

CHAPTER 8

Growth-Inducing Impacts of the Project

Pursuant to Sections 15126.2(c) and 15126.2(d) of the *CEQA Guidelines*, this chapter is provided to examine ways in which the proposed project or the non-clustered scenario could foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment. Also required by CEQA in this section is an assessment of other projects that would foster activities which could affect the environment, individually or cumulatively. To address these issues, answers to the following questions are examined in terms of the potential to directly or indirectly foster growth:

- Would this project remove obstacles to growth, e.g., through the construction or extension of major infrastructure facilities that do not presently exist in the project areas?
- Would the project remove obstacles to growth through changes in existing regulations pertaining to land development?
- Would this project result in the need to expand one or more public services to maintain desired levels of service?
- Would this project encourage or facilitate economic or other effects that could result in activities other than the proposed project that could significantly affect the environment?
- Would approval of this project involve some other action that could encourage and facilitate other activities that could significantly affect the environment?

Growth-inducing effects are not to be construed as necessarily beneficial, detrimental or of little significance to the environment (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.2(d)). This issue is presented to provide additional information on ways in which the proposed project or non-clustered scenario could contribute to significant changes in the environment beyond the direct consequences of developing the land use concepts examined in the preceding sections of this EIR.

Would this project remove obstacles to growth, e.g., through the construction or extension of major infrastructure facilities that do not presently exist in the project areas?

Proposed Project

The project site is located within the service boundaries of TCWD and the project proposes to build infrastructure for a new water reservoir, which would be located in the northern portion of the project site, along with an on-site water booster station or an off-site waterline extension (see Section 2.5, Project Characteristics, of this Draft EIR). The project alone would require a 910,000 gallon capacity tank, and TCWD estimates that an additional 1,000,000 gallons would be

needed as a possible oversize for emergency storage and existing development. Therefore, the project has been designed with a two million gallon tank to accommodate the proposed project and emergency storage. An on-site water pump station or waterline extension is required to supply water to the project's on-site reservoir. This would result in a direct growth inducing impact as it would remove an obstacle to development of the project site. The proposed tank and on-site pump station or waterline extension would not serve any other development and therefore, no indirect growth inducing impacts would result from provision of new water infrastructure.

As discussed in Section 3.15, *Utilities and Service Systems*, of this Draft EIR, no major new infrastructure facilities (e.g., expansion of wastewater treatment plant or water supply pipeline) would be required to develop the proposed project. Existing utility facilities are readily available throughout the project area and the water tank would be constructed to accommodate only the proposed project. Connections of existing utility facilities from surrounding roadways are sufficient to meet the demands of the proposed project. Therefore, no new infrastructure would be provided, and no obstacles to development of surrounding properties would be removed. Thus, there would be no indirect growth inducing impacts related to the provision of infrastructure, as well as no increased demand for utilities associated with the project. The proposed project would not result in an indirect growth inducing impact through the construction or extension of major infrastructure facilities that do not presently exist in the project area.

Non-Clustered Scenario

Similar to that described above for the proposed project, the non-clustered scenario would not require new major infrastructure facilities for development. Therefore, the non-clustered scenario would not remove physical obstacles to growth by expanding infrastructure.

Would the project remove obstacles to growth through changes in existing regulations pertaining to land development?

Proposed Project

As described in Section 2.7, *Project Approvals and Intended Uses of the EIR*, and Section 3.9, *Land Use and Planning*, of this Draft EIR, amendments to the F/TSP and General Plan are being requested to accommodate the proposed project. An Area Plan has been prepared to provide for the orderly development of the project site in accordance with the F/TSP and applicable provisions of the County of Orange Zoning Code. As discussed in Section 3.9, *Land Use and Planning*, the proposed project would be consistent with the goals, objectives and policies of the F/TSP and General Plan, as amended with the proposed project.

