
4.10 CULTURAL AND PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

This section considers and evaluates the potential impacts of the proposed project on cultural and paleontological resources. Cultural resources include historical buildings and structures, historical districts, historical sites, prehistoric and archaeological sites, and other prehistoric and historic objects and artifacts. Paleontological resources include fossil remains, as well as fossil localities and formations, which have produced fossil material in other nearby areas.

4.10.1 EXISTING SETTING

PREHISTORY

The Central Valley of California has long held the attention of California archaeologists dating back to the 1920s. Indeed, archaeological work in the area during the 1920s and 1930s led to the development of the first cultural chronology for Central California. The chronology identified three archaeological cultures, which were named Early, Transitional, and Late. Subsequently the three cultural groups were subsumed into three time periods, designated the Early, Middle, and Late Horizons.

The Windmill Pattern is representative of the Early Horizon in the Rancho Cordova area. The Early Horizon is highlighted by: large, heavy, stemmed and leaf-shaped projectile points made of a variety of materials; charmstones; shell beads and ornaments; trident fish spears; flat slab millstones; small numbers of mortars; and ventrally extended burials oriented toward the west. The Windmill Pattern probably emphasized hunting and fishing, with seed collecting as a supplement to the diet. The Windmill Pattern dates from 4,500-2,500 Before Present (B.P.).

The Cosumnes Culture is representative of the Middle Horizon in the Rancho Cordova area. The Middle Horizon is highlighted by: large, heavy, lanceolate concave base projectile points made of a variety of materials; charmstones; shell beads and ornaments; cobble mortars and evidence of wooden mortars; numerous bone tools and bone ornaments; and tightly flexed burials with variable orientation and red ochre staining. Middle Horizon cultures are generally quite different from the Windmill Pattern, but do continue to exhibit some of the characteristics of Windmill such as similar projectile point forms. The similarities in projectile point forms may be indicative of cultural continuity and/or functional and adaptational success of particular forms. The Middle Horizon dates from 2,500 B.P.-A.D. 500.

The Hotchkiss Culture is representative of the Late Horizon in the Rancho Cordova area. The Late Horizon primarily represents both local innovation and the blending of new cultural traits introduced into the Central Valley primarily from the north. It is distinguished by intensive fishing, extensive use of acorns, elaborate ceremonialism, social stratification, and cremation of the dead. The Hotchkiss Culture dates from A.D. 500-to Euroamerican contact.

For a more detailed description of the prehistoric background of Rancho Cordova and the surrounding area, please refer to the Archaeological and Historical Resources Report for the Rancho Cordova General Plan EIR (Nadolski, 2005), which is available for review at the Rancho Cordova City Hall.

ETHNOGRAPHY

A large population of Native Americans speaking more than 100 different languages and occupying a variety of ecological settings inhabited California prior to the arrival of Euroamericans. Rancho Cordova and the surrounding area are in Valley Nisenan territory.

4.10 CULTURAL AND PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The basic social and economic group of the Nisenan was the family or household unit, with the nuclear and/or extended family forming a corporate unit. Among the Nisenan these groups combined to form tribelets, which were their largest sociopolitical unit. Each tribelet had a chief or headman, and tribelet populations were as large as 500 persons living in permanent villages that were usually located on raised areas to avoid flooding.

Valley Nisenan used a variety of utilitarian stone tools, with obsidian being a highly valued material for tool manufacture. Other tools and weapons were made of bone, wood, and plant materials including stirring sticks, mush paddles, pipes, hide preparation equipment, and baskets. Fishing formed a large component of Valley Nisenan subsistence activity. Consequently, they used an extensive assemblage of fishing-related implements including: spears; cordage lines with bone fishhooks; harpoons with detachable points; dams for stream diversion; nets of cordage and basketry; weirs; and an array of fish traps. Other food processing equipment included bedrock mortars and pestles for grinding acorns, buckeyes, pine nuts, seeds, berries, and meat. Valley Nisenan also fostered trading relationships with surrounding groups for commodities such as salt, marine shells, and basketry.

