

5.0 GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This section evaluates the potential for growth inducement as a result of proposed project implementation. Section 15126.2(d) of the *California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines* requires that an environmental impact report (EIR) include a discussion of the potential for a proposed project to foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment.

The *State CEQA Guidelines* do not provide specific criteria for evaluating growth inducement and state that it must not be assumed that growth in an area is necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment. Growth inducement is generally not quantified, but is instead evaluated as either occurring, or not occurring, with implementation of a project. The identification of growth-inducing impacts is generally informational, and mitigation of growth inducement is not required by CEQA. It must be emphasized that the *State CEQA Guidelines* require an EIR to “discuss the ways” a project could be growth inducing and “discuss the characteristics of some projects that may encourage and facilitate other activities that could significantly affect the environment, either individually or cumulatively.” However, the *State CEQA Guidelines* do not require an EIR to predict or speculate where such growth would occur, in what form it would occur, or when it would occur.

In general, terms, a project may foster spatial, economic, or population growth in a geographic area if it meets any one of the criteria that are identified below.

- Removal of an impediment to growth (e.g., the establishment of an essential public service or the provision of new access to an area).
- Economic expansion or growth (e.g., construction of additional housing, changes in revenue base, employment expansion, etc.).
- Establishment of a precedent- setting action (e.g., an innovation, a change in zoning or general plan designation).
- Development or encroachment in an isolated or adjacent area of open space (being distinct from an “infill” type of project).

Should a project meet any one of these criteria, it can be considered growth inducing. An evaluation of this project compared against these criteria is provided below.

5.2 REMOVAL OF AN IMPEDIMENT TO GROWTH

Growth in an area may result from the removal of physical impediments or restrictions to growth as well as the removal of planning impediments resulting from land use plans and policies. In this context, physical growth impediments may include nonexistent or inadequate access to an area or the lack of essential public services (e.g., water services), and planning impediments may include restrictive zoning and/or general plan designations.

The project area contains established land uses and supporting infrastructure. The construction of proposed uses would require the modification and/or improvement of existing infrastructure in the vicinity of the project site in order to support the increased land use intensity associated with the project. Such modifications and improvements to infrastructure are discussed in further detail below.

An established transportation network exists in the surrounding area that offers local and regional access to the project site. Vehicular access to the project site would be provided via Bunker Hill Drive and Ticonderoga Drive. No changes to the roadways associated within the Highland neighborhood would occur as part of the proposed project. All improvements would be designed to serve the project and would not induce growth within the area.

Sanitary sewer service would be provided to the project site by the Crystal Springs County Sanitation District. The homes would connect to existing sewer lines that run along Ticonderoga Drive and Bunker Hill Drive. Domestic water service would be provided to the project site by Cal Water Service. Upon approval of the project, the applicant would be responsible for securing permits with Cal Water Service to extend the water lines from their existing termini in Ticonderoga Drive, New Brunswick Drive, and Bunker Hill Drive to the proposed lots. No new water or sewer mains other than those required to connect the proposed residences to existing lines serving the site would be constructed. As such, the development of water and wastewater infrastructure to serve the project would not induce growth within the area.

Electricity and natural gas transmission infrastructure presently exists in the vicinity of the site. Existing homes are currently provided with electricity and communication utilities through Pacific, Gas & Electric (PG&E) and through private telecommunications companies. The new homes would connect to existing underground gas and electrical lines along Bunker Hill Drive, New Brunswick Drive, and Ticonderoga Drive. The extension of electrical, natural gas, and telecommunications infrastructure would be performed to provide service to the proposed project site and would not be designed to accommodate additional development. Given the location of the site, the urban nature of the surroundings, and the

existence of established infrastructure, no growth-inducing impacts would result from the extension of electrical or natural gas service lines to the project site.

In summary, the design and construction of roadway, water, electrical, and natural gas infrastructure needed to accommodate the project would not induce growth within undeveloped areas surrounding the project.