The General Plan and F/TSP amendments, discussed in Section 2.7, *Project Approvals and Intended Uses of the EIR*, of this Draft EIR include the following proposed changes to plan provisions that could affect growth and development:

General Plan Amendments

- Amend the Transportation Element of the General Plan to provide that the level of service policy for Santiago Canyon Road will be implemented by evaluating peak hour

volumes in relation to the physical capacity of the road using the volume-to-capacity methodology.

- Provide language to make it clear that new development within the F/TSP area should be designed to be consistent with the goals of the Specific Plan to maintain a buffer with the Cleveland National Forest, to be compatible with adjacent areas, and to reflect the goals of the F/TSP.

F/TSP Amendments

- Acknowledge Introduction, Section I.A, the changes that have occurred with respect to environmental planning (e.g., biological mitigation, fire management and hydromodification) as well as changes that have occurred in the County.
- Modify the provisions of the F/TSP relating to Tree Management and Preservation Plans to provide that oak tree transplantation is not required if a tree is in poor health or would not survive transplantation and to allow oak trees to be replaced under either the tree replacement scale or an approved Tree Management and Preservation Plan that would provide more effective mitigation.
- Include language in the UAR District to provide that the County has the authority to approve alternative Site Development Standards relating to building site area and grading if the development plan would result in greater overall protection of environmental resources than a plan that fully complied with current Site Development Standards within the F/TSP.
- Clarify that grading is allowed during development within areas that will be maintained as open space areas.

These Specific Plan amendments would result in a direct growth inducing impact because the amendments would remove obstacles to development on the project site posed by the existing plan provisions; however, the amendments would not change the density allowed on the site beyond the maximum density permitted in the F/TSP, and would not change the uses allowed on the site.

The F/TSP was approved in 1991 and reflects the conditions that existed at that time. The amendments to the F/TSP that are being proposed reflect current design standards and conditions that would potentially provide greater protection of natural resources than the standards in the F/TSP that they would replace. For example, the applicant is proposing to amend the F/TSP to allow for variations in the UAR District grading and building site area standards, which will permit the clustering of development, which is not uncommon and allows for the greater protection of natural resources for a number of reasons. As discussed in Section 3.3, *Biological Resources*, of this Draft EIR, the proposed project which includes clustering preserves more of the natural resources on-site that are contiguous, as compared to the non-clustered scenario.

In addition, the proposed project includes an amendment to change the methodology for analyzing traffic impacts on Santiago Canyon Road. The level of service calculated based on the current methodology of peak hour volumes for two lane rural roadways that is required by the

GMP, TIM, is not reflective of observed current operating conditions as determined based on travel time runs. However, the existing methodology creates an obstacle to development within the area subject to the provisions of the F/TSP, because when the HCM methodology of PTSF for rural two lane highways is used, the calculations indicate that some segments of Santiago Canyon Road are not operating at a level of service “C”, even though observed traffic conditions are significantly better than that level of service. However, continuing to measure level of service with the existing methodology would preclude the further development anticipated in the F/TSP. As discussed in Section 3.14, *Transportation and Traffic*, of this Draft EIR, the F/TSP contains specific requirements for analyzing traffic on Santiago Canyon Road and indicates that the HCM methodology for rural two-lane highways shall be used. An evaluation of existing conditions along Santiago Canyon Road based upon the HCM’s methodology yields a calculated LOS D, which does not comply with the County LOS policy prior to the amendment.

By changing F/TSP design standards, the proposed amendments would remove impediments to development within the UAR District of the F/TSP and could facilitate future development applications within this area in the same manner as they would facilitate the proposed project. In addition, the amendment that would change the methodology for analyzing traffic impacts on Santiago Canyon Road would remove a regulatory obstacle, which precludes approval of residential development within the F/TSP. Thus by removing these impediments to new development, the proposed amendments could have growth inducing impacts within the F/TSP area, by encouraging applications for development pursuant to the F/TSP as it is proposed to be amended that would otherwise not be proposed under the existing standards. It should be noted, however, that the development that could occur utilizing the proposed amendments would still need to be consistent with other provisions of the adopted F/TSP, including the provisions of the F/TSP relating to the total amount of development that can occur under the plan.

