4.22 CUMULATIVE AND GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS

This section presents an assessment of the DNA project's contribution to cumulative and growth-inducing impacts in a manner consistent with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

4.22.1 Regulatory Context

Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts are the effects on the environment that result from the incremental impacts of the DNA project when considered together with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects. Under CEQA, cumulative impacts are defined as:

> *"…two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts."* (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15355)

CEQA provides two alternative methods for evaluating cumulative impacts (see State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15130), typically referred to as the "projections approach" or the "list approach."

- **Projections Approach.** A summary of projections contained in an adopted general plan or related planning document, or in a prior environmental document which has been adopted or certified, which described or evaluated regional or areawide conditions contributing to the cumulative impact.

- **List Approach.** A list of past, present, and probably future projects producing related or cumulative impacts, including, if necessary, those projects outside the control of the agency.

Projections Approach

For the DNA project, a summary of projections is provided by the *2006 MTP*. The MTP is based on future land use forecasts for the region, consistent with the approved General Plans of the City and County, and analyzes proposed improvements to the regional transportation system. The approach to cumulative effects based on adopted land use projections is effective for several resources in the DNA analysis. In particular, this approach is used for the analysis of regional transportation, land use, socioeconomic, air quality, and noise impacts.

List Approach

The list approach is the most effective method of analyzing cumulative effects of short-term, construction-related effects. Construction-related effects of the DNA project could be individually minor, but could be significant when considered in combination with the construction activities of other planned projects. Construction-related impacts have been identified in the following sections of this Draft Programmatic EIR:

- 4.8, Cultural Resources
- 4.9, Parklands
- 4.12, Air Quality
- 4.13, Noise and Vibration
- 4.14, Biological Resources
- 4.18, Water Resources

Section 4.20, Summary of Construction Impacts, provides additional discussion of these impacts. The remainder of this section discusses how construction of the DNA project, when combined with other construction activities, could result in cumulative impacts to these resources.

With regard to construction-related cumulative impacts, RT expects to begin operation of the DNA project south of the American River as soon as possible, following 25 to 27 months of construction. In order to evaluate the potential for project construction activities to result in cumulative impacts, an assessment was performed to determine what other projects are likely to occur at the same time that the DNA project is constructed. Based on phone surveys with the City and County and other data collection, the following projects are considered in this assessment of cumulative effects (note that construction schedules are subject to change):

- **Roadway Improvements**. Highway and road improvements that would occur in the DNA project area south of the American River in the likely construction timeframe include constructing HOV lanes on I-5 from Downtown Sacramento to I-80, constructing auxiliary lanes on I-5 over the American River, and reconstructing the I-5/Richards Boulevard Interchange. In addition, several new roadways associated with the Railyards redevelopment (see below) are included in the 2006 MTP. Planned roadways in the DNA project area north of the American River include the Meister Way overcrossing and three other crossings of I-5 and SR 99 in North Natomas (El Centro Road, Snowy Egret Way, Natomas Crossing Drive), as well as associated improvements.

- **Railyards/Richards Boulevard Area**. The redevelopment of this area is currently underway with the extension of 7th Street and some commercial development activity along Richards Boulevard. In addition, a master development plan for the Railyards was approved by the City Council in December 2007. Development of this area will be market-driven; therefore, it is speculative to assume specific levels of development and development activity in the near term. The EIR for the Richards Boulevard Area Plan/Railyards Specific Plan states that complete redevelopment of the Planning Area could take 35 years or more (Thomas Enterprises, 2006).

- **North Natomas**. The schedule of development in North Natomas has been studied as part of the North Natomas Financing Plan (City of Sacramento, 1999). According to the Financing Plan, residential development in North Natomas is scheduled to be approximately 50 to 60 percent developed by 2008 to 2010, and non-residential development is scheduled to be approximately 45 to 50 percent developed by 2008 to 2010. In summary, most of North Natomas is likely to be developed prior to implementation of the DNA project in this area.

- **Metro Air Park**. Metro Air Parkway and a portion of the Elkhorn Boulevard and Meister Way extensions are currently under construction, representing the key roadway

infrastructure within the project area. Other internal roadway improvements are dependent on the buildout of Metro Air Park, which is market-driven and speculative at this time. It is assumed that substantial internal project development activities will have occurred prior to the construction of the DNA project.

- **Sacramento International Airport**. An update to the Airport's Master Plan is currently underway. It is expected that medium-term construction projects in the vicinity of planned DNA improvements would likely include expansion of airport terminals, although several other small-scale facility improvements are also likely (Febbo, 2002).

