to vibration signals. In a sense, the human body responds to average vibration amplitude. The RMS of a signal is the average of the squared amplitude of the signal, typically calculated over a period of 1 second. Like airborne sound, the RMS velocity is often expressed in decibel notation, as vibration decibels (VdB), which serves to compress the range of numbers required to describe vibration (FTA 2018). This is based on a reference value of 1 microinch per second (µin/sec).

Vibration Sources

Sources of groundborne vibrations include natural phenomena (e.g., earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, sea waves, landslides) or human-made causes (e.g., explosions, machinery, traffic, trains, construction equipment). Vibration sources may be continuous, transient, or random. Continuous vibrations result from operating factory machinery, vibratory pile drivers, large pumps, horizontal directional drilling, and compressors. Transient vibrations are generated by explosions, blasting, impact pile driving, and wrecking balls. Random vibration can result from jackhammers, pavement breakers, and heavy construction equipment.

Construction activities can generate groundborne vibrations, which can, in extreme cases, pose a risk to nearby structures. Constant or transient vibrations can weaken structures, crack facades, and disturb occupants (FTA 2018). Heavy construction operations can cause substantial groundborne vibration in proximity to the source. The highest vibration levels are generated by impact equipment or heavy equipment, such as pile drivers or vibratory rollers.

The primary vibration sources associated with transportation system operations include heavy truck and bus traffic along roadways and train traffic along rail lines. Vehicle traffic, including heavy trucks traveling on a highway, rarely generates vibration amplitudes high enough to cause structural or cosmetic damage. In some cases, however, heavy trucks traveling over potholes or other discontinuities in the pavement have caused vibration high enough to result in complaints from nearby residents; these complaints typically can be resolved by smoothing the roadway surface. Freight trains, commuter trains, and light-rail trains can also be sources of ground vibration.

Effects of Vibration

The effects of groundborne vibration include movement of building floors, rattling of windows, shaking of items that sit on shelves or hang on walls, and rumbling sounds. In extreme cases, vibration can damage buildings, although this is not a factor for most projects. Human annoyance from groundborne vibration often occurs when vibration exceeds the threshold of perception by only a small margin. A vibration level that causes annoyance can be well below the damage threshold for normal buildings.

Vibrations transmitted through the ground during construction equipment operations or transportation system operations may annoy people and detrimentally affect structures and sensitive devices. Where construction vibration does cause structural damage, it is through direct damage and/or vibration-induced settlement. Structural damage depends on the frequency of the vibration at the structure, as well as the condition of the structure and its foundation. Human annoyance by vibration is related to the number and duration of events. The more events or the greater the duration, the more annoying it will be to humans.

Table 3.e-2 displays the reactions of people and the effects on buildings that continuous vibration levels produce. The annoyance levels shown in Table 3.e-2 should be interpreted with care since vibration may be found to be annoying at much lower levels than those shown, depending on the level of activity or the sensitivity of the individual. To sensitive individuals, vibrations approaching the threshold of perception can be annoying. Low-level vibrations frequently cause irritating secondary vibration, such as a slight rattling of windows, doors, or stacked dishes.

Table 3.e-2. Reaction of People and Damage to Buildings from Continuous or Frequent Intermittent Vibration Levels

Velocity Level, PPV (in/sec)	Human Reaction	Effect on Buildings
0.01	Barely perceptible	No effect
0.04	Distinctly perceptible	Vibration unlikely to cause damage of any type to any structures
0.08	Distinctly perceptible to strongly perceptible	Recommended upper level of the vibration to which ruins and ancient monuments should be subjected
0.1	Strongly perceptible	Virtually no risk of damage to normal buildings
0.3	Strongly perceptible to Severe	Threshold at which there is a risk of damage to newer residential structures
0.5	Severe – Vibration considered unpleasant	Threshold at which there is a risk of damage to newer residential structures

Notes: in/sec = inches per second; PPV = peak particle velocity
Source: Caltrans 2020

EXISTING NOISE ENVIRONMENT

Sensitive Receptors

Noise-sensitive land uses are generally considered to include those uses where quiet is an essential element of their intended purpose. This typically would include residences, schools, hospitals, nursing homes, retirement residences, places of worship, libraries, and sometimes parks, historic sites, cemeteries, and places where low interior noise levels are essential.

There are noise-sensitive uses, including residences, a library, and a school, located to the east and northeast of the project site. The nearest single-family residences are located approximately 100 feet to the southeast and as close as 150 feet to the east. A public library is directly adjacent to the northeast, and a school is also located to the northeast of the project site. No residential uses are present to the immediate north of the site.

Community Noise Survey

A community noise survey was conducted on April 31st through May 1st, 2025, to document the existing noise environment various at locations in the vicinity of the project site. The dominant noise source identified during the ambient noise survey was traffic from Nevada Street along the western boundary, and Fulweiler Avenue along the southern boundary of the project site. the distant State Route 49 (SR 49) to the east, and Interstate 80 (I-80) to the south of the project area.[5]

Community noise survey locations are shown in Exhibit 3.e-4. The L_{eq}, and L_{max} values were taken at each ambient noise measurement location presented in Table 3.e-3. During the survey, average daytime ambient noise levels ranged from 49 dBA to 66 dBA L_{eq}, with maximum noise levels that ranged from 60 dBA to 82 dBA L_{max}. Day-night average noise levels (L_{dn}) at the measurement locations ranged from 58 dBA to 67 dBA.

Existing Noise Sources

The primary noise source in the project area is vehicle traffic.

[5] Measurements of noise levels were taken in accordance with American National Standards Institute (ANSI) standards. Continuous 24-hour, long-term monitoring of noise levels was conducted at three locations in the City using Larson Davis Laboratories (LDL) Model 820 sound-level meters. The sound-level meters were calibrated before and after use with an LDL Model CAL200 acoustical calibrator to ensure that the measurements would be accurate. The equipment used meets all pertinent specifications of the ANSI for Type 1 sound-level meters (ANSI S1.4-1983[R2006]).

Table 3.e-3. Summary of Measured 24-hour Long Term Ambient Noise Levels (Average Measured Hourly Noise Levels, dBA)

Site	Location	Date	L_{dn}	L_{eq} Daytime (7 a.m.–10 p.m.)	L_{max} Daytime (7 a.m.–10 p.m.)	L_{eq} Nighttime (10 p.m.–7 a.m.)	L_{max} Nighttime (10 p.m.–7 a.m.)
LT-1	Eastern Project Boundary	4/30/25 – 5/1/25	58	49	64	52	67
LT-2	Western Project Boundary	4/30/25 – 5/1/25	67	66	82	58	75
ST-1	Southern Project Boundary	4/30/25	--	58	69	--	--
ST-2	Northern Project Boundary	5/1/25	--	49	60	--	--

Notes: dB = A-weighted decibels; L_{dn} = day-night average noise level; L_{eq} = the equivalent hourly average noise level; L_{max} = maximum noise level.
Monitoring locations correspond to those depicted in Exhibit 3.e-2.
Source: Data collected by AECOM 2025

Roadways

Existing vehicle traffic noise levels in the vicinity of the project site were modeled using the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Highway Traffic Noise Prediction Model (FHWA-RD-77-108) and traffic data prepared for the proposed project.[6]

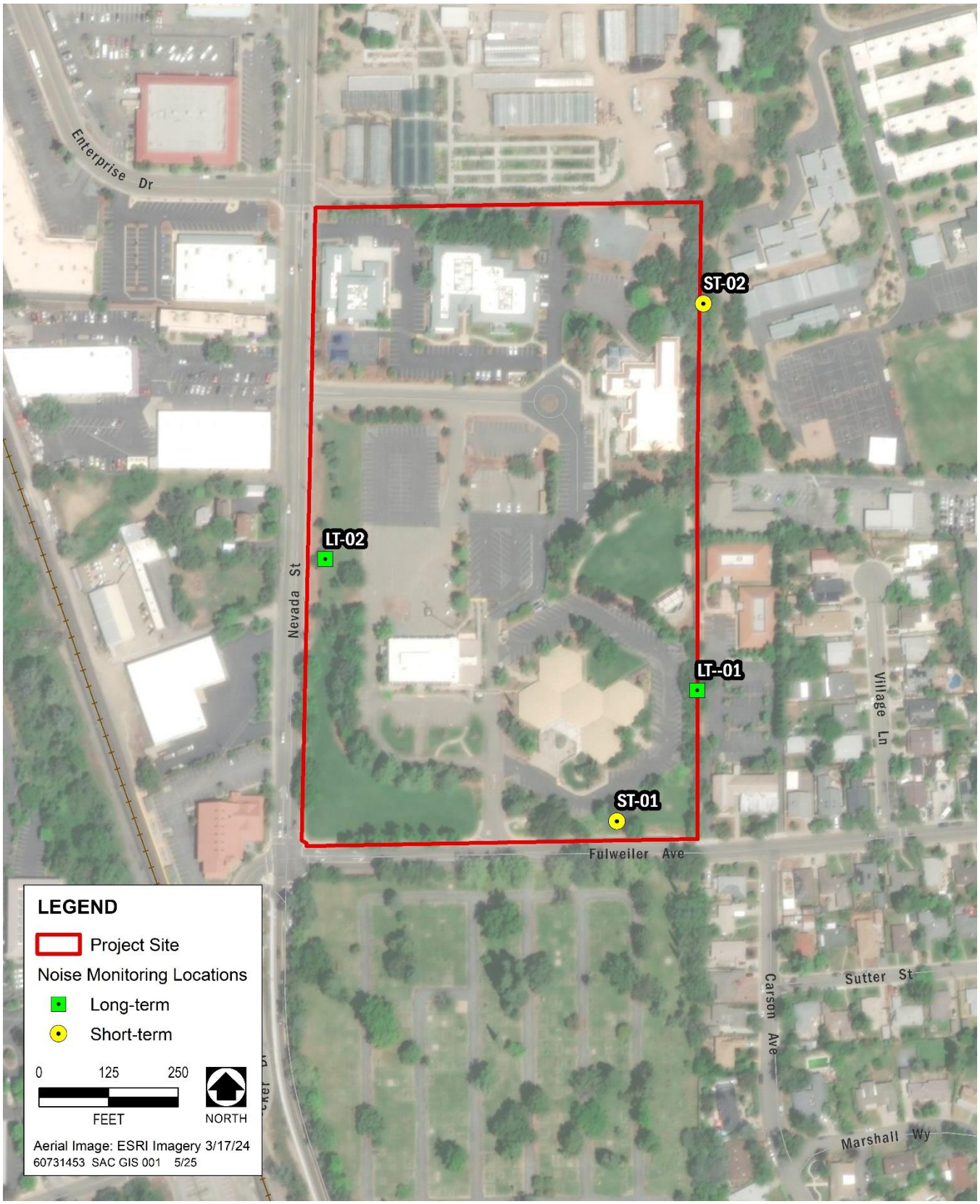
Table 3.e-4 summarizes the modeled traffic noise levels, provides noise levels at 100 feet from the centerline of roadways that could be affected by traffic generated at the project site, and lists distances from the roadway centerlines to the 60 dB, 65 dB, and 70 dB L_{dn} traffic noise contours. Exhibit 3.e-2 shows the traffic noise contours for roadways within the vicinity of the project site based on existing traffic volumes (not including any traffic associated with the proposed project). These traffic noise modeling results are based on existing average daily traffic (ADT) volumes. As shown in Table 3.e-4, the location of the 60 dB L_{dn} contour ranges from 91 to 4,805 feet from the centerline of the modeled surface street roadways. The extent to which noise-sensitive uses in the area are affected by the existing traffic noise depends on their respective proximity to the roadways and their individual sensitivity to noise.

Table 3.e-4. Summary of Modeled Levels of Existing Traffic Noise - Distance (feet) from Roadway Centerline to L_{dn} Contour

No	Roadway	Segment	L_{dn} (dB) 100 Feet	70 dB	65 dB	60 dB
1	SR 49 (Grass Valley Hwy)	Nevada Street to Palm Avenue	76	366	1157	3658
2	SR 49 (Grass Valley Hwy)	Palm Avenue to Elm Avenue	75	348	1099	3476
3	SR 49 (Grass Valley Hwy)	Elm Avenue to I-80	75	338	1070	3384
4	Nevada Street	SR 49 to Palm Avenue	65	30	94	298
5	Nevada Street	Palm Avenue to Fulweiler Avenue	68	67	211	668
6	Nevada Street	Fulweiler Avenue to I-80	68	57	180	569
7	Mount Vernon Road	West of Nevada Street	63	20	62	197
8	Palm Avenue	Nevada Street to SR 49	63	20	65	204
9	Palm Avenue	SR 49 to Auburn Ravine Road	65	29	92	292
10	Fulweiler Avenue	Nevada Street to SR 49	66	39	123	389
11	Elm Avenue	SR 49 to I-80	68	63	200	632

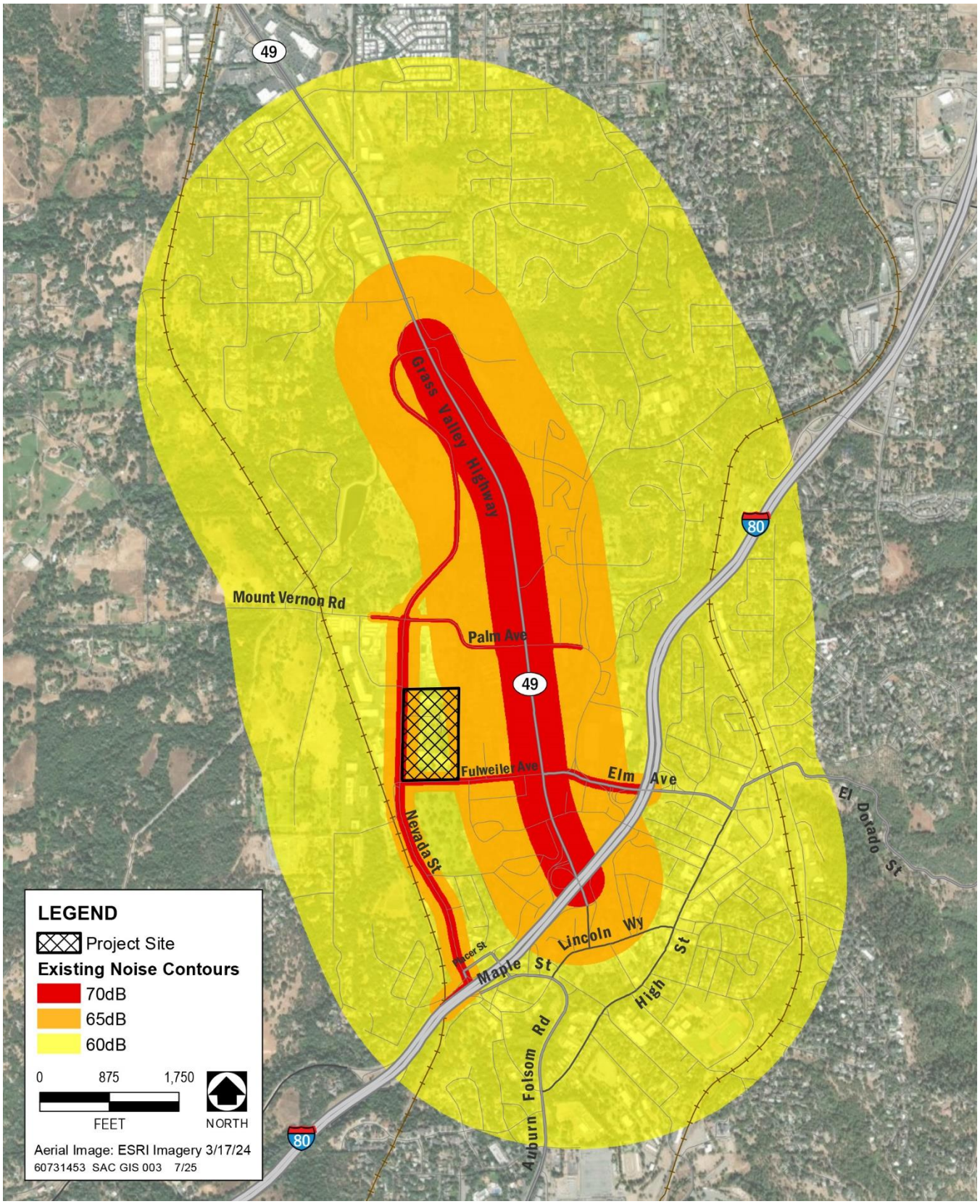
Notes: dB = A-weighted decibels; L_{dn} = day-night average noise level; SR = State Route. I = Interstate.
Source: FHWA 1978, Data modeled by AECOM in 2025

[6] The FHWA model is based on California Vehicle Noise (CALVENO) reference noise factors for automobiles, medium trucks, and heavy trucks, with consideration given to vehicle volume, speed, roadway configuration, distance to the receptor, and ground attenuation factors.



Source: AECOM 2025

Exhibit 3.e-2 Noise Monitoring Locations Map



Source: AECOM 2025

Exhibit 3.e-3 Existing Roadway Noise Contours

3.e.2 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Agencies have established noise guidelines and standards to protect citizens from potential hearing damage and other adverse physiological and social effects associated with noise and vibration.

FEDERAL PLANS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS, AND LAWS

Although not directly applicable to the proposed project, the research that supported the development of federal community noise standards is broadly applicable in understanding human response to different noise levels and is summarized below for the reader's edification.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Noise Control Act

The Federal Noise Control Act of 1972 (Public Law 92-574) established a requirement that all federal agencies administer their programs to promote an environment free of noise that would jeopardize public health or welfare.[7] Although the EPA was given a major role in disseminating information to the public and coordinating federal agencies, each federal agency retains authority to adopt noise regulations pertaining to agency programs.[8]

In 1974, in response to the requirements of the federal Noise Control Act, the EPA identified indoor and outdoor noise level limits to protect public health and welfare (communication disruption, sleep disturbance, and hearing damage). (EPA 1974) Outdoor and indoor noise exposure limits of 55 dB L_{dn} and 45 dB L_{dn}, respectively, are identified as desirable to protect against speech interference and sleep disturbance for residential, educational, and healthcare areas.[9] The sound-level criterion identified to protect against hearing damage in commercial and industrial areas is 70 dB 24-hour L_{eq} (both outdoors and indoors).

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Noise Abatement and Control

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has established guidelines for evaluating noise impacts on residential projects seeking financial support under various grant programs (HUD n.d), as summarized below:

- **Acceptable ≤ 65 dB.** Sites are generally considered acceptable for residential use if they are exposed to outdoor noise level of 65 dB L_{dn} or less.
- **Normally Unacceptable 65-75 dB.** Sites are considered "normally unacceptable" if they are exposed to outdoor noise levels of 65-75 dB L_{dn}.

---

7 The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was given the responsibility for providing information to the public regarding identifiable effects of noise on public health and welfare, publishing information on the levels of environmental noise that will protect the public health and welfare with an adequate margin of safety, coordinating federal research and activities related to noise control, and establishing federal noise emission standards for selected products distributed in interstate commerce. The Noise Control Act also directed that all federal agencies comply with applicable federal, State, interstate, and local noise control regulations.

8 The EPA can, however, require other federal agencies to justify their noise regulations in terms of the Noise Control Act policy requirements.

9 The EPA's Office of Noise Abatement and Control was established to coordinate federal noise control activities. In 1981, EPA administrators determined that subjective issues such as noise would be better addressed at lower levels of government. Consequently, in 1982 responsibilities for regulating noise control policies were transferred to state and local governments.

- **Unacceptable > 75 dB.** Sites are considered "unacceptable" if they are exposed to outdoor noise levels above 75 dB L_{dn}.

The HUD goal for the interior noise levels in residences is 45 dB L_{dn} or less.

Federal Aviation Administration Airport Noise Compatibility Planning

14 CFR Part 150, "Airport Noise Compatibility Planning" prescribes the procedures, standards, and methodology to be applied to airport noise compatibility planning activities. Noise levels below 65 dB L_{dn} are normally considered to be acceptable for noise-sensitive land uses. While no airport noise exposure is anticipated to affect the project site, the Auburn Municipal Airport is located approximately 3.3 miles north of the site. Given this distance and the scale of airport operations, the project site is not located within the 65 dB L_{dn} noise contour, and no airport-related noise compatibility issues are expected.

Federal Highway Administration Procedures for Abatement of Highway Traffic Noise and Construction Noise Regulations

FHWA regulations (23 CFR 772) specify procedures for evaluating noise impacts associated with federally funded highway projects and determining whether these impacts are sufficient to justify funding noise abatement. The FHWA noise abatement criteria are based on the worst hourly L_{eq} sound levels, not 24-hour average values (e.g., L_{dn} or CNEL). The worst-hour L_{eq} criteria for residential, educational, and healthcare facilities are 67 dB outdoors and 52 dB indoors. The worst-hour L_{eq} criterion for commercial and industrial areas is 72 dB (outdoors).

Federal Transit Administration Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment

Federal Transit Administration (FTA) procedures for the evaluation of noise from transit projects are specified in the document entitled, "Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment" (FTA, 2018). The FTA Noise Impact Criteria address the following categories:

- **Category 1:** Buildings or parks where quiet is an essential element of their purpose.
- **Category 2:** Residences and buildings where people normally sleep. This includes residences, hospitals, and hotels where nighttime sensitivity is assumed to be of utmost importance.
- **Category 3:** Institutional land uses with primarily daytime and evening use. This category includes schools, libraries, places of worship, and active parks.

The L_{dn} noise level descriptor is used to characterize noise exposure for residential areas (Category 2). For other noise sensitive land uses, such as outdoor amphitheaters and school buildings (Categories 1 and 3), the maximum hourly L_{eq} during the facility's operating period is used. Noise impacts are identified based on absolute predicted noise levels and increases in noise associated with the subject project.

With respect to vibration, the range of interest is from approximately 50 VdB, which is the typical background vibration-velocity level, to 100 VdB, which is the general threshold where minor damage can occur in fragile buildings. The background vibration-velocity level in residential areas is typically approximately 50 VdB. Groundborne vibration is normally perceptible to humans at approximately 65 VdB. For most people, a vibration-velocity level of 75 VdB is the approximate dividing line between barely perceptible and distinctly perceptible levels (FTA 2018).

Federal Railroad Administration

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) noise standards are the same as those specified by the FTA.

U.S. Department of Transportation and U.S. EPA Vibration Guidelines

To address the human response to groundborne vibration, the FTA of the U.S. Department of Transportation has set forth guidelines for maximum-acceptable-vibration criteria for different types of land uses. These include 65 VdB referenced to 1 μin/sec and based on RMS velocity amplitude for land uses where low ambient vibration is essential for interior operations (e.g., hospitals, high-tech manufacturing, laboratory facilities); 80 VdB for residential uses and buildings where people normally sleep; and 83 VdB for institutional land uses with primarily daytime operations (e.g., schools, places of worship, clinics, offices) (FTA 2018).

Standards have also been established to address the potential for groundborne vibration to cause structural damage to buildings. These standards were developed by the Committee of Hearing, Bio Acoustics, and Bio Mechanics (CHABA) at the request of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (FTA 2018). For fragile structures, CHABA recommends a maximum limit of 0.25 in/sec PPV (FTA 2018).

STATE PLANS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS, AND LAWS

In 1971, the State required cities and counties to include noise elements in their general plans (Government Code Section 65302 et seq.). The State of California General Plan Guidelines (Office of Planning and Research 2017) identify guidelines for the noise elements of local general plans, including a sound level/land-use compatibility chart. The noise element guidelines identify the "normally acceptable" range of noise exposure for low-density residential uses as less than 60 dB L_{dn}, and the "conditionally acceptable" range as 55-70 dB L_{dn}. The "normally acceptable" range for high-density residential uses is identified as below 65 dB L_{dn}, and the "conditionally acceptable" range is identified as 60-70 dB L_{dn}. For educational and medical facilities, levels below 70 dB L_{dn} are considered "normally acceptable," and levels of 60-70 dB L_{dn} are considered "conditionally acceptable." For office and commercial land uses, levels below 70 dB L_{dn} are considered "normally acceptable," and levels of 67.5–77.5 dB L_{dn} are considered "conditionally acceptable." Overlapping noise level ranges are intended to indicate that local conditions (existing sound levels and community attitudes toward dominant sound sources) should be considered in evaluating land use compatibility at specific locations. The State's guidance for land use / noise compatibility is summarized in Table 3.e-5.

In 1984, State noise element provisions were revised to "recognize" guidelines prepared by the Office of Noise Control of the California Department of Health Services and to analyze and quantify, "to the extent practicable, as determined by the legislative body," noise from the following sources: highways and freeways; primary arterials and major local streets; passenger and freight on-line railroad operations and ground rapid transit systems; commercial, general aviation, heliport, helistop and military airport operations, aircraft overflights, jet engine test stands, and other ground facilities and maintenance functions related to airport operation; local industrial plants, including, but not limited to, railroad classification yards; and other ground stationary noise sources identified by local agencies as contributing to the community noise environment. As noted in the draft update to the General Plan Guidelines, the Office of Planning and Research notes that the Department of Health Services Office of Noise Control no longer exists, and the guidelines have been incorporated into the General Plan Guidelines for Noise Elements (OPR 2017).

Table 3.e-5. Land Use Noise Compatibility Guidelines (Community Noise Exposure [CNEL/L_{dn}, dBA])

Land Use Category	Normally Acceptable[1]	Conditionally Acceptable[2]	Normally Unacceptable[3]	Clearly Unacceptable[4]
Residential-Low Density Single Family, Duplex, Mobile Home	<60	55–70	70–75	75+
Residential-Multiple Family	<65	60–70	70–75	75+
Transient Lodging, Motel, Hotel	<65	60–70	70–80	80+
School, Library, Church, Hospital, Nursing Home	<70	60–70	70–80	80+
Auditorium, Concert Hall, Amphitheater		<70	65+	
Sports Arenas, Outdoor Spectator Sports		<75	70+	
Playground, Neighborhood Park	<70		67.5–75	72.5+
Golf Courses, Stable, Water Recreation, Cemetery	<75		70–80	80+
Office Building, Business Commercial and Professional	<70	67.5–77.5	75+	
Industrial, Manufacturing, Utilities, Agriculture	<75	70–80	75+	

Notes: CNEL = Community Noise Equivalent Level; dBA = A-weighted decibels; L_{dn} = day-night average noise level.

1 Specified land use is satisfactory, based on the assumption that any buildings involved are of normal conventional construction, without any special noise insulation requirements.

2 New construction or development should be undertaken only after a detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirements is made and needed noise insulation features are included in the design. Conventional construction, but with closed windows and fresh air supply systems or air conditioning will normally suffice.

3 New construction or development should generally be discouraged. If new construction or development does proceed, a detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirements must be made and needed noise insulation features included in the design. Outdoor areas must be shielded.