For a more detailed description of the ethnographic background of Rancho Cordova and the surrounding area, please refer to the Archaeological and Historical Resources Report for the Rancho Cordova General Plan EIR (Nadolski 2005).

HISTORIC PERIOD

Spanish exploration of the Central Valley dates to the late 1700s, but exploration of the Northern section of the Central Valley and contact with its Native American population did not begin until the early 1800s. At this time, the attention of Spanish missionaries shifted away from the coast and its dwindling Native American population, to the conversion and missionization of interior populations. This time period also marks the beginning of the decline of Native American populations due to Euroamerican diseases and the relocation of many groups to missions, which resulted in not only the loss of life, but also the loss of Native American traditional culture.

During the middle of the 19th century trails were being blazed across the plains and mountains facilitating the westward migration of Euroamericans. Groups such as the 1841 Bartleson-Bidwell party and the 1844 Stevens-Murphy party that traveled to California typify these early immigrants. The commencement of the Mexican-American war in 1846 also affected the exploration and development of California, including the identification of new trails across the Sierra Nevada.

The second quarter of the nineteenth century encompasses the Mexican Period (ca. 1821-1848) in California. This period is an outgrowth of the Mexican Revolution, and its accompanying social and political views affected the mission system across California. In 1833, the missions were secularized and their lands divided among the Californios as land grants called ranchos. These ranchos, such as the 35,000-acre Rancho Rio de los Americanos, located in the Rancho Cordova area, facilitated the growth of a semi-aristocratic group that controlled the large ranchos.

The Rancho Rio de los Americanos was originally granted to William Leidesdorff and subsequently sold to Joseph Folsom. Neither of these individuals, however, developed the rancho, and it does not reflect patterns of rancho development and use that are typical in other parts of California. Regardless, the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill in Coloma in 1848 caused a dramatic alteration of both Native American and Euroamerican cultural patterns in California. Once news of the discovery of gold spread, a flood of Euroamericans began to enter the

4.10 CULTURAL AND PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

region, and gravitated to the area of the “Mother Lode”. Initially, the Euroamerican population grew slowly, but soon exploded as the presence of large deposits of gold was confirmed. The population of California quickly swelled from an estimated 4,000 Euroamericans in 1848 to 500,000 in 1850. This large influx of immigrants had a negative effect on Native American cultures, and marks the beginning of a relatively rapid decline of both Native American populations and culture.

The second half of the nineteenth century witnessed an ongoing and growing immigration of Euroamericans into the area, an influx also accompanied by regional cultural and economic changes. These changes are highlighted by the development of the Rancho Cordova area that is associated with expanding business opportunities related to gold mining, agriculture, and/or ranching.

For a more detailed description of the history of Rancho Cordova and the surrounding area, please refer to the Archaeological and Historical Resources Report for the Rancho Cordova General Plan EIR (Nadolski, 2005).

KNOWN CULTURAL RESOURCES IN THE PROJECT AREA

Historic Resources

A records search at the North Central Information Center at California State University, Sacramento identified thirteen historic resources within the Project Area (see **Table 4.10-1**). The locations of the non-classified sites listed in **Table 4.10-1** are depicted on **Figure 4.10-1**. These sites are distributed across the Project Area and are generally related to the development of transportation networks and agriculture. Three historic sites are eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR).

