

## SECTION 4: CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

### 4.1 - Introduction

CEQA Guidelines Section 15130 requires the consideration of cumulative impacts within an EIR when a project’s incremental effects are cumulatively considerable. Cumulatively considerable means that “. . . the incremental effects of an individual project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.” In identifying projects that may contribute to cumulative impacts, the CEQA Guidelines allow the use of a list of past, present, and reasonably anticipated future projects, producing related or cumulative impacts, including those which are outside of the control of the lead agency.

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(b), “. . . the discussion of cumulative impacts shall reflect the severity of the impacts and their likelihood of occurrence, the discussion need not provide as great [a level of] detail as is provided for the effects attributable to the project alone.” The discussion should be guided by standards of practicality and reasonableness, and it should focus on the cumulative impact to which the identified other projects contribute rather than on the attributes of other projects that do not contribute to the cumulative impact.

The proposed project’s cumulative impacts were considered in conjunction with the General Plan 2030 buildout projections. The General Plan 2030’s cumulative impacts were considered in conjunction with the Association of Bay Area Government’s (ABAG’s) Projections 2009 for Alameda and Contra Costa counties. These two counties were selected because the General Plan’s Planning Area is wholly contained in Contra Costa County and is geographically adjacent to Alameda County. Furthermore, these two counties form the East Bay region, which is where any cumulative effects of the General Plan 2030 buildout projections would be most acutely observed. Table 4-1 provides a summary of projections.

**Table 4-1: Alameda County/Contra Costa County 2030 Projections**

Jurisdiction	Population	Jobs
Alameda County	1,874,600	970,490
Contra Costa County	1,273,700	516,910
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,148,300</b>	<b>1,487,400</b>
Source: Association of Bay Area Governments, 2009.		

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## 4.2 - Cumulative Impact Analysis

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### 4.2.1 - Aesthetics, Light, and Glare

The analysis area for evaluation of cumulative impacts on aesthetics, light, and glare is the City of San Ramon. The City is characterized as a suburban community located within the San Ramon Valley. The valley bottom is mostly developed with urban uses, while significant portions of the hillsides and nearly all of the ridgelines have remained undeveloped. Mt. Diablo, Wiedemann Hill, and the Dougherty Hills are prominent visual features. Interstate 680 (I-680) is designated as a State Scenic Highway through San Ramon.

The proposed project, in conjunction with development contemplated by the City of San Ramon General Plan, would result in changes to views from I-680, visual character, and light and glare. However, the incremental changes that would occur relative to the baseline conditions would not be cumulatively considerable because of the extent and nature of existing development in San Ramon. Moreover, planned development would be required to comply with development guidelines and would be reviewed by the City to ensure consistency with architectural standards, viewshed policies, and lighting requirements. Therefore, the proposed project, in conjunction with other future development projects, would not have cumulatively considerable impacts on aesthetics, light, and glare.

### 4.2.2 - Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases

The analysis area for evaluation of cumulative impacts to air quality includes the San Francisco Bay Area Air Basin (Air Basin), which is identical to the boundaries of the San Francisco Bay Area Air Quality Management District. The Air Basin consists of Napa, Marin, San Francisco, Contra Costa, Alameda, San Mateo, and Santa Clara counties; the southern portion of Sonoma County; and the western portion of Solano County.

Cumulative impact analysis is guided by buildout assumptions identified in regional population projections for the Air Basin. BAAQMD, which oversees air quality in the Air Basin, uses the ABAG population and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) growth projections as the basis for its air pollutant projections and reduction strategies contained in its Clean Air Plan (CAP). The proposed project would be consistent with the 2010 CAP after implementation of mitigation, and the projected increase in VMT would be less than the projected population increase. The project would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of criteria pollutants after implementation of mitigation. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with the 2010 Clean Air Plan and would not have a cumulatively considerable impact associated with inconsistency with regional air quality planning or a cumulative net increase in nonattainment pollutants. In addition, the proposed project would not result in an air quality violation or contribute substantially to an existing or project air quality violation, after incorporation of mitigation, nor would it expose sensitive receptors to substantial air pollutants after mitigation.