4 New construction or development should generally not be undertaken.

Source: OPR 2017

California Department of Transportation

To protect fragile, historic, and residential structures, Caltrans recommends a construction vibration threshold of 0.3 in/sec PPV for older residential buildings and 0.08 in/sec PPV for old or historically significant structures (Caltrans 2020). These thresholds are more conservative than those recommended by the FTA, and are used here for a more protective analysis. Table 3.e-6 presents typical vibration damage risk thresholds for different structure types, based on Caltrans guidance.

Table 3.e-6. Vibration Thresholds for Structural Damage (PPV in/sec)

Structure and Condition	Transient[1] Sources	Continuous/Frequent[2] Intermittent Sources
Extremely fragile historic buildings, ruins, ancient monuments	0.12	0.08
Fragile buildings	0.2	0.1
Historic and some old buildings	0.5	0.25
Older residential structures	0.5	0.3
New residential structures	1.0	0.5
Modern industrial/commercial buildings	2.0	0.5

Notes: in/sec = inches per second; PPV = peak particle velocity

1 Transient sources refer to short-duration vibration events, typically resulting from single impacts or discrete impulses. Examples include blasting, drop-weight impacts, and individual hammer strikes in pile driving. Due to their brief nature, transient vibrations dissipate quickly, allowing structures to tolerate higher peak vibration levels before experiencing damage.

2 Continuous/frequent intermittent sources involve repeated or sustained vibrations over time, which can lead to cumulative effects and material fatigue. Examples include vibratory pile driving, heavy construction equipment (such as bulldozers and vibratory rollers), and train pass-bys. These sources require lower peak vibration thresholds due to their prolonged exposure and potential for long-term structural degradation.

Source: Caltrans 2020

REGIONAL AND LOCAL PLANS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS, AND ORDINANCES

City of Auburn General Plan

The City of Auburn General Plan Noise Element (updated 1993) provides a framework of policies and standards to minimize the harmful effects of excessive noise on the community and to ensure land use compatibility with projected noise environments. (City of Auburn 1993) The Noise Element includes quantitative standards for transportation and non-transportation noise sources, noise and land use compatibility guidelines, and implementation measures. Transportation sources include traffic on public roads, rail operations, and aircraft. Non-transportation sources include HVAC equipment, outdoor recreation venues, loading docks, and industrial activities. The standards outlined in the Noise Element serve as the foundation for determining when noise mitigation is required. The Noise Element serves as the basis for determining significance under CEQA and for establishing noise control strategies.

Goals and Policies

Goal 1: Protect residents of Auburn from the harmful and disruptive effects of excessive noise.

- **Policy 1.1:** For proposed non-residential land uses that are anticipated to generate noise levels exceeding the thresholds listed in Table VIII-1 [of the General Plan, Table 3.e-9 of this EIR] at nearby existing or planned noise-sensitive uses, an acoustical analysis must be prepared as part of the environmental review process. This analysis will ensure that appropriate mitigation measures are identified and incorporated into the project design. (See Table VIII-2 [of the General Plan, Table 3.e-10 of this EIR] for acoustical analysis requirements.)

- **Policy 1.2:** The feasibility of new development projects in relation to existing and future transportation noise sources must be evaluated using the Land Use Compatibility Guidelines for Development [of the General Plan, Table 3.e-8 of this EIR].

Goal 2: Protect Auburn's economic base by avoiding the intrusion of incompatible land uses near existing or planned noise-generating activities.

- **Policy 2.1:** New noise-sensitive uses should not be permitted in areas where noise from non-transportation sources exceeds the limits outlined in Table VIII-1 [of the General Plan, Table 3.e-9 of this EIR], unless effective mitigation is included in the project design to meet those standards.

- **Policy 2.2:** Proposed non-transportation noise sources must be controlled to ensure they do not exceed the noise standards in Table VIII-1 [of the General Plan, Table 3.e-9 of this EIR] at the property lines of nearby noise-sensitive uses. This policy does not apply to noise generated by agricultural activities on lands zoned for agriculture.

Table 3.e-7. Land Use Compatibility Guidelines for Development

Land Use Category	55 dB	60 dB	65 dB	70 dB	75 dB	80 dB
Residential, Theaters, Auditoriums, Music Halls, Meeting Halls, Churches	✓	✓	◐	◐	✕	✕
Transient Lodging – Motels, Hotels	✓	✓	✓	◐	◐	✕
Schools, Libraries, Museums, Hospitals, Nursing Homes	✓	✓	✓	◐	◐	✕
Playgrounds, Neighborhood Parks	✓	✓	✓	✓	◐	✕
Office Buildings, Retail Commercial	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	◐

Interpretation:
✓ ACCEPTABLE: Specified land use is satisfactory. No noise mitigation measures are required.
◐ CONDITIONALLY ACCEPTABLE: Use should be permitted only after careful study and inclusion of protective measures as needed to satisfy policies of the Noise Element.
✕ UNACCEPTABLE: Development of the specified land use is not feasible in accordance with the goals of the Noise Element.

Table 3.e-8. Noise Level Performance Standards (Non-Transportation Sources)

Noise Level Descriptor	Daytime (7 a.m. to 10 p.m.)	Nighttime (10 p.m. to 7 a.m.)
Hourly L_{eq}, dB	55	45
Maximum Level, dB	75	65

Each of the noise levels specified above shall be reduced by five dB for simple tone noises, noises consisting primarily of speech or music, or for recurring impulsive noises. These noise level standards do not apply to residential units established in conjunction with industrial or commercial uses (e.g., caretaker dwellings).
Note: For the purposes of the Noise Element, transportation noise sources are defined as traffic on public roadways, railroad line operations, and aircraft in flight, including takeoffs and landings. Control of noise from these sources is preempted by federal and state regulations. Other noise sources are presumed to be subject to local regulations, such as a noise control ordinance.

Table 3.e-9. Requirements for Acoustical Analysis

An acoustic analysis prepared pursuant to the Noise Element shall:
A. Be the responsibility of the applicant.
B. Be prepared by a qualified person experienced in the fields of environmental noise assessment and architectural acoustics.
C. Include representative noise level measurements with sufficient sampling periods and locations to adequately describe local conditions and the predominant noise sources.
D. Estimate existing and projected (20 years) noise levels in terms of L_{dn} or CNEL and/or the standards of Table VIII-1, and compare those levels to the adopted policies of the Noise Element.
E. Recommend appropriate mitigation to achieve compliance with the adopted policies and standards of the Noise Element. Where the noise source in question consists of intermittent single events, the report must address the effects of maximum noise levels in sleeping rooms in terms of possible sleep disturbance.
F. Estimate noise exposure after the prescribed mitigation measures have been implemented.
G. Describe a post-project assessment program which could be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed mitigation measures.

- **Policy 2.3:** New development of noise-sensitive land uses will not be permitted in areas exposed to existing or projected levels of noise from transportation noise sources which exceed the levels specified in Table VIII-3 [of the General Plan, Table 3.e-11 of this EIR], unless the project design includes effective mitigation measures to reduce noise in outdoor activity areas and interior spaces to the levels specified in Table VIII-3 [of the General Plan, Table 3.e-11 of this EIR].

- **Policy 2.4:** Noise created by new transportation noise sources, including roadway improvement projects, shall be mitigated so as not to exceed the levels specified in Table VIII-3 [of the General Plan, Table 3.e-11 of this EIR] at outdoor activity areas or interior spaces of existing noise-sensitive land uses in either the incorporated or unincorporated areas.

- **Policy 2.5:** Where noise-sensitive land uses are proposed in areas exposed to existing or projected exterior noise levels exceeding the levels specified in Table VIII-3 [of the General Plan, Table 3.e-11 of this EIR] or the performance standards of Table VIII-1 [of the General Plan, Table 3.e-9 of this EIR], an acoustical analysis shall be required as part of the environmental review process so that noise mitigation may be included in the project design.

Table 3.e-10. Maximum Allowable Noise Exposure (Transportation Sources)

Land Use	Outdoor Activity Areas (L_{dn}/CNEL)	Interior Spaces (L_{dn}/CNEL)	Interior Spaces (Hourly L_{eq}, dB)
Residential	60[3]	45	
Transient Lodging	60[3]	45	
Hospitals, Nursing Homes	60[3]	45	
Theaters, Auditoriums, Music Halls			35
Churches, Meeting Halls	60[3]		40
Office Buildings, Retail Commercial	65		45
Schools, Libraries, Museums			45
Playgrounds, Neighborhood Parks	70		

Notes:
If the location of outdoor activity areas is unknown, the standard applies to the property line of the receiving land use.
L_{eq} values are based on the typical worst-case hour during periods of use.
Where 60 dB L_{dn}/CNEL cannot be achieved in outdoor areas using practical application of the best available noise reduction measures, up to 65 dB L_{dn}/CNEL may be allowed, provided interior levels are in compliance.

- **Policy 2.6:** When noise mitigation is necessary to comply with the standards in Tables VIII-1 [of the General Plan, Table 3.e-9 of this EIR] and VIII-3 [of the General Plan, Table 3.e-11 of this EIR], the primary focus should be on integrating noise-reducing features into site planning and project design. The use of noise barriers should be considered a secondary or supplemental strategy, employed only after all feasible design-based mitigation measures have been implemented into the project.

Land Use Compatibility Guidelines for Noise Exposure

Table 3.e-7 presents a matrix illustrating the compatibility of various land use categories with different levels of community noise exposure, expressed in L_{dn} or CNEL. It identifies whether a land use is normally acceptable (✓), conditionally acceptable (◐), or unacceptable (✕) based on the ambient noise environment. Residential, institutional, and other noise-sensitive uses are generally acceptable only where noise levels remain below 60 dB, while commercial and recreational uses may be suitable in higher noise environments. This table guides planning decisions and environmental review by identifying where mitigation may be needed to achieve consistency with General Plan noise standards.

Transportation Noise Standards

Table VIII-3 of the Noise Element [Table 3.e-11 of this EIR] establishes maximum allowable exterior noise exposure levels for transportation-related sources such as highways and railways. For outdoor activity areas, residential uses, transient lodging, and healthcare facilities are considered compatible with noise levels up to 60 dB L_{dn}/CNEL. Where it is not feasible to achieve this threshold using practical application of best-available exterior noise reduction measures, levels up to 65 dB L_{dn}/CNEL may be permitted, provided that all feasible exterior controls have been incorporated. Churches and meeting halls are also subject to the 60 dB threshold, while office buildings are allowed up to 65 dB and playgrounds up to 70 dB L_{dn}/CNEL. Where the specific location of outdoor activity areas is unknown, the standard applies at the receiving land use's property line. These thresholds form the basis for evaluating the compatibility of proposed land uses in this EIR and determining whether exterior transportation noise mitigation is warranted.

Interior Noise Standards

Table VIII-3 of the Noise Element [Table 3.e-11 of this EIR] also establishes interior noise limits for noise-sensitive land uses affected by transportation sources. Habitable spaces in residential, lodging, and healthcare facilities are required to achieve an interior noise level of 45 dB L_{dn}/CNEL or lower, consistent with the City's standards and Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations. Where proposed development would be exposed to exterior noise levels exceeding 60 dB L_{dn}/CNEL, a project-specific acoustical analysis must demonstrate that interior levels can be achieved through appropriate building design and mitigation measures.

For certain institutional and assembly uses, such as theaters, auditoriums, and music halls, interior hourly L_{eq} limits apply instead, typically 35 dB. Churches, meeting halls, and libraries are subject to hourly L_{eq} thresholds of 40 to 45 dB, depending on use. These standards ensure that interior acoustic environments remain compatible with their intended use and are used in this EIR to evaluate the need for interior noise attenuation.

Non-Transportation Noise Standards

Table VIII-1 of the City's Noise Element [Table 3.e-9 of this EIR] establishes noise level performance standards for non-transportation sources, including stationary equipment such as HVAC systems, generators, and commercial operations. For noise-sensitive land uses, the allowable hourly average noise level is 55 dB L_{eq} during daytime hours (7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.) and 45 dB L_{eq} at night (10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.). Maximum noise levels are limited to 75 dB during the day and 65 dB at night.

A 5-dB penalty is applied to sources that are tonal, impulsive, or repetitive in nature, such as mechanical alarms, speech-based systems, or rhythmic industrial processes. These standards do not apply to caretaker dwellings or other residential units associated with industrial or commercial facilities. For the purposes of the Noise Element, these criteria are used in this EIR to evaluate potential operational noise impacts from stationary sources and to determine the need for mitigation.

City of Auburn Municipal Code

The City of Auburn regulates noise through Chapter 93 of its Municipal Code, Loud and Unusual Noises, which reflects the City's legislative finding that increasing levels of loud, unnecessary, and unnatural noise adversely affect public health, safety, welfare, and the peaceful enjoyment of the community. As declared in Section 93.01,

the purpose of the ordinance is to secure and promote "the public health, comfort, convenience, safety, welfare, prosperity, peace and quiet of the city and its inhabitants."

The ordinance is primarily qualitative in nature but includes specific provisions directly applicable to the types of construction and operational noise typically addressed in CEQA environmental impact reports.

Unlawful Noise and General Prohibition

Section 93.08 of the Municipal Code makes it unlawful for any person to create or continue any loud, unnecessary, or unusual noise that "annoys, disturbs, injures or endangers the comfort, repose, health, safety or peace of others." This broad prohibition applies to both temporary and ongoing noise sources and serves as a foundation for enforcement of community noise complaints.

Section 93.09 enumerates specific activities that constitute violations of this general prohibition, including:

- Loading and unloading operations, including the destruction of crates, boxes, or containers, if they result in loud and excessive noise;
- Use of internal combustion engines, blowers, or fans without mufflers or sufficient sound suppression;
- Exhaust systems discharging directly into the air without adequate muffling;
- Defective or overloaded vehicles that create grating, grinding, or rattling sounds;
- Steam whistles, pile drivers, and pneumatic hammers operating during prohibited hours.

Construction Noise Regulations

Section 93.09(K) establishes specific hours and noise limits for construction, alteration, and repair activities that require City permits. These activities are allowed only during the following hours:

- Monday through Friday: 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (Roofing and masonry work allowed from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. between June 1 and September 30)
- Saturday: 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- Sundays and observed holidays: 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

In addition, construction-related equipment must comply with the following maximum sound levels:

- 80 dBA at 25 feet on Saturdays
- 70 dBA at 25 feet on Sundays and observed holidays

These limits form the local regulatory basis for assessing construction noise in this EIR. Exceptions may be granted by the City Building Official for emergency work or documented cases of extreme hardship. "Emergency work" is defined as work necessary to restore safe conditions after a calamity or to protect life and property from imminent danger.

Furthermore, per Section 93.09(T), the use of high-impact equipment such as pile drivers, pneumatic hammers, steam shovels, or derricks is prohibited between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m., regardless of day.

Operational Noise and Stationary Sources

Operational noise from equipment such as HVAC systems, generators, or commercial blowers is addressed under Section 93.09(U), which prohibits the operation of blowers, fans, or internal combustion engines that produce excessive noise unless properly muffled to deaden the sound. Similarly, engine and exhaust noise from stationary or mobile sources must be mitigated using mufflers or other effective devices.

Loading and unloading activities (§ 93.09(I)) and the handling of crates or boxes must also be conducted in a manner that avoids excessive or disruptive noise, particularly during early morning or nighttime hours when nearby receptors may be more sensitive to disturbances.

Summary of Applicable Noise Standards

The City of Auburn's General Plan Noise Element and Municipal Code Chapter 93 provide the regulatory framework for evaluating transportation, stationary, and construction-related noise in this EIR. For transportation noise sources, Table 3.e-10 identifies maximum allowable exterior levels of 60 dB L_{dn}/CNEL for residential, lodging, and healthcare uses (allowing up to 65 dB if fully mitigated), and higher thresholds for commercial and recreational uses. Interior spaces must achieve 45 dB L_{dn}/CNEL for habitable rooms, with hourly L_{eq} limits between 35 and 45 dB applied to institutional and assembly uses such as theaters and libraries.

Table 3.e-9 establishes performance standards for non-transportation sources such as HVAC systems, generators, and loading operations, setting hourly average noise limits of 55 dB L_{eq} during daytime and 45 dB L_{eq} at night, with a 5 dB penalty applied to tonal, impulsive, or repetitive sources. Operational noise that produces loud or disturbing impacts—such as unmuffled exhausts, defective machinery, or excessive loading noise—is also prohibited under Section 93.09 of the Municipal Code.

For construction activities, Section 93.09(K) allows work only during specific hours: 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on weekdays, with shorter hours on weekends and holidays. The ordinance limits construction noise to 80 dBA at 25 feet on Saturdays and 70 dBA at 25 feet on Sundays and holidays. This EIR also applies standard screening thresholds of 75–80 dBA L_{eq} at 50 feet for construction noise and Federal Transit Administration vibration criteria of 0.3 in/sec peak particle velocity (PPV) for potential structural damage and 0.04 in/sec PPV for human perception.

Together, these policies and standards guide the evaluation of noise impacts, inform the need for mitigation, and ensure consistency with the City's stated goal of promoting public health, safety, comfort, and quiet. The Noise Element emphasizes the use of project design and planning strategies to reduce noise exposure, supported by acoustical studies where applicable.

3.e.3 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

METHODOLOGY

Data included in Chapter 2 of this EIR, "Project Description," and obtained during on-site noise monitoring were used to determine potential locations of sensitive receptors and potential noise- and vibration-generating land uses

in the Proposed project Area and off-site improvement areas. Noise-sensitive land uses and major noise sources near the Proposed project Area and off-site improvement areas were identified based on existing documentation (e.g., equipment noise levels and attenuation rates) and site reconnaissance data.

To assess the impacts of potential short-term construction noise on sensitive receptors, this analysis considered sensitive receptors located within and surrounding the project site, including the vicinity of proposed off-site pedestrian and bicycle improvements. These improvements are limited in scope but may involve localized ground disturbance and construction activity near sensitive land uses. Construction noise was predicted by using the Federal Highway Construction Noise Model (RCNM, FHWA 2006). The emission noise levels referenced, and the usage factors were based on the Federal Highway Administration Roadway Construction Noise Model. Construction vibration was estimated using Federal Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment methodology (FTA 2018). Groundborne vibration impacts were qualitatively assessed based on existing documentation (e.g., vibration levels produced by specific construction equipment operations) and the distance of sensitive receptors from the given source. The noise and vibration levels of the specific construction equipment that would be used and the resulting noise levels where sensitive receptors are located were calculated.

Traffic noise modeling was conducted based on average daily traffic volumes obtained from the transportation analysis for the proposed project. This is discussed in more detail in Section 3.g of this EIR, "Transportation." The FHWA RD 77-108 was used to calculate traffic noise levels along affected roadways, based on the trip distribution estimates as discussed in Section 3.g of this EIR, "Transportation." The proposed project's contribution to the existing traffic noise levels along area roadways was determined by comparing the predicted noise levels at a reference distance of 100 feet from the roadway centerline for the baseline and cumulative conditions with and without project-generated traffic.

Potential noise impacts from long-term (operation-related) stationary sources were assessed based on existing documentation (e.g., equipment noise levels) and site reconnaissance data. This analysis also included an evaluation of noise-generating uses that could affect noise-sensitive receptors near the project site.

To assess the land use compatibility, predicted traffic noise contours were used to determine if development of the project site would exceed the applicable noise criteria.

THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, a noise impact is considered significant if implementation of the proposed project would result in any of the following:

- Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies *(Policies 1.1 and Policy 1.2, and Policy 2.1, Policy 2.2 and Policy 2.5 for Non-Transportation Noise Sources, and Policies 2.3 and Policy 2.4 for Transportation Noise Sources), (Table 3.e-8 for Noise Level Performance Standards (Non-Transportation Sources) and Table 3.e-10 for Maximum Allowable Noise Exposure (Transportation Sources), and Chapter 93 of the Municipal Code of the City of Auburn for Construction Noise [that could affect noise-sensitive receptors that are in the City]);*

- Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels *(Vibration impacts would be significant if vibration levels would exceed the Caltrans-recommended standard of 0.3 in/sec PPV with respect to the prevention of structural damage for normal buildings, for fragile or historically significant*

buildings, a more stringent threshold of 0.08 in/sec PPV applies; or FTA's maximum-acceptable vibration standard of 80 VdB with respect to human response [i.e., annoyance] at nearby vibration-sensitive land uses, such as residences);

- For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, exposure for people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels *(Significant if the proposed project would expose people to excessive noise levels from an airport or private airstrip, or if located within the 60 dB L_{dn}/CNEL contour of any airport)*.

ISSUES NOT DISCUSSED FURTHER

- **Excessive Noise from an Airport**—Future development would not expose people to excessive noise levels from an airport or private airstrip. Because the project site would not be located in an area exposed to excessive aircraft-generated noise levels (e.g., not within the 60 dB L_{dn}/CNEL contour of any airport), there would be **no impact** related to aircraft noise, and therefore this issue is not discussed further in this EIR.

IMPACT ANALYSIS

IMPACT 3.e-1 **Temporary, short-term exposure of sensitive receptors to construction noise.** *Short-term construction source noise levels could exceed the applicable City standards at nearby noise-sensitive receptors. In addition, if construction activities were to occur during more noise-sensitive hours, construction source noise levels could also result in annoyance and/or sleep disruption to occupants of existing and proposed noise-sensitive land uses and create a substantial temporary increase in ambient noise levels. This impact is considered* ***significant****.*

Development within the project site would require demolition, site preparation, and construction. Noise-sensitive uses located adjacent to areas of such construction activity could be exposed to temporary construction noise. Construction noise impacts primarily result when construction activities occur during noise-sensitive times of the day (early morning, evening, or nighttime hours), the construction occurs in areas immediately adjoining noise sensitive land uses, or when construction durations last over extended periods of time.

Noise generating construction activities would include site grading and excavation, installation of infrastructure, building erection, paving, and landscaping. The highest construction noise levels are typically generated during grading and excavation and lower noise levels typically occur during building construction.

Construction equipment operate in two modes: mobile and stationary. Mobile equipment sources move around a construction site performing tasks in a recurring manner (e.g., loaders, graders, dozers). Stationary equipment sources operate in a given location for an extended period of time to perform continuous or periodic operations. Thus, determining the location of stationary sources, or the effective acoustical center of operations for mobile equipment during various phases of the construction process is necessary. Operational characteristics of heavy construction equipment are additionally typified by short periods of full-power operation followed by extended periods of operation at lower power, idling, or powered-off conditions.

Without feasible noise control, large pieces of earth-moving equipment, such as graders, excavators, and dozers, generate maximum noise levels of 85 dBA to 90 dBA at a distance of 50 feet (refer to Table 3.e-13) (EPA 1971: 11). Typical hourly average construction-generated noise levels are about 80 dBA to 85 dBA, measured at a

distance of 50 feet from the site during busy construction periods. Some types of construction require pile driving. This type of construction activity could produce very high noise levels of approximately 105 dBA at 50 feet.

The nearest noise-sensitive uses to the proposed project area include single-family residences located approximately 100 feet or less to the southeast and approximately 150 feet to the east of the project site. There are no residential uses directly to the north. In addition to residential uses, a public library is located immediately adjacent to the northeast of the project site, and a school is also located to the northeast, both of which are considered noise-sensitive receptors.. Noise from localized point sources (such as construction sites) typically decreases by 6 dB with each doubling of distance from source to receptor. Therefore, an attenuation rate of 6 dB per doubling of distance was assumed and accounted for in construction operation noise level predictions. A construction noise level of 85 dBA, L_{eq} at 50 feet from typical construction activities would translate to a noise level of 79 dBA, L_{eq} at 100 feet. A construction noise level of 105 dBA, L_{eq} at 50 feet from pile driving activities would translate to a noise level of 99 dBA, L_{eq} at 100 feet.

Minor off-site transportation-related improvements are proposed along adjacent roadways, including sidewalk and bicycle facility enhancements. These off-site improvements could occur near additional noise-sensitive uses, including residences and the same library and school facilities to the northeast. Given their proximity to existing development and the temporary nature of construction, similar exposure conditions as those described for on-site construction are anticipated.

The City of Auburn exempts construction activities from general noise standards when conducted within the permitted hours specified in Municipal Code Section 93.09(K), 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on weekdays, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays, and 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Sundays and observed holidays. During these timeframes, construction is allowed provided that noise levels do not exceed 86 dBA at 50 feet on Saturdays and 76 dBA at 50 feet on Sundays and holidays. However, if construction were to occur during more noise-sensitive evening or nighttime hours, outside of these allowable periods, due to the necessity of continuous operations to maintain structural integrity, noise levels could exceed the City's nighttime stationary source standard of 55 dB L_{eq} (Table 3.e-8) at existing or future noise-sensitive receptors. In such cases, the applicant would be required to obtain a variance or special approval from the City. Additional mitigation may include implementation of portable noise barriers, notification of nearby residents, use of quieter equipment or methods, and restricting the most intensive activities to daytime hours where feasible. These measures would be necessary to ensure that nighttime construction does not result in a significant noise impact under CEQA.

With respect to increase above ambient noise levels, measured ambient noise levels in the project area ranged from 49 dBA, L_{eq} to 66 dBA, L_{eq} (Table 3.e-3). Project-related construction noise levels of 85 dBA, L_{eq} (typical construction) and 105 dBA, L_{eq} (pile driving) at 50 feet, would exceed the ambient noise levels in the project area. Also, proposed project-related construction noise level of 79 dBA, L_{eq} at 100 feet from typical construction activities; and proposed project-related construction noise level of 99 dBA, L_{eq} at 100 feet from pile driving activities would exceed the measured ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the proposed project area. Also, as described above, new noise-sensitive receptors could be located near construction source of later phases of proposed project development, at 50 feet to 100 feet. Also, off-site construction could occur within 100 feet of occupied residences. Therefore, construction of on-site elements of the proposed project and off-site improvement areas could expose future on-site and existing off-site sensitive receptors to a substantial, albeit temporary increase in ambient noise levels. This is a **significant** impact.

Table 3.e-11. Typical Construction Equipment Noise Levels

Equipment Item	Typical Maximum Noise Level (dB) at 50 Feet
Earthmoving	
Backhoes	80
Bulldozers	85
Front Loaders	80
Graders	85
Paver	85
Roller	85
Scrapers	85
Tractors	84
Slurry Trencher	82
Dump Truck	84
Pickup Truck	55
Materials Handling	
Concrete Mixer Truck	85
Concrete Pump Truck	82
Crane	85
Man Lift	85
Stationary Equipment	
Compressors	80
Generator	82
Pumps	77
Impact Equipment	
Compactor	80
Jack Hammers	85
Impact Pile Drivers (Peak Level)	95
Pneumatic Tools	85
Rock Drills	85
Other Equipment	
Concrete Saws	90
Vibrating Hopper	85
Welding Machine / Torch	73

Notes: dB = A-weighted decibels
Noise levels are for equipment fitted with properly maintained and operational noise control devices, per manufacturer specifications.
Source: FTA 2018.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure 3.e-1: Implement Noise-Reducing Construction Practices.