Growth-Inducing Effects

Growth-inducing impacts are best defined in the CEQA Guidelines. Specifically, Section 15126(g) of the CEQA Guidelines states:

> *"Discuss 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 waste water treatment plant might, for example, allow for more construction in service areas). Increases in the population may further tax existing community service facilities so consideration must be given to this impact. Also discuss the characteristics of some projects which 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."*

Growth-inducing effects can result from projects such as the relocation of a major industry to a region. Projects that remove a barrier to growth (such as construction of a new freeway interchange in a rural area) can also be considered growth inducing.

4.22.2 Long-Term Cumulative Effects

Because the long-term effects of the DNA project are generally the same as those of cumulative development as evaluated in the MTP, additional cumulative analysis of long-term effects is not necessary. These effects have been included in the regional analysis using the SACMET travel demand model. Therefore, analysis of regional transportation (Chapter 3), land use (Section 4.2), socioeconomic (Section 4.5), air quality (Section 4.12), and noise and vibration (Section 4.13) impacts is considered to be the cumulative effects analysis.

4.22.3 Construction-Related Cumulative Effects

Cultural Resources

As described in Section 4.8, Cultural Resources, improvements related to construction of the DNA project could affect unknown subsurface cultural resources, and mitigation is prescribed. Mitigation requirements include the obligation to stop construction if potential archeological or historical resources are uncovered. This mitigation requirement is consistent with typical City and County mitigation requirements for unknown cultural

resources, and it is expected that all other construction projects in the area would follow the same standards. Because the potential impact is localized in nature (e.g., related to discrete finds of cultural resources), it is expected that project impacts together with the potential impacts of other projects would not result in a cumulative impact.

Parklands and Visual Resources

As described in Sections 4.9, Parklands, and Section, 4.11, Visual and Aesthetic Resources, respectively, construction-phase impacts to parklands and visual resources would be limited primarily to disruption of recreation activities (e.g., bicycling, picnicking) in the American River Parkway. The other primary construction improvement to the American River Parkway in the DNA study area is the potential widening of the I-5 Bridge (HOV lane and auxiliary lane projects), referenced earlier. The auxiliary lane project is scheduled for construction in 2010, prior to construction of the DNA project. The HOV lanes, however, are scheduled for construction in 2020, which could coincide with construction of the DNA project.

Impacts of the HOV lane project on recreation use in the American River Parkway are expected to be similar to the impacts described in Sections 4.9, Parklands and 4.11, Visual and Aesthetic Resources, and could be mitigated with similar measures. Although the impacts of each individual project could be mitigated, there is expected to be substantial geographic overlap in impacts (e.g., bike trail) that would warrant additional consideration. Because the impacts of the DNA project are expected to be similar in extent to the impacts of the I-5 Bridge widening project, close coordination between the two CEQA lead agencies (RT and Caltrans) is recommended (see Section 4.22-5).

Air Quality and Noise

Although there is likely to be simultaneous construction along the DNA Corridor, especially given land development in North Natomas, Richards Boulevard, and potentially in other areas, it is not expected that construction-related air quality and noise impacts would be cumulatively considerable. Dust control measures would be implemented as BMPs during all project construction in accordance with the standard specifications of the City and County. City and County noise ordinances permit temporary construction noise during daylight hours, and all construction projects are subject to these provisions.

Biological Resources

As described in Section 4.14, Biological Resources, construction-phase biological resources impacts in the American River Parkway include the disturbance of riparian vegetation, impacts to special-status species, and turbidity and noise impacts caused by in-water construction. For the reasons described above in Parklands and Visual Resources, future I-5 HOV improvements are considered part of the cumulative condition. Impacts of the HOV project on riparian vegetation, special-status species, and riverine habitat would be similar to the impacts described in Section 4.14, Biological Resources. The addition of the I-5 auxiliary lane project (scheduled for 2010) in the cumulative condition would increase the extent of the impact. Because the impacts of the DNA project are expected to be similar in extent to the impacts of the I-5 Bridge widening project, there is a potential for cumulative impacts to biological resources.

Biological resources impacts of the I-5 HOV improvements (e.g., valley elderberry longhorn beetle, special-status fish species) are expected to be similar to the impacts associated with the DNA project and would be mitigated with similar measures as described in Section 4.14, Biological Resources. Although the impacts of each individual project could be mitigated, it is expected that there will be substantial geographic overlap in impacts (e.g., relative to a nest tree). Because the impacts of the DNA project are expected to be similar in extent to the impacts of the I-5 Bridge widening project, close coordination between the two CEQA lead agencies (RT and Caltrans) is recommended (see Section 4.22-5).