As described on page III-2 of the Area Plan (Appendix B of this Draft EIR), several development projects that were envisioned in the F/TSP will not occur because the land has been sold for conservation purposes or other reasons will not be developed (resulting in an overall reduction of approximately 717 dwelling units from that envisioned by the F/TSP). As a result, the proposed amendments would not result in greater levels of development within the area than provided for in the F/TSP (see Appendix B of the F/TSP). Thus, while the amendment proposed as part of the project might remove regulatory obstacles to growth, any growth that would occur would be significantly less than contemplated by the F/TSP.

In addition, the amendments to the General Plan and F/TSP would not themselves result in any new significant impacts. As explained in Section 3.14, *Transportation and Traffic*, of this Draft EIR, traffic on Santiago Canyon Road links, based on observed conditions of traffic volume in relation to road capacity is a level of service A and would remain at this high level of service under cumulative conditions. The change in the methodology used to calculate level of service would not have a significant adverse effect on actual traffic conditions.

The amendments to the F/TSP relating to transplanted oak trees and oak tree mitigation would not have an adverse impact because the amendments specifically provide that the

provisions may be applied when it is found that they would provide more effective mitigation than existing standards.

Similarly, the amendments to UAR District regulations to provide that the County has the authority to approve alternative Site Development Standards relating to building site area and grading if the development plan would result in greater overall protection of environmental resources is designed to allow approval of development plans that would better protect biological resources, provide larger areas of unfragmented open space, provide for superior defensibility from fires (reducing the need for fuel modification activities), and provide other environmental benefits that cannot be achieved under the existing UAR regulations. The difference in impacts is illustrated in the comparison in each section of the EIR between the impacts of the proposed project and the non-clustered scenario, and the fact that the proposed project is environmentally superior to the non-clustered scenario in a number of respects. The same differences in environmental impacts would be expected for other development projects within the UAR District that might be approved under the provisions of this amendment allowing alternatives grading and building site standards for projects that can qualify by showing greater overall protection of environmental resources than a plan that fully complied with those Site Development Standards.

Application of the alternative development standards to other parcels within the UAR District could result in the following number of additional residential lots in addition to the existing lots on each parcel:

**TABLE 8.1
ADDITIONAL BUILDING SITES**

Parcel Name	Maximum DU per F/TSP	Present Number of Building Sites	Building Sites Remaining for Development
Adams	3	1	2
Carisoza	4	1	3
Serrano	3	2	1
Seventh Day Adventist Church ^a	11	1	10
Shimomura	38	1	37
Varshney	25	0	25
Watson	48	1	<u>47</u>
	Total		125

a These values represent the maximum density on the portion not owned by the project applicant.

SOURCE: County of Orange, 2012.

The total number of lots for each parcel that would result would be within the ceiling established for each of these parcels by the F/TSP. These parcels would only qualify for application of the alternative Site Development Standards, if the County found that the proposed Area Plan for the

parcel met the standard of providing overall environmental superiority. Further, because the total number of lots would be subject to the existing limits of the F/TSP, this amendment would not increase the number of lots in comparison with the number envisioned by the existing F/TSP.

Finally, the F/TSP amendment relating to open space is a clarifying amendment and does not make a major change to the UAR District regulation relating to open space. Consistent with the County's long-standing interpretation and application of this provision of the F/TSP, the amendment makes it clear that the grading that occurs during development for slope contouring and stabilization, installation of underground utilities, remediation of landslides, planting of trees and other vegetation, environmental mitigation, recreational trails and other purposes is permitted in areas planned to be reserved as open space upon completion of development. This amendment is consistent with County policies favoring improvements to open space areas that enhance its quality and value as a resource.

Non-Clustered Scenario

The non-clustered scenario would not require an amendment to the F/TSP, but would require a General Plan amendment with regard to traffic methodology.

