

This section discusses the additional topics statutorily required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The topics discussed include significant irreversible environmental changes/irretrievable commitment of resources, significant and unavoidable environmental impacts, and growth-inducing impacts.

7.1 GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS

INTRODUCTION

The CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(d) requires that an environmental impact report (EIR) evaluate the growth-inducing impacts of a proposed action. A growth-inducing impact is defined by the CEQA Guidelines as:

The way in which a 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 which would remove obstacles to population growth . . . It is not assumed that growth in an area is necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment.

A project can have direct and/or indirect growth-inducing potential. Direct growth inducement would result if a project, for example, involved construction of new housing. New housing and development in an area has the potential to increase the population and its need for services in that area. Alternatively, a project providing an increased water supply in an area where water service historically limited growth could be considered growth-inducing.

A project would have indirect growth inducement potential if it established substantial new permanent employment opportunities (e.g., commercial, industrial, or governmental enterprises) or if it involved a construction effort with substantial short-term employment opportunities that would indirectly stimulate the need for additional housing and services to support the new employment demand. Similarly, a project would indirectly induce growth if it removed an obstacle to additional growth and development, such as removing a constraint on a required public service. The CEQA Guidelines further explain that the environmental effects of induced growth are considered indirect impacts of the proposed action. These indirect impacts or secondary effects of growth may result in significant, adverse environmental impacts. Potential secondary effects of growth include increased demand on other community and public services and infrastructure, increased traffic and noise, and adverse environmental impacts such as degradation of air and water quality, degradation or loss of plant and animal habitat, and conversion of agricultural and open space land to developed uses.

Growth inducement may constitute an adverse impact if the growth is not consistent with or accommodated by the land use plans and growth management plans and policies for the area affected. Local land use plans provide for land use development patterns and growth policies that allow for the orderly expansion of urban development supported by adequate urban public services, such as water supply, roadway infrastructure, sewer service, and solid waste service.

COMPONENTS OF GROWTH

The timing, magnitude, and location of land development and population growth in a community or region are based on various interrelated land use and economic variables. Key variables include regional economic trends, market demand for residential and nonresidential uses, land availability and cost, the availability and quality of transportation facilities and public

7.0 LONG-TERM IMPLICATIONS

services, proximity to employment centers, the supply and cost of housing, and regulatory policies or conditions. Since the general plan of a community defines the location, type, and intensity of growth, it is the primary means of regulating development and growth in California.

GROWTH EFFECTS OF THE PROJECT

Based on Government Code Section 65300, the proposed City of Pinole General Plan Update, including other project components such as the Three Corridors Specific Plan and the update to the City's Zoning Code (proposed project), is intended to serve as the overall plan for the physical development of the City of Pinole. While the General Plan Update does not specifically propose any development projects, it does regulate future population and economic growth of the city that could result in indirect growth-inducing effects. Implementation of the proposed project would refine existing land use designations in the city and establish new policies, actions, and design guidelines to direct and manage future development and land uses in Pinole. This management would also include policy direction on roadway facility improvements, public service improvements, and the extension and expansion of utilities. Similarly, the Three Corridors Specific Plan, which includes the transportation corridors of San Pablo Avenue, Pinole Valley Road, and Appian Way, also incorporates specific land uses, policies, and directives for each of the three corridors. The last component of the proposed project involves updates to the City's Zoning Code (Title 17 of the City's Municipal Code). Key issues to be addressed by this update include administration and permit procedures, land use districts and corresponding uses and standards, general site planning and development regulations, special use regulations, definitions, and legal issues.

Although the city has only a few individual parcels left undeveloped that are not classified as open space or designated for some form of preserve, the proposed project allows for some additional growth within the General Plan Update Planning Area, which also includes each of the three transportation corridors. The General Plan Update and associated project components would also encourage the development of infrastructure, including extension of infrastructure into currently unserved areas, to support the projected development. As of January 2010, the city's population was estimated at 20,100 persons (ABAG 2007). The proposed project would result in approximately 2,576 residential units and a population of approximately 23,875 for the city by 2030, while jobs are projected to number 7,560. The reader is referred to Section 4.2, Population/Housing/Employment, for a discussion of impacts associated with increases in population and housing under the proposed General Plan Update.