**TABLE 4.10-1
KNOWN CULTURAL RESOURCES IN THE REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT AREA**

Trinomial/Address	Description	Eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places
CA-Sac-428-H	Sacramento Valley Railroad (P-34-455)	Evaluated 1993; eligible ; Reaffirmed 1997
CA-Sac-435-H	Historic refuse scatter	Evaluated 1994; ineligible
-	Folsom Boulevard	Recognized as historically significant to local government
9878 Folsom Blvd	Pfingst Realty Company building	Evaluated 1993; eligible
Dawes Street and Folsom Blvd	Mills Station Building	Evaluated 1993; ineligible
9857 Horn Road	Silva Brothers Winery (Currently Rascals Restaurant)	Evaluated 1993; ineligible
2720 Kilgore Road	American River Grange Hall	Evaluated 1996; eligible
10595 Folsom Blvd	Fire Station 61	Ineligible
2909 Mather Field Rd	Dominos Pizza/Vacant	Ineligible
2919 Mather Field Rd	Residence	Ineligible
10298 McCracken Dr	Residence	Ineligible
White Rock Road	Road	Not evaluated
Kilgore Road between Trade Center and Sun Center Drive	Kilgore Cemetery	Not evaluated

Source: Nadolski, 2005.

4.10 CULTURAL AND PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

CULTURAL RESOURCES NOT FOUND IN THE PROJECT AREA

Prehistoric and Historic Native American Cultural Resources

A records search at the North Central Information Center at California State University, Sacramento identified no prehistoric sites within the Project Area. Most of the prehistoric sites in the Rancho Cordova area are located along the American River and creeks and some of those sites are known to contain human remains. However, all prehistoric sites in the area are located outside the Redevelopment Project Area. The prehistoric and historic Native American occupation of the Rancho Cordova area is generally related to the Middle and Late Horizon.

Paleontological Resources

Paleontology is defined as a science dealing with the life of past geological periods as known from fossil remains. Paleontological resources include fossil remains, as well as fossil localities and formations, which have produced fossil material in other nearby areas. This resource can be an important educational resource for the reasons mentioned before, and are nonrenewable once destroyed. CEQA offers protection for these sensitive resources and requires that they be addressed during the EIR process.

A search of the University of California Museum of Paleontology (UCMP) collections database did not identify any evidence of significant paleontological resources in the Project Area or in the entire City of Rancho Cordova. The Project Area does not appear sensitive for the presence of paleontological resources. Additionally, as the Project Area is largely developed and previously disturbed, the Project Area is not likely to yield any new resources.

4.10.2 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

STATE

California Environmental Quality Act

Under CEQA, public agencies must consider the effects of their actions on both "historical resources" and "unique archaeological resources." Pursuant to 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." Section 21083.2 requires agencies to determine whether proposed projects would have effects on "unique archaeological resources."

"Historical resource" is a term with a defined statutory meaning (Public Resources Code, Section 21084.1 and CEQA Guidelines, Section 15064.5 [a], [b]). The term embraces any resource listed in or determined to be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR). The CRHR includes resources listed in or formally determined eligible for listing in the NRHP, as well as some California State Landmarks and Points of Historical Interest.

Properties of local significance that have been designated under a local preservation ordinance (local landmarks or landmark districts) or that have been identified in a local historical resources inventory may be eligible for listing in the CRHR and are presumed to be "historical resources" for purposes of CEQA unless a preponderance of evidence indicates otherwise (Pub. Resources Code, Section 5024.1 and California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 4850). Unless a resource listed in a survey has been demolished, lost substantial integrity, or there is a

4.10 CULTURAL AND PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

preponderance of evidence indicating that it is otherwise not eligible for listing, a lead agency should consider the resource to be potentially eligible for the CRHR.

In addition to assessing whether historical resources potentially impacted by a proposed project are listed or have been identified in a survey process, lead agencies have a responsibility to evaluate them against the CRHR criteria prior to making a finding as to a proposed project's impacts to historical resources (Public Resources Code, Section 21084.1 and CEQA Guidelines, Section 15064.5 [a][3]). In general, an historical resource, under this approach, is defined as any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript that:

- A) Is historically or archeologically significant, or is significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political or cultural annals of California; and
- B) 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; or
 - 4) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Archaeological resources may also qualify as "historical resources." and Public Resources Code 5024 requires consultation with the Office of Historic Preservation when a project may impact historical resources located on State-owned land.