The project applicant(s) and their primary contractors for engineering, design, and construction of all project phases and contractors for all off-site improvements shall ensure that the following requirements are implemented. Measures that shall be used to limit noise shall include the measures listed below:

- Noise-generating construction operations shall be limited to the hours between 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays, and 10:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on Sundays and observed holidays when located within 500 feet of noise-sensitive uses in general

or within 1,600 feet of noise-sensitive uses if the construction involves pile driving or similarly intensive equipment.

- Staging areas shall be located at the farthest practicable point within the construction site from nearby noise-sensitive land uses.
- All construction equipment shall be properly maintained and equipped with noise-reduction intake and exhaust mufflers and engine shrouds, in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations. Equipment engine shrouds shall be closed during equipment operation.
- All motorized construction equipment shall be shut down when not in use to prevent idling.
- Individual operations and techniques shall be replaced with quieter procedures (e.g., using welding instead of riveting, mixing concrete off-site instead of on-site).
- Noise-reducing enclosures shall be installed and maintained around stationary noise-generating equipment (e.g., compressors and generators) located within 500 feet of occupied residences. The enclosures shall be designed to obstruct the line of sight between outdoor gathering spaces of noise-sensitive land uses and on-site noise-generating stationary construction equipment.
- If pile-driving is required during construction, the following measures shall be implemented to minimize noise, and vibration impacts to nearby sensitive receptors:
  - Use of alternative pile installation methods (e.g., vibratory pile driving or drilled piles) where feasible to reduce impact noise levels and vibration.
  - Installation of temporary sound barriers or acoustic shrouds around pile-driving equipment to block direct line-of-sight to nearby sensitive land uses.
  - Scheduling of pile-driving during the least noise-sensitive time periods (e.g., mid-morning to late afternoon).
  - Advance notification to adjacent sensitive receptors, including residential uses, schools, and the public library, identifying timing and expected duration of pile-driving activity.

- Written notification of construction activities shall be provided to all noise-sensitive receptors located within 1,600 feet of construction activities. Notification shall include anticipated dates and hours during which construction activities are anticipated to occur and contact information, including a daytime telephone number, for the project representative to be contacted in the event that noise levels are deemed excessive. Recommendations to assist noise-sensitive land uses in reducing interior noise levels (e.g., closing windows and doors) shall also be included in the notification.

Significance after Mitigation

With implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.e-1, construction would be limited to relatively less noise-sensitive daytime hours. On-site and off-site impacts from temporary, short-term exposure of sensitive receptors to increased equipment noise from construction would be reduced. Measured ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the proposed project area ranged from 49 dBA, L_{eq} to 66 dBA, L_{eq} (Table 3.e-3). Project-related construction

noise levels of 85 dBA, L_{eq} (typical construction) and 105 dBA, L_{eq} (pile driving) at 50 feet, would exceed the ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the proposed project area by 36 dB to 56 dB at 50 feet. Also, project-related construction noise level of 79 dBA, L_{eq} at 100 feet from typical construction activities would exceed ambient levels up to 30 dB; and project-related construction noise level of 99 dBA, L_{eq} at 100 feet from pile driving activities would exceed the measured ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the proposed project area by up to 50 dB. With enforcement of the above mitigation measure and existing noise regulations, future development of the project site and off-site improvements would be designed to minimize potential impacts. For example, when installed properly, acoustic barriers can reduce construction noise levels by approximately 8–10 dB (EPA 1971). This mitigation measure would reduce potential impacts. However, it is not possible to demonstrate that this would avoid significant construction noise impacts in every case. There is no additional feasible mitigation. The impact is considered **significant and unavoidable.**

IMPACT 3.e-2 Temporary, short-term exposure of sensitive receptors to increased traffic noise levels from construction. *Construction within the project site and of the off-site improvements would result in temporary increases in on- and off-site roadway traffic noise. Construction-generated traffic would not expose sensitive receptors to noise levels along on- or off-site roadways that would exceed the applicable noise standards and/or result in a substantial increase in ambient noise levels. This impact would be* ***less than significant****.*

Future development of the project site and off-site improvements would result in an increase of traffic volumes due to the addition of construction-generated traffic associated with on-site future development and off-site infrastructure improvements. All materials would be transported along the local roadway network, thus increasing traffic volumes along affected roadway segments. Construction-generated traffic on the local roadway network was analyzed based on a maximum assumed construction-related traffic volume of 500 vehicles daily and assuming nine hours of construction period per day the project would result in 56 construction vehicles per hour.

Typically, a traffic volume increase of 100 percent (i.e., doubling the volume of traffic on a roadway) would result in a 3-dB increase in traffic noise. Daily traffic volumes were obtained from analysis conducted to support Section 3.g, "Transportation," Of this EIR. Existing daily traffic volumes along the studied roadways range from 1,000 to 53,200 vehicle trips. Proposed project construction related traffic increases of up to 500 trips per day would not double traffic volumes along any roadway segment and therefore would not result in a substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project site associated with construction traffic. As a result, this impact would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

IMPACT 3.e-3 Temporary, short-term exposure of sensitive receptors to potential groundborne noise and vibration from construction. *Construction within project site and of the off-site improvements would expose sensitive receptors to groundborne noise and vibration levels that exceed applicable standards, which could cause human disturbance or damage structures. Construction could cause a temporary, short-term disruptive vibration if construction activities were to occur near sensitive receptors. This impact is considered* ***significant****.*

Construction activities associated with future development of the project site and off-site improvement areas have the potential to result in varying degrees of temporary groundborne vibration, depending on the specific

construction equipment used, the location of construction activities relative to sensitive receptors, the operations/activities involved, and the construction material of buildings housing affected vibration-sensitive uses. Vibration generated by construction equipment spreads through the ground and diminishes in magnitude with increases in distance. The type and density of soil can also affect the transmission of energy. Table 3.e-12 provides vibration levels at 25 feet for impact and heavy construction equipment, in terms of PPV (for structural damage) and VdB (for human annoyance).

Table 3.e-12. Typical Vibration Levels for Construction Equipment

Equipment	PPV at 25 Feet (in/sec)	Approximate Lv at 25 Feet
Pile Driver (Impact) – Upper Range	1.518	112
Pile Driver (Impact) – Typical	0.644	104
Pile Driver (Sonic)– Upper Range	0.734	105
Pile Driver (Sonic)– Typical	0.170	93
Vibratory Roller	0.21	94
Large Bulldozer	0.089	87
Caisson Drilling	0.089	87
Truck	0.076	86
Jackhammer	0.035	79
Small Bulldozer	0.003	58
Significance Threshold	0.2/0.08 [1]	80

Notes: in/sec = inches per second; Lv = the velocity level in decibels referenced to 1 microinch per second and based on the root mean square velocity amplitude; PPV = peak particle velocity

[1] For normal residential buildings and for buildings more susceptible to structural damage, respectively.

Sources: FTA 2018, Caltrans 2020.

Construction-related vibration would occur as a result of development of the project site and off-site improvements during equipment operation at construction areas and during the transport of construction equipment and materials to and from the project site and off-site improvement areas. Based on Caltrans vibration standards, a vibration limit of 0.3 in/sec PPV is used in this analysis to identify the potential for cosmetic damage at buildings of normal conventional construction and a vibration level of 80 VdB is used to evaluate human response to groundborne vibration levels.

The required construction equipment is not known at this time, but could possibly include pile drivers, loaded trucks, bulldozers, and vibratory rollers. According to the FTA, vibration levels associated with the use of such equipment would range from approximately 0.21 in/sec PPV (referenced to 1 µin/sec and based on the root mean square velocity amplitude) and 94 VdB for vibratory roller to 1.518 in/sec PPV and 112 VdB for pile driver, at 25 feet, as shown in Table 3.e-12. Typical construction equipment, loaded trucks, jackhammers, and bulldozers generate vibration levels that decrease quickly over distance, whereas pile driving activities generate significantly more vibration energy and require more distance for a decrease in vibration levels. If construction activities were to occur during more noise-sensitive hours, vibration from construction sources could annoy and/or disrupt the sleep of occupants of existing and proposed residences and expose persons to excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels.

The vibration-sensitive uses closest to construction activities within the proposed project site include single-family residences located approximately 100 feet or less to the southeast and approximately 150 feet to the east, a

public library directly adjacent to the northeast, and a school located to the northeast. There are no residential uses directly to the north of the site. The majority of construction activities would occur in the central portion of the project site, where new buildings would be constructed, placing most vibration-generating equipment at least 100 feet from the nearest sensitive uses. At distances of 100 feet, the most substantial vibration generated by project construction equipment would result to 76 to 94 VdB and 0.026 to 0.19 in/sec PPV, respectively for vibratory roller and for pile driver. Off-site work is expected to involve only very minor pedestrian and bicycle improvements and could occur as close as 50 feet from existing buildings. At a distance of 50 feet, the vibration level generated by construction equipment would result to 85 VdB and 0.074 in/sec PPV. These levels would be above the criteria of 80 VdB, and below 0.3 in/sec PPV recommended for older building structures by Caltrans.

If Option 1 is selected and the existing Domes structure is preserved on-site, construction activities may occur within 25 feet of the structure. At this distance, vibration levels from heavy equipment could be substantial. A vibratory roller could generate up to approximately 0.210 in/sec PPV and 94 VdB, and a large bulldozer could generate up to 0.089 in/sec PPV and 89 VdB. A pile driver, if used, could produce vibration levels as high as 0.644 in/sec PPV and 104 VdB at 25 feet. These values substantially exceed the Caltrans-recommended threshold of 0.08 in/sec PPV for older or potentially historic structures and the FTA annoyance threshold of 80 VdB.

Use of such equipment near the Domes would require further engineering review and vibration control planning. Specific mitigation measures, such as establishing equipment exclusion zones within 50 feet of the Domes, real-time vibration monitoring, and limiting construction to low-vibration methods, are necessary to reduce the risk of structural damage.

Therefore, for buildings already constructed and\or occupied while the next phase of construction within the project site continues, the vibration levels due to construction operation would exceed the thresholds of building damage for structures that would occur within 100 feet for pile driver, and within 45 feet for vibratory rollers. Therefore, short-term construction of the project would exceed the threshold for structural damage and would expose persons to or generate excessive ground-borne noise or vibration. For these reasons, this impact would be **potentially significant**.

Long-term project operation would not include any major new sources of groundborne noise or vibration. Maintenance vehicles and delivery trucks would be restricted to existing public roadways, and the limited number of trips generated would not have the potential to substantially increase vibration levels at adjacent land uses.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure 3.e-2: Implement Measures to Reduce Groundborne Noise and Vibration Levels.

The project applicant(s) and their primary contractors for engineering, design, and construction shall ensure that the following requirements are implemented at each work site in any year of project construction to avoid and minimize construction vibration effects on sensitive receptors.

- Place stationary construction equipment as far as possible from developed uses, particularly the library to the northeast and the residences to the east and southeast of the project site.
- Use smaller construction equipment when practical, particularly smaller vibratory rollers that are as small as practicable, or that have an adjustable vibratory force feature.

- Locate vibration-generating equipment, etc., as far as feasible from sensitive receptors, particularly the library to the northeast and the residences to the east and southeast of the project site. There are no known vibration-sensitive receptors to the north or west.

- Prohibit the use of vibratory rollers within 110 feet of any occupied residential structures.

- A disturbance coordinator shall be designated, and this person's contact information shall be posted in a location near the project site that it is clearly visible to the nearby receivers most likely to be disturbed. The director would manage complaints and concerns resulting from activities that cause vibrations. The severity of the vibration concern should be assessed by the disturbance coordinator, and if necessary, evaluated by a professional with construction vibration expertise.

- The existing structural condition of all buildings within a 300-foot radius within the immediate vicinity of proposed pile driving activities shall be recorded in the form of a preconstruction survey. The preconstruction survey shall determine conditions that exist before construction begins for use in evaluating damage caused by construction activities. Fixtures and finishes within a 500-foot radius of construction activities susceptible to damage shall be documented (photographically and in writing) before construction. All damage will be repaired to its pre-existing condition.

- Vibration monitoring shall be conducted before and during pile driving operations occurring within 500 feet of the sensitive receptors. Every attempt shall be made to limit construction generated vibration levels in accordance with Caltrans recommendations during pile driving and impact activities in the vicinity of the historic structures.

- Pile driving required within a 300-foot radius of sensitive receptors should use alternative installation methods, where possible (e.g., pile cushioning, jetting, predrilling, cast-in-place systems, resonance-free vibratory pile drivers). This would reduce the number and amplitude of impacts required to seat the pile.

Mitigation Measure 3.e-2 (with Option 1): Protection of Domes Structure from Vibration Impacts

If Option 1 is selected and the existing Domes structure is retained on-site, the following measures shall be implemented to avoid vibration-related structural damage:

- Pre-Construction Survey: A preconstruction structural condition survey shall be conducted for the Domes building prior to the start of any nearby construction. The survey shall include photographic and written documentation of the building's existing conditions (e.g., foundation, walls, roof, and fixtures). This baseline will be used to assess any potential construction-related damage. The City shall require that any verified damage resulting from construction activities be repaired to its pre-existing condition.

- Vibration Threshold: A maximum vibration limit of 0.08 inches per second peak particle velocity (in/sec PPV) shall be established at the nearest point of the Domes structure, consistent with thresholds commonly applied to historic buildings.

- Vibration Modeling and Construction Setback: Construction activities predicted to generate vibration levels exceeding 0.08 in/sec PPV shall not occur within 25 feet of the Domes building unless vibration-reducing construction methods (e.g., drilled piles or dampened vibratory equipment) are used to maintain compliance with the vibration threshold.

- Real-Time Monitoring and Response: Real-time vibration monitoring shall be implemented during all construction activities within 100 feet of the Domes. If vibration levels exceed 0.08 in/sec PPV, all work within 50 feet of the structure shall halt immediately until corrective mitigation measures are implemented and compliance is re-established.

- Alternative Construction Methods: Where feasible, use lower-impact construction methods (e.g., small dozers, rubber-tired backhoes, or manual techniques) when working in close proximity to the Domes to further reduce the risk of structural vibration impacts.

Significance after Mitigation

Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.e-2 would substantially limit the effects of groundborne vibration on sensitive receptors. Pile driving construction would be conducted at least 500 feet from vibration sensitive receptors or use alternative methods when within 300 feet from a vibration sensitive receptor. Therefore, project-generated groundborne noise and vibration levels would be reduced.

If Option 1 is selected and the Domes structure is preserved on-site, construction activities within 50 feet of the Domes would require additional vibration control measures, such as a buffer zone excluding heavy vibration-generating equipment within 25 to 50 feet of the structure, preconstruction condition surveys, and real-time vibration monitoring, to avoid structural damage due to the structure's age and potential historic sensitivity.

However, it is not possible at the time of this analysis to determine the effectiveness of mitigation with certainty. With enforcement of the above mitigation measure, impacts would be reduced. However, it is not possible to determine at this time whether this mitigation would avoid all potentially significant impacts. There is no additional feasible mitigation. The impact is considered **significant and unavoidable.**

IMPACT 3.e-4 **Long-term traffic noise levels at existing noise-sensitive receivers.** *Future development would result in an increase in vehicle trips. The increased traffic volumes would not result in a noticeable (3 dB or greater) increase in traffic noise along roadways in and within the vicinity of the project site. Therefore, this impact is considered* ***less than significant****.*

Future development of the project site could result in an increase in traffic volumes on the local roadway network and, consequently, an increase in noise levels from traffic sources along affected segments. To assess the impact of project-generated traffic increases, traffic noise levels associated with the proposed project were calculated for roadway segments affected by development within the vicinity of the project site using FHWA-RD-77-108. Traffic noise levels were modeled under with and without project implementation. ADT volumes and the distribution were derived from the transportation analysis prepared to support this EIR. Vehicle speeds and truck volumes on local area roadways were determined based on field observations. Additional input data included day/night percentages of autos, medium and heavy trucks, vehicle speeds, ground attenuation factors, and roadway widths. In order to ensure conservative results, existing trips were not subtracted in this analysis.

Table 3.e-13 summarizes the modeled traffic noise levels at 100 feet from the centerline of affected roadway segments in the vicinity of the Proposed project Area.

Exhibit 3.e-3 illustrates the predicted distances to the 60 dBA, 65 dBA, and 70 dBA L_{dn} traffic noise contours. These contour distances are used to identify areas that would be considered potentially subject to noise impacts from traffic. The roadway traffic noise levels shown represent conservative potential noise exposure to roadways, since the calculations do not assume natural or artificial shielding or reflection from existing or proposed structures or topography. Actual noise levels would vary from day to day, depending on factors such as local traffic volumes and speed, shielding from existing and proposed structures, variations in attenuation rates resulting from changes in surface parameters, and meteorological conditions.

As shown in Table 3.e-13, the modeling conducted shows that future development within the project site would result in traffic noise level increases ranging from 0 dBA to + 0.8 dB, compared to noise levels without the implementation of the proposed project.[10]

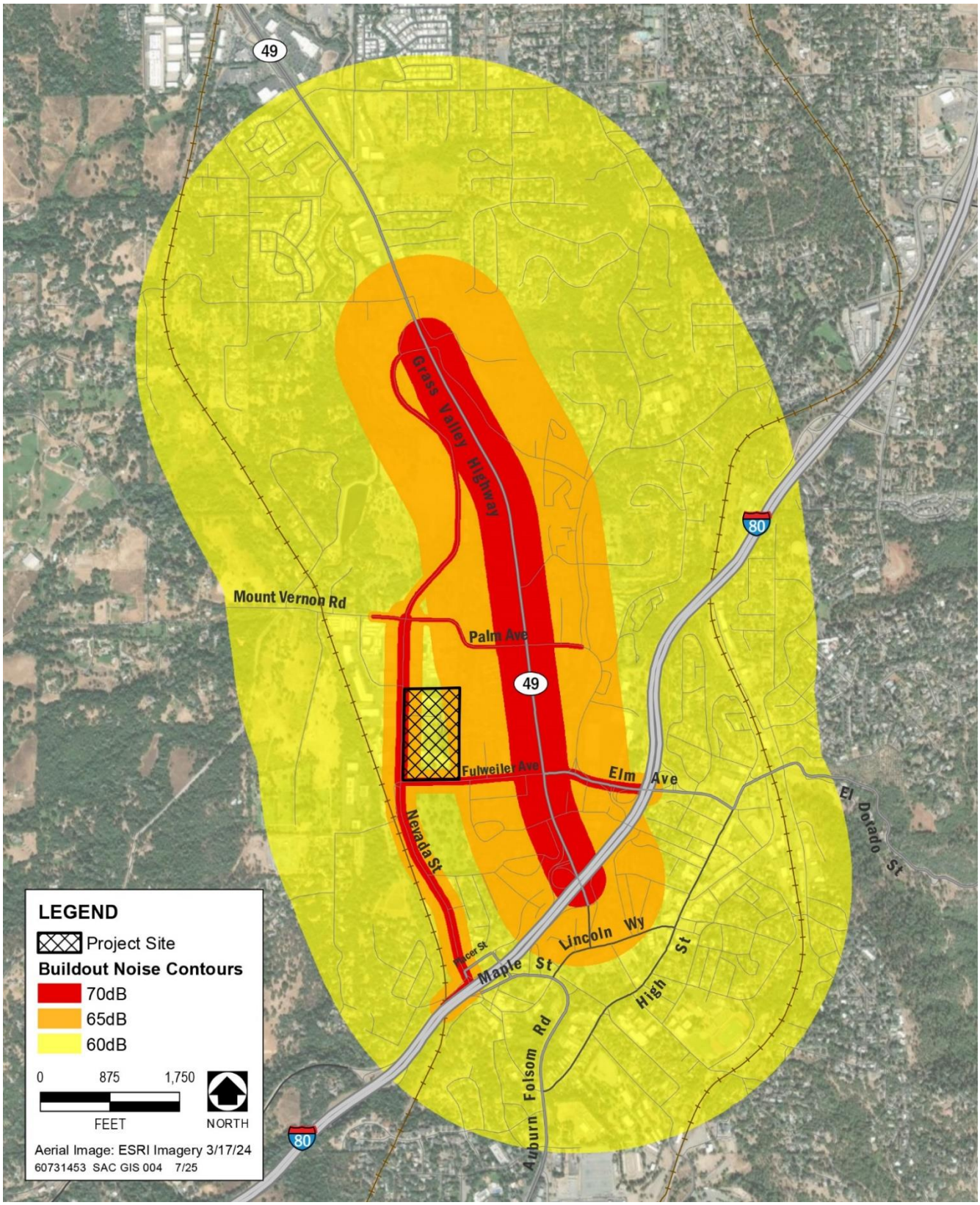
Table 3.e-13. Predicted Traffic Noise Levels, Buildout Plus Project Conditions, L_{dn} at 100 Feet, dB

No	Roadway	Segment Location	No Proposed Project	Plus Proposed Project	Net Change	Significant Impact?
1	SR 49 (Grass Valley Hwy)	Nevada Street to Palm Avenue	76	76	0.0	No
2	SR 49 (Grass Valley Hwy)	Palm Avenue to Elm Avenue	75	75	0.1	No
3	SR 49 (Grass Valley Hwy)	Elm Avenue to I-80	75	75	0.1	No
4	Nevada Street	SR 49 to Palm Avenue	65	65	0.3	No
5	Nevada Street	Palm Avenue to Fulweiler Avenue	68	69	0.5	No
6	Nevada Street	Fulweiler Avenue to I-80	68	68	0.3	No
7	Mount Vernon Road	West of Nevada Street	63	63	0.3	No
8	Palm Avenue	Nevada Street to SR 49	63	63	0.3	No
9	Palm Avenue	SR 49 to Auburn Ravine Road	65	65	0.0	No
10	Fulweiler Avenue	Nevada Street to SR 49	66	67	0.8	No
11	Elm Avenue	SR 49 to I-80	68	68	0.1	No

Notes: dB = A-weighted decibels; L_{dn} = day-night average noise level; SR = State Route. I = Interstate.
Source: FHWA 1978, Data compiled by AECOM 2025.

As shown in Table 3.e-13, traffic noise would not increase more than 0.8 dB, along any of the studied roadway segments. Therefore, this impact would be **less than significant**.

[10] Specific Plan-related traffic noise increase under future plus Specific Plan conditions would slightly vary from those under existing plus Specific Plan conditions, because adjustment in traffic rerouting to Southeast Connector was taken into account under future plus Specific Plan.



Source: AECOM 2025

Exhibit 3.e-4 Buildout Plus Project Roadway Noise Contours

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

IMPACT 3.e-5 **Land use compatibility of off-site sensitive receptors to or generation of non-transportation noise levels in excess of local standards.** *Future development of new noise-sensitive land uses would occur within areas that either are currently affected by noise from non-transportation noise sources, or will be in the future. These non-transportation noise sources could exceed the applicable noise standards (hourly L_{eq} dBA) and result in a substantial increase in ambient noise levels. Therefore, this impact is considered* ***significant.***

The project proposes uses that could produce non-transportation noise sources that could exceed the 55 dB L_{eq} daytime and 45 dB L_{eq} nighttime thresholds at neighboring noise-sensitive uses. The long-term operation of these uses could result in non-transportation noise from, but not limited to, the following potential sources:

- landscape and building maintenance activities (e.g., hand tools, power tools, lawn and garden equipment);
- mechanical equipment (e.g., pumps, generators heating, ventilation, and cooling systems);
- garbage collection;
- parking lots;
- commercial activities;
- other residential, school, and recreation activities and events; and

POTENTIAL LONG-TERM PROJECT-GENERATED STATIONARY SOURCE NOISE

Landscape and Building Maintenance Activities

Landscape maintenance activities, such as leaf blowers, power tools, and lawn mowing, can generate intermittent noise, temporarily affecting neighboring properties, including residences and the public library.. Such activities could result in intermittent noise levels that range from approximately 88.3 dB at 6.5 feet, respectively. Based on an equipment noise level of 88.3 dB, the use of such equipment, assuming a noise attenuation rate of 6 dB per doubling of distance from the source, would result in exterior noise levels of approximately 70.1 dB at 50 feet. Such activities are intermittent and would occur during the daytime, which is a less noise-sensitive time of day. These short-duration, daytime activities do not automatically comply with a daytime zoning-based noise limit (since Auburn has none). Rather, they are evaluated under the general nuisance provisions of Chapter 93 (e.g., Sections 93.08/93.09), which prohibit disturbing noise. Because these activities are intermittent and fall within standard daytime hours, they are unlikely to violate those qualitative standards or result in a significant noise impact.

Mechanical Equipment

The operation of mechanical equipment (e.g., electrical substations, HVAC) is another non-transportation noise source. The operation of mechanical equipment (e.g., pumps, generators; heating, ventilation, and cooling systems) could result in intermittent noise levels of approximately 90 dB at 3 feet (EPA 1971). Based on this equipment noise level, the operation of such equipment, assuming a noise attenuation rate of 6 dB per doubling of distance from the source, may result in exterior noise levels of approximately 60 dB at 95 feet. The nearest noise-sensitive uses to the project site are a public library directly adjacent to the northeast ,residences located at least 100 feet to the southeast, and as close as 150 feet to the east and west (within the city of Auburn) from the project site, and further, approximately 200 feet or more, from HVAC system units. HVAC noise level of 60 dB at 95

feet, would result in 54 dB at 200 feet, which would not exceed the 55 dB L_{eq} daytime threshold. It would exceed the 45 dB L_{eq} nighttime threshold at neighboring noise-sensitive uses located at 200 feet from the project site. However, the HVAC system would not be located at the boundary of the project site, it would be located at the rooftop of the buildings or at the back yards, and would be shielded by other buildings or enclosures. Therefore, increase in distance from the top of the buildings and the enclosure would reduce the HVAC to below the nighttime threshold of 45 dB.

Although these types of equipment are typically shielded from direct exposure (e.g., housed on rooftops, in equipment rooms, or in exterior enclosures), the actual placement of such equipment on future land uses is not known at this time. It is possible that noise levels could exceed the applicable standards at the proposed noise-sensitive receptors and create a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels at existing noise-sensitive receptors if measures are not taken to reduce such noise exposure.

Solid Waste Collection Activities

Solid waste collection activities (e.g., emptying large refuse dumpsters, possible multiple times per week, and the shaking of containers with a hydraulic lift), could result in instantaneous maximum noise levels of approximately 89 dB L_{max} at 50 feet. Such activities are anticipated to be very brief, intermittent, and would occur during daytime hours, which are considered to be less noise-sensitive times of day. Garbage collection activities are infrequent and therefore would not be expected to exceed daily noise standards. Noises would typically emanate from public rights-of-way, which would normally be separated from outdoor gathering spaces associated with residential uses. While the City of Auburn's Municipal Code does not provide a specific exemption for solid waste collection noise, such activities are generally expected to comply with allowable construction and operational hours outlined in the code and are not anticipated to cause substantial disruption or sleep disturbance at nearby noise-sensitive land uses.