The City's existing 1995 General Plan allows Level of Service (LOS) D for urban roadways (San Pablo Avenue [Oak Ridge Road to west city limits]; Appian Way [San Pablo Avenue to south city limits]; Pinole Valley Road [San Pablo Avenue to city limits]; Tennent Avenue [Pinole Valley Road to Railroad Avenue]; Fitzgerald Drive [Appian Way to 1,000 feet west of Appian Way]; Tara Hills Drive [Appian Way to 1,000 feet west of Appian Way]). The proposed General Plan Update allows the same LOS on these roadway segments.

For the Central Business District, the 1995 General Plan allows LOS E for San Pablo Avenue (Oak Ridge Road to western city limits). In contrast, the proposed General Plan Update allows LOS E for the entirety of San Pablo Avenue. The proposed project requires that LOS E or better be maintained at all signalized intersections along San Pablo Avenue and LOS D or better be maintained at all signalized intersections on Appian Way.

The proposed project does not include any provisions requiring the oversizing of roadway facilities to serve growth not anticipated under the General Plan Land Use Map. The reader is

referred to Section 4.4, Traffic and Circulation, for a discussion of impacts associated with increases in traffic and circulation under the proposed General Plan Update.

Infrastructure improvements could require the expansion and development of new water infrastructure facilities, including water supply conveyance pipelines and treatment facilities. The East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) has indicated that projects developed under the General Plan Update would more than likely be served from existing water treatment plant capacity (Rehnstrom, 2009). However, future development could require water main extensions in order to ensure adequate water supplies, fire flows, and system redundancy. The reader is referred to Section 4.12, Public Services and Utilities, for a discussion of impacts associated with increased utility infrastructure needs under the proposed project.

It is anticipated that most of the future growth under the General Plan Update would primarily occur in the City's Sphere of Influence (SOI), which includes lands just beyond the southwestern city limits near the City of San Pablo and bordered to the south by Richmond Parkway, and lands just south of the city limits near the unincorporated area of El Sobrante. The City would continue to control land use and growth within Pinole through its General Plan, Three Corridors Specific Plan, and zoning provisions.

The specific environmental effects resulting from the proposed land use patterns and associated extension of public services are discussed in the environmental issue areas in Sections 4.1 through 4.13, and the project's cumulative impacts (Section 5.0, Cumulative Impacts) would be in addition to the following additional environmental effects of growth in the region:

- **Air Quality** – Increases in air pollutant emissions potentially conflicting with air quality attainment efforts under state and federal Clean Air Acts and increased potential for the exposure of sensitive receptors to toxic air contaminants.
- **Hydrology and Water Quality** – Additional sources of discharge of polluted runoff during construction and operation of future urban development potentially violating water quality standards.
- **Noise** – Increased transportation noise levels from increased traffic volumes. Increased stationary noise levels from commercial, industrial, institutional (public schools), and recreational uses as well as new noise-sensitive land uses potentially located in areas of existing stationary noise sources.
- **Public Services and Utilities** – Increased demand for the development and expansion of water supply and associated infrastructure.
- **Transportation and Circulation** – Increased traffic volumes on the region's highways and regional roadways contributing to declining levels of service.
- **Visual Resources** – New sources of light and glare.

7.2 SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

CEQA Sections 21100(b)(2) and 21100.1(a) require that EIRs prepared for the adoption of a plan, policy, or ordinance of a public agency must include a discussion of significant irreversible environmental changes of project implementation. In addition, CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(c) describes irreversible environmental changes as:

7.0 LONG-TERM IMPLICATIONS

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 irreversible damage can result from environmental accidents associated with the project. Irretrievable commitments of resources should be evaluated to assure that such current consumption is justified.

Implementation of the proposed City of Pinole General Plan Update and associated project components would result in development of infill housing and commercial uses. Development of the Planning Area would constitute a long-term commitment to residential and commercial uses. It is unlikely that circumstances would arise that would justify the return of the land to its original condition.

Development of the Planning Area would irretrievably commit building materials and energy to the construction and maintenance of buildings and infrastructure proposed. Renewable, nonrenewable, and limited resources that would likely be consumed as part of the development of the proposed project would include, but are not limited to, oil, gasoline, lumber, sand and gravel, asphalt, water, steel, and similar materials. In addition, development of the project would result in an increased demand on public services and utilities (see Section 4.12, Public Services and Utilities).