For historic structures, State CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5, subdivision (b)(3), indicates that a project that follows the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings, or the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings (1995) shall mitigate impacts to a level of less than significant. Potential eligibility also rests upon the integrity of the resource. Integrity is defined as the retention of the resource's physical identity that existed during its period of significance. Integrity is determined through considering the setting, design, workmanship, materials, location, feeling and association of the resource.

As noted above, CEQA also requires lead agencies to consider whether projects will impact "unique archaeological resources." Public Resources Code Section 21083.2, subdivision (g), states that "'unique archaeological resource' means 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:

- Contains information needed to answer important scientific research questions and that there is a demonstrable public interest in that information.
- Has a special and particular quality such as being the oldest of its type or the best available example of its type.

4.10 CULTURAL AND PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

- Is directly associated with a scientifically recognized important prehistoric or historic event or person.”

Treatment options under Section 21083.2 include activities that preserve such resources in place in an undisturbed state. Other acceptable methods of mitigation under Section 21083.2 include excavation and curation or study in place without excavation and curation (if the study finds that the artifacts would not meet one or more of the criteria for defining a “unique archaeological resource”).

Advice on procedures to identify cultural resources, evaluate their importance and estimate potential effects is given in several agency publications such as the series produced by the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research (OPR). The technical advice series produced by OPR strongly recommends that Native American concerns and the concerns of other interested persons and corporate entities, including but not limited to, museums, historical commissions, associations and societies, be solicited as part of the process of cultural resources inventory. In addition, 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.

Section 7050.5(b) of the California Health and Safety code specifies protocol when human remains are discovered. The code states:

In the event of discovery or recognition of any human remains in any location other than a dedicated cemetery, there shall be no further excavation or disturbance of the site or any nearby area reasonably suspected to overlie adjacent remains until the coroner of the county in which the human remains are discovered has determined, in accordance with Chapter 10 (commencing with Section 27460) of Part 3 of Division 2 of Title 3 of the Government Code, that the remains are not subject to the provisions of Section 27492 of the Government Code or any other related provisions of law concerning investigation of the circumstances, manner and cause of death, and the recommendations concerning treatment and disposition of the human remains have been made to the person responsible for the excavation, or to his or her authorized representative, in the manner provided in Section 5097.98 of the Public Resources Code.

State 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.

In addition to the mitigation provisions pertaining to accidental discovery of human remains, the State CEQA Guidelines also require that a lead agency make provisions for the accidental discovery of historical or archaeological resources, generally. Pursuant to Section 15064.5, subdivision (f), these provisions should include “an immediate evaluation of the find by a qualified archaeologist. If the find is determined to be an historical or unique archaeological resource, contingency funding and a time allotment sufficient to allow for implementation of avoidance measures or appropriate mitigation should be available. Work could continue on other parts of the building site while historical or unique archaeological resource mitigation takes place.”

Paleontological resources are classified as non-renewable scientific resources and are protected by state statute (Public Resources Code Chapter 1.7, Section 5097.5, Archeological, Paleontological, and Historical Sites and Appendix G). No state or local agencies have specific jurisdiction over paleontological resources. No state or local agency requires a paleontological collecting permit to allow for the recovery of fossil remains discovered as a result of construction-related earth moving on state or private land in a project site.

City of Rancho Cordova Proposed General Plan

The City of Rancho Cordova is in the process of preparing its first General Plan. On May 16, 2005 the City of Rancho Cordova adopted Resolution No. 57-2005 that establishes the City's interim policies and diagrams associated with the development of its new General Plan are to be used to guide land use and circulation within the City until adoption of the proposed General Plan. The proposed General Plan includes provisions for the protection of cultural and paleontological resources in the City, both discovered and unknown. Section 4.1 of this EIR includes more information on the proposed Rancho Cordova General Plan.