Finally, the proposed project would be consistent with the City of San Ramon’s Climate Action Plan, and it is considered a key component in the Climate Action Plan to help the City achieve its emission reduction goals, because of its infill, increased density, mixed-use, transit-oriented, pedestrian-oriented, and compact development design characteristics. In addition, the project is intended to provide infill and improved pedestrian and transit orientation that will reduce overall growth in VMT generation in the City by increasing use of alternative modes of travel in the Plan area. The project also meets many of the goals of the Bay Area-wide effort, “Focusing our Vision” (FOCUS) program, guided by the Joint Policy Committee, which seeks to strengthen existing city centers, locate more housing near existing and future rail stations and quality bus lines, encourage more compact and walkable suburbs, and protect regional open space. Growth in the Plan area will produce lower VMT per capita and per employee than would otherwise occur without the adoption of the North Camino Ramon Specific Plan. Therefore, the project would not significantly contribute to a cumulative greenhouse gas impact.

#### **4.2.3 - Biological Resources**

The analysis area for evaluation of cumulative impacts to biological resources includes the North Camino Ramon Specific Plan Area. The entire Specific Plan area is heavily developed and is considered an urban environment. The area does contain landscaped areas in small patches in parking lots, adjacent to buildings, along streets, and within medians.

Nesting birds protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MTBA) are the only special-status species with the potential to occupy this area. Development activities associated with the proposed project, as well as other future development projects in the area, may impact nesting birds. Standard pre-construction surveys and, if necessary, avoidance procedures would be required for any project with the potential to affect nesting birds. Therefore, the proposed project, in conjunction with other future development projects, would not have cumulatively considerable impacts on biological resources. Because of the urban, built-up nature of the North Camino Ramon Specific Plan area, there is no potential for any other significant individual or cumulative biological resource impacts.

#### **4.2.4 - Cultural Resources**

The analysis area for evaluation of cumulative impacts to cultural resources includes the North Camino Ramon Specific Plan area. The entire Specific Plan area is mostly built out and considered an urban environment. Nearly all of the land within the Specific Plan area has been previously graded and developed or substantially disturbed. In addition, there are no known cultural resources within the Specific Plan area. Development activities associated with the proposed project, as well as other future development projects in the Specific Plan area, would result in ground-disturbing activities that may encounter previously undiscovered cultural resources. Standard construction monitoring and, if necessary, avoidance or recovery procedures would be required for any project with the potential to adversely affect cultural resources. Therefore, the proposed project, in

conjunction with other future development projects, would not have cumulatively considerable impacts on cultural resources.

#### **4.2.5 - Geology, Soils, and Seismicity**

The analysis area for evaluation of cumulative impacts to geology, soils, and seismicity includes the North Camino Ramon Specific Plan area. The Specific Plan area is mostly built out and is considered an urban environment. Nearly all of the land within the Specific Plan area has been previously graded and developed or substantially disturbed. There are no known geologic hazards within the subarea (active faults, liquefaction zones, steep slopes, etc.). Development activities associated with the proposed project, as well as other future development projects in the Specific Plan area, would be required to comply with building code standards for foundations and structures to ensure that buildings are adequately supported to withstand seismic events and abate any unstable soil conditions. In addition, future development would be required to implement standard erosion control measures to ensure that ground-disturbing activities do not create offsite hazards. Therefore, the proposed project, in conjunction with other future development projects, would not have cumulatively considerable impacts on geology, soils, and seismicity.

#### **4.2.6 - Hazards and Hazardous Materials**

The analysis area for evaluation of cumulative impacts to hazards and hazardous materials includes the North Camino Ramon Specific Plan area. The Specific Plan area is mostly built out and contains a mix of commercial and office buildings. A number of land uses within the Specific Plan area currently use or formerly used hazardous materials. Mitigation is proposed that would require development activities associated with the proposed project and located within the Aerojet General/Aerotest Facility to conduct Environmental Site Assessments. Other future development projects potentially impacted by these sites would also be required to remediate any potential hazardous materials. The proposed project, as well as future development projects, would be required to comply with all applicable hazardous materials handling and storage requirements to ensure that public health and safety are not at risk. Therefore, the proposed project, in conjunction with other future development projects, would not have cumulatively considerable impacts on hazards and hazardous materials.

