

CHAPTER 7.0 GROWTH INDUCING IMPACTS

In compliance with CEQA requirements, this section analyzes the growth-inducing impacts of the proposed project. It also evaluates the potential for significant and irreversible commitment of resources associated with project implementation.

Requirements for Analysis of Growth-Inducing Impacts

According to Section 15126.2(d) of the State CEQA Guidelines, an EIR must discuss the growth-inducing impacts of the proposed project. Specifically, CEQA states that the EIR shall:

Discuss the 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 (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 can have direct and/or indirect growth inducement potential. Direct growth inducement would result if a project involved construction of new housing. Indirect growth inducement would result, for instance, if implementing a project resulted in substantial new permanent employment opportunities (e.g., commercial, industrial, or governmental enterprises); or a construction effort with substantial short-term employment opportunities that indirectly stimulates the need for additional housing and services to support the new employment demand; and/or removal of an obstacle to additional growth and development, such as removing a constraint on a required public utility or service (e.g., construction of a major sewer line with excess capacity through an undeveloped area).

The analysis of the project's potential for growth inducement is consistent with *Napa Citizens for Honest Government v. Napa County Board of Supervisors* (2001) 91 Cal.App.4th 342, which sets forth the standard for an adequate growth inducing impacts discussion in an EIR. Growth inducement itself is not an environmental effect but may lead to environmental effects. These environmental effects may include increased demand on other community and public services and infrastructure, increased traffic and noise, degradation of air or water quality, degradation or loss of plant or animal habitats, or conversion of agricultural and open space land to urban uses. Thus, pursuant to *Napa Citizens*, growth-inducing effects of proposed projects should be acknowledged, but discussed in less detail than other, more direct effects resulting from projects. The analysis of growth inducing impacts, therefore, is unique and distinct from the analysis in the individual impact chapters in which the existing conditions baseline is more overtly applied. Importantly, it is within these individual impact

chapters (including the cumulative analysis section) that the actual impacts of the growth are analyzed.

Possibility of Growth Inducement with the Proposed Project

A project may induce growth by creating jobs that attract economic or population growth to the area, promoting the construction of homes that would bring new residents to the area, or removing an existing obstacle that impedes growth in the area. Project implementation would increase construction employment within the City of Rocklin for the duration of the project's construction activities. This temporary increase in employment could increase the demand for temporary housing. According to the latest labor data available from the U.S. Census Bureau (2000), 1,164 residents in Rocklin and 10,860 residents in Placer County are employed in the construction industry. Construction workers serving the project would be expected to come from Rocklin and from nearby communities in Placer and Sacramento counties. Due to the size of the construction industry in the region, the local labor supply is expected to be of sufficient size to meet the project's construction labor needs without requiring substantial employees from out of the region. Local construction workers that already have housing in the region would be expected to commute to the site while construction is ongoing. For construction workers that did come from outside the region, the temporary nature of the work would typically discourage a permanent relocation. Therefore, the anticipated temporary increase in construction employment would not be expected to result in a significant demand for housing within the City or region.

The proposed project is consistent with the City's General Plan and by extension, the employment, commercial development, and housing assumptions evaluated in the City's General Plan EIR. Moreover, the growth induced by the project is within the range of growth anticipated by the General Plan. Implementation of the proposed project would generate employment opportunities for current and future residents consistent with the General Plan's forecasts, and its goals and policies. Also new housing is being constructed within the City to accommodate planned employment growth, consistent with the General Plan land use designations and the City's Housing Element requirements. Therefore, because the growth induced by the project is within the range of growth anticipated by the General Plan, the project would not be expected to induce substantial unplanned population growth in the City or region.

The proposed project would generate new permanent employment within the City of Rocklin, which could contribute to the demand for housing. The employment growth anticipated with the proposed project would represent an increase in total employment within the City of approximately 1.2% (approx. 300 projected employees/24,900 (2006 City of Rocklin employment figure)). However, due to the project's location along the primary transportation corridor within Placer County, employees for the project would be drawn from throughout the region. Also, due to the relatively high median home prices within the City (identified as \$320,000 in 2009 [City of Rocklin 2009]) and the majority of the project's employment consisting of lower-paying service jobs, only a relatively small percentage of the project's employees may come from within the City. Employees would logically be expected to reside in communities along the Interstate 80 corridor in both Placer and Sacramento counties. Due to the density of urban development within these communities, a wide variety of housing options are available for project employees. The expected dispersal of employees across the region would minimize the effects of increased housing demands within the City.

A detailed analysis of induced growth in areas outside the City is not required, however; it is enough that the analysis examine the probability that additional housing will be needed so that interested persons and governing bodies can take steps to prepare for or address that probability. (See *Napa Citizens*, 91 Cal.App.4th at pp. 369-371.) Thus, because this induced growth would occur in areas outside of the City's control and jurisdiction, and because it would be speculative to predict where such growth would occur, the analysis was limited to a general discussion of probable housing needs. (See *Napa Citizens*, 91 Cal.App.4th at 369-71; *Marin Municipal Water District v. KG Land California Corporation* (1991) 235 Cal.App.3d 1652, 1660-1663.) For these reasons, the proposed project would not be expected to generate a substantial demand for new housing and would not be expected to be growth inducing.

Significant and Irreversible Commitment of Resources

CEQA (PRC Section 21100(b)(2)) provides that an EIR shall include a detailed statement setting forth "[i]n a separate section...[a]ny significant effects on the environment that would be irreversible if the project is implemented." State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(c) provides the following guidelines for analyzing the significant irreversible environmental changes of a project:

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. Primary impacts and, particularly, secondary impacts (such as highway improvement which provides access to a previously inaccessible area) generally commit future generations to similar uses. Also irretrievable damage can result from environmental accidents associated with the project. Irretrievable commitments of resources should be considered to assure that such current consumption is justified.

The proposed project would use both renewable and nonrenewable natural resources for project construction and operation. The proposed project would use nonrenewable fossil fuels in the form of oil and gasoline during construction and operation. Other nonrenewable and slowly-renewable resources consumed as a result of the project development would include, but not necessarily be limited to, lumber and other forest products, sand and gravel, asphalt, petrochemical construction materials, steel, copper, lead, electricity, natural gas, and water.

The proposed project involves construction of a regional shopping center resulting in conversion of relatively undeveloped land¹ to urban uses. This change in land use would represent a long-term commitment to urbanization, as the potential for developed land to be reverted back to undeveloped land uses is highly unlikely.

Lastly, the proposed project would result in irreversible damage from environmental accidents, such as an accidental spill or explosion of hazardous material. During construction, equipment on the site would use various types of fuel. Operation of the proposed project could include the use and sale of hazardous materials, primarily associated with home improvement and gardening products, which

¹ The project site formerly was occupied by small farming uses, including a farmhouse and associated structures. These features were abandoned, and most of the components associated with the farmhouse and farming activities have been destroyed. Recent re-construction of the Sierra College Boulevard/I-80 Interchange modified the site and all remaining remnants.

could increase the risk of an accidental spill or release. However, these hazardous materials would be sold in relatively small quantities and in California, the storage, use and sale of hazardous substances are strictly regulated and enforced by various local and regional agencies. The enforcement of these existing regulations would be expected to minimize the potential for irreversible damage associated with accidental spills or explosions on the project site.

Although the proposed project would result in the irretrievable commitment of non-renewable resources, the Rocklin City Council could reasonably conclude that such consumption would be justified because the proposed project would provide a convenient shopping center for local and regional businesses and residents, and would contribute to economic development in the region.