4.10.3 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Following Public Resources Code Sections 21083.2 and 21084.1, and Section 15064.5 and Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, Rancho Cordova considers cultural resource impacts to be significant if a project would:

- Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a unique archaeological resource or an historical resource as defined in Public Resources Code section 21083.2 and CEQA Guidelines section 15064.5, respectively;
- Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geological feature; or
- Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries.

State CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5 defines "substantial adverse change" as physical demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of the resource or its immediate surroundings such that the significance of an historical resource is materially impaired.

METHODOLOGY

Pacific Municipal Consultants (PMC) cultural resources staff performed all current archaeological and historical investigations for the preparation of the Rancho Cordova General Plan EIR (currently being prepared). These investigations included a records search at the North Central Information Center at California State University, Sacramento, archival research at other repositories (e.g., California State Library), and field investigation of the Planning Area. These investigations identified thirty-one cultural resources or prehistoric/historic sites within the City of Rancho Cordova General Plan Planning Area. Of these, thirteen sites are found within the Redevelopment Project Area (see **Table 4.10-1**). The archaeological and historical sensitivity of the Project Area is depicted on **Figure 4.10-1**, above.

4.10 CULTURAL AND PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

4.10.4 PROJECT IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Prehistoric Resources, Historic Resources, and Human Remains

Impact 4.10.1 Implementation of the proposed project could result in the potential disturbance of cultural resources (i.e., prehistoric sites, historic sites, and isolated artifacts and features) and human remains. This is considered a **potentially significant** impact.

Archaeological and historical investigations have been conducted for portions of the Project Area as a result of previous development projects initiated within the City, but the entire Project Area has not been subjected to close on-site investigation. Future redevelopment activities initiated as a result of the Redevelopment Plan could result in the discovery of and impacts to previously unknown prehistoric resources, historic resources, or human remains. The probability of impacts to these unknown resources or human remains is reduced by the fact that the Project Area has already been developed and that the majority of the Project Area is already disturbed. Potential impacts to such resources by the Redevelopment Plan primarily concern known historic resources in the Project Area (see **Table 4.10-1**). Future redevelopment activities could result in either modification or replacement of historic structures in the Project Area.

Mitigation Measures

The following mitigation measures will be adopted by the City Council in connection with the adoption of the Redevelopment Plan as measures that will apply to all development in the Project Area until the proposed General Plan is adopted:

MM 4.10.1a The Agency shall promote and establish programs that identify, maintain, and protect buildings, sites, or other features of the landscape that possess historic and/or cultural significance.

MM 4.10.1b The Agency shall maintain and enhance the historic character of Rancho Cordova through review procedures for remodeling and reconstruction of buildings and other structures.

MM 4.10.1c The Agency shall require historic resources and paleontological studies (i.e., archaeological and historical investigations) for all Redevelopment Plan projects prior to construction activities. The studies shall: identify resources in the project area; determine the eligibility for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources of any resources that cannot be avoided in the project area; and provide mitigation measures for any resources in the project area that cannot be avoided.

MM 4.10.1d The following provisions shall be incorporated in appropriate permits and/or conditions for all Redevelopment Plan projects:

“The Planning Division shall be notified immediately if any cultural resources (e.g., prehistoric or historic artifact) or paleontological resources (e.g., fossils) are uncovered during construction. All construction must stop in vicinity of the find and an archaeologist that meets the Secretary of the Interior’s Professional Qualifications

4.10 CULTURAL AND PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Standards in prehistoric or historical archaeology or a paleontologist shall be retained to evaluate the finds and recommend appropriate action.

The Planning Division shall be notified immediately if any human remains are uncovered and all construction must stop in vicinity of the find. The Planning Division shall notify the County Coroner according to Section 7050.5 of California's Health and Safety Code. If the remains are determined to be Native American, the procedures outlined in State CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5 (d) and (e) shall be followed."