#### **4.2.7 - Hydrology and Water Quality**

The analysis area for evaluation of cumulative impacts to hydrology and water quality includes the Specific Plan area. The Specific Plan area is mostly built out and contains a mix of commercial and office buildings. Development activities associated with the proposed project may impact water quality. Mitigation is proposed requiring the implementation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan and Best Management Practices that would minimize water quality impacts. Other future development projects in the Specific Plan area would be required to implement similar mitigation. Therefore, the proposed project, in conjunction with other future development projects, would not have cumulatively considerable impacts on hydrology and water quality.

#### **4.2.8 - Land Use and Planning**

The analysis area for evaluation of cumulative impacts on land use is the City of San Ramon. Most of the City contains urban development. The Specific Plan and its contemplated land uses were found to be consistent with the City of San Ramon General Plan and Zoning Ordinance. Future development projects would be required to demonstrate consistency with General Plan policies and Zoning Ordinance policies and ensure that they do not create land use conflicts with adjacent properties. Therefore, the proposed project, in conjunction with other future development projects, would not have cumulatively considerable impacts on land use.

#### **4.2.9 - Noise**

The analysis area for evaluation of cumulative noise impacts encompasses the ambient noise environment around the project site, which includes the Specific Plan area, as well as roadways that would experience increases in traffic volumes from project-generated trips.

The cumulative noise impact analysis is guided by evaluating increases in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity relative to existing conditions. Construction noise would result in temporary increases in ambient noise levels, and mitigation is proposed that would require implementation of noise control measures during construction activities. Because construction would be temporary, ambient noise levels would not experience a permanent increase; therefore, no cumulatively considerable increase would occur. Vehicular trips generated by the proposed project would not cause ambient noise levels along any affected roadway segment to exceed acceptable noise standards for sensitive receptors under near-term or Year 2030 conditions. Therefore, the proposed project would not have a cumulatively considerable impact related to increased ambient noise levels on nearby roadways. Residential uses proposed within the Specific Plan area would be exposed to noise levels above acceptable noise standards. Mitigation is proposed that would require an acoustical study to be prepared for any residential development within the Specific Plan area and the subsequent implementation of measures to reduce exterior and interior noise impacts to a less than significant level. The proposed project may result in potentially significant construction and operational vibration to offsite sensitive receptors or proposed onsite sensitive receptors. Mitigation is proposed that would require a vibration analysis to be performed to determine if significant impacts would occur and identify vibration attenuation measures to reduce impacts to a level of less than significant. Offsite and proposed onsite sensitive receptors would not be exposed to significant sources of vibration, and impacts would not be cumulatively considerable. Therefore, the proposed project, in conjunction with other future development projects, would not have cumulatively considerable impacts on noise.

#### **4.2.10 - Population and Housing**

The analysis area for evaluation of cumulative impacts to population and housing encompasses the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area region. The proposed project would be consistent with the population projections contained in the General Plan; however, the General Plan is inconsistent with

the projections contained in ABAG's 2009 Projections. Because the Specific Plan's growth is included in the General Plan 2030, it would not further exacerbate the City of San Ramon's exceedance of ABAG growth estimates. Implementation of the Specific Plan would add 1,500 housing units to the City's housing supply. Several residential development and redevelopment sites are identified by the General Plan within the North Camino Ramon Specific Plan boundaries. The housing units would contribute to fulfilling the City's Regional Housing Needs Allocation. Other projects within San Ramon would be required to demonstrate consistency with population projections and residential land use designations of the General Plan. Therefore, the proposed project, in conjunction with other future development projects, would not have cumulatively considerable impacts on population and housing.

