

7 OTHER CEQA CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 GROWTH INDUCEMENT

CEQA specifies that growth-inducing impacts of a project must be addressed in an EIR (Public Resources Code, Section 21100[b][5]). Specifically, Section 15126.2(d) of the California Code of Regulations 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 which would remove obstacles to population growth (a 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 construction of new facilities that could cause significant environmental effects. 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.

Direct growth inducement would result if a project involved construction of new housing, which would facilitate new population to an area. Indirect growth inducement would result, for instance, if implementing a project resulted in any of the following:

- ▲ substantial new permanent employment opportunities (e.g., commercial, industrial, or governmental enterprises);
- ▲ substantial short-term employment opportunities (e.g., construction employment) that indirectly stimulates the need for additional housing and services to support the new temporary 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 State CEQA Guidelines do not distinguish between planned and unplanned growth for purposes of considering whether a project would foster additional growth. Therefore, for purposes of this EIR, to reach the conclusion that a project is growth-inducing as defined by CEQA, the EIR must find that it would foster (i.e., promote, encourage, allow) additional growth in economic activity, population, or housing, regardless of whether the growth is already approved by and consistent with local plans. The conclusion does not determine that induced growth is beneficial or detrimental, consistent with Section 15126.2(d) of the State CEQA Guidelines.

If the analysis conducted for the EIR results in a determination that a project is growth-inducing, the next question is whether that growth may cause adverse effects on the environment. Environmental effects resulting from induced growth (i.e., growth-induced effects) fit the CEQA definition of “indirect” effects in Section 15358(a)(2) of the State CEQA Guidelines. These indirect or secondary effects of growth may result in significant environmental impacts. CEQA does not require that the EIR speculate unduly about the precise location and site-specific characteristics of significant, indirect effects caused by induced growth, but a good-faith effort is required to disclose what is feasible to assess. Potential secondary effects of growth could include consequences – such as conversion of open space to developed uses, increased demand on community and public services and infrastructure, increased traffic and noise, degradation of

air and water quality, or degradation or loss of plant and wildlife habitat – that are the result of growth fostered by the project.

The decision to allow those projects that result from induced growth is the subject of separate discretionary processes by the lead agency responsible for considering such projects. Because the decision to allow growth is subject to separate discretionary decision making, and such decision making is itself subject to CEQA, the analysis of growth-inducing effects is not intended to determine site-specific environmental impacts and specific mitigation for the potentially induced growth. Rather, the discussion is intended to disclose the potential for environmental effects to occur more generally, such that decision makers are aware that additional environmental effects are a possibility if growth-inducing projects are approved. The decision of whether impacts do occur, their extent, and the ability to mitigate them is appropriately left to consideration by the agency responsible for approving such projects at such times as complete applications for development are submitted.

7.1.1 Growth Variables

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 services, proximity to employment centers, the supply and cost of housing, and regulatory policies or conditions.

7.1.2 Growth-Inducing Impacts of the Project

Approval of the SOIA, general plan amendment, annexation, and prezone (SOIA/annexation) would remove obstacles to the future development of the site as a City of Folsom corporation yard. While this project would not approve specific development, it anticipates that a future corporation yard would be located at this site if the project is approved. The corporation yard would not directly induce growth as a future corporation yard would not include any housing units. In addition, while the corporation yard would provide a job site for City employees, it would not provide jobs unique to this site. The City already employs workers for all of the City activities and roles that would be required at the proposed corporation yard. While the City anticipates that employment at the future corporation yard buildout would be greater than the current employment numbers, these jobs are not a direct or indirect result of relocating and building a new corporation yard.

Employment at the corporation yard is linked to growth of the City in general and is a necessary outcome of allowing growth in the City of Folsom. As the City continues to build out, more employees would be needed to serve additional population and additional areas in the City. The proposed corporation yard would remove some barriers to growth as the City does not currently have enough space in the current corporation yard to provide for all the services needed for the anticipated future growth in the City. The City has placed conditions on some of FPASP development's tentative maps and development agreements that require there be substantial progress on the annexation of the Folsom Corporation Yard SOIA/annexation project prior to final map approvals. While this would cause the SOIA/annexation to have growth-inducing impacts, indirectly, the probable environmental impacts of the growth in the FPASP area have already been analyzed in the *Folsom South of U.S. 50 Specific Plan Project EIR/EIS* (2011).

7.2 SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

CEQA requires that EIRs assess whether the project would result in significant irreversible changes to the physical environment. The State CEQA Guidelines discuss three categories of significant irreversible changes that should be considered. Each is addressed below.

- ▲ **Changes in Land Use Which Commit Future Generations** – while the SOIA/annexation would not include physical development, the change to land use designation, zoning, and jurisdiction would remove barriers to future development. This project would commit future generations to a change in land use that, once developed, would be a permanent change.
- ▲ **Irreversible Damage from Environmental Accidents** – a future corporation yard, resulting from approval of the SOIA/annexation, would include the use of hazardous materials, including fuel. However, as described in Section 3.8, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*, the City would comply with all regulations regarding the handling of hazardous materials.
- ▲ **Consumption of Nonrenewable Resources** – the development of the SOIA/annexation area would result in conversion of agricultural land and consumption of fossil fuels and other non-renewable or slowly renewable resources through the operation of vehicles and equipment for site grading and construction activities and additional electricity, water, and natural gas demand following development of a corporation yard. Please see Section 3.6, *Energy*, regarding energy demands of future development of the SOIA/annexation area.

7.3 SIGNIFICANT AND UNAVOIDABLE IMPACTS

Detailed mitigation measures are identified in Chapter 3 of the Draft EIR that are intended to mitigate project effects to the extent feasible. All mitigation measures are identified in ES-1. After implementation of the proposed mitigation measures, nearly all adverse effects associated with the project would be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Following is a listing of significant and unavoidable impacts associated with implementation of the SOIA/annexation.

Aesthetics (Section 3.1)

- ▲ Impact 3.1-1: Substantially adversely affect a scenic vista
- ▲ Impact 3.1-2: Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.
- ▲ Impact 3.1-3: Create new source of light or glare

Agriculture and Forestry Resources (Section 3.2)

- ▲ Impact 3.2-1: Conversion of farmland into non-agricultural uses

Biological Resources (Section 3.4)

- ▲ Impact 3.4-2: Disturbance to or loss of special-status wildlife species and habitat

Energy (Section 3.6)

- ▲ Impact 3.6-2: Demand for energy services and facilities.

Noise and Vibration (Section 3.10)

- ▲ Impact 3.10-1: Construction-generated noise

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