7.3 SIGNIFICANT AND UNAVOIDABLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(b) requires an EIR to discuss unavoidable significant environmental effects, including those that can be mitigated but not reduced to a level of insignificance. In addition, Section 15093(a) of the CEQA Guidelines allows the decision-making agency to determine whether the benefits of a proposed project outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental impacts of implementing the project. The City can approve a project with unavoidable adverse impacts if it prepares a "Statement of Overriding Considerations" setting forth the specific reasons for making such a judgment.

The following significant and unavoidable impacts are specifically identified in Sections 4.1 through 4.12 of this DEIR. The reader is referred to these sections for further details and analysis of the significant and unavoidable impacts identified below.

SECTION 4.3 AIR QUALITY

Conflict with the BAAQMD 2010 Clean Air Plan

Impact 4.3.1 Subsequent land use activities associated with implementation of the proposed project (General Plan Update, Three Corridors Specific Plan, and Zoning Code Update) would result in increased population and vehicle miles traveled that would exceed assumptions used to create the BAAQMD's Clean Air Plan. This impact is considered to be **potentially significant**.

Violate Air Quality Standard or Contribute Substantially to an Air Quality Violation: Long-Term, Operational Emissions

Impact 4.3.3 Subsequent land use activities associated with implementation of the proposed project (General Plan Update, Three Corridors Specific Plan, and Zoning Code Update) could result in long-term, operational emissions that

could violate or substantially contribute to violations of federal and state ambient air quality standards. This impact is considered to be **potentially significant**.

Exposure of Sensitive Receptors to Substantial Concentrations of Toxic Air Contaminant and/or Fine Particulate Matter

Impact 4.3.5 Subsequent land use activities associated with implementation of the proposed project (General Plan Update, Three Corridors Specific Plan, and Zoning Code Update) could result in projects that would include sources of toxic air contaminants which could affect surrounding land use. Subsequent land use activities could also place sensitive land uses near existing sources of toxic air contaminants. These factors could result in the exposure of sensitive receptors to substantial concentrations of toxic air contaminants and/or fine particulate matter. This is considered a **potentially significant** impact.

Result in a Cumulatively Considerable Net Increase of Nonattainment Criteria Pollutants and Precursors

Impact 4.3.7 Implementation of the proposed project (General Plan Update, Three Corridors Specific Plan, and Zoning Code Update), in combination with cumulative development in the SFBAAB, would result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of ozone and coarse and fine particulate matter. This is considered a **cumulatively considerable** impact.

SECTION 4.4 TRAFFIC AND CIRCULATION

Impacts to Freeway Mainline

Impact 4.4.1 Implementation of the proposed project (General Plan Update, Three Corridors Specific Plan, and Zoning Code Update) would result in an increase in freeway mainline volumes during the AM and PM peak hours. This is considered a **significant** impact.

Conflict with an Applicable Congestion Management Plan

Impact 4.4.3 Implementation of the proposed project (General Plan Update, Three Corridors Specific Plan, and Zoning Code Update) would conflict with the multimodal transportation service objectives (MTSOs) identified in the West County Action Plan. This is considered a **significant** impact.

Cumulative Conflicts with an Applicable Congestion Management Plan

Impact 4.4.8 Implementation of the proposed project (General Plan Update, Three Corridors Specific Plan, and Zoning Code Update) would conflict with the multimodal transportation service objectives (MTSOs) identified in the West County Action Plan. This is considered a **cumulatively considerable** impact.

SECTION 4.5 NOISE

Exposure to Surface Transportation Noise

7.0 LONG-TERM IMPLICATIONS

Impact 4.5.3 The proposed project (General Plan Update, Three Corridors Specific Plan, and Zoning Code Update) could result in a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project and could result in exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan, as a result of increased traffic on the roadway network. In addition, future development of noise-sensitive land uses could be exposed to roadway and/or railroad noise levels in excess of the City's noise standards. This impact would be considered **potentially significant**.

Cumulative Transportation Noise Impacts

Impact 4.5.7 Implementation of the proposed project (General Plan Update, Three Corridors Specific Plan, and Zoning Code Update), in combination with other development in nearby areas in Contra Costa County, would increase transportation noise along area roadways. This would be a **cumulatively considerable** impact.

REFERENCES

Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG). 2007. *ABAG Projections 2007*. Oakland, California.

Rehnstrom, David. 2009. Senior Civil Engineer, Water Service Planning, East Bay Municipal Utilities District. Personal Communication (Letter), February 25.