#### **4.2.11 - Public Services and Recreation**

The analysis area for evaluation of cumulative impacts to public services and recreation is the City of San Ramon. The proposed project and future development projects would increase demands for fire protection, police protection, schools, libraries, parks, trails, and other recreational facilities. These projects would be required to provide development fees to finance capital improvements to the facilities to maintain acceptable service ratios and performance standards. The proposed project would provide a police contact and public outreach station and more than 10 acres of additional park facilities and public spaces. The facilities would be sized to accommodate increased demands resulting from planned growth and, therefore, would be a cumulative benefit of the proposed project. As applicable, future development projects may also be required to dedicate parkland or provide in-lieu-of fees to mitigate for impacts on parks and recreational facilities. Therefore, the proposed project, in conjunction with other future development projects, would not have cumulatively considerable impacts on public services and recreation.

#### **4.2.12 - Transportation**

The analysis area for evaluation of cumulative impacts to transportation is the City of San Ramon. The proposed project, in conjunction with other development projects contemplated by the City of San Ramon, would increase traffic volumes at intersections within the City limits under Existing Plus Project conditions. With the addition of trips generated by the proposed project, several intersections would operate at deficient levels of service. Mitigation is proposed that would require improvements to intersections resulting in acceptable performance levels under Existing Plus Project and Year 2030 Plus Project conditions. As such, impacts would not be cumulatively considerable. The proposed project and other future development projects would be required to provide appropriate transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities and, therefore, would ensure that cumulative impacts associated with alternative transportation would not be considerable.

#### **4.2.13 - Utility Systems**

The proposed projects cumulative impacts to utility systems are discussed separately below.

### **Potable Water**

Potable water demand from the proposed project, in conjunction with other planned growth in the East Bay Municipal Utility District service area, is accounted for in the agency's 2010 Urban Water Management Plan. As indicated in the Urban Water Management Plan, the proposed project's water demand was accounted for in its long-term water supply planning; therefore, the agency has adequate existing and planned water supplies to satisfy projected demand, even during drought-year scenarios, through 2030. In addition, the proposed project and future projects would be required to implement water-efficiency measures to reduce the demand for potable water. Furthermore, the proposed project and some future development projects would be served by recycled water systems for outdoor irrigation, which would further reduce the demand for potable water. Therefore, the proposed project, in conjunction with other future development projects, would not have cumulatively considerable impacts on potable water.

### **Wastewater**

Wastewater generation by the proposed project, as well as with other planned growth in the Central Contra Costa Sanitary District service area, is factored into the agency's long-range planning projections. The agency indicates that there is adequate collection and treatment capacity to serve development in the Specific Plan area and such development would not create capacity deficiencies. In addition, the agency is undertaking capital improvements to its conveyance system, including upsizing the San Ramon Interceptor in anticipation of planned growth in the San Ramon area. Therefore, the proposed project, in conjunction with other future development projects, would not have cumulatively considerable impacts on wastewater.

### **Storm Drainage**

The proposed Specific Plan would alter development types in the area, but it is not anticipated to increase the quantity of impervious surfaces and, therefore, would not increase storm drainage needs. Future development projects would be required to demonstrate no net increase in storm drainage or provide drainage impoundment facilities that would detain runoff prior to discharge into the storm drain facilities. Therefore, the proposed project, in conjunction with other future development projects, would not have cumulatively considerable impacts on storm drainage.

### **Solid Waste**

The proposed project and other future development projects would generate construction and operational solid waste that would need to be disposed of in landfills in the San Francisco Bay Area region. Landfill capacity in the region is available to serve the proposed project, as well as other planned projects, through 2025. Mitigation is proposed that would require development within the Specific Plan area to implement waste diversion measures, including recycling, to reduce waste generation. Other future development projects would be required to implement similar measures. Therefore, the proposed project, in conjunction with other future development projects, would not have cumulatively considerable impacts on solid waste.

## Energy

The proposed project, in conjunction with future development in the Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) service area, would increase demand for electricity and natural gas. PG&E has adequate existing energy supplies to meet existing demand and has access to other energy supplies necessary to meet future demand. In addition, the proposed project and future projects would be required to implement energy-efficient measures in accordance with the Title 24 standards to reduce energy demand. Therefore, the proposed project, in conjunction with other future development projects, would not have cumulatively considerable impacts on energy.