Parking Lots

Parking lots and parking structures include noise sources such as vehicles entering/exiting the lot, alarms/radios, and doors slamming. According to the FHWA, parking lots with a maximum hourly traffic volume of approximately 1,000 vehicles per hour either entering or exiting the lot could result in a peak hour and daily noise levels of approximately 56 dB L_{eq} and 63 dB L_{dn} at 50 feet. Rates of vehicle entry and exit into parking lots under the proposed project would be well below this rate.

Thus, this impact would be considered **significant**.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure 3.e-3: Implement Measures to Reduce Potential Exposure of Sensitive Receptors to Non-Transportation Noise Source-Generated Noise

The project applicants for all project phases shall implement the following measures to reduce noise exposure for noise-sensitive receptors.

- Non-residential projects shall be designed so that on-site mechanical equipment (e.g., HVAC units, compressors, and generators) and area-source operations (e.g., loading docks, parking lots,

and recreational-use areas) are located at least 200 feet from, or, if such distance cannot be achieved, are shielded from, nearby noise-sensitive land uses.

- Residential air conditioning units shall be located a minimum of 10 feet from outdoor gathering spaces for residential dwellings, shall be shielded to reduce operational noise levels at adjacent outdoor gathering spaces for residential dwellings, or shall be selected based on manufacturer specifications that demonstrate the air conditioning units will meet City standards for stationary noise sources. Shielding shall be continuous or solid, with no gaps, and shall block the line of sight to outdoor gathering spaces for residential dwellings.

- Routine testing and preventive maintenance of emergency electrical generators shall be conducted during the less sensitive daytime hours (i.e., 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.). All electrical generators shall be equipped with noise control devices (e.g., muffler) in accordance with manufacturers' specifications.

In addition, the City of Auburn should ensure that potential long-term exposure of sensitive receptors to noise generated by project-related non-transportation sources, such as public activities in parks, open-space areas, or on publicly accessible grounds, is minimized through the implementation of best management practices to reduce interior and exterior noise levels to within acceptable limits. The project includes very limited publicly accessible open space and minimal active recreational facilities. However, if these facilities are used for community events or maintenance activities, the following measures would help reduce potential adverse noise effects:

- On-site landscape maintenance equipment shall be equipped with properly operating exhaust mufflers and engine shrouds, in accordance with manufacturers' specifications.

- For maintenance areas located within 500 feet of noise-sensitive land uses, the operation of on-site landscape maintenance equipment shall be limited to the least noise-sensitive periods of the day, between the hours of 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.

- Outdoor use of amplified sound systems within 500 feet of noise-sensitive land uses shall be permitted only between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m. Sunday through Thursday, and between 7 a.m. and 11 p.m. on Friday and Saturday.

Significance after Mitigation

Compliance with the City Noise Ordinance and implementation of additional mitigation measures for the control of non-transportation source operational noise as identified above in Mitigation Measure 3.e-3 would reduce non-transportation source noise levels. Restricting noise generating activities to daytime hours as outlined in the City's Noise Control Ordinance and requiring stationary equipment to achieve property line noise limits would reduce the potential for noise impacts at sensitive receptors.

Achievable noise reductions from fences or barriers can vary, but typically range from approximately 5 to 10 dBA, depending on construction characteristics of the barrier, height, and location. However, due to the conceptual nature of current project plans and lack of detailed information on specific equipment, placement, and operational schedules, it is not yet possible to determine the effectiveness of mitigation with certainty. With enforcement of the above mitigation measure, the project would be designed to minimize potential operational

noise impacts. The City would condition future building permits on compliance with Mitigation Measure 3.e-3. However, it is not possible to determine at this time whether this mitigation would avoid all potentially significant impacts. There is no additional feasible mitigation. The impact is considered **significant and unavoidable.**

3.F POPULATION AND HOUSING

This section includes a description of potential impacts related to population and housing associated with the proposed project.

3.f.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

According to the 2020 United States (U.S.) Census, the city of Auburn (the city) had a population of 13,776 (U.S. Census 2020a). Based on projections from the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG), the City's population is expected to increase to 14,454 by 2040, an increase of six percent between 2020 and 2049. In contrast, Placer County's population is projected to grow by 25 percent over the same period. The City's 2021–2029 Housing Element attributes Auburn's limited population growth to its built-out urban form and small-town character (City of Auburn 2021).

The City's population characteristics reflect an older demographic profile and smaller household sizes than the regional average. The median age in Auburn was 49, compared to 42 in Placer County. Approximately 36 percent of residents were 65 or older, compared to 28 percent in Placer County. Additionally, 85 percent of Auburn's population is age 16 and over, slightly higher than Placer County's 80 percent (U.S. Census 2020a).

Household composition data further highlights the City's high proportion of smaller households. According to the 2021–2029 Housing Element, 34 percent of households consisted of a single person, and 40 percent consisted of two-person households. Approximately 11 percent of households were three-persons. Additionally, 41 percent of all households were non-family households, primarily single adults including seniors. By comparison, 59 percent of households were family households, and among those, 76 percent were married-couple households (City of Auburn 2021).

HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

The City had approximately 6,370 housing units in 2020 (U.S. Census 2020b). The housing stock is predominantly composed of single-family detached homes, which account for about 67 percent of all units, while multi-family dwellings make up approximately 16 percent (City of Auburn 2021). As of 2020, 60 percent of households in the City were owner-occupied and 40 percent were renter-occupied (U.S. Census 2020c).

EMPLOYMENT

As of 2022, the City had 7,795 jobs. The largest industry sectors for local employment include health care and social assistance (12 percent); educational services (12 percent); accommodation and food services (10 percent); professional, scientific, and technical services (9 percent); and retail trade (9 percent) (LEHD 2022).

The City's local employment base includes a range of private, public, and nonprofit organizations spanning sectors such as healthcare, education, utilities, real estate, manufacturing, and professional services. Employers in Auburn include Century Commercial Service, Flyers Energy, LLC, Miltenyi Biotec, Mother Lode Holding Company (Placer Title Company), Crooked Lane Brewing Company, Chapa-De Indian Health, and Pride Industries. Public and nonprofit entities such as the Placer County Office of Education, Placer County Water Agency, and Sutter Health also maintain facilities or offices within the City (City of Auburn 2025)

Related to population, housing, and employment, many relevant environmental effects are attributable to the relationships between jobs and housing, which can promote walking, biking, or transit commutes, allow for relatively short vehicular commutes, or result in longer commutes and associated air quality and greenhouse gas emissions, transportation noise, and other environmental effects. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Auburn residents had an average commute time of 19 minutes, slightly shorter than the Placer County average of 29 minutes (U.S. Census Bureau 2020d and 2020e). Approximately 69 percent of the city's employed residents commuted by driving alone, 5 percent carpooled, and less than one percent used public transportation, while 16 percent worked from home (U.S. Census Bureau 2020d).

Of the city's estimated 6,422 employed residents (i.e., labor force), approximately 798, or 12 percent, both live and work in the city, while the remaining 88 percent commute to jobs outside the city, indicating that the city experiences substantial levels of both inbound and outbound commuting (LEHD 2022).

Unemployment

Auburn has a very low unemployment rate. The city's unemployment rate was approximately 3 percent, 45 percent lower than the statewide rate of 5.5 percent and 36 percent lower than Placer County's rate of 4.7 percent rate (U.S. Census Bureau 2020f and 2020g). These figures do not include individuals who are underemployed or who have exited the labor force.

Jobs/Housing Relationship

While trends related to remote work are highly dynamic, there are environmental consequences related to the relationship between the location, job types, and housing in a community. A closer match between the number and types of jobs and the number of households and interests/skills of the local labor force can help to alleviate traffic congestion, shorten commute times, and reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and air pollutant emissions and noise associated with vehicular travel. Balancing jobs and housing in a smaller area can increase opportunities to use transit, bike, or walk to work instead of driving.

A more favorable relationship between jobs and housing can be driven by a focus on supplying housing that is the right type and affordability level for workers in a defined geographic area. Alternatively, improving the jobs and housing balance could focus more on the adequate provision of employment in a defined area that provides jobs that match the education and employment skills of the local population. An area with too many jobs compared to the number of housing units is likely (in the absence of offsetting factors) to experience substantial in-commuting and escalations in housing prices. Conversely, if an area has relatively few jobs in comparison to the number of employed residents, many of the workers may need to commute to jobs outside of their area of residence. To maximize the environmental benefits of a jobs-housing balance, there needs to be a nexus between the types and cost of housing proposed to be located near jobs to be provided, the education/skills required by those jobs relative to the local labor force, and the income levels associated with those jobs.

Another aspect of job-housing balance involves the concentration and location of basic (primary, exporting) and non-basic (population-based) jobs. This is discussed in SACOG's Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS) (SACOG 2019, 2020):

> The MTP/SCS relies on and supports a concerted effort on the part of cities and counties to foster a balance of jobs and housing. Understanding that not all residents will choose to live and work in the same community, more housing near job centers, and more jobs near major residential areas, will provide

choice and reduce the growth rate of vehicle miles traveled. The plan's land use forecast assumes that housing-rich jurisdictions will invest in, attract, and encourage job growth and that today's jobs-rich jurisdictions will invest in, attract, and encourage compact residential development.

Beyond the locational relationship between jobs and housing, there is also an important relationship between jobs and workers. Housing has long been used as a proxy for workers and worker residences. In reality, the number of workers per household varies widely across regions based on a variety of demographic factors (such as age and education/skills), and different housing types have the capacity to accommodate different numbers of workers.

One measure of jobs-housing balance is an index based on the ratio of employed residents (influenced by the number of homes) to jobs in the area. Other measurements compare jobs to housing units or jobs to households. An index of 1.0 indicates that the supply of jobs and housing is balanced. An index above 1.0 indicates more jobs than employed residents and may suggest that many employees are commuting in from outside the community. An index below 1.0 indicates that there are more employed residents than jobs and may suggest that many residents commute to jobs outside the community.

The real relationship between jobs and housing is far more complex than the ratio portrays. Even with a relative numerical balance, there can still be substantial commuting activity if the types of jobs are not matched with the skills and experience of the local labor force. The number of workers per household varies, and different housing types accommodate different numbers of workers. In addition, the ratio depends on the geographic region used for the computation.

Finally, no simplistic numeric formula can capture the complex human decision-making process of where to live and where to work. For households with choices regarding employment and housing, lifestyle factors (good schools, community amenities and culture, available housing types, etc.) can outweigh the convenience of living closer to work.

According to the adopted 2025 Blueprint Land Use Assumptions, the Sacramento region has a current ratio of 1.2 jobs for every housing unit (SACOG 2024). While the city has an existing ratio of approximately 1.2 jobs for every housing unit (7,795 jobs and 6,370 housing units) to match the regional relationship of jobs and housing units (LEHD 2022; U.S. Census Bureau 2020b), this numerical balance does not reflect an alignment between where people live and where they work. As noted above, only 798 residents both live and work in the city, representing 12 percent of the city's working residents. The remaining 88 percent of working residents commute to jobs located outside of the city. Similarly, approximately 89 percent are filled by individuals who reside outside the City limits. Auburn's labor force, employed residents regardless of job location, totals about 6,422 people (LEHD 2022), yielding a job-to-labor force ratio of approximately 1.2; meaning there are about 1.2 jobs in the city for every employed resident.

In line with SACOG's 2020 MTP/SCS, Auburn contains areas designated a "Center/Corridor Community" and "Established Community." The proposed project is within a Center/Corridor Community, which identifies growth in areas with compact development patterns and supportive infrastructure, including rail station areas, downtowns, and commercial corridors, as critical to the region's housing and employment strategy. The MTP/SCS anticipates that nearly two-thirds of the region's new housing and 85 percent of job growth will occur in Centers/Corridors and Established Communities by 2040 (SACOG 2020).

3.f.2 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

FEDERAL PLANS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS, AND LAWS

No federal regulations related to population and housing growth are applicable to the proposed project.

STATE PLANS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS, AND LAWS

State Housing Element Requirements

California Planning Law requires each county (and city) to adopt a housing element as part of its general plan (Government Code Sections 65580–65590). As Government Code Section 65583 explains:

> The housing element shall consist of an identification and analysis of existing and projected housing needs and a statement of goals, policies, quantified objectives, financial resources, and scheduled programs for the preservation, improvement, and development of housing. The housing element shall identify adequate sites for housing, including rental housing, factory-built housing, mobile homes, and emergency shelters, and shall make adequate provision for the existing and projected needs of all economic segments of the community.

The California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) is responsible for assigning quantified regional housing shares to the various government councils for allocation to the individual cities and counties within their region. HCD is also responsible for reviewing and certifying the adequacy of the housing elements adopted by the cities and counties.

California Relocation and Assistance Act [Government Code Section 7260 et seq.]

The California Relocation and Assistance Act requires state and local governments to provide relocation assistance and benefits to displaced persons as a result of projects undertaken by state and/or local agencies that do not involve federal funds. The proposed project does not propose any displacement.

REGIONAL AND LOCAL PLANS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS, AND ORDINANCES

SACOG Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA)

Government Code Section 65584 requires designated regional agencies or councils of government to prepare a regional housing needs plan (RHNP). SACOG is the agency that develops the regional housing strategy for Placer County and its incorporated cities. SACOG adopted its final RHNP and Regional Housing Needs Allocations (RHNA) on March 19, 2020, for the Housing Element compliance period of October 31, 2021, through October 31, 2029 (SACOG 2020).

The RHNA determines potential locations for future housing stock based on projected population growth, employment trends, and development suitability. The RHNA also designates the number of housing units that local governments should accommodate at different affordability levels to ensure that all jurisdictions provide a fair share of the region's affordable housing needs. Unlike other elements of a general plan, the housing element must be updated on a regular schedule.

The City adopted its 2021–2029 Housing Element on May 24, 2021. The 2021–2029 Housing Element was certified by HCD as substantially compliant with state law and includes policies and site inventories to support the development of new housing units.

SACOG's 6th Cycle RHNA determined that Auburn has a housing construction need of 310 units for the planning period 2021–2029, distributed by income category as follows:

Table 3.f-1. Housing Unit Allocation for Auburn

Income Group	New Units Needed	Percent Total
Extremely Low*	34	11%
Very Low	34	11%
Low	41	13%
Moderate	60	19%
Above Moderate	141	45%
Total	**310**	**100%**

Source: Source: SACOG 2021-2029 Regional Housing Needs Plan (RHNP).
**Assumes that 50 percent of the very low- income RHNA is for extremely low-income*

This allocation is part of SACOG's broader regional strategy under its MTP/SCS, which encourages compact, infill development and reduced VMT to meet climate and equity goals. The City is responsible for identifying sufficient land and adopting policies to ensure that housing development is feasible for each income category.

City of Auburn General Plan

The City's General Plan (1993) serves as the foundational land use and policy document guiding long-range development and conservation within the City. The General Plan establishes the community's vision for future growth, including land use, housing, circulation, open space, public services, and environmental resource management. The General Plan includes a Land Use Diagram and associated elements that collectively direct the City's type, intensity, and pattern of development.

The City's 2021–2029 Housing Element, certified by HCD, is a mandatory component of the General Plan. It identifies strategies and sites to accommodate the City's share of the RHNA, with specific programs intended to facilitate housing production across income levels. The 2021–2029 Housing Element includes policies and implementation programs related to zoning capacity, infrastructure availability, fair housing, and streamlining of approvals for qualifying housing projects.

The Housing, Land Use, Circulation, Conservation and Open Space, and Economic Elements establish population and housing strategies. The Conservation and Open Space Element emphasizes development within the existing City limits in order to minimize adverse impacts to the natural environment and encourages new residential development to provide direct access to new residents to adjacent parks and open spaces. The Economic Development Element establishes that the City will endeavor to increase the number of Auburn residents that have local jobs and promote infill and redevelopment in order to retain and expand existing businesses.

Goals and Policies

Housing Element

- **Goal 1:** The City shall provide a range of housing choices that meets the needs of all Auburn residents in terms of type, density, and cost.
  - **Policy 1.1:** The City shall maintain an adequate supply of land in appropriate land use designations and zoning categories to accommodate the projected growth in the number of households.
  - **Policy 1.2:** While promoting the provision of housing for all economic segments of the community, the City shall seek to ensure high quality in all new residential developments.
  - **Policy 1.4:** The City shall identify areas where infrastructure exists or propose to support residential development.
  - **Policy 1.7:** Allow housing developments with at least 20-percent affordable housing by-right on lower-income housing sites that have been counted in previous Housing Element cycles, consistent with Government Code Sections 65580, 65583, and 65583.
- **Goal 5:** The City will promote equal opportunity to secure safe, sanitary, and affordable housing for all members of the community regardless of age, race, religion, sex, marital status, national origin, or color.
  - **Policy 5.2:** The City shall encourage greater access to housing for persons with disabilities.
  - **Policy 5.6:** Assist in increasing the supply of housing that meets the needs of older adults.
- **Goal 6:** The City will adopt and implement a Housing Element that is in compliance with state law and the requirements of the California Department of Housing and Community Development.
  - **Policy 6.3:** The City shall continue to actively participate in regional housing solutions.

Land Use Element

- **Goal 1:** Guide development in a pattern that will minimize land use conflicts between adjacent land users.
  - **Policy T.2:** Design multi-family residential projects to minimize impacts on adjacent land uses.
- **Goal 4:** Enhance air quality.
  - **Policy 4.2:** Continue to participate in regional solutions to air quality problems.
- **Goal 5:** Establish a variety of residential densities which will provide for different housing types and levels of cost.
  - **Policy 5.3:** Promote use of Planned Unit Developments to provide for clustering and open space areas.
- **Goal 6:** Discourage extension of strip commercial development and encourage future commercial infill development.

- **Policy 6.2:** Encourage commercial design that utilizes existing topography, minimizing cut and fill.

- **Goal 7:** Provide a mix of commercial development to serve residents and visitors.
  - **Policy 6.2:** Neighborhood centers should be designed to minimize impacts on adjacent uses through site design, access and parking, landscaping and lighting standards.

- **Goal 9:** Develop a land use pattern which can be adequately served with community facilities (such as schools, libraries, and community recreation), urban services, and transportation facilities.
  - **Policy 9.1:** The City will continue to seek new and maintain existing sources of funding to develop, operate and maintain community facilities, urban services and transportation facilities.

- **Goal 10:** Establish a rate of development that allows public service providers to keep pace with growth.

Circulation Element

- **Goal 1:** Provide and maintain a comprehensive, safe, and efficient transportation system.
  - **Policy 1.3:** The City shall develop a Transportation System Management (TSM) program to assure efficient utilization of existing transportation facilities.

- **Goal 2:** Create a continuous, interrelated street network that is user-friendly for both vehicular and pedestrian traffic including, but not limited to, avoiding walled projects, dead end streets, and barricades.
  - **Policy 2.4:** The City shall construct pedestrian and emergency vehicle access where a logical connection can be made to existing streets, bikeways, future development or emergency access roads.

- **Goal 3:** Encourage transportation alternatives to the single-occupant automobile.
  - **Policy 3.1:** Match land use density to transit service routes and roadway capacity.
  - **Policy 3.3:** Encourage and support programs which will increase ridesharing.
  - **Policy 3.8:** Construct bicycle lanes, where possible, on all major arterials.

- **Goal 5:** Provide a full range of adequate public services for all area residents and businesses.
  - **Policy 5.2:** The City will continue to seek new and maintain existing sources of funding to develop, operate and maintain community facilities, urban services and transportation facilities.

Conservation and Open Space Element

- **Goal 2:** Minimize adverse development impacts to the natural environment.
  - **Policy 2.4:** Urbanization and development which requires typical City services (police, fire, water, sewer) shall be developed within the City limits.

- **Policy 2.6:** Encourage development of all building sites and residences in a manner minimizing disturbance to natural terrain and vegetation and maximizing preservation of natural beauty and open space.

- **Goal 5:** Create a pedestrian and trail network to provide access to developed areas as well as public access to open space and recreation resources consistent with the need to protect these resources.
  - **Policy 5.5:** Residential developments adjacent to parks or open spaces shall be strongly encouraged to provide direct access to common open space contiguous to such areas.

Economic Element

- **Goal 1:** Provide a land development pattern, planning process, and regulatory atmosphere conducive to maintaining and increasing employment opportunities for City residents and fostering new economic development.
  - **Policy 1.4:** Attempt to increase the number of persons who both work and live in the city.
- **Goal 3:** Maintain and expand existing businesses.
  - **Policy 3.1:** The Chamber of Commerce, Main Street, City, and Merchants Associations should all work together to promote the retention and expansion of existing businesses.
  - **Policy 3.2:** The City will utilize and promote redevelopment to retain and expand existing businesses.

3.f.3 Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Methodology

This analysis assumes the proposed project would redevelop the approximately 10.5-acre site with new multi-family residential buildings, a central community space, landscaping, and associated circulation and parking improvements. The City has developed two implementation options:

- **Option 1 – Preserve the Domes**: Option 1 would retain the existing 22,000 square foot Domes office building and construct 238 residential units. Associated improvements would include residential parking, a central common-use building (community space), private open space areas, and preservation of mature landscape trees along the western and southern edges of the site.
- **Option 2 – Redevelop the Entire Site**: Option 2 would demolish the Domes and Placer County administrative office buildings and redevelop the entire site with 315 residential units. Improvements include a central common-use building (community space), parking, private open space, circulation enhancements, and landscaping. If Option 2 is advanced, the County would identify existing or new office space on the subject property or a different property to house operations at the project site. No definitive plans are available at this time.

Both options would preserve or reconstruct the existing Fulweiler Avenue access point for project circulation and emergency vehicle access. Option 1 may also be a first development phase if phased construction is pursued.

The use of a development range is appropriate for this project-level CEQA analysis given that either Option 1 or Option 2 may be implemented, and minor site plan refinements may occur as the project proceeds through entitlements and permitting. This analysis reflects the land use program described in the Project Description.

While the proposed project would result in the addition of new residential units and associated population growth, such growth is not, in itself, considered a significant impact under CEQA. However, CEQA requires analysis of the direct and indirect physical effects of growth, including impacts to transportation, utilities, public services, air quality, and other environmental resources. These potential impacts are analyzed in the technical sections of this EIR. Potential growth-inducing effects are discussed in Chapter 4.0, "Other CEQA Considerations."

THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, an impact related to population and housing is considered significant if the proposed project would:

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

IMPACT ANALYSIS

IMPACT 3.f-1 Induce Substantial Unplanned Population Growth. *The proposed project would introduce new residential and limited commercial uses on an infill site within the City. The site is located within the City's planned area, already served by infrastructure, and surrounded by developed land uses. The level of residential growth anticipated under either development option, ranging from 238 to 315 units, would not induce development beyond what is already planned under the City's General Plan or regional projections in the SACOG Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy. The proposed project's location, infill context, and consistency with existing infrastructure and planning frameworks further limit the potential for indirect growth inducement. This impact is considered* ***less than significant****.*

The proposed project would result in planned and localized population growth by introducing new residential uses on an approximately 10.5-acre infill site within the city. The site is currently developed with two Placer County government office buildings and surface parking and is located within the existing City limits on a property that is designated for urban development and surrounded by existing urban development. The existing General Plan designation for the site is Commercial with a Public overlay, and the current zoning is Central Business District Open Space & Conservation (C-2/OSC). It appears the Open Space & Conservation (OSC) component of this combining zoning district is attributable to the County's ownership of the site, and the City's Zoning Code provides a process for public agencies such as the County to declare surplus land and convert to a new zoning district, and remove the OSC zoning classification after a report by the Planning Commission and determination by the City Council (City of Auburn Zoning Code Section 159.044[J]). The C-2 component of this combining district allows apartments and rental housing and retail by right, consistent with the proposed project. However, under the existing Zoning Code, development within the C-2 zoning district is limited to a maximum building height of 40 feet and therefore, a zoning change would be required.

While the proposed project would directly contribute to population growth through new housing, this growth is consistent with the City's strategy to accommodate future housing needs through infill development. The 2021-

2029 Housing Element emphasizes provision of a range of housing choices (Goal 1), the maintenance of an adequate supply of land to meet projected household growth (Policy 1.1), and the identification of areas where infrastructure exists to support residential uses (Policy 1.4). The proposed project also supports regional housing goals (Policy 6.3) and is consistent with City policies to increase housing options near existing infrastructure and services.

The site is already served by municipal infrastructure, including water, sewer, storm drainage, electricity, and roads, and the proposed project would not require extension of infrastructure into undeveloped areas. Therefore, the proposed project would not induce substantial or unplanned population growth, either directly or indirectly.

The scale and characteristics of population growth associated with the proposed project would vary depending on the development option selected, as described below:

- **Option 1** would preserve the existing structures (the Domes) and develop residential buildings and supporting infrastructure around them. This option would result in the construction of 238 residential units, accommodating approximately 423 residents**.**

- **Option 2** would involve the demolition of the Domes and full redevelopment of the site. This option would allow for a higher residential yield, with 315 units, accommodating approximately 625 residents.

Both options include approximately 3,375 square feet of neighborhood-serving commercial space, estimated to support 14 employees. The retail/commercial component is expected to result in a limited employment increase and would not induce population growth or generate new housing demand. Rather, these uses are intended to serve the daily needs of the proposed project residents and surrounding neighborhoods and are not of a scale that would attract new residents or workers from outside the area. This type of small-scale, locally oriented commercial use is consistent with Land Use Element Goal 6, which discourages strip commercial development and encourages infill commercial development, and Goal 7, which promotes a mix of commercial services to support residents and visitors.

Although Option 2 would result in a higher residential yield, both options represent infill development consistent with the City's General Plan goal of compact growth within the existing city footprint and 2021-2029 Housing Element Policy 1.4, which promotes housing in areas already supported by infrastructure. Compared to citywide growth projections under the SACOG MTP/SCS, which anticipate approximately 7,868 total housing units in Auburn by 2035, the proposed project would provide approximately:

- 3 percent of the projected 2035 housing under Option 1, or
- 4 percent of the projected 2035 housing under Option 2.

The City's 2021–2029 Housing Element identifies infill development as a key strategy to accommodate its RHNA allocation of 310 housing units (Goal 1; Policy 1.1). While the proposed project is not restricted to specific income categories, the addition of new multi-family housing, particularly in an infill location, would increase overall supply and support RHNA compliance.

The population growth associated with either development option would represent a small share of the city's overall projected growth and would occur within an area already planned for urban development. The proposed site's central location, walkability, and proximity to transit and public services align with Circulation Element

Policy 3.1, which encourages matching land use density to transit access. This siting helps accommodate growth without contributing to unplanned development or spillover into outlying areas.

Neither option would result in population growth that would substantially increase demand for public services, infrastructure, or regional land use patterns beyond levels anticipated in applicable plans. Furthermore, the proposed project does not include large-scale employment-generating uses that would attract new residents beyond those living onsite. As such, the proposed project would not directly or indirectly induce substantial unplanned population growth that could result in significant adverse environmental effects. Impacts would be **less than significant**.