Implementation of the above mitigation measures would reduce potential impacts to known and unknown cultural resources. However, it cannot be determined at this point with certainty that avoidance of all significant cultural resources would be feasible from implementation of the various activities under the proposed Redevelopment Plan. Thus, this impact is determined to be **significant and unavoidable**.

Paleontological Resources

Impact 4.10.2 Implementation of the proposed project could result in the potential disturbance of paleontological resources (i.e., fossils and fossil formations). This is considered a **potentially significant** impact.

A search of the University of California, Berkeley Museum of Paleontology collections database did not identify any evidence of paleontological resources within the Project Area. The Project Area consists almost entirely of previous development and previously disturbed land, reducing the chance for discovery of and impact to previously unknown paleontological resources. No known paleontological resources exist within the Project Area. Regardless, redevelopment under the Redevelopment Plan could impact undiscovered paleontological resources. The Redevelopment Plan does not propose any specific construction, development, or redevelopment activities at this time. Future projects initiated as a result of implementation of the proposed project would be analyzed pursuant to CEQA for their project-specific impacts to cultural resources.

Mitigation Measures

Implement Mitigation Measure **MM 4.10.1c and d**.

Implementation of mitigation measure **MM 4.10.1c and d**, above, would further mitigate any impacts to paleontological resources. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would result in **less than significant** impacts to paleontological resources.

4.10.4 CUMULATIVE SETTING, IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

CUMULATIVE SETTING

The cumulative setting associated with the Redevelopment Project Area includes proposed, planned, reasonably foreseeable, and approved projects within the City of Rancho Cordova Planning Area. Developments and planned land uses within the entire Rancho Cordova Planning Area would contribute to potential conflicts with cultural and paleontological resources. These resources include archaeological resources associated with Native American

4.10 CULTURAL AND PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

activities and historic resources associated with settlement, farming, gold mining, and economic development. Similarly, proposed and approved projects and implementation of the Redevelopment Plan could impact undiscovered paleontological resources.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Prehistoric Resources, Historic Resources, and Human Remains

Impact 4.10.3 Implementation of the proposed project along with any foreseeable development in the region could result in the potential disturbance of cultural resources (i.e., prehistoric sites, historic sites, and isolated artifacts and features) and human remains. This is considered a **cumulatively considerable** impact.

As noted under Impact 4.10.1, the proposed project could result in potentially significant cultural resource impacts and has the potential to contribute to the cumulative loss of prehistoric and historic resources in the region.

Mitigation Measures

Implementation of mitigation measures **MM 4.10.1a through d** would reduce the project's contribution to cumulative cultural resource impacts. However, it cannot be determined with absolute certainty that all significant cultural resources can be avoided or fully mitigated to a less than significant level from implementation of the Redevelopment Plan. Given, this uncertainty, the Redevelopment Plan's contribution to cumulative cultural resource impacts is **cumulatively considerable** and is considered **significant and unavoidable** impact.

Paleontological Resources

Impact 4.10.4 Implementation of the proposed project along with any foreseeable development in the region could result in the potential disturbance of paleontological resources (i.e., fossils and fossil formations). This is considered a **less than cumulatively considerable** impact.

A search of the University of California, Berkeley Museum of Paleontology collections database did not identify any evidence of paleontological resources within the City of Rancho Cordova General Plan Planning Area or the Redevelopment Project Area. The probability of the discovery of previously unknown paleontological resources in the region is low due to the previously developed and thus disturbed state of the region. Regardless, development under the City of Rancho Cordova General Plan and implementation of the Redevelopment Plan could result in impacts to paleontological resources. However, implementation of Mitigation Measure **MM 4.10.1c and d** would ensure that any paleontological resource that is discovered is adequately protected. Therefore, the proposed project's incremental contribution to cumulative paleontological resources impacts is considered **less than cumulatively considerable**.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

REFERENCES

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4.10 CULTURAL AND PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

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