Biological resources impacts in the farmland area are limited primarily to potential construction effects on the giant garter snake and the loss of up to 7.4-acres of habitat (rice fields). Other foreseeable improvements in the farmland area include the construction of the Meister Way overcrossing (and also the Meister Way roadway between Metro Air Park and the new overcrossing), the widening of SR 99, and the widening of I-5. Many of these projects are likely to occur before the completion of the DNA project, and would therefore not result in cumulative impacts to biological resources. The development of farmland itself is not considered part of the cumulative condition because that development is dependent upon substantial land use action by the City and County (see Section 4.22.4, Growth-Inducing Impacts), and is therefore speculative at this time.

Water Resources

Cumulative impacts include potential impacts to flood flows in the American River as a result of both the DNA project and the expansion of the I-5 Bridge to accommodate auxiliary and HOV lanes. One other project in the local American River floodway area, widening Northgate Boulevard to four lanes between Garden Highway and SR 160, is expected to be constructed in 2015.

Potential impacts to water surface elevations and other aspects of flood protection are discussed in Section 4.18, Water Resources. Impacts of the DNA project are expected to be less than significant based on a quantitative analysis using a one-dimensional hydrologic model, which will be verified at a greater level of accuracy pursuant to a mitigation measure requiring a future two-dimensional analysis pending additional engineering design. Although the project-specific effect appears to be minor, any future changes to the American River channel in the project area could contribute to substantive increases in water surface elevations. Potential projects contributing to these effects are the widening of I-5 to accommodate HOV lanes and the widening of Northgate Boulevard. Although these projects were evaluated in the MTP, the level of analysis was not sufficient to address flood control issues at the level recommended by Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency (SAFCA) for the DNA project (e.g., demonstrate that changes in water surface elevation would be less than 0.1 feet). Accordingly, mitigation is recommended (see Section 4.22-5).

Construction-phase impacts to water resources associated with the DNA project are described in Section 4.18, Water Resources, and include erosion/siltation and potential barriers to American River navigation. With regard to construction-related erosion and siltation of waterways, the project will be required to follow the detailed regulatory requirements of the CVRWQCB and the City and County, which are intended to mitigate the cumulative impacts of construction on a regional basis.

Cumulative navigation impacts could result from the construction of I-5 improvements (described above in Parklands and Biological Resources). All projects that potentially affect

navigation resources would follow the detailed regulatory requirements of the U.S. Coast Guard, which are described in Section 4.18, Water Resources, and are intended to mitigate the cumulative impacts of construction projects on navigability.

4.22.4 Growth-Inducing Impacts

Transit improvements in the DNA Corridor would extend major transportation infrastructure into several developing areas, primarily the Railyards/Richards Boulevard area, North Natomas, and Metro Air Park. Because of the different planning processes involved and the different stages of development (or planned development), these three project areas are considered separately below. The farmland area also is discussed.

Railyards/Richards Boulevard Area

The planned Railyards/Richards Boulevard redevelopment is intended to allow for mixed public use of the Railyards area, a large heavy-industrial site currently undergoing substantial remediation and master planning, and revitalize the industrial Richards Boulevard area to include a broad range of mixed uses. A primary objective of the redevelopment of these areas is increased linkage to Downtown Sacramento (e.g., through the extension of 6th and 7th Streets).

Economic growth in the Railyards and Richards Boulevards areas is driven by their proximity to Downtown, and increasing the transportation linkages between these areas is a key factor in the successful implementation of the *Railyards Specific Plan* and *Richards Boulevard Area Plan* (City of Sacramento, 1992). For example, the proposed DNA project alignment has been incorporated into two current planning efforts, the Sacramento Intermodal Transportation Facility and the update to the *Railyards Specific Plan* (Thomas Enterprises Inc., approved December 11, 2007). Because the DNA Corridor is included as part of the planned circulation improvements in this area, implementation of the DNA project is expected to contribute to this growth in some manner. It does not appear that redevelopment of these areas is dependent upon the DNA project.

The environmental consequences of development in the Railyards and Richards Boulevard areas are presented in the EIR for the above plans. Environmental impacts include substantial changes in traffic patterns throughout the local areas, potential release of hazardous materials into the environment during construction, and potential demolition or other impacts to historical buildings. Implementation of the DNA project south of the American River may contribute to these anticipated impacts, but as stated above, it is likely that the impacts would occur in the absence of the DNA project. No significant growth-inducing impacts in this area are anticipated.