Conclusion

The proposed project would result in direct population growth through the development of new residential units; however, this growth would occur on an infill site within the existing City on a site planned and zoned for urban development, surrounded by complementary urban development, and already served by infrastructure. The scale of development under either option, ranging from 238 to 315 units, would represent a smaller share of citywide projected growth and would not require extension of infrastructure into undeveloped areas. The proposed project does not include large-scale employment-generating uses that would induce additional population growth. Moreover, the proposed neighborhood-serving commercial space is limited in scale and intended to support onsite residents and surrounding neighborhoods.

Therefore, the proposed project would not directly or indirectly induce substantial unplanned population growth that could result in significant environmental impacts. This impact is considered **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measure

No mitigation is required.

IMPACT ANALYSIS

IMPACT 3.f-2 Displacement of a Substantial Number of Existing People or Housing. *The proposed project would not displace existing housing or require the relocation of residents. The 10.5-acre site is developed with Placer County government offices and surface parking and contains no residential units, temporary or permanent dwelling structures, or facilities used for habitation. Redevelopment under either Option 1 or Option 2 would not remove housing or displace residents. The proposed project would not displace substantial numbers of people or housing, nor necessitate the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. Therefore, this impact is considered* ***no impact****.*

The proposed project would not displace existing housing or require the relocation of residents. The 10.5-acre site is currently developed with two Placer County government office buildings and surface parking. The site contains no residential structures, temporary or permanent dwelling units, or facilities used for habitation. No individuals reside on the site, and no housing units would be removed or demolished under either development option.

The project proposes redevelopment of the site with multi-family residential and limited retail/commercial uses. Because no housing exists on the site, neither Option 1 nor Option 2 would displace existing people or housing. Instead, both options would increase the City's housing supply and support planned infill development consistent with the City's General Plan and 2021–2029 Housing Element. Under Option 1, an existing County office building would be demolished and Option 2, the existing County offices (Domes) may be demolished and

relocated to another facility. However, this change in use would not result in displacement, as the site is used exclusively for administrative functions and does not support residential occupancy. This impact is considered no impact.

Conclusion

The proposed project would not displace existing housing or residents, as the site is developed with government office buildings and surface parking and does not contain any dwelling units or facilities used for habitation. Although County administrative functions could be relocated under Option 2, this would not result in displacement. The City's General Plan and 2021-2029 Housing Element support infill development on underutilized sites to accommodate future housing needs without displacing existing communities. Because the site does not contain existing housing and the proposed project would introduce new multi-family housing units within existing development, the proposed project would not displace substantial numbers of people or housing or necessitate the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. This impact is considered **no impact**.

Mitigation Measure

No mitigation is required.

3.G TRANSPORTATION

The Transportation section of the EIR discusses existing and cumulative transportation and circulation conditions associated with the Auburn Domes Infill Project (proposed project). The information contained within this chapter is primarily based on transportation-related data prepared for the project, the City of Auburn General Plan, and the City of Auburn General Plan Transportation White Paper. The analysis includes consideration of impacts related to vehicular travel demand, automobile traffic impacts on roadway capacity, transit impacts, bicycle impacts, and pedestrian impacts.

3.g.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Streets and Roadways in the Vicinity of the Project Site

The following roadways and streets are adjacent to or near the project site, and would be used by future residents, visitors, and employees of the project site.

State Route 49 (SR-49). SR-49 is a principal arterial that is the primary north-south route through Auburn. SR-49 is generally a 4-6 lane conventional highway with a continuous center two-way left-turn lane or median. The posted speed limit in the area of the project site is 45 miles per hour (mph) and the flow of traffic is generally governed by the operation of numerous major signalized intersections. There is one such intersection approximately 0.2-mile east of the project site at SR-49 and Fulweiler Avenue.

Nevada Street. Nevada Street is a primary north-south route through the portion of Auburn that is west of SR-49. Nevada Street borders the project site on the west. Nevada Street is generally a two-lane road with a continuous two-way left turn lane. It has dedicated left-turn pockets at the intersection of Nevada Street/Fulweiler Avenue. The posted speed limit is 35 mph north of Mount Vernon Road and 30 mph south of Mount Vernon Road.

Fulweiler Avenue and Elm Avenue. Fulweiler Avenue and Elm Avenue are east-west streets linking Nevada Street with SR-49 and Downtown Auburn. Fulweiler Avenue extends from its intersection with Nevada Street to the SR-49 and Elm Avenue intersection. East of SR-49, it transitions into Elm Avenue, which continues east through an interchange with Interstate 80 (I-80) to High Street.

Mount Vernon Road and Palm Avenue. Mount Vernon Road and Palm Avenue are rural collector streets that intersect with Nevada Street approximately 0.25-mile north of the Project Site. Mount Vernon Road provides access to neighborhoods west and northwest of the Project Site, while Palm Avenue provides access to SR-49 via a signalized interchange.

As part of the technical analysis for the proposed project, traffic volume data were collected by a third-party consultant as part of the City of Auburn's ongoing General Plan update efforts. These data were provided to our team by the City and represent existing conditions for use in this EIR. No new traffic counts were conducted specifically for this project. The use of City-provided data ensures consistency with broader planning efforts and supports the cumulative context of the analysis. The resulting Average Daily Traffic Volumes (ADT) for the streets and roadways discussed above are listed in Table 3.g-1 below.

Table 3.g-1. Average Daily Traffic Volume Counts

Street/Roadway	Segment	Avg Volume Daytime (7AM - 7PM)	Avg Volume Evening (7PM - 10PM)	Avg Volume Overnight (10PM - 7AM)	Daily Total	Percent Daytime (7AM - 7PM)	Percent Evening (7PM - 10PM)	Percent Overnight (10PM - 7AM)
SR-49 (Grass Valley Hwy)	Nevada Street to Palm Avenue	29,343	3,545	4,206	**37,093**	79.1%	9.6%	11.3%
SR-49 (Grass Valley Hwy)	Palm Avenue to Elm Avenue	27,548	3,465	4,238	**35,251**	78.1%	9.8%	12.0%
SR-49 (Grass Valley Hwy)	Elm Avenue to I-80	26,908	3,337	4,072	**34,317**	78.4%	9.7%	11.9%
Nevada Street	SR-49 to Palm Avenue	4,210	296	240	**4,746**	88.7%	6.2%	5.0%
Nevada Street	Palm Avenue to Fulweiler Avenue	9,430	609	614	**10,653**	88.5%	5.7%	5.8%
Nevada Street	Fulweiler Avenue to I-80	7,952	526	585	**9,063**	87.7%	5.8%	6.5%
Mount Vernon Road	West of Nevada Street	2,694	248	199	**3,141**	85.8%	7.9%	6.3%
Palm Avenue	Nevada Street to SR-49	2,916	242	97	**3,255**	89.6%	7.4%	3.0%
Palm Avenue	SR-49 to Auburn Ravine Road	4,142	357	153	**4,652**	89.0%	7.7%	3.3%
Fulweiler Avenue	Nevada Street to SR-49	5,357	565	284	**6,206**	86.3%	9.1%	4.6%
Elm Avenue	SR-49 to I-80	8,450	938	688	**10,076**	83.9%	9.3%	6.8%

Note:
I-80 = Interstate 80
SR-46 = State Route 49

In addition to the ADT counts shown in Table 3.g-1, future traffic volumes were calculated for each street and roadway segment for two scenarios: a scenario four years into the future where there is no development of the project site, but where there is background growth and Option 2 (development of the entire project site). A four-year horizon was conservatively applied to estimate future traffic volumes using an annual growth rate of two percent. These data are shown in Table 3.g-2.[1]

Table 3.g-2. Future Traffic Volumes

Street/ Roadway	Segment	Future (No Build Alternative) Volumes	Build Alternative Volumes	Future + Build Alternative Volumes	Percent Change
SR-49 (Grass Valley Hwy)	Nevada Street to Palm Avenue	40,151	103	40,254	0.3%
SR-49 (Grass Valley Hwy)	Palm Avenue to Elm Avenue	38,157	556	38,713	1.5%
SR-49 (Grass Valley Hwy)	Elm Avenue to I-80	37,146	541	37,688	1.5%
Nevada Street	SR-49 to Palm Avenue	5,138	329	5,466	6.4%
Nevada Street	Palm Avenue to Fulweiler Avenue	11,531	1,399	12,930	12.1%
Nevada Street	Fulweiler Avenue to I-80	9,810	628	10,438	6.4%
Mount Vernon Road	West of Nevada Street	3,400	218	3,618	6.4%
Palm Avenue	Nevada Street to SR-49	3,523	225	3,749	6.4%
Palm Avenue	SR-49 to Auburn Ravine Road	5,036	13	5,049	0.3%
Fulweiler Avenue	Nevada Street to SR-49	6,717	1,399	8,117	20.8%
Elm Avenue	SR-49 to I-80	10,907	159	11,066	1.5%

Note:
I-80 = Interstate 80
SR-46 = State Route 49

[1] The analysis conservatively does not subtract the existing on-site trips that would be eliminated through implementation of the proposed project.

Transit Services

Transit service within the City of Auburn is primarily provided by Placer County Transit (PCT), which offers fixed-route bus services connecting Auburn to surrounding communities such as Rocklin, Roseville, Lincoln, and Colfax. Auburn also serves as a regional transit hub for intercity connections.

The Auburn Transit Station, located approximately 200 feet southwest of the project site near the intersection of Nevada Street and Fulweiler Avenue, provides additional transit access. This station offers Amtrak Capitol Corridor service with one round trip daily to Sacramento and the Bay Area, as well as Amtrak Thruway Bus Service. Greyhound and other intercity bus services also operate from this facility.

The PCT Auburn Loop serves key destinations within Auburn, including commercial areas, schools, government offices, and the medical center. The nearest PCT bus stops to the project site are located along Nevada Street, within a short walking distance (approximately 300 feet) of the site's southwestern corner. In addition to fixed-route service, dial-a-ride paratransit service is available to eligible seniors and persons with disabilities through Placer County Dial-A-Ride.

Overall, the project site is well-served by existing regional and local transit infrastructure, supporting the potential for transit-oriented development and reducing dependence on private vehicles for future residents and employees.

Rail Service

The City of Auburn is served by passenger rail service via the Auburn Multimodal Station, located at 277 Nevada Street, approximately 200 feet southwest of the project site. The station provides Amtrak Capitol Corridor service, which offers a single round-trip train daily between Auburn and San Jose, with intermediate stops in Sacramento, Davis, and other Bay Area cities. This rail line provides a critical regional connection for commuters and intercity travelers alike.

In addition to rail service, the Auburn station functions as a hub for Amtrak Thruway Motorcoach services that extend the reach of the rail network, offering scheduled bus service to destinations not directly served by the Capitol Corridor.

The Capitol Corridor service is operated by Amtrak and managed by the Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority (CCJPA) in coordination with Caltrans and Union Pacific Railroad. The line is a key component of California's state-supported intercity passenger rail system.

Freight rail service in the Auburn area is operated by Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) along the same rail corridor. However, no freight service directly serves the project site, and freight activity in the vicinity is generally limited in frequency and does not generate substantial local traffic or access constraints.

The proximity of the Auburn Multimodal Station to the project site enhances its regional accessibility and supports the feasibility of transit-oriented infill development.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

The City of Auburn has adopted a citywide Bicycle Master Plan and continues to implement infrastructure improvements to support non-motorized transportation, including pedestrian and bicycle access. The project site

is located within an urbanized area of the city, with varying levels of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure connecting to surrounding residential, commercial, civic, and recreational destinations.

Pedestrian Facilities:

Sidewalks are provided along Nevada Street and Fulweiler Avenue, both of which serve as primary access points to the project site. These sidewalks offer continuous pedestrian connections to adjacent properties, public transit stops, and the Auburn Multimodal Station. Marked crosswalks are present at key intersections in the area, enhancing pedestrian safety. The relatively compact street grid and existing sidewalks in the vicinity support walkability and facilitate safe pedestrian travel.

Bicycle Facilities:

Bicycle infrastructure in the immediate project area consists primarily of shared-roadway conditions (Class III bike routes) and limited Class II bike lanes. Nevada Street is designated as a Class III bicycle route, with signage indicating the shared nature of the roadway. While dedicated Class II bike lanes are limited near the project site, the City's Bicycle Master Plan identifies opportunities to expand the bicycle network, including improvements to Nevada Street and potential connections to existing trails and parks.

Overall, the project site is moderately accessible by bicycle and pedestrian modes. Planned improvements under the City's Bicycle Master Plan would further enhance connectivity and safety for non-motorized users. The proximity of the site to transit and key destinations within the city makes it well-suited to support active transportation as part of a multi-modal circulation system.

3.g.2 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

STATE REGULATIONS

Assembly Bill 32 (AB 32) and Senate Bill 375 (SB 375)

With the passage of Assembly Bill (AB) 32, the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, the State of California committed itself to reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. On December 11, 2008, ARB adopted its Proposed Scoping Plan for AB 32. This scoping plan included the approval of SB 375 as the means for achieving regional transportation related GHG targets. SB 375 provides guidance regarding curbing emissions from cars and light trucks. There are four major components to SB 375. First, SB 375 requires regional GHG emissions targets. ARB's Regional Targets Advisory Committee will guide the adoption of targets to be met by 2020 and 2035 for each Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in the state. These targets, which MPOs may propose themselves, must be updated every eight years in conjunction with the revision schedule of the housing and transportation elements of local general plans. Second, MPOs are required to create a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) that provides a plan for meeting regional targets. The SCS and the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) must be consistent, including action items and financing decisions. If the SCS does not meet the regional target, the MPO must produce an Alternative Planning Strategy that details an alternative plan for meeting the target. Third, SB 375 requires regional housing elements and transportation plans to be synchronized on 8-year schedules. In addition, Regional Housing Needs Assessment allocation numbers must conform to the SCS. If local jurisdictions are required to rezone land as a result of changes in the housing element, rezoning must take place within three years of adoption of the housing element. Finally, MPOs must use transportation and air emissions modeling techniques that are consistent with the guidelines prepared by the

California Transportation Commission. Regional Transportation Planning Agencies, cities, and counties are encouraged, but not required, to use travel demand models that are consistent with California Transportation Commission guidelines. The adopted RTP, per SB 375 (SACOG 2019), is discussed below.

COMPLETE STREETS (AB 1358)

AB 1358, also known as the California Complete Streets Act of 2008, requires cities and counties to include "complete street" policies in their general plans. These policies address the safe accommodation of all users, including bicyclists, pedestrians, motorists, public transit vehicles and riders, children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. These policies can apply to new streets, as well as the redesign of corridors.

Senate Bill 743

On September 27, 2013, SB 743 was signed into law, supporting previous climate focused and transportation legislation, including the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008 (SB 375), the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32), as well as the Complete Streets Act (AB 1358), which requires local governments to plan for a balanced, multimodal transportation network that meets the needs of all users. In December 2018, the OPR issued a final advisory to guide lead agencies in implementing SB 743, Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA (OPR 2018). Vehicle miles traveled, or VMT, has long been a common metric to use to measure travel demand. A VMT is one vehicle traveling on a roadway for one mile. The Technical Advisory observes that VMT is the most appropriate metric to use in evaluating a project's transportation impact under CEQA.

VMT for residential and office projects is generally assessed using efficiency metrics, i.e., on a "per rate" basis. Specifically, the OPR-recommended metrics are VMT per capita for residential projects and VMT per employee for office projects. Lead agencies have the discretion to set or apply their own significance thresholds in lieu of those recommended in the Technical Advisory, provided they are based on substantial evidence. Cities and counties still have the ability to use metrics such as Level of Service (LOS) for other plans, studies, or network monitoring. However, LOS and similar metrics are not considered to be significant environmental impacts under CEQA.

In other words, SB 743 changes the focus of transportation impact analysis in CEQA from measuring impacts on drivers to measuring the impact of driving. Projects with one or more of the following characteristics would generally have lesser VMT impacts:

- Higher land use densities
- Mix of project uses
- Support of a citywide jobs-housing balance (i.e., provide housing in a job-rich area, or vice versa)
- Proximity to the core of a region
- Proximity to high-quality transit service
- Location in highly walkable or bikeable areas

This shift in transportation impact criteria is intended to better align transportation impact analysis and mitigation outcomes with the State's goals to reduce GHG emissions, encourage infill development, and improve public health through more active transportation. Specific to SB 743, Section 15064.3(c) of the revised CEQA Guidelines states that, "a lead agency may elect to be governed by the provisions of this section immediately.

Beginning on July 1, 2020, the provisions of this section shall apply statewide." However, Public Resources Code Section 21099(b)(2) states that, "upon certification of the guidelines by the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency pursuant to this section, automobile delay, as described solely by level of service or similar measures of vehicular capacity or traffic congestion, shall not be considered a significant impact on the environment pursuant to this division, except in locations specifically identified in the Guidelines."

REGIONAL REGULATIONS

SACOG Metropolitan Transportation Plan

The Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) is responsible for the preparation of, and updates to, the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and the corresponding Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP) for the six-county Sacramento region. The MTP provides a 20-year transportation vision and corresponding list of projects. The MTIP identifies short-term projects (7-year horizon) in more detail. The current MTP, the 2020 MTP/SCS, was adopted in November 2019 (SACOG 2019). SACOG is also responsible for the oversight and distribution of most federal and State transportation funding sources. An update to the MTP/SCS is underway as of the writing of this EIR. In June of 2024, SACOG adopted land use assumptions to use in the MTP/SCS update, otherwise known as the 2025 Blueprint.

LOCAL REGULATIONS

City of Auburn General Plan

The City of Auburn General Plan 1992 – 2012 is the currently adopted general plan for the City of Auburn (City of Auburn 1993). The General Plan Circulation Element contains goals and policies to guide development within the city, a summary of existing conditions for the time when the plan was written, and a needs assessment and recommended improvements. The City is currently in the process of developing a new general plan, titled Envision Auburn 2045, and has released a transportation white paper that includes current existing and planned conditions, regulatory framework, and references to regional and local planning documents to inform the general plan update (City of Auburn 2024). Nevada Street is recognized as an arterial that provides access to the freeway system and generally serves relatively a higher volume of traffic than other local streets in this white paper.

The proposed project would be compatible with the Circulation Element of the City of Auburn General Plan 1992 – 2012. The primary goals of the Circulation Element are the following:

- **Goal 1:** Provide a comprehensive, safe, and efficient transportation system
- **Goal 2:** Create a continuous, interrelated street network that is user-friendly for both vehicular and pedestrian traffic including, but not limited to, avoiding walled projects, dead end streets, and barricades.
- **Goal 3:** Encourage transportation alternatives to the single-occupant automobile.
- **Goal 4:** Protect the public investment in the airport.
- **Goal 5:** Provide a full range of adequate public services for all area residents and businesses.

3.g.3 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

METHODOLOGY

The transportation analysis provided in this EIR evaluates potential impacts associated with the proposed project in accordance with CEQA, including the assessment of VMT consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3. The analysis also incorporates applicable guidance from the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation to evaluate transportation impacts.[2] While the City of Auburn does not maintain its own travel demand model, the analysis uses available data sources and standard methodologies for trip generation and VMT estimation, including the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Trip Generation Manual and California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod)-based VMT screening tools.

Trip generation estimates were derived using the ITE Trip Generation Manual, 11th Edition, and VMT was calculated based on average trip lengths for residential, office, and retail uses, and informed by research collected by the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association. The impact analysis also reflects a qualitative and quantitative assessment of roadway network performance, transit accessibility, pedestrian and bicycle connectivity, and project design relative to safety and emergency access. Although the social inconvenience of peak-period vehicular traffic congestion is not an environmental impact under CEQA, it may still be referenced for planning and design purposes by the City.

THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

This EIR evaluates transportation impacts using criteria derived from Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, as well as City-adopted significance thresholds, to the extent applicable. Under CEQA, the proposed project would result in a significant transportation impact if it would:

- Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities;
- Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b);
- Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment); or
- Result in inadequate emergency access.

Transit, Roadway, Bicycle, and Pedestrian Facilities

A significant impact would occur if the project:

- Conflicts with an applicable plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the performance or effectiveness of the circulation system, including transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities.

[2] The Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation was known as the Governor's Office of Planning and Research at the time relevant guidance for evaluating VMT effects under CEQA was published.

Transportation Hazards (Geometric Design or Incompatible Uses)

A significant impact would occur if the project:

- Introduces a design feature or layout that fails to comply with City or industry standards for on-site circulation, access, or visibility; or
- Results in conflicts with existing or planned transportation uses, such as introducing incompatible traffic volumes or vehicle types.

Emergency Access

A significant impact would occur if the project:

- Would result in inadequate emergency access to or from the site due to poor design, lack of sufficient egress/ingress, or obstruction of designated emergency routes.

IMPACT ANALYSIS

IMPACT 3.g-1 **Conflict with a Program, Plan, Ordinance, or Policy Addressing the Circulation System.** *The proposed project would not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities. This impact would be* ***less than significant.***

Policy 3.1 of the City of Auburn General Plan 1992 – 2012 indicates that the City will "Match land use density to transit service routes and roadway capacity." As noted throughout this EIR, the proposed project is located adjacent to a variety of existing transit services, and the proposed density of the project is transit supportive. The project proposes on-site pedestrian and bicycle paths to ensure connectivity, as well as recommended pedestrian and bicycle linkages outside of the project site.

The Auburn Bicycle Master Plan identifies Nevada Street as a Class II bicycle route, and SR-49 has been designated as a Class III bicycle route, with signage but no exclusive lanes. While these facilities exist, the project would provide new on-site bicycle parking and pedestrian connections that improve access to the surrounding active transportation network.

Goal 7 from the Land Use Element established the City's intent to "Provide a mix of commercial development to serve residents and visitors. Policy 7.1 notes that "Neighborhood convenience commercial areas should be located so that residents may meet their daily needs for commercial goods and services." The proposed project is consistent with this policy by proposing multi-family residential development near existing destinations, including a school and retail and commercial services.

Localized trips would increase slightly during construction, as construction workers would commute to and from the project site. This effect would be temporary, and would not substantially increase traffic volumes. The proposed project would generate new future vehicular traffic associated with the proposed uses, and would also result in elimination of some trips associated with current uses on the site that would be discontinued as a part of either Option 1 or Option 2, as detailed in Chapter 2 of this EIR, "Project Description." Under Option 1, the Placer County Government Administrative Office building would be demolished. Under Option 2, the Placer

County Government Administrative Office building and the Domes building and parking areas would be demolished. However, trip reductions associated with removal of on-site buildings were conservatively not included in the Build Option analysis, to present a worst-case scenario.

As shown in Table 3.g-2, the proposed project would increase vehicular traffic volumes on all studied streets and roadway segments, with a 12 percent and 21 percent increase on Nevada Street (Palm Avenue to Fulweiler Avenue) and Fulweiler Avenue (Nevada Street to SR-49), respectively.

The project would also enhance pedestrian access and circulation by upgrading sidewalks and adding internal paths, supporting General Plan goals for a walkable city (General Plan Circulation Element Goal 2).

The project would not conflict with any program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system during construction or operations. Therefore, the project would result in a less-than-significant impact.

IMPACT 3.g-2 **Conflict with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, Subdivision (b).** *The proposed project would not conflict with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b). This impact would be* ***less than significant****.*

CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3(a) suggests that, in general, VMT is the most appropriate measure to use in evaluating transportation impacts. VMT represents "the amount and distance of automobile travel attributable to a project." VMT is a possible indicator of an adverse physical environmental impact. The actual physical impacts attributable to vehicular travel demand are comprehensively reported in the City's environmental analysis of the proposed project, and conservative assumptions of the proposed project's vehicular travel demand were used in this analysis – please see sections detailing potential impacts to air quality, related to greenhouse gas emissions, energy, and transportation noise.

The degree of impact for development projects related to transportation and travel demand depends on the nature of the proposed project and its location and the context of the surrounding environment. In general, projects with higher VMT rates and a higher potential for impacts related to transportation would be those in low-density environments with disconnected transportation networks (cul-de-sacs, few intersections per square mile), that have large areas with single land uses rather than a mix of complementary uses in proximity, that have little transit service, that have few opportunities for practical pedestrian and bicycle travel to reach destinations, and where parking is free and provided in relatively large amounts. Conversely, projects expected to have low rates of VMT include those that are located in an area that already exhibits low VMT rates, that have relatively high densities and development intensities, that are well served by nearby transit, that have a highly connected transportation network (with no cul-de-sacs and high number of intersections per square mile), that are located in a setting where complementary land uses (residential, school, park, retail, services) are located within walking or bicycling distance of one another, or where the proposed use would complement the existing surrounding land use array (California Air Pollution Control Officers Association 2024, 2010). Increases in density could yield up to 30 percent reduction in VMT. The placement of projects in a complementary mixed-use environment could reduce VMT by up to 30 percent. Higher-density projects with access to nearby transit could reduce VMT by up to 25 percent (California Air Pollution Control Officers Association 2010). The proposed project type and location matches the characteristics that have been shown to have benefits in reducing VMT rates.

The City's efforts for the proposed project are funded by a grant from SACOG under the Green Means Go program. The project site and the proposed project were developed in a way that is consistent with the objectives of the grant program, including:

- accelerate infill development, which will lower greenhouse gas emissions and revitalize existing communities
- build a connected region with transportation options, affordable housing, and equitable investments
- effectively grow …communities while reducing greenhouse gas emissions

The Green Means Go program assists member jurisdictions with technical assistance and infrastructure grants that will facilitate infill development that would reduce vehicular travel demand, and associated greenhouse gas (and criteria air pollutant) emissions.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3(b)(1) allows that projects located within one-half mile of a major transit stop or a high-quality transit corridor may be presumed to cause a less-than-significant transportation impact. CEQA defines a major transit stop as:

(a) An existing rail or bus rapid transit station;
(b) A ferry terminal served by bus or rail;
(c) The intersection of two or more major bus routes with 15-minute headways during peak commute hours.

As described in Chapter 2 of this EIR ("Project Description"), the project site is served by both rail and bus public transit services. Auburn Station, located directly across the street, is the northern terminus of the Capitol Corridor intercity rail line, providing limited morning and afternoon service between Auburn and Oakland/San Jose. Additionally, Placer County Transit operates five routes that serve the site (Routes 10, 30, 40, 50, and 60), and Auburn Transit Services operates both a fixed-route loop (Auburn Loop) and a rideshare program (Auburn OnDemand).

The project site is located in a "SB 375 Transit Priority Project Area," and a 2040 planned High Frequency Transit Area, as identified by SACOG in the 2020 Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy. The project site is located in an area identified by SACOG both as "Qualifying Areas for SB 375 Sustainable Communities Projects" and "Qualifying Areas for SB 375 Transit Priority Projects" (SACOG 2019, Figure 3.7, page 51). The project site is also identified as being within an existing Transit Priority Area (SACOG 2019, Figure 3.8, page 52).