5.3 ECONOMIC GROWTH

The second criterion by which potential for growth inducement can be measured involves economic expansion. Development of the project site would take place over approximately 12 months, during which time the project would provide short-term construction employment opportunities in the local area. It is anticipated that many of the construction employment positions would be filled by current County residents, and that those construction employees who do not reside in San Mateo County would commute from elsewhere in the region, rather than relocate to the County for a temporary assignment.

Long-term growth, should it occur, would be primarily in the form of an economic response to the new residents that would occupy the site. The increase of 33 residents associated with the project may result in a slight corresponding increase in demand for goods and services in the County. However, given the relatively small size of the project in relation to county population and that the project would be generally consistent with the goals of the General Plan per the Initial Study, the economic contribution of this project alone would not be considered growth inducing.

5.4 PRECEDENT-SETTING ACTION

Changes from a project that could be considered precedent setting include (among others) a change in zoning, general plan designation, general plan text, or approval of exceptions to regulations that could have implications for other properties or that could make it easier for other properties to develop.

The project site is currently designated as Open Space on the San Mateo County General Plan land use map. This designation permits single-family residential development. Any issue not specifically covered in the General Plan will be subject to the regulations in the Zoning Code. The project involves two changes in zoning: (1) a 2,178-square-foot portion of the site currently zoned Single-Family Residential (R-1/S-8) would be rezoned as Resource Management District (RM), and (2) a 9,000-square-foot portion that is zoned Single-Family Residential (R-1/S-81) would be rezoned with a different single-family residential designation. The proposed project is consistent with the intent of the General Plan, but as it includes changes in zoning, it could be considered growth inducing under this criterion. However, the change in zoning from one type of single-family residential use to another and the change from

single-family residential uses to Resource Management for consistency purposes would further the intent of currently established zoning districts, rather than set a new precedent. In addition, these zoning changes would not allow for the development of properties beyond the 11 proposed residences on the project site. Therefore, changes related to the rezoning of parcels on the project site would not be considered precedent setting or growth inducing.

Additionally, the County proposes to adopt a zoning text amendment to RM District regulations as part of this project, which would allow for a reduction of required setbacks for RM District residential properties in urban areas. Per the amendment, reduced setbacks would only be allowed if the affected area would preserve additional open space and would be consistent with existing development. Although the proposed text amendment would change RM District requirements and would result in a zoning change, it would not conflict with the type of uses currently allowed by the County of San Mateo RM Zoning Ordinance. The RM District zoning change could, therefore, be considered precedent setting or growth inducing as it would allow exceptions to regulations that could have implications for other properties and could further facilitate growth. However, this growth would be consistent with both the goals of the San Mateo County General Plan for the preservation of open space uses and for the preservation of resources in the RM District.

5.5 DEVELOPMENT OR ENCROACHMENT IN AN ISOLATED AREA OF OPEN SPACE

Development can be considered growth inducing when it requires the extension of urban infrastructure into isolated localities, which are presently devoid of such facilities. Although the project would involve the development of approximately 4.53 acres of open space on the 97-acre project site, the project site is located in a neighborhood that is already developed and that contains established infrastructure. Because residential uses surround the proposed project site on all sides, this area would not be considered an isolated area of open space. The proposed project would instead involve development in an established residential area. Consequently, the project would not be considered growth inducing under this criterion because it would not result in the urbanization of land in an isolated location.

5.6 CONCLUSION

As discussed above, implementation of the proposed project would not be considered growth inducing in terms of removing an obstacle to growth. While public services and utilities would be extended to the new homes, this extension would not facilitate growth in areas outside of the project site. In addition, the proposed project would contribute minimally to regional economic expansion during project construction and operation. Although the project would include proposed zoning changes, these changes would not

facilitate development of other properties and would not involve a precedent-setting action. Finally, although the proposed project would develop a portion of an open space parcel, this represents a small portion of the site located in an area characterized by existing residential development. For these reasons, the project would not be considered growth inducing.