North Natomas

North Natomas is currently under construction, including lands along the DNA Corridor such as the Town Center. The area includes (or is planned to include) a complete roadway system that provides automobile access to the two major freeways and to surrounding arterial roadways. North Natomas is notable for several reasons, including the manner in which the DNA project was specifically included in the layout of the community. Providing Irrevocable Offers of Dedication (IODs) along new roadways has substantially settled

challenges associated with right-of-way acquisition and is expected to facilitate the construction of the project.

Because the DNA Corridor is included as part of the existing and planned future circulation improvements in the area, the project is expected to contribute to growth in some manner. However, the development of North Natomas is not dependent upon the DNA project as evidenced by the rapid development of the area in the absence of the project. The environmental consequences of development in North Natomas are summarized in the Supplemental EIR for the *North Natomas Community Plan* (City of Sacramento, 1996). Significant environmental impacts include changes in local traffic patterns; loss of farmlands; and loss of habitat for the giant garter snake, Swainson's hawk, and other species. The DNA project may contribute to these anticipated impacts, but as stated above, it is likely that the impacts would occur (or have already occurred) in the absence of the project. No significant growth-inducing impacts in this area are anticipated.

Greenbriar Development Project

The Greenbriar site is located between North Natomas and Metro Air Park. At this time, Greenbriar is outside of the local Urban Service Boundary, and is designated as agricultural land on the Sacramento County General Plan land use map. In recent years, the City and County have been considering options for development north and west of North Natomas, including the Greenbriar site. This "Joint Vision" would require amending the Urban Service Boundary, annexing the farmland into the City, ensuring that adequate infrastructure is available, and securing incidental take authorization from the USFWS over and above what is expected to be provided under the Natomas Basin HCP.

The first proposal under the Joint Vision, the Greenbriar development project, is currently under consideration by the City of Sacramento and the Sacramento Local Area Formation Commission. The environmental consequences of the Greenbriar development project are summarized in the project's Draft EIR (City of Sacramento and Sacramento Local Area Formation Commission, 2006). Significant environmental impacts include changes in local traffic patterns; loss of farmlands; and loss of habitat for the giant garter snake, Swainson's hawk, and other species.

Growth-inducing impacts would result from stations being constructed on the Greenbriar site. If the Greenbriar development project is approved, then the optional, developer-funded station could be built to serve the development. For the discussion of growth-inducing effects, it is important to note that RT would not construct a station on the Greenbriar site and that developer funding is based on authorization to develop the property, which currently does not exist. No station is proposed for the farmland at this time, and therefore no growth-inducing impacts would occur. If the City and County choose to allow development in the area currently under consideration in the Joint Vision process and the Greenbriar proposal, then the environmental impacts of development to the farmland would be evaluated as part of that decision-making process.

Metro Air Park

Metro Air Park is an approved commercial/industrial development that abuts the east side of Sacramento International Airport. Local approvals for the project have been secured, and the Metro Air Park HCP has been approved (refer to Section 4.14, Biological Resources). Metro Air Park includes a complete roadway system, including substantial new

improvements such as the new Metro Air Parkway interchange and the extension of Elkhorn Boulevard to the airport. Right-of-way for RT has been reserved along the planned Meister Way and Elkhorn Boulevard improvements, thus facilitating the construction of the project in this area. Because the DNA project is included as a part of the planned circulation system, the project is expected to contribute to growth in some manner. However, the development of Metro Air Park is not dependent on the DNA project because of the extent of planned roadway improvements and the market-driven character of the potential commercial and industrial development. The environmental consequences of development in Metro Air Park are summarized in the Metro Air Park EIR (Sacramento County, 1993). Significant environmental impacts include public facility impacts; loss of farmlands; and loss of habitat for the giant garter snake, Swainson's hawk, and other species. The DNA project may contribute to the realization of these anticipated impacts, but as stated above, it is likely that the impacts would occur in the absence of the project. No significant growth-inducing impacts in this area are anticipated.

4.22.5 Mitigation Measures

The following mitigation measures will be implemented:

- RT shall work with Caltrans to coordinate the planning for construction improvements so that construction-related conflicts (e.g., disruption of recreation users, visual impacts, habitat and species impacts, and traffic impacts) can be minimized. This will be achieved through joint project management, joint offsite habitat restoration, coordinated public information, and other means, as appropriate.

- For projects in the lower reaches of the American River with the potential to substantially affect the water surface elevation in the American River (e.g., by placing new piers or berms in the floodplain), hydrologic studies shall be conducted to address potential changes in a quantitative manner. Project proponents shall conduct these studies in consultation with SAFCA, the Reclamation Board, and other appropriate flood control officials.