A Transit Priority Area is defined in Public Resources Code Section 21099(a)(7) as: "(7) "Transit priority area" means an area within one-half mile of a major transit stop that is existing or planned, if the planned stop is scheduled to be completed within the planning horizon included in a Transportation Improvement Program or applicable regional transportation plan." Transit Priority Areas were established by the same legislation that shifted the focus of transportation analysis under CEQA to the impacts of driving (SB 74, 2013-2014 legislative session, adopted September 2013). Transit Priority Areas were created in order to provide environmental streamlining benefits for qualifying infill projects in areas with good transit service in order to advance the intent of the bill to "…more appropriately balance the needs of congestion management with statewide goals related to infill development, promotion of public health through active transportation, and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions."

The location of the project, along with the fact that the project is proposing higher-density residential uses that would support the adjacent available transit services, would have the effect of reducing vehicular travel demand (typically measured according to daily VMT). According to the 2020 MTP/SCS:

> "[t]he MTP/SCS provides increased transit coverage across the region but prioritizes corridors and station areas with land uses that support productive transit services" (such as the proposed project). Further, "High Frequency Transit Areas (HFTAs) are areas of the region within one-half mile of a major transit stop (existing or planned light rail, streetcar, or train station) or an existing or planned high-quality transit corridor included in the MTP/SCS. A high-quality transit corridor is a corridor with fixed route bus service with service intervals no longer than 15 minutes during peak commute hours. SACOG uses this definition of HFTAs because it coincides with the definition of Transit Priority Projects in SB 375. Under SB 375, Transit Priority Projects are eligible for streamlined environmental review… High Frequency Transit Areas in the MTP/SCS are different from Transit Priority Areas that are also available for some environmental streamlining or exemption under Senate Bill 743. The HFTAs in FIGURE 3.7 are representative of the transit in 2040 and have the potential to change with every quadrennial update of the MTP/SCS."

In order to demonstration that the region can meet the passenger vehicle greenhouse gas emissions mandates of SB 375, the MTP/SCS emphasizes development such as the proposed project: compact residential development near destinations and adjacent to transit. As noted in the 2020 MTP/SCS:

> "…the region needs to develop land more efficiently in the next 20 years compared to the way it developed over the last 60 years. More compact development will…make it more reliable and affordable for people to get to their daily destinations…We are required to look at the both the transportation and land use impacts of the forecasted new jobs, homes and people. While the region has adequate room to grow in proposed and adopted local land use plans for the growth we project over the next 20 years, it far exceeds the amount required. Using those local plans as a base, this plan lays out a strategy for coordinating and phasing land development with transportation projects that accommodate growth and enhance quality of life… By 2040 there will be 490,000 homes and 658,000 jobs close to high-frequency transit service… An increased emphasis on compact development and better coordination of that development with transportation projects show significant benefits for travel in 2040… These improvements help to lower the average daily vehicle miles workers will travel from 18 in 2016 to 16.1 in 2040. That 1.9 mile reduction may not sound significant, but when you multiply that impact by 1.33 million total workers in 2040, and consider that it is within the context of 620,000 more people in the region, the roughly 10 percent reduction in commute distance makes a real difference in people's lives by contributing to a per capita reduction in greenhouse gases emitted by weekday drivers of 19 percent below 2005 levels. That 19 percent reduction comes because of the policies outlined in this plan; if we were to proceed on our current trajectory, we would not meet that state mandated goal" (SACOG 2019, pages 30-31).

As noted in the OPR Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA, "[b]ecause location within the region is the most important determinant of VMT, in some cases, streamlining CEQA review of projects in travel efficient locations may be the most effective means of reducing VMT" (OPR 2018, page 7). The

proposed project site is a travel efficient location, as evidenced by the proposed project's location in a Transit Priority Area and High Frequency Transit Area, as identified by SACOG. Importantly, the nature of the proposed project is also VMT-efficient in that the project proposes compact residential opportunity directly adjacent to existing and planned transit service.

As also noted in the OPR Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA and in CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, "[g]enerally, projects within one-half mile of either an existing major transit stop or a stop along an existing high quality transit corridor should be presumed to cause a less than significant transportation impact" (in relation to vehicular travel demand) (OPR 2018, pages 11 and 12). The OPR Technical Advisory does remind lead agencies that there could be instances where a project located adjacent to high-quality transit may still have significant vehicular travel demand effects. Among those examples identified is projects that have a floor area ratio (FAR) of less than 0.75. A lower FAR could be an indicator of lower-density residential development that would not take best advantage of adjacent transit, or retail or office development that had a lower development intensity due to the inclusion of large parking fields and an overall automobile-dependent design. This example does not hold true for the proposed project, which would have a FAR of approximately 0.8.[3] Other examples included in the OPR Technical Advisory for projects that might still have a significant impact related to vehicular travel demand despite a VMT-efficient location include projects that are overparked or projects that are inconsistent with the subject sustainable communities strategy (OPR 2018, pages 11 and 12). The project does not propose parking in excess of existing City parking standards, and would advance the objectives of the MTP/SCS. The proposed project does not include other features that would increase vehicular travel demand beyond that which would be anticipated for a multi-family residential development with community space and a small complementary retail component.

VMT can be an indicator of potential adverse physical environmental effects. Please refer also to Section 3.3 of the Initial Study, "Air Quality," which comprehensively analyzes and provides feasible mitigation for air pollutant emissions; Section 3.8 of the Initial Study, "Greenhouse Gas Emissions," which comprehensively analyzes and provides feasible mitigation for GHG emissions; and Section 3.e of this EIR, "Noise and Vibration," which comprehensively analyzes and provides feasible mitigation for noise and vibration impacts. Please also see the discussion of transportation energy use in Section 3.6 of the Initial Study, "Energy."

As detailed above, the nature and location of the project will reduce vehicular travel demand, as measured according to daily VMT such that there would be no conflict with the provisions of CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3(b), which provides guidance to lead agencies on evaluating transportation impacts under CEQA. The impact is **less than significant**.

IMPACT 3.g-3 **Substantially Increase Hazards.** *The proposed project would not substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature or incompatible use. This impact would be* ***less than significant.***

The existing vehicular entrances/egress points from Nevada Street and Fulweiler Avenue would be preserved, improved, and maintained for both general and emergency access as a part of the proposed project. All other proposed project features, including the proposed bicycle and pedestrian facilities, would be required to be designed to adhere to and comply with City of Auburn Engineering Design Standards. These standards require the

[3] Under Option 1, the Domes property would not be subject to new development, and therefore this acreage was not included in the FAR calculation.

standardization of design elements for consistency and to ensure public safety. The project does not propose new high-speed, high-volume roadways near places accommodating employees, schoolchildren, or residents. No design features creating sharp curves, obstructed views, or unsafe conditions have been identified. The proposed project would not substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature or incompatible uses, and this impact would be **less than significant**.

IMPACT 3.g-4 **Inadequate Emergency Access.** *The proposed project would not result in inadequate emergency access. This impact would be* ***less than significant****.*

During the construction period for the proposed project, construction staff and vehicles would access the project site via the two existing vehicular entrances/egress points from Nevada Street and Fulweiler Avenue. Project construction is not anticipated to require any temporary closures of Nevada Street, Fulweiler Avenue, or other local roads, as construction would be primarily confined to the site itself. Emergency access to and from the project site would be maintained at all times through these existing access points. The project would not interfere with emergency response times or evacuation routes and would maintain multiple points of access in case of the need for emergency access. The project would not result in inadequate emergency access, and this impact would be **less than significant**.

This page left intentionally blank with the exception of this text

4 OTHER CEQA CONSIDERATIONS

This chapter addresses the following CEQA considerations that are required as part of an EIR:

- Cumulative Impacts
- Growth-Inducing Impacts; and
- Significant and Unavoidable Environmental Impacts.

4.1 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

This section provides an analysis of the cumulative impacts of the proposed project considered together with other past, present, and probable future projects producing related impacts, as required by Section 15130 of the CEQA Guidelines.

Cumulative impacts are defined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15355 as "two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts." A cumulative impact occurs from "the change in the environment which results from the incremental impact of the project when added to other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time" (CEQA Guidelines Section 15355[b]).

Consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(a), the discussion of cumulative impacts in this DEIR focuses on significant and potentially significant cumulative impacts. CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(b), in part, provides the following:

> The discussion of cumulative impacts shall reflect the severity of the impacts and their likelihood of occurrence, but the discussion need not provide as great detail as is provided for the effects attributable to the project alone. The discussion should be guided by the standards of practicality and reasonableness, and should focus on the cumulative impact to which the identified other projects contribute rather than the attributes of other projects which do not contribute to the cumulative impact.

Table 4-1. List of Cumulative Projects

Project	Location	Residential Units	Commercial, Office, Industrial Square Footage	Acres	Status
Baltimore Ravine Shaded Fuel Break, Fuels Reduction Project	300 feet wide along the south side of I-80 at Baltimore Ravine for just over 1 mile, also along the edge of residential neighborhoods on the southeast side of Baltimore Ravine (Auburn)	--	--	212	Approved
Lords Gym Group Fitness Facility Use Permit	258 Elm Avenue, Auburn	--	16,700, reuse of an existing building	--	Approved
Caltrans Highway 49 Sidewalk Gap Closure Project; new sidewalks, curb ramps, multiple crosswalks across State Route 49 between Interstate 80 and Dry Creek Road and the addition of a pedestrian bridge over Rock Creek	State Route 49 in Auburn	--	--	4.4 miles of linear improvements	Under Construction
Auburn Auto Doctors Design Review Permit	311 Auburn Ravine Road, Auburn	--	4,615, new shop building and new office space	--	Completed
Valero Gas Station New LED Illumination at Existing Monument and Canopy Signs	1650 Lincoln Way, Auburn	--	--	--	Completed
Existing Exterior Office Building Façade and Site Improvements	1271 High Street, Auburn	--	2,300	--	Completed
New Office Building	1243 High Street, Auburn	--	1,400, replacement of existing office building	--	Completed
Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map, Collins Drive Project	975 and 1055 Collins Drive, Auburn	65	--	27.9	Approved
Historic Design Review Permit, Exterior Façade, Window, and Door Improvements	1582–1586 Lincoln Way, Auburn	--	900	--	Completed
Two Ass Brewing: Design Review Permit for Site Improvements and Signage for Proposed Brewery, and Use Permit for Outdoor Patio/Beer Garden	140 Hoffman Avenue, Auburn	--	1,100, outdoor patio/beer garden	--	Completed
Burger & Cream: Design Review Permit for New Shade Structure and Use Permit for Outdoor Dining	403 Grass Valley Highway (north side of Fulweiler Avenue), Auburn	--	550	--	Completed
Historic Design Review Permit for Change to Exterior Building Color	255 Elm Avenue, Auburn	--	3,300	--	Completed

Project	Location	Residential Units	Commercial, Office, Industrial Square Footage	Acres	Status
Roberts Tentative Parcel Map to Subdivide One Residential Lot into Two Lots	1726 Arroyo Drive, Auburn	2	--	3.9	Completed
Pasquale's Italian Ristorante Use Permit, New Restaurant in Existing Building with Facility Upgrades	210 Washington Street, Auburn	--	4,800	--	Completed
PG&E Auburn Sacramento Street Renovation Project	333 and 343 Sacramento Street, Auburn	--	9,660, renovation of an existing building, demolition of three buildings, construction of two new buildings and perimeter fencing, paved materials storage and parking	7.1	Completed
Nevada Street Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities Project	Widen Nevada Street to add Class II bicycle lanes and a continuous sidewalk between Placer Street and Fulweiler Avenue	--	--	0.5 mile of linear improvements	Completed

Sources: City of Auburn 2025, California State Clearinghouse 2025, California Department of Transportation 2025

4.1.1 APPROACH

CUMULATIVE PROJECTS CONSIDERED

The CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(b)(1) identifies two basic methods for establishing the cumulative environment in which the proposed project is to be considered:

- List method—A list of past, present, and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts.
- Plan method—A summary of projections contained in adopted general plans or related planning documents, or in a prior environmental document that has been adopted or certified, which described or evaluated regional or areawide conditions contributing to the cumulative impact.

The cumulative analysis for this DEIR uses the list method. The list of cumulative projects considered in this cumulative analysis is presented in Table 4-1. This list includes representative past, present, and probable future projects that relate to impacts of the proposed project.[1]

GEOGRAPHIC CONTEXT

Cumulative impacts may occur over different geographic areas depending upon the resource area being considered. The cumulative analyses for each topic area below describe the geographic scope (e.g., immediate project vicinity, city, county, watershed, or air basin). The geographic area considered depends on the topic that is being analyzed. For example, in assessing aesthetic impacts, only development within the vicinity of the proposed project would contribute to a cumulative visual effect because the project site is only visible within the vicinity of the site. In assessing air quality impacts, development within the air basin contributes to regional emissions of criteria pollutants, and basin-wide projections of emissions are the best tool for determining the cumulative effect.

4.1.2 CUMULATIVE IMPACT ANALYSIS

The following sections contain a discussion of the cumulative effects that may occur from project implementation, when considered in combination with the other cumulative projects presented in Table 4-1, for each of the environmental topic areas evaluated in detail in this DEIR with the exception of Land Use and Planning (Section 3.d). Because the proposed project was found to have no impact related to land use and planning, the project would not contribute to any effects of the cumulative projects presented in Table 4-1 related to land use and planning.

As discussed in detail in the project's Initial Study circulated by the City in July 2025, the following topic areas were determined to clearly result in environmental impacts that are either less than significant or no impact would result from implementing the proposed project: agriculture and forestry resources, air quality, energy, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, mineral resources, public service, recreation, utilities and service systems, and wildfire. Therefore, these topics areas were not carried

[1] As of the writing of this document, the City is developing an update to the Auburn General Plan. In the future, with a comprehensively updated General Plan, other projects would be able to pursue environmental streamlining available under an updated General Plan and environmental review and use of the "plan method" for cumulative analysis for projects that would require such analysis. The list method is used in this document.

forward for further detailed analysis in the EIR and are not included in the cumulative impact analysis presented below, because no cumulative impacts would occur.

This cumulative analysis conforms with Section 15130 of the CEQA Guidelines, which specifies that the "discussion of cumulative impacts shall reflect the severity of the impacts and their likelihood of occurrence, but the discussion need not provide as great a detail as is provided of the effects attributable to the project alone."

AESTHETICS

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has determined that State Route (SR) 49 is "Eligible" for designation as a State scenic highway, and the existing City of Auburn General Plan considers SR 49 throughout Placer County to be a local scenic highway. The new shade structure and use permit for outdoor dining at the Burger & Cream restaurant approximately 150 feet west of SR 49 (listed in Table 4-1), which was approved and has been completed, is visible from SR 49; however, the additional shade structure and outdoor dining area are visually consistent with the highly developed and urbanized nature of this area on both sides of SR 49 in the project vicinity. The Caltrans Highway 49 Sidewalk Gap Closure Project, which includes installation of new sidewalks, curb ramps, multiple crosswalks across SR 49 between Interstate 80 and Dry Creek Road, which result in minor improvements to the viewshed that would not degrade the existing scenic resources. As discussed in Section 3.a, "Aesthetics," the tops of new buildings associated with redevelopment at the project site may be visible from SR 49, which is 975 feet east of the project site, depending on the final site design. However, both sides of SR 49 in this area already consist of urban development in the form of commercial, office, and school buildings with paved parking areas; therefore, the proposed redevelopment would be consistent with the visual environment along this portion of SR 49, and would not affect the State eligible or City designated scenic highway designation. Furthermore, none of the other cumulative projects included in Table 4-1 would not in the future and have not in the past resulted in adverse impacts to scenic resources associated with SR 49. Therefore, the proposed project, combined with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects, would result in a **less-than-cumulatively considerable contribution** to cumulative impacts related to scenic resources associated with a scenic highway.

All of the cumulative projects listed in Table 4-1 would be reviewed by the City and would be subject to the requirements of the Auburn Municipal Code and Zoning Code, Title XV (Land Use), which contains standards intended to minimize potential adverse effects on properties surrounding proposed new development through regulations such as building heights, setbacks, fencing, signage, parking, tree preservation, and historic preservation. Furthermore, projects in the City that involve historic structures, and/or are situated within the City's Downtown or Historic Districts, are subject to the City's Design Review Process to ensure high-quality design for new development and to provide for unified development themes that reflect Auburn character and heritage. Project Option 1 would demolish the Placer County Administrative Office Building, which is not a historic structure and does not represent an example of unique visual character or quality. As discussed in detail in Section 3.a, "Aesthetics," the proposed redevelopment would represent a noticeable change from public vantage points around the site. However, the proposed redevelopment under both project Options 1 and 2 would be visually similar to and consistent with existing urban development throughout the city and near the project site. Project Option 2 would include demolition of the Domes, which is a historic structure, and represents an outstanding example of high visual quality and unique design character. Furthermore, City General Plan policies and City Design Guidelines direct that historic structures should be preserved. Because Option 2 would demolish the Domes and its landscaping and replace it with new multi-story residential buildings, Option 2 would

substantially degrade the existing visual character and quality of the project site, and would conflict with City policies and design review guidelines governing scenic quality. No feasible mitigation measures are available. However, none of the other cumulative projects included in Table 4-1 would not in the future and have not in the past resulted in adverse impacts to historic resources. Therefore, the proposed project, combined with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects, would result in a **less-than-cumulatively considerable contribution** to cumulative impacts related to degradation of visual character and conflicts with zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality.

The project site is situated within the City's urbanized area along the west side, which already has high levels of nighttime lighting and (in older areas, including the project site) building materials that can cause daytime glare. Redevelopment of the project site would add additional sources of nighttime lighting that would intensify the existing nighttime glare and skyglow effects, when considered in combination with existing and reasonably foreseeable projects. However, implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.a-4 would require a lighting plan that would be approved by the City, requiring measures such shielding all exterior light fixtures and directing the downward to minimize light spillover effects, and require the use of low-glare building materials and architectural coatings, among others. Given the small size of the proposed development, and the fact that existing nighttime light and daytime glare sources are already present on the project site, with implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.a-4 the project would result in a **less-than-cumulatively considerable contribution** to cumulative nighttime lighting and daytime glare impacts.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Projects in the City of Auburn that provide suitable nesting habitat for common, urban-adapted migratory birds and raptors protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Section 3503.5 of the California Fish and Game Code (such as the Baltimore Ravine Shaded Fuel Break Fuels Reduction Project and the Collins Drive subdivision project) listed in Table 4-1 would be required to conduct preconstruction nesting bird surveys and implement appropriate avoidance buffers, as needed, in order to comply with the California Fish and Game Code. The proposed project would implement Mitigation Measure BIO-1 contained in the Initial Study circulated by the City, to ensure that these requirements are implemented. Because the projects considered in this cumulative analysis would be required by law to implement the same or similar protective measures, with implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-1 the proposed project would result in a **less-than-cumulatively considerable contribution** to cumulative impacts on nesting migratory birds and raptors protected under the Fish and Game Code.

Section 161 of the City's Municipal Code includes regulations for the protection of native trees with a diameter at breast height (DBH) of 6 inches or more. Several of the project sites considered in this cumulative analysis (such as the Baltimore Ravine Shaded Fuel Break Fuels Reduction Project and the Collins Drive subdivision project) listed in Table 4-1 include native trees with a DBH of 6 inches or more. The cumulative projects that would affect these trees, along with proposed project, are required by law to comply with the requirements of Auburn Municipal Code Section 161. The proposed project would ensure compliance with these requirements through implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-2. Because the projects considered in this cumulative analysis would be required by law to implement the same or similar measures, with implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-2 the proposed project would result in a **less-than-cumulatively considerable contribution** to cumulative impacts on protected trees.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Historical Resources

Significant cumulative impacts to historical resources could occur if a series of actions leads to the loss of a substantial type of site, building, or resource. Continued loss of resources on a project-by-project basis could constitute a significant cumulative effect. Destruction or relocation of historic buildings would also significantly impact the setting, a streetscape, or a neighborhood.

The proposed project would contribute to cumulative impacts on historical resources if the project and other projects in the City were to adversely impact the same types of resources, or cause impacts on other historical resources in the vicinity of the project site. Project Option 2 would result in the demolition of the Domes building, which is a historical resource. However, none of the projects listed in Table 4-1 results in adverse impact to known historical resources in the City of Auburn. Therefore, the proposed project, combined with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects, would result in a **less-than-cumulatively considerable contribution** to cumulative impacts related to historical resources.

Archaeological Resources and Human Remains

Since the project site has been previously developed and is almost completely covered with impervious surfaces, ground-disturbing activities associated with prior construction likely already disturbed or resulted in the discovery of any archeological resources that may have existed on the site. However, previously unknown archaeological materials may be present and could be encountered by project-related earthmoving activities. The potential impacts of the proposed project on any previously unknown archaeological resources would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.b-2. Because this mitigation measure would protect any previously unknown archaeological resources that may be present at the project site, the proposed project would not result in a cumulatively significant impact on archaeological resources. Additionally, the existing federal, State, and local regulations and policies described throughout Section 3.b, "Cultural Resources," including the procedures for the treatment of Native American human remains contained in California Health and Safety Code Sections 7050.5 and 7052 and California Public Resources Code Section 5097 and Mitigation Measures 3.b-2 and 3.b-3, would serve to protect any as-yet-undiscovered cultural resources, including human remains, at the project site and in the cumulative projects listed in Table 4-1 in the City of Auburn to the maximum extent practicable. Therefore, in combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, the project would result in a **less-than-cumulatively considerable contribution** to cumulative impacts related to archaeological resources and human remains.

TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

No Tribal Cultural Resources were identified within the project site as a result of the records search, literature review, Native American consultation, or archaeological field survey. Furthermore, implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.c-1 would minimize the project's potential adverse impacts from any inadvertent discovery of previously unknown Tribal Cultural Resources. Therefore, the project **would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution** to any cumulative impact related to Tribal Cultural Resources.

NOISE AND VIBRATION

Noise

Cumulative noise impacts consider the combined effect of the proposed project in conjunction with other existing, planned, or reasonably foreseeable future projects in the vicinity. For this analysis, cumulative noise impacts may occur where multiple projects contribute to:

- increased ambient noise levels from traffic, mechanical equipment, or on-site activities; and/or
- overlapping construction periods that result in concurrent temporary increases in noise levels at nearby sensitive receptors.

The proposed project would result in increases in noise during both construction and operation, including from construction equipment, building mechanical systems, and traffic generated by the project.

According to the traffic study (which focused on Option 2 as the most conservative analysis since it would generate the most additional vehicular trips), project-generated traffic would result in noise increases of less than 1 dB along surrounding roadways. An increase of less than 3 dB is not perceptible (Caltrans 2013) to the human ear and is therefore not considered cumulatively significant. When combined with reasonably foreseeable development projects in the area (e.g., infill residential or mixed-use development within the City of Auburn as listed in Table 4-1), traffic-related noise levels are not expected to increase by more than 3 dB along any roadway segment. A 3-dB increase represents a doubling of acoustic energy and is typically considered the threshold at which a noise increase becomes perceptible to the average person. In accordance with CEQA significance criteria and regulatory guidance from Caltrans, increases of less than 3 dB are generally not considered substantial or significant, particularly when resulting ambient noise levels remain below applicable planning thresholds (e.g., 60 or 65 dBA L_{dn}/CNEL for residential or other sensitive land uses). Project-related traffic alone is expected to result in an incremental increase of less than 1 dB, and the contribution of other cumulative projects is not anticipated to result in more than a 3 dB increase overall. Therefore, from a cumulative perspective, the project would not make a considerable contribution to a significant cumulative impact related to traffic noise. Therefore, the project's contribution to a cumulatively considerable increase in long-term traffic noise would be less than significant.

In terms of stationary sources, HVAC systems and other operational equipment would be located on rooftops or within enclosed areas. Compliance with the City Noise Ordinance and implementation of additional measures for the control of stationary source operational noise as identified in Mitigation Measure 3.9-3 would reduce stationary source noise levels. However, due to the conceptual nature of current project plans and lack of detailed information on specific equipment, placement, and operational schedules, it is not yet possible to determine whether the measures that would be implemented in Mitigation Measure 3.9-3 would avoid all potentially significant impacts. However, noise dissipates rapidly with distance, and the proposed project places parking field, which would be the primary source of noise on-site, within the interior of the proposed buildings and therefore with this design concept, operational noise from the proposed project would not combine with other sources of noise go create any significant cumulative operation noise impact. The proposed project would have a **less-than-cumulatively considerable** contribution to any significant cumulative operational noise impact.

Construction noise could overlap with that of nearby development projects. However, due to the temporary and localized nature of construction noise, its cumulative impact is typically assessed on a case-by-case basis depending on proximity and timing. No other known construction activities are planned adjacent to the site that would coincide directly with the proposed project's construction period. In addition, adherence to the City's

construction noise regulations and implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.9-1 would reduce the project's contribution to cumulative construction noise levels. Therefore, the project's construction-related cumulative noise impacts **would not be considered cumulatively considerable.**

Vibration

Vibration impacts from construction are typically highly localized and attenuate rapidly with distance. The primary source of vibration from the project would be heavy construction equipment, including pile drivers if used. The potential for cumulative vibration impacts would occur only if nearby projects involved simultaneous use of vibration-generating equipment close to the same sensitive receptor.

No other known nearby projects are expected to conduct pile driving or use high-vibration construction equipment concurrently and within close proximity (e.g., 100 feet) of the same vibration-sensitive receptor. Therefore, the proposed project's contribution to cumulative vibration impacts **would not be cumulatively considerable.**

POPULATION AND HOUSING

The proposed project would provide new housing opportunities for existing residents of Auburn and new residents. New multi-family housing opportunities have been rare in the city, and the proposed project would offer a new type of housing adjacent to transit service, which would be unique. The proposed project site is zoned to accommodate urban development, including multi-family development and retail development, and is surrounded by existing development. In this sense, the proposed project would not induce unplanned population growth, and would not combine with past, present, or future development to contribute to any cumulative impact related to unplanned population growth. As detailed particularly in Section 3.G of this EIR, the proposed project would not conflict with, but rather would advance the goals of the Sacramento Area Council of Governments Metropolitan Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy, and would not contribute to any cumulative impact related to unplanned population growth not anticipated in this regional plan. Among the City's project objectives is the City's intent for the proposed project to "[s]erve as a model for future infill development under the new General Plan." While the City's intent is for the proposed project to help facilitate other similar projects on similarly situated project sites, the City will accomplish this in the context of the General Plan and the forthcoming update to the General Plan, and therefore, the proposed project would contribute in this sense to any cumulative effect related to unplanned population growth. Similarly, since the proposed project would not remove any existing housing, the proposed project would **not contribute to any cumulative impact** related to replacement of housing or any cumulative impact related to population and housing.

TRANSPORTATION

When combined with reasonably foreseeable development projects in the area, including infill residential and commercial development anticipated under the City of Auburn General Plan, the proposed project would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to transportation-related impacts as explained below.

Forecasted increases in traffic volumes along Nevada Street, Fulweiler Avenue, and nearby roadway segments were evaluated under both Existing Plus Project and Future Plus Project scenarios using Option 2 (which represents the most conservative analysis because it would generate the most additional vehicle trips). Based on available capacity and conservative assumptions used in the Option 2 traffic analysis, all studied roadway segments are expected to operate within acceptable thresholds under cumulative conditions. Additionally, the

project does not propose new roadway infrastructure that would alter traffic patterns or significantly influence regional vehicle trip distribution.

With regard to vehicle miles traveled (VMT), while there could be a citywide or regional growth in VMT and increase in VMT rates per capita and/or per employee, the nature and location of the project would reduce vehicular travel demand, as measured according to daily VMT such that there would be no conflict with the provisions of CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3(b). The proposed project and the project site exhibit characteristics identified by the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) and scholars shown to reduce VMT rates. Therefore, the proposed project's contribution to any significant cumulative VMT impact is **less than cumulatively considerable**.

Therefore, given the project's consistency with existing land use plans, limited scale of traffic generation, and lack of impact on roadway design or connectivity, the project would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to transportation or circulation system impacts. The cumulative impact would be **less than significant**.

4.2 GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS

A discussion of growth-inducing impacts is required by Section 15126.2(d) of the CEQA Guidelines, which states that an EIR should:

> [d]iscuss ways in which the proposed project could foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment. Included in this are projects that would remove obstacles to population growth (a major expansion of a wastewater treatment plant might, for example, allow for more construction in service areas). Increases in the population may tax existing community service facilities, requiring the construction of new facilities that could cause significant environmental effects. Also discuss characteristics of some projects that may encourage and facilitate other activities that could significantly affect the environment, either individually or cumulatively. It must not be assumed that growth in any area is necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment.

A project has the potential to induce growth both directly and indirectly. Direct growth inducement could occur if a project involved construction of new housing. Indirect growth inducement could occur, for instance, if implementing a project resulted in substantial new permanent employment opportunities (e.g., commercial, industrial, or governmental enterprises); or removal of an obstacle to additional growth and development, such as improving the capacity of a public utility or service (e.g., construction of a major sewer line with excess capacity through an undeveloped area).

Growth inducement itself is not an environmental effect but may lead to environmental effects. These environmental effects may include increased demand on other services and infrastructure, increased traffic and noise, degradation of air or water quality, degradation or loss of plant or animal habitats, conversion of agricultural and open space land to urban uses, or other adverse impacts.

The project site is currently developed with two Placer County government office buildings and surface parking and is located within the City planning area, surrounded by existing urban development. The proposed project

would introduce new residential and limited commercial uses on an infill site within the City, requiring a rezone to allow mixed-use development. However, the level of residential growth anticipated under either development option, ranging from 184 to 272 units, would not induce development beyond what is already planned under the City's General Plan or regional projections in the SACOG Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy. While the proposed project would directly contribute to population growth through new housing, this growth is consistent with the City's strategy to accommodate future housing needs through infill development as envisioned in the City General Plan's 2021-2029 Housing Element. The population growth associated with either development option would represent a small share of the City's overall projected growth and would occur within an area already planned for urban development. The project site's central location, walkability, and proximity to transit and public services align with policies in the City General Plan Circulation, which encourage matching land use density to transit access. This siting helps accommodate growth without contributing to unplanned development or spillover into outlying areas. Neither development option would result in population growth that would substantially increase demand for public services, infrastructure, or regional land use patterns beyond levels anticipated in applicable plans.

Furthermore, the project site is already served by municipal infrastructure, including water, sewer, storm drainage, electricity, and roads, and the proposed project would not require extension of infrastructure into undeveloped areas. Finally, the small retail/commercial component of the proposed project is expected to result in a limited employment increase and would not induce population growth or generate new housing demand. Rather, these uses are intended to serve the daily needs of the proposed project residents and surrounding neighborhoods and are not of a scale that would attract new residents or workers from outside the area.

Therefore, for reasons discussed above, the proposed project would not be growth inducing.

4.3 SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

CEQA requires an EIR to address significant irreversible environmental changes where the proposed project involves:

a) the adoption, amendment, or enactment of a plan, policy, or ordinance of a public agency;

b) the adoption by a Local Agency Formation Commission of a resolution making determinations; or

c) a project which will be subject to the requirement for preparing an environmental impact statement pursuant to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, 42 U.S.C. 4321–4347. (CEQA Guidelines Section 15127)

Specifically, the EIR must consider whether "uses of nonrenewable resources during the initial and continued phases of the project may be irreversible since a large commitment of such resources makes removal or nonuse thereafter unlikely" (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2[d]). Nonrenewable resources, as used in this discussion, refer to the physical features of the natural environment.

The State CEQA Guidelines also require a discussion of the potential for irreversible environmental damage caused by an inadvertent accident associated with the proposed project. The proposed project would result in the use, transport, storage, and disposal of hazardous wastes during construction and operation. However, all activities would comply with applicable local, state, and federal laws related to hazardous materials, which would

substantially reduce the likelihood and severity of accidents that could result in irreversible environmental damage.

Implementation of the proposed project would result in the long-term commitment of resources to urban development. The project would change the visual character of the project site and increase generation of pollutants from vehicular travel and stationary operations. The proposed project would require short-term commitment during construction activities of nonrenewable and/or slowly renewable natural and energy resources, such as water resources. Operations associated with future uses would also consume natural gas and electrical energy.

Resource consumption would be reduced due to the regionally central location of the project site and relatively compact design and mixed-use nature of the proposed project. The proposed project is located in a transit priority area. A transit priority area is within 0.5-mile of a major transit stop, as detailed in Section 3.g of this EIR. The relatively compact and mixed-use character of the vicinity of the project site places existing and proposed residents in proximity to jobs and commercial services. This, along with the presence of transit, makes more walking, bicycling, and transit trips practical, eliminating some vehicle trips. Given the character of the project area, trips that do occur by automobile would be relatively short. The proposed project's location and design would help to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and associated physical environment effects associated with VMT (i.e., noise, air pollutant emissions, and greenhouse gas emissions).

The proposed project would be more efficient with regard to energy and other resources and would reduce transportation-related energy use relative to projects built in the past under building codes that did not require the same level of energy and water conservation. The energy consumption for multi-family housing units is substantially less than energy consumed by single-family detached homes.

Resources that would be permanently and continually consumed by project implementation include water, electricity, natural gas, and fossil fuels; however, the amount and rate of consumption of these resources would not result in the unnecessary, inefficient, or wasteful use of resources. The proposed project would comply with all applicable building codes.

Nonetheless, construction activities related to the proposed project would result in the irretrievable commitment of nonrenewable energy resources, primarily in the form of fossil fuels (including fuel oil), natural gas, and gasoline and diesel fuel for automobiles and construction equipment.

4.4 SIGNIFICANT AND UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS

Section 15216.2(b) of the CEQA Guidelines requires EIRs to include a discussion of any significant environmental impacts that cannot be avoided if the project is implemented. Chapter 3 of this EIR provides a detailed analysis of all significant and potentially significant environmental impacts related to implementing the proposed project; identifies feasible mitigation measures, where available, that could avoid or reduce these significant and potentially significant impacts; and presents a determination whether these mitigation measures would reduce these impacts to less-than-significant levels. In addition, Section 4.1 identifies the significant cumulative impacts resulting from the combined effects of the proposed project and the related projects and plans. If a specific impact in either of these sections cannot be fully reduced to a less-than-significant level, it is considered a significant and unavoidable adverse impact. A list of the project's significant and unavoidable adverse impacts is provided below.

AESTHETICS

- Impact 3.a-3: Substantial Degradation of Visual Character or Quality, or Conflicts with Zoning and other Regulations Governing Scenic Quality (Option 2 Only)

CULTURAL RESOURCES

- Impact 3.b-1: Cause a Substantial Adverse Change in the Significance of a historical Resource Pursuant to Section 15064.5 (Option 2 Only)

NOISE AND VIBRATION

- Impact 3.e-1: Temporary, Short-Term Exposure of Sensitive Receptors to Construction Noise
- Impact 3.e-3: Temporary, Short-Term Exposure of Sensitive Receptors to Potential Groundborne Noise and Vibration from Construction
- Impact 3.e-5: Land Use Compatibility of Off-Site Sensitive Receptors to or Generation of Non-Transportation Noise Levels in Excess of Local Standards

This page intentionally left blank with the exception of this text

5 ALTERNATIVES

5.1 INTRODUCTION

CEQA requires the consideration and analysis of alternatives to a proposed project. Because an EIR must identify ways to mitigate or avoid the significant effects that a project may have on the environment (Public Resources Code Section 21002.1), the discussion of alternatives must focus on alternatives to the project or its location which are capable of avoiding or substantially lessening any significant effects of the project, even if these alternatives would impede to some degree the attainment of the project objectives, or would be more costly (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6[b]).

An EIR need not evaluate the environmental effects of alternatives in the same level of detail as the proposed project, but must include enough information to allow meaningful evaluation, analysis, and comparison with the environmental effects of the proposed project. Pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines, CCR Section 15126.6, an analysis of alternatives to the proposed project is presented in this EIR to provide the public and decision makers with a range of possible alternatives to consider.

5.1.1 FOCUS OF ALTERNATIVES

Several applicable infill streamlining provisions limit the required scope of the CEQA alternatives analysis required for the proposed project. Pursuant to both California Public Resources Code Section 21155.2(c)(2) and 21094.5(b)(1) this EIR is not required to evaluate an off-site alternative even if adequate off-site locations were available. Furthermore, California Public Resources Code Section 21159.28(a) provides that this EIR is not required to describe or discuss a reduced residential density alternative to address effects of cars and light trucks generated by the proposed project. Finally, California Public Resources Code Section 21094.5(b)(1) states that qualifying infill projects that are consistent with the applicable sustainable communities strategy (in this case, the Sacramento Area Council of Governments Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy), an EIR is not required to evaluate reduced density or building intensity alternatives.

CCR Section 15126.6[a] of the State CEQA Guidelines requires that an EIR (1) describe a range of reasonable alternatives to a proposed project, or to the location of the project, that would feasibly attain most of the basic project objectives but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project and (2) evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives. Therefore, a key goal of the alternatives analysis included in an EIR is to consider alternatives with the potential to "avoid or substantially lessen one or more of the significant effects" of the proposed project (State CEQA Guidelines, CCR Section 15126.6[c]).

The State CEQA Guidelines recommend that an EIR should briefly describe the rationale for selecting the alternatives to be discussed, identify any alternatives that were considered by the lead agency but were rejected as infeasible, and briefly explain the reasons underlying the lead agency's determination (State CEQA Guidelines, CCR Section 15126.6[c]).

5.1.2 REASONABLE RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES

The State CEQA Guidelines state that an EIR shall describe a reasonable range of alternatives that would avoid or substantially lessen any significant effects of the project, but need not consider every conceivable alternative. The

range of alternatives required to be evaluated in an EIR is governed by a "rule of reason" that requires the EIR to set forth only those alternatives necessary to permit a reasoned choice.

The EIR need examine in detail only those alternatives that the lead agency determines could feasibly attain most of the basic project objectives, taking into account factors that include site suitability; economic viability; availability of infrastructure; general plan consistency; other plans or regulatory limitations; jurisdictional boundaries; control or access to alternative sites (State CEQA Guidelines, CCR, Section 15126.6[f]). The State CEQA Guidelines further state that "the discussion of alternatives shall focus on alternatives to the project or its location [that] are capable of avoiding or substantially lessening any significant effects of the project, even if these alternatives would impede to some degree the attainment of the project objectives, or would be more costly" (State CEQA Guidelines, CCR Section 15126.6[b]).

An EIR must also evaluate a "no-project" alternative, which represents "what would be reasonably expected to occur in the foreseeable future if the project were not approved, based on current plans and consistent with available infrastructure and community services" (State CEQA Guidelines CCR Section 15126.6[e][2]).

CEQA exempts EIRs for transit priority projects from the requirement to analyze off-site alternatives (California Public Resources Code Section 21155.2[c][2]). A transit priority project is a project that meets the following four criteria (see Public Resources Code Section 21155[a] through [b]):

- Contains at least 50 percent residential use, based on total building square footage (and has a floor area ratio of 0.75 and at least 25 percent of total building square footage is dedicated to non-residential uses);
- Includes a minimum density of at least 20 units per acre;
- Is located within one-half mile of a major transit stop or high-quality transit corridor included in a regional transportation plan; and
- Is consistent with the use designation, density, building intensity, and applicable policies specified for the project area in a sustainable communities strategy for which the California Air Resources Board (CARB) has accepted the metropolitan planning organization's determination that the sustainable communities strategy would, if implemented, achieve the greenhouse gas emission reduction targets established by CARB.

5.1.3 FEASIBILITY OF ALTERNATIVES

Alternatives in an EIR must be potentially feasible (State CEQA Guidelines, CCR Section 15126.6[a]). The feasibility of an alternative may be determined based on a variety of factors, including, but not limited to site suitability, economic viability, availability of infrastructure, general plan consistency, other plans or regulatory limitations, jurisdictional boundaries, and site accessibility and control (State CEQA Guidelines, CCR Section 15126.6[f][1]). Under CEQA, "feasible" is defined as capable of being accomplished in a successful manner within a reasonable period of time, taking into account economic, environmental, legal, social, and technological factors (State CEQA Guidelines, CCR Section 15364). The concept of "feasibility" also encompasses the question of whether a particular alternative promotes the underlying goals and objectives of a project. Moreover, 'feasibility' under CEQA encompasses 'desirability' to the extent that desirability is based on a reasonable balancing of the relevant economic, environmental, social, legal, and technological factors.

Alternatives were selected for evaluation in this EIR based on criteria in the CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6. These criteria include: (1) ability of the alternative to attain most of the basic project objectives; (2) feasibility of the alternative; and (3) ability of the alternative to avoid or substantially reduce one or more significant environmental effects of the proposed project.

The City has evaluated potential alternatives relative to the objectives of the proposed project. For the purpose of alternatives analysis under CEQA, project objectives may not be defined so narrowly that the range of alternatives is unduly constrained. Alternatives that would impede to some degree the attainment of the project objectives or would be more costly may also be considered.

5.1.4 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The objectives for the Auburn Station Infill project are listed below.

- Provide economically feasible redevelopment of the site, supported by market and proforma analyses.
- Achieve a housing density that sufficiently supports existing adjacent transit services and provides new patrons for existing and future businesses.
- Create a new "sense of place" and civic hub with a mix of public open space, residential, institutional, and commercial uses.
- Complement and enhance existing City and County assets on and near the site.
- Serve as a model for future infill development under the new General Plan.

5.2 ALTERNATIVES ELIMINATED FROM DETAILED CONSIDERATION

5.2.1 OFF-SITE ALTERNATIVES

Two potential off-site alternatives near the Auburn Station were briefly considered, as described below.

1. Assessor's Parcel No. 001-501-049, which consists of 14.3 acres of undeveloped land immediately adjacent to and west of the Union Pacific Railroad tracks at the north end of Merrow Street, southwest of the Old Auburn Cemetery. This parcel is approximately 900 feet south of the Auburn Station. The parcel is zoned and designated for industrial use, and it currently does not include any pedestrian or bicycle linkages that would allow new residents to access the Auburn Station. The northwest side of this parcel includes an intermittent drainage with associated wildlife and riparian habitat, which flows southwest across Hidden Creek Drive and eventually discharges into Baltimore Ravine. Furthermore, the parcel is surrounded on all sides by a large concentration of native oak trees. Neither the City nor the County either own or control this parcel, which would therefore require purchase from a willing seller. This alternative was dismissed from detailed consideration because the adverse impacts from potential fill of Waters of the State and/or Waters of the U.S., loss of riparian habitat, loss of wildlife habitat, loss of a wildlife movement corridor, and loss of native oak trees protected by the City Municipal Code, along with potential impacts to cultural (archaeological) resources, would be greater as compared to the proposed project. Furthermore, there are existing residences immediately adjacent to this parcel to the east and south, and therefore the project's significant and unavoidable noise impacts from both construction and operation would not be reduced. Finally,

approximately 7.25 acres of this parcel is already proposed and approved for development with the Auburn Industrial Park. Therefore, this alternative was not carried forward for detailed consideration.

2. Assessor's Parcel Number 038-300-003, which consists of 12.9 acres of undeveloped land owned by the Auburn Cemetery District, between the Union Pacific Railroad tracks and Collins Drive, south of Mt. Vernon Road, and north of the New Auburn Cemetery. The parcel is zoned R-1-0, designated Single Family Residential. The parcel contains a large stand of native oak trees along the east side, and another stand in the southwest corner. The biological resources impacts from loss of native oak trees protected by the City Municipal Code, loss of wildlife habitat provided by the trees, along with potential impacts to cultural (archaeological) resources, would be substantially greater than under the proposed project. In addition, this site is intended as an expansion area of the existing cemetery. Due to above mentioned reasons, it is assumed to be unavailable as an off-site alternative. Therefore, this alternative was not carried forward for detailed consideration.

There are no other undeveloped sites in close proximity to the Auburn Station, and most of the city of Auburn is built out with existing development. Based on the lack of available properties of a suitable size and location either within the City of Auburn boundary or the City of Auburn Sphere of Influence that are not already planned for other development by other property owners, the lack of control of other sites by the City or County, the lack of available potential surplus property owned by Placer County adjacent to transit services, and the similar or more severe environmental constraints on other sites as compared to the project site, an off-site alternative is not feasible.

5.3 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED IN DETAIL IN THIS EIR

5.3.1 ALTERNATIVE 1: NO PROJECT ALTERNATIVE (NO NEW DEVELOPMENT)

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e)(2) states that a discussion of the "No Project" alternative must consider "what would be reasonably expected to occur in the foreseeable future if the project were not approved, based on current plans."

The project site is already developed with existing urban land uses. The project site currently includes two buildings: (1) the Placer County Government Administrative Office building; and (2) "the Domes" building, which houses the Placer County Board of Supervisors, among other County departments. Approximately 192 employees work in the two existing on-site buildings. The project site also includes a memorial dedicated to World War I veterans (consisting of a sculpture, water feature, U.S. flag, landscaping, and bench seating) at the entrance from Fulweiler Avenue. The project site includes multiple paved parking areas and two paved entryways, along with landscaping that consists of mature trees, shrubs, and turf grass. The site is designated for Commercial/Public Uses.

Under the No Project Alternative, the project site would not be redeveloped with new residential, commercial, or other uses, and a zoning change to allow higher-density residential use at the site would not be requested. Instead, the existing land uses would continue as per the existing City zoning and land use designations. Nothing on the project site would be demolished (buildings, parking areas, or landscaping). The Domes building would continue to be used for Commercial or Public uses. Thus, there would be no change from the existing conditions at the project site.

project site would be demolished (buildings, parking areas, or landscaping). The Domes building would continue to be used for Commercial or Public uses. Thus, there would be no change from the existing conditions at the project site.

5.3.2 ALTERNATIVE 2: REDEVELOPMENT WITH A DIFFERENT MIX OF LAND USES

Alternative 2 was developed to reduce the significant and unavoidable aesthetics impact and historical resources impact of Option 2 related to the demolition of the Domes and to reduce the level of construction and operational noise impacts as compared to Options 1 and 2 under the proposed project. Under Alternative 2, the project site would be developed with a slightly different mix of land uses with a slightly different arrangement at the project site, as described below.

Instead of the proposed residential development in the northeast corner of the site as contemplated under the project Options 1 and 2, the northeast corner would be developed with an approximately 0.65-acre public park. The park would be developed immediately across from the Auburn Public Library and the Auburn Garden Theater (an outdoor amphitheater), and would be adjacent to the access path from the new on-site residential development to the E.V. Cain Middle School east of the project site. The proposed park would include walking paths, bench seating, landscaping (including shade trees), drinking fountain, open turf grass area for play, a basketball court, and a tot lot. The park would be open from sunrise to sunset. Minor outdoor nighttime security lighting would be provided; all lighting would be shielded and directed downward to ensure that light spillover does not occur, and to minimize nighttime glare effects. The existing row of mature trees along the east side of the proposed park would be retained.

In order to accommodate a sufficient number of dwelling units, some of the proposed residential development would be shifted to include the southwest corner of the project site, which currently consists of a steep hillside covered with turf grass, and a row of evergreen trees that are part of the existing urban landscaping. These evergreen trees would be removed. Construction in the southwest corner in this area of steep topography would require grading – likely more grading and site preparation work than what would be required for project Options 1 and 2 (both of which would not develop this area for this reason). New residential development throughout the site would be reduced in scale to two-story garden apartments, and no pile-driving during construction of building foundations would be required. Alternative 2 would result in development of approximately 200 residential units, which is less than proposed project Options 1 and 2. As with the proposed project, Alternative 2 would require rezoning to allow residential uses at the project site.[MG1]

Similar to project Option 1, Alternative 2 would preserve the existing Domes building for continued Commercial or Public use, and would also preserve the existing on-site World War I veterans memorial. Also similar to Option 1, this Alternative would include demolishing the existing Placer County Government Administrative Office building along with most of the on-site surface parking areas, and would include development of a small area of new commercial uses intended to serve the new on-site residents. As with Option 1, under this Alternative, the existing vehicular entrance/egress from Fulweiler Avenue would be preserved or reconstructed, as necessary, to serve the circulation and emergency access needs of the proposed redevelopment. Alternative 2 would include the same off-site circulation improvements to improve pedestrian and bicycle connectivity in the City as the proposed project.

5.4 ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

The CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(d) provides guidance as to how alternatives should be evaluated:

> The EIR shall include sufficient information about each alternative to allow meaningful evaluation, analysis, and comparison with the proposed project. A matrix displaying the major characteristics and significant environmental effects of each alternative may be used to summarize the comparison. If an alternative would cause one or more significant effects in addition to those that would be caused by the project as proposed, the significant effects of the alternative shall be discussed, but in less detail than the significant effects of the project as proposed.

As discussed in the Initial Study circulated by the City, the proposed project would result in potentially significant impacts to biological resources (that would be fully mitigated through the implementation of required mitigation measures); therefore, biological resources are included in this alternatives analysis. As discussed in DEIR Section 3.d, "Land Use and Planning," the proposed project would result in no impacts; therefore, land use and planning is not included in this alternatives analysis.

5.4.1 AESTHETICS

ALTERNATIVE 1: NO PROJECT ALTERNATIVE (NO NEW DEVELOPMENT)

Under the No Project Alternative, the project site would not be redeveloped with any new land uses. The existing Commercial/Public uses at project site would continue, and the Placer County Government Administrative Office building and the Domes building would not be demolished. As a result, the visual character under the No Project Alternative would not change from existing conditions, there would be no potential for conflicts with applicable zoning or other regulations governing scenic quality, and there would be no new nighttime light and glare effects. Therefore, the aesthetics impacts under the No Project Alternative would be **substantially reduced** as compared to the proposed project Options 1 and 2.

ALTERNATIVE 2: REDEVELOPMENT WITH A DIFFERENT MIX OF LAND USES

Under Alternative 2, a similar mix of land uses compared to the proposed project would be developed, along with a new park in the northeast corner of the project site; therefore, a similar level of impact related to changes in visual character and quality at the project site and a similar potential for conflicts with zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality would occur as compared to the project Option 1. Because the Domes building would be preserved under Alternative 2, this alternative would result in a **substantially reduced** level of impact as compared to project Option 2 from degradation of visual character and conflicts with regulations governing scenic quality (such as General Plan policies and Design Review Guidelines intended to preserve historic buildings). Finally, redevelopment of the project site under Alternative 2 would result in a similar potential for creation of new light and glare impacts as compared to project Options 1 and 2.

5.4.2 AIR QUALITY [1]

ALTERNATIVE 1: NO PROJECT ALTERNATIVE (NO NEW DEVELOPMENT)

Under the No Project Alternative, the project site would not be redeveloped with any new land uses. The existing Commercial/Public uses at project site would continue, and the Placer County Government Administrative Office building and the Domes building would not be demolished. Thus, under the No Project Alternative, there would be no potential for cumulatively considerable net increases of criteria pollutant emissions or exposure of sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations, conflicts with applicable air quality plans, or result in adverse odor impacts. Therefore, the air quality impacts under the No Project Alternative would be **substantially reduced** as compared to the project Options 1 and 2.

ALTERNATIVE 2: REDEVELOPMENT WITH A DIFFERENT MIX OF LAND USES

Under Alternative 2, a similar mix of land uses compared to the proposed project would be developed, along with a new park in the northeast corner of the project site. However, Alternative 2 would shift the proposed residential development on the project site to include the steeply sloped area in the southwest corner; as a result, additional grading would be required as compared to the project Options 1 and 2. Therefore, a **greater** level of impacts related to cumulatively considerable net increases of criteria pollutant emissions or exposure of sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations, conflicts with applicable air quality plans, or adverse odor impacts would occur as compared to proposed project Options 1 and 2. As noted in the Initial Study circulated by the City, all air quality impacts under project Options 1 and 2 would be less than significant and no mitigation is required; however, the increased grading that would be required under Alternative 2 would increase the level of impact as compared with that anticipated under the proposed project, and could require implementation of mitigation measures.

5.4.3 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

ALTERNATIVE 1: NO PROJECT ALTERNATIVE (NO NEW DEVELOPMENT)

Under the No Project Alternative, the project site would not be redeveloped with any new land uses. The existing Commercial/Public uses at project site would continue, no construction activities would occur, and none of the existing trees or other vegetation at the project site would be removed. Thus, under the No Project Alternative there would be no potential impact on nesting habitat for common, urban-adapted migratory birds and raptors protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Section 3503.5 of the California Fish and Game Code, and no potential conflict with Section 161 of the City's Municipal Code regulations that protect native trees with a diameter at breast height (DBH) of 6 inches or more. Therefore, the impacts to biological resources under the No Project Alternative would be **substantially reduced** as compared to project Options 1 and 2.

ALTERNATIVE 2: REDEVELOPMENT WITH A DIFFERENT MIX OF LAND USES

Under Alternative 2, a similar mix of land uses compared to the proposed project would be developed, along with a new park in the northeast corner of the project site. However, Alternative 2 would shift the proposed residential

1 Although, as detailed in the Initial Study for the proposed project, there would be no significant or potentially significant air quality impact, to further inform decision makers regarding the potential increase in air pollutant emissions associated with additional grading and site preparation activities under Alternative 2, Air Quality has been included in this Alternatives analysis.

development on the project site to include the steeply sloped area in the southwest corner; as a result, additional protected trees would be removed. Therefore, the impacts to common, urban-adapted nesting migratory birds and raptors protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Section 3503.5 of the California Fish and Game Code, and the conflict with Section 161 of the City's Municipal Code regulations that protect native trees with a DBH of 6 inches or more, would be **greater** under Alternative 2 as compared to project Options 1 and 2.

5.4.4 CULTURAL RESOURCES

ALTERNATIVE 1: NO PROJECT ALTERNATIVE (NO NEW DEVELOPMENT)

Under the No Project Alternative, the project site would not be redeveloped with any new land uses. The existing Commercial/Public uses at project site would continue, and the Placer County Government Administrative Office building and the Domes building would not be demolished. There would be no earthmoving activities. Thus, under the No Project Alternative, there would no potential to cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical or archaeological resource, or to disturb any human remains. Therefore, the impacts to cultural resources under the No Project Alternative would be **substantially reduced** as compared to project Options 1 and 2.

ALTERNATIVE 2: REDEVELOPMENT WITH A DIFFERENT MIX OF LAND USES

Under Alternative 2, a similar mix of land uses compared to the proposed project would be developed, along with a new park in the northeast corner of the project site. The Placer County Government Administrative Office building and most of the paved parking would be demolished. Alternative 2 would shift the proposed residential development on the project site to include the steeply sloped area in the southwest corner; as result, a slightly larger area of the project site would be disturbed during construction as compared to project Option 1, but not as large of an area as project Option 2. Therefore, under Alternative 2, the potential to cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource, or to disturb any human remains, would be slightly greater as compared to project Option 1, while the potential to cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource would be similar to project Option 1.

Because the Domes building would be preserved under Alternative 2, this alternative would result in a **substantially reduced** level of impact as compared to proposed project Option 2 from a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

5.4.5 NOISE AND VIBRATION

ALTERNATIVE 1: NO PROJECT ALTERNATIVE (NO NEW DEVELOPMENT)

Under the No Project Alternative, the project site would not be redeveloped with any new land uses. The existing Commercial/Public uses at project site would continue, and the Placer County Government Administrative Office building and the Domes building would not be demolished. There would be no new, or increase in existing, noise or vibration sources. Thus, under the No Project Alternative there would no potential to generate substantial increases in short-term construction or long-term operational construction or traffic noise, or to generate excessive groundborne vibration. Therefore, the impacts related to noise and vibration under the No Project Alternative would be **substantially reduced** as compared to project Options 1 and 2.

ALTERNATIVE 2: REDEVELOPMENT WITH A DIFFERENT MIX OF LAND USES

Under Alternative 2, a similar mix of land uses compared to the proposed project would be developed, along with a new park in the northeast corner of the project site. Because Alternative 2 would shift the proposed residential development on the project site to include the southwest corner, a slightly larger area of the project site would be disturbed and would require grading. However, under Alternative 2, the new residential uses would consist of wood-framed, two-story garden apartments that would not require pile-driving activities during construction. Therefore, the short-term construction noise and groundborne vibration impacts would be **substantially reduced** under Alternative 2 as compared to project Options 1 and 2. Furthermore, placing the new park in the northeast corner of the project site under Alternative 2, instead of multi-family residential for the proposed project, would also reduce the level of operational noise that would be experienced at off-site receptors in this area, including the Auburn Public Library, Auburn Garden Theater (an outdoor amphitheater), and E.V. Cain Middle School.

5.4.6 POPULATION AND HOUSING

ALTERNATIVE 1: NO PROJECT ALTERNATIVE (NO NEW DEVELOPMENT)

Under the No Project Alternative, the project site would not be redeveloped with any new land uses. The existing Commercial/Public uses at project site would continue, and the Placer County Government Administrative Office building and the Domes building would not be demolished. There would be no changes in the population or housing at the project site. Thus, under the No Project Alternative, there would be no potential impact from direct or indirect inducement of substantial unplanned population growth. Therefore, the impacts related to population and housing under the No Project Alternative would be **reduced** as compared to project Options 1 and 2.

ALTERNATIVE 2: REDEVELOPMENT WITH A DIFFERENT MIX OF LAND USES

Under Alternative 2, a similar mix of land uses compared to the proposed project would be developed, along with a new park in the northeast corner of the project site. Rezoning of the project site would be required to allow the development of approximately 200 new residential garden-style apartments. The existing Placer County Government Administrative Office building and most of the existing paved parking would be demolished, but the Domes building would be preserved for continued Commercial or Public uses. The level of redevelopment associated with Alternative 2 would be slightly less than project Options 1 and 2, and thus the potential to induce substantial unplanned population growth under Alternative 2 would be **slightly reduced**. Similar to project Options 1 and 2, Alternative 2 would not induce development beyond what is already planned under the City's General Plan or regional projections in the Sacramento Area Council of Governments' (SACOG) Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy.

5.4.7 TRANSPORTATION

ALTERNATIVE 1: NO PROJECT ALTERNATIVE (NO NEW DEVELOPMENT)

Under the No Project Alternative, the project site would not be redeveloped with any new land uses. The existing Commercial/Public uses at project site would continue, and the Placer County Government Administrative Office building and the Domes building would not be demolished. Under the No Project Alternative there would be no changes in the existing amount or timing of traffic patterns. Thus, the No Project Alternative would have no potential to conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system; no potential

increase in design hazards; and no potential for inadequate emergency access; and the level of these impacts would be reduced as compared to project Options 1 and 2. However, under the No Project Alternative, the City/County would not have an opportunity to redevelop an existing underutilized site with housing to meet the City's Regional Housing Needs Assessment, and to implement a transit-oriented development adjacent to the existing Auburn rail and bus station – development that would be expected to produce vehicular travel demand (measured according to daily vehicle miles traveled or VMT) at a lower rate compared to other residential development in the city and region. Furthermore, under the No Project Alternative, no new off-site transportation facilities to improve pedestrian and bicycle connectivity and safety would be installed to benefit existing and future city of Auburn residents. Therefore, the No Project Alternative would have a **greater** level of impact related to VMT as compared to project Options 1 and 2.

ALTERNATIVE 2: REDEVELOPMENT WITH A DIFFERENT MIX OF LAND USES

Under Alternative 2, a similar mix of land uses compared to the proposed project would be developed, along with a new park in the northeast corner of the project site. The existing Domes building and its associated parking would be preserved for continued Commercial or Public uses, and the internal circulation network would be similar to project Option 1. As with the proposed project, new transit-oriented residential uses would be developed on the project site adjacent to the Auburn rail and bus station under Alternative 2, but would include up to 200 new dwelling units, somewhat less than project Options 1 and 2. As with project Option 1, under Alternative 2 the existing vehicular entrance/egress from Fulweiler Avenue would be preserved or reconstructed, as necessary, to serve the circulation and emergency access needs of the proposed redevelopment. Alternative 2 would also include the same off-site circulation improvements to improve pedestrian and bicycle connectivity in the City as the project Options 1 and 2. Thus, Alternative 2 would have a similar potential to conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system; similar potential for increase in design hazards; similar potential for inadequate emergency access; and a **similar** potential to reduce VMT rates as compared to the project Options 1 and 2. Therefore, the impacts related to transportation under Alternative 2 would be similar as compared to project Options 1 and 2.

5.4.8 TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

ALTERNATIVE 1: NO PROJECT ALTERNATIVE (NO NEW DEVELOPMENT)

Under the No Project Alternative, the project site would not be redeveloped with any new land uses. The existing Commercial/Public uses at project site would continue, and the Placer County Government Administrative Office building and the Domes building would not be demolished. There would be no earthmoving activities. Thus, under the No Project Alternative, there would no potential to cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a Tribal Cultural Resource. Therefore, the impacts to Tribal Cultural Resources under the No Project Alternative would be **reduced** as compared to project Options 1 and 2.

ALTERNATIVE 2: REDEVELOPMENT WITH A DIFFERENT MIX OF LAND USES

Under Alternative 2, a similar mix of land uses compared to the proposed project would be developed, along with a new park in the northeast corner of the project site. The Placer County Government Administrative Office building and most of the paved parking would be demolished. The Domes building and its associated parking would be preserved, but the proposed residential development at the project site under Alternative 2 would be shifted to include the southwest corner, and therefore earthmoving activities would occur in a slightly larger area

as compared to project Option 1, but not as large of an area as project Option 2. Therefore, under Alternative 2, the level of impact related to potential to cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a Tribal Cultural Resource would be **slightly greater** as compared to project Option 1, but **slightly reduced** as compared to project Option 2.

5.5 ENVIRONMENTALLY SUPERIOR ALTERNATIVE

For Alternative 1, the No Project Alternative, impacts would be reduced in six of the seven topic areas as compared to both project Options 1 and 2.

For Alternative 2, noise and vibration impacts would be substantially reduced as compared to project Option 1. Also for Alternative 2, impacts in three other topic areas would also be reduced as compared to project Option 2.

The No Project Alternative would be the environmentally superior alternative based on the number of topic areas that would have a reduced level of impact; however, the No Project Alternative would not meet any of the project objectives. Therefore, Alternative 2, which could feasibly obtain many of the project objectives, is considered the environmentally superior alternative.

Table 5-1. Comparison of Impacts of the Alternatives to the Proposed Project

Environmental Topic Area	Alternative 1: No Project (No New Development) Compared to Project Options 1 and 2	Alternative 2: Development with a Different Mix of Land Uses Compared to Project Option 1	Alternative 2: Development with a Different Mix of Land Uses Compared to Project Option 2
Aesthetics	Reduced	Similar	Greater
Air Quality	Reduced	Greater	Greater
Biological Resources	Reduced	Greater	Greater
Cultural Resources	Reduced	Greater	Reduced
Noise and Vibration	Reduced	Reduced	Reduced
Transportation	Greater	Similar	Reduced
Tribal Cultural Resources	Reduced	Greater	Reduced
Total Reduced Impact Topics	6	1	4
Total Increased Impact Topics	1	4	3

Source: Data Compiled by AECOM in 2025

This page intentionally left blank with the exception of this text

6 REFERENCES

6.1 AESTHETICS

California Department of Transportation. 2025. California State Scenic Highways. Available: https://dot.ca.gov/programs/design/lap-landscape-architecture-and-community-livability/lap-liv-i-scenic-highways. Accessed August 13, 2025.

City of Auburn. Undated. *Design Review Permit Application Information*. Available: https://www.auburn.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/697/Design-Review-Permit-Checklist. Accessed August 11, 2025.

———. 1992. *City of Auburn General Plan 1992 – 2012*. Available: https://www.auburn.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/625/City-of-Auburn---General-Plan?bidId=. Accessed August 13, 2025.

Genevieve Marsh Design Group and Barry Miller Consulting. 2024. *Envision Auburn 2025: Arts and Culture White Paper, Community Design White Paper.* Available: https://www.auburn2045.org/resources. Accessed August 13, 2025.

Placer County. 2018. *Placer County Government Center Master Plan Update Draft EIR,* Chapter 8 Cultural Resources. Available: https://www.placer.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/33863/08_CulturalResources. Accessed July 2025.

Sacramento Area Council of Governments. 2020. *2020 Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy*. Available: https://www.sacog.org/planning/blueprint/2020-mtp-scs. Accessed August 2025.

U.S. Census Bureau. 2025. Urbanized Areas, Urban Cluster Mapping. Available: https://www.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?url=https://tigerweb.geo.census.gov/arcgis/rest/services/TIGERweb/Urban/MapServer&source=sd. Accessed August 13, 2025.

6.2 CULTURAL RESOURCES

American Institute of Architects (AIA). 1962. *1962 American Architects Directory.* Available: https://aiahistoricaldirectory.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/AHDAA/pages/20677106/1962+American+Architects+Directory?preview=/20677106/2217873169/Bowker_1962_H.pdf. Accessed July 2025.

AIA. 1970. *1970 American Architects Directory.* Available: https://aiahistoricaldirectory.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/AHDAA/pages/20873518/1970+American+Architects+Directory?preview=/20873518/2218330305/Bowker_1970_A.pdf. Accessed July 2025.

Auburn Journal. 1960 Mar 31. "Supervisors Order Master Plan For New Governmental Center." Available: https://www.newspapers.com/image/378346202/. Accessed July 2025.

_____. 1960 Oct 20. Editorial Page and Features, untitled article. Available: https://www.newspapers.com/image/378374213/. Accessed July 2025.

_____. 1960 Oct 27. "City, County Study Court House Plans." Available: https://www.newspapers.com/image/378374217/. Accessed July 2025.

_____. 1962 May 10. "Supervisors Air Issues In Placer Building Plans." Available: https://www.newspapers.com/image/378438357/. Accessed July 2025.

_____. 1963 Dec 19. "New Health, Welfare Building Is Formally Dedicated Sunday." Available: https://www.newspapers.com/image/378450504/. Accessed July 2025.

City of Auburn. n.d.a. Historic Design Review District Map. Available: https://www.auburn.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/711/Historic-Districts-Map?bidId=. Accessed July 2025.

_____. n.d.b. City of Auburn Historic Properties by Parcel [map]. Available: https://www.auburn.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2851/Historic-Properties-Maps. Accessed July 2025.

_____. n.d.c. City of Auburn Historical Resources Survey Master List of Individual Properties. Available: https://auburn.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2915/HR-Master-List-By-APN. Accessed July 2025.

City of Auburn. 1993. General Plan. Available: https://www.auburn.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/625/City-of-Auburn---General-Plan?bidId=. Accessed July 2025.

_____. 2022. City of Auburn Register of Historic Places. Available: https://www.auburn.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/584/Register-of-Historic-Places?bidId=. Accessed July 2025.

Gilberg, M.E. 1986. *Auburn: A California mining camp comes of age*. Gilmar Press, New Castle, California.

Gold Country Media. 2024. "Placer County Historical Society marks history with new signs." Available: https://goldcountrymedia.com/news/299876/placer-county-historical-society-marks-history-with-new-signs/. Accessed July 2025.

Jackson, Robert J., and Hannah S. Ballard. 1999. *Once Upon a Micron, A Story of Archaeological Site CA-ELD-145 Near Camino, El Dorado County, California*. Prepared for California Department of Transportation District 3, Marysville. Prepared by Pacific Legacy, Inc., Cameron Park, CA. – CONFIDENTIAL.

Lardner, W.B. and Brock M..J. 1924. *History of Placer and Nevada Counties.* Los Angeles: Historic Record Company.

National Parks Service. 1990. How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation. Available: https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/upload/NRB-15_web508.pdf. Accessed July 2025.

PAR Environmental. 1997. California Department of Transportation Architectural Inventory/Evaluation Form for Placer County Administrative Building (P-31-001798). On file at the Northwest Information Center.

Placer County. 2018. *Placer County Government Center Master Plan Update Draft EIR,* Chapter 8 Cultural Resources. Available: https://www.placer.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/33863/08_CulturalResources. Accessed July 2025.

_____. 2024. *Draft EIR Housing Element Sites Rezone Project*, Chapter 6 Cultural Resources. Available: https://www.placer.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/77071/6-Cultural-Resources-PDF. Accessed July 2025.

Placer County Historical Society. n.d. "An Historical Tour of Auburn." Available: https://www.placercountyhistoricalsociety.org/_files/ugd/d597af_5ad7dbd60cee44bfad9d937370f867b6.pdf?index=true. Accessed July 2025

Placer County Historical Society. 2024. National Register of Historic Places nomination form Placer County Administration Center. Available: https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/pages/1067/files/CA_Auburn_Placer%20County%20Adminstration%20Center_DRAFT.pdf. Accessed May 2025.

Ritter, Eric W. (editor). 1971. The Archaeology of 4-PLA-101, the Spring Garden Ravine Site. In *Archaeological Investigations in the Auburn Reservoir Area, Phase II–III*, edited by Eric W. Ritter, pp. 270–538. Submitted to the National Park Service, Western Region, San Francisco, CA. – CONFIDENTIAL

State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). 2025. Letter re: Placer County Administrative Center Listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

6.3 TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). 2002. *Press Release: Cites Tribal-State-County Cooperation as Example of 4C's Ideal.* Available: https://www.bia.gov/as-ia/opa/online-press-release/mccaleb-approves-united-auburn-indian-community-land-trust. Accessed July 2025.

Indian Country Today. 2022. Web accessed at: https://urldefense.com/v3/__https:/nativepartnership.org/indian-country-today/__;!!ETWISUBM!36rMgn4XfNzSopepf8fNm3BhA3bGCtGR0M_DO-8GeI_OvaX4TQrFe8mxvRpq8np5iKjaP44MEtlhsWstco6Bolgv$ in July 2025.

Kroeber, A. 1925. *Handbook of the Indians of California*. Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution.

Littlejohn, H. W. 1928. "Nisenan Geography." Unpublished manuscript on file at InContext, Fair Oaks, CA.

National Park Service (NPS). 2024. *National Register Bulletin 38: Identifying, Evaluating, and Documenting Traditional Cultural Places*. https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/DownloadFile/713282. Accessed July 2025.

Placer County Historical Society nd. *An Historical Tour of Auburn.* Available: https://www.placercountyhistoricalsociety.org/_files/ugd/d597af_5ad7dbd60cee44bfad9d937370f867b6.pdf?index=true. Accessed July 2025.

Shipley, William F. 1978. "Native Languages of California," In California, edited by Robert F. Heizer, pp. 80–90. *Handbook of North American Indians*, Vol. 8, William C. Sturtevant, general editor. Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

Sommers, et al. 2015. *Early Auburn.* Arcadia Publishing, United States.

United Auburn Indian Community (UAIC). 2025. *Our History.* Available: https://www.auburnrancheria.com/about-us/our-history-1/. Accessed July 2025.

Wilson and Towne. 1978. "Nisenan." In Handbook of *North American Indians, Volume 8*, R. F. Heizer, editor. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Wilton Rancheria. 2024. *Wilton Rancheria Tribal History*. Available: https://wiltonrancheria-nsn.gov/about-us/tribal-history/. Accessed July 2025.

6.4 LAND USE AND PLANNING

City of Auburn. 1993. City of Auburn General Plan 1992 – 2012. Available online at: https://www.auburn.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/625/City-of-Auburn---General-Plan?bidId=

City of Auburn. 2019. City of Auburn Municipal Code 159.034 Central Business District (C-2). Available online at: https://auburn.municipalcodeonline.com/book?type=ordinances#name=159.034_Central_Business_District_(C-2)

City of Auburn. 2021. City of Auburn General Plan Housing Element. Available online at: https://www.auburn.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2270/AUBURN_Housing-Element-2021

City of Auburn. 2025a. Land Use White Paper. Available online at: https://static1.squarespace.com/static/64ff44b2ddc39f330ad80978/t/68753197a023ec3092d2b810/1752510877835/AuburnLandUseWhitePaper-Final.pdf

_____. 2025b. General Plan Land Use Designations. Available online at: https://static1.squarespace.com/static/64ff44b2ddc39f330ad80978/t/688d138d43ddcb61ba3d8ac0/1754076047598/LandUseCategories.pdf

Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG). 2019. Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS). Available: https://www.sacog.org/planning/blueprint/2020-mtp-scs. Accessed August 6, 2025.

6.5 NOISE AND VIBRATION

California Department of Transportation. 2013 (September). *Technical Noise Supplement to the Traffic Noise Analysis Protocol. A Guide for Measuring, Modeling, and Abating Highway Operation and Construction Noise Impacts.* Division of Environmental Analysis, Environmental Engineering, Hazardous Waste, Air, Noise, Paleontology Office, Sacramento, CA.

———. 2020 (April). Transportation and Construction Vibration Guidance Manual. Division of Environmental Analysis, Environmental Engineering, Hazardous Waste, Air, Noise, Paleontology Office, Sacramento, CA.

Caltrans. *See* California Department of Transportation.

City of Auburn. 1993 (November). General Plan, Noise Element.

City of Auburn Municipal Code.

EPA. *See* U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Federal Highway Administration. 1978 (December). *Highway Traffic Noise Prediction Model*. FHWA-RD-77-108. Washington, DC: Office of Research, Office of Environmental Policy.

———. 2006 (January). *Roadway Construction Noise Model User's Guide*. FHWA-HEP-05-054. Washington, DC.

Federal Transit Administration. 2018 (September). *Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment*. FTA-VA-90-1003-06. Office of Planning and Environment, Washington, DC.

FHWA. *See* Federal Highway Administration.

FTA. *See* Federal Transit Administration.

Governor's Office of Planning and Research. 2017. *State of California General Plan Guidelines.* Sacramento, CA.

HUD. See U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

OPR. *See* Governor's Office of Planning and Research.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. 2015. Noise Abatement and Control. 24 CFR Part 51 Subpart B, Noise Guidebook.

———. n.d. The Noise Guidebook. Available: https://www.huduser.gov/portal/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/The-Noise-Guidebook.pdf.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. 1971 (December 31st). *Noise from Construction Equipment and Operations, Building Equipment, and Home Appliances*.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. 1974 (March). *Information on Levels of Environmental Noise Requisite to Protect Public Health and Welfare with an Adequate Margin of Safety.* Washington, DC.

6.6 POPULATION AND HOUSING

City of Auburn Planning Division. 2021. Housing Element. Auburn, CA. Available: https://www.auburn.ca.gov/399/Planning. Accessed: August 1, 2025.

City of Auburn. 1993 (November). General Plan. Available: https://www.auburn.ca.gov/399/Planning. Accessed: July 30, 2025.

City of Auburn. 2009. City of Auburn Zoning Map. Available: https://www.auburn.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/135/City-of-Auburn-Zoning-Map-PDF?bidId=. Accessed August 13, 2025.

City of Auburn. 2025. Auburn Industry Leaders. Available: https://www.auburn.ca.gov/616/Auburn-Industry-Leaders. Accessed: July 30, 2025.

Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD). 2025. Inflow/Outflow Analysis: Worker Flows In, Out, and Within Auburn city, CA. U.S. Census Bureau OnTheMap Application. Available: https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/. Accessed: August 1, 2025.

Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG). 2019. Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS). Available: https://www.sacog.org/planning/blueprint/2020-mtp-scs. Accessed: July 30, 2025.

Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG). 2020 (September). SACOG Regional Housing Needs Plan Cycle 6 (2021–2029). Available: https://www.sacog.org/planning/land-use/housing/regional-housing-needs-allocation-rhna. Accessed: July 30, 2025.

Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG). 2024 (June). 2025 Blueprint Adopted Land Use Assumptions.

U.S. Census Bureau. 2020a. Age and Sex (Table S0101), American Community Survey, 2016–2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables. U.S. Department of Commerce. Available: https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2020.S0101?q=Auburn+city,+California,+and+Placer+County,+California. Accessed: August 1, 2025.

U.S. Census Bureau. 2020b. Housing Units (Table DP04), American Community Survey, 2016–2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles. U.S. Department of Commerce. Available: https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP5Y2020.DP04?q=Auburn+city,+California. Accessed: August 1, 2025.

U.S. Census Bureau. 2020c. Tenure by Household Size (Table B25009), American Community Survey, 2016–2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables. U.S. Department of Commerce. Available: https://data.census.gov/table/B25009?q=Auburn+city,+California. Accessed: August 1, 2025.

U.S. Census Bureau. 2020d. Means of Transportation to Work (Table S0801), American Community Survey, 2016–2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables. U.S. Department of Commerce. Available: https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2020.S0801?q=Auburn+city,+California. Accessed: August 1, 2025.

U.S. Census Bureau. 2020e. Means of Transportation to Work (Table S0801), American Community Survey, 2016–2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables. U.S. Department of Commerce. Available:

https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2020.S0801?q=Placer+County,+California. Accessed: August 1, 2025.

U.S. Census Bureau. 2020f. Employment Status (Table S2301), American Community Survey, 2016–2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables. U.S. Department of Commerce. Available: https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2020.S2301?q=Auburn+city,+California. Accessed: August 1, 2025.

U.S. Census Bureau. 2020g. Employment Status (Table S2301), American Community Survey, 2016–2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables. U.S. Department of Commerce. Available: https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2020.S2301?q=Placer+County,+California. Accessed: August 1, 2025.

6.7 TRANSPORTATION

California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA). 2010 (August). Quantifying Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Measures A Resource for Local Government to Assess Emission Reductions from Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Measures. Available: https://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/ceqa/handbook/capcoa-quantifying-greenhouse-gas-mitigation-measures.pdf. Accessed August 7, 2025.

_____. 2024 (October). Handbook for Analyzing Greenhouse Gas Emission Reductions, Assessing Climate Vulnerabilities, and Advancing Health and Equity Designed for Local Governments, Communities, and Project Developers. Available: https://www.airquality.org/ClimateChange/Documents/2024%20Handbook%20Update_AB434.pdf. Accessed August 7, 2025.

California Public Resources Code Section 21064.3. *Definition of Major Transit Stop.* Available online at: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=21064.3&lawCode=PRC

City of Auburn. 1993. City of Auburn General Plan 1992 – 2012. Available online at: https://www.auburn.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/625/City-of-Auburn---General-Plan?bidId=

City of Auburn. 2024. Transportation White Paper. Available online at: https://static1.squarespace.com/static/64ff44b2ddc39f330ad80978/t/67c646257377424647704dc2/1741047345115/AuburnGP_BackgroundReport_Transportation_2025-02-15_wAppendices.pdf

Governor's Office of Planning and Research. 2018. Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA. Available online at: https://lci.ca.gov/docs/20180416-743_Technical_Advisory_4.16.18.pdf

Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG). 2019. Residential VMT Mapping. Available online at: https://sacog.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=0eac172e44514776b2f30e4324652f88&extent=-13567338.6225%2C4599309.7898%2C-13330078.0867%2C4789485.1162%2C102100

_____. 2019. Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS). Available: https://www.sacog.org/planning/blueprint/2020-mtp-scs. Accessed August 6, 2025.

6.8 OTHER CEQA CONSIDERATION

California Department of Transportation. 2013. *Technical Noise Supplement to the Traffic Noise Analysis Protocol. A Guide for Measuring, Modeling, and Abating Highway Operation and Construction Noise Impacts.* Division of Environmental Analysis, Environmental Engineering, Hazardous Waste, Air, Noise, Paleontology Office, Sacramento, CA.

——. 2025. District 3 News: Highway 49 Project Under Way to Enhance Pedestrian, Cyclist Safety. Available: https://dot.ca.gov/caltrans-near-me/district-3/d3-news/d3-news-release-25-059. Accessed July 29, 2025.

California State Clearinghouse. 2025. CEQAnet Search, Lead Agency: City of Auburn. Available: https://ceqanet.lci.ca.gov/Search?LeadAgency=Auburn%2c+City+of. Accessed July 29, 2025.

City of Auburn. 2025. Public Notice: CEQA Filings. Available: https://www.auburn.ca.gov/690/Public-Notice-CEQA-Filings. Accessed July 29, 2025.

7 LIST OF PREPARERS

7.1 CITY OF AUBURN

Tia Klumpp..... Planner Director

Jonathan Wright.....Economic Development Director

7.2 AECOM

Matthew Gerken ..... Project Manager

Nikita Subramanian .....Environmental Planner

Wendy Copeland ..... Environmental Scientist

Broden Farazmand..... Environmental Scientist

Mary Nooristani .....Environmental Planner

Issa Mahmodi ..... Environmental Scientist

Chandra Miller .....Architectural Historian

Deborah Jew .....Document Production

This page intentionally left blank with the exception of this text