Thus, similar to the proposed project, the non-clustered scenario would remove a regulatory obstacle associated with the use of the existing traffic analysis methodology and that would facilitate growth as contemplated by the F/TSP. The non-clustered scenario would not include specific plan amendments and thus would not include any of the positive environmental features of the amendments associated with the proposed project.

Would this project result in the need to expand one or more public services to maintain desired levels of service?

Proposed Project

Increasing or expanding public service facilities allows for an increase in urban growth within a service area. The proposed project is expected to increase demand for fire protection and emergency response, police protection, schools, library services, and hospitals. As discussed in Section 3.12, *Public Services*, of this Draft EIR, the proposed project would increase the population within the F/TSP area, requiring increased public services resulting in a direct growth inducing impact related to development of the proposed project itself. However, the proposed project would not require additional resources to maintain existing levels of service or cause a need for additional facilities that could result in an indirect growth inducing impact as a result of increased services that could support development in addition to the proposed project. In addition, the proposed project would not create a demand for services beyond that contemplated in the General Plan, F/TSP or the master plans of the public services agencies serving the F/TSP area. The proposed project, would not, therefore, have significant growth-inducing consequences with respect to public services.

Non-Clustered Scenario

Similar to described above for the proposed project, the non-clustered scenario would not require additional resources to maintain existing levels of service or cause the need for additional facilities resulting in an indirect growth inducing impact. The non-clustered scenario, would not, therefore, have significant growth-inducing consequences with respect to public services.

Would this project encourage or facilitate economic or other effects that could result in activities other than the proposed project that could significantly affect the environment?

Proposed Project

During project construction, a number of temporary design, engineering, and construction related jobs would be created. This would last until project construction is completed; with the estimated build out being 2016 (see Section 2.6, *Construction Activities*, of this Draft EIR). This job provision would be a direct growth inducing effort of the proposed project. However, this effect would be temporary, lasting only through 2016. In addition, the project-related work force would be anticipated to be from surrounding areas. Due to the small size of the proposed project (65 dwelling units) in comparison to the large population and available labor pool in Orange County and the western portions of Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, it is highly unlikely that the economic effects of the proposed project might result in other activities that could impact the environment (i.e., new housing or facilities). There would also be employment opportunities for security personnel, landscapers, and other service workers once the project is constructed; however, such workers are typically drawn from surrounding areas, and the number of proposed dwelling units is too small to attract a large enough labor force that new housing for those workers would be necessary. Additionally, as the new dwelling units are occupied, residents of the proposed project would seek shopping, entertainment, and other economic opportunities in the surrounding areas. This would represent an increased demand for such economic goods and services. The new residents of the project could, therefore, encourage the creation of new businesses, and/or the expansion of existing businesses to address these economic needs resulting in an indirect growth inducing impact. It is more likely, however, that given the small number of proposed dwelling units (65), increased long-term economic activity resulting from the proposed project would be accommodated by existing businesses and business expansion based on overall Orange County growth trends, rather than any discernable expansion related specifically to the proposed project.

Considering the size of the proposed project, and the existing commercial and retail services that already exist in the area (located south of the project site in the cities of Lake Forest and Mission Viejo; and southeast of the site in the City of Rancho Santa Margarita), increased long-term economic activity resulting from the proposed project would be accommodated by existing businesses and business expansion based on overall growth trends in southern Orange County rather than any discernable expansion related specifically to the proposed project. As a result, it is unlikely that the proposed project would itself result in other activities that could impact the environment. In addition, the proposed project itself and in combination with the buildout of the

F/TSP area would not generate activities beyond those already contemplated by the F/TSP and the General Plan. Therefore, although the proposed project could have an indirect growth inducing effect, this effect would be less than significant, due to the existing services that serve the project area, which are anticipated to be adequate to serve the limited number of dwelling units that are included under the proposed project.

Non-Clustered Scenario

Similar to that described for the proposed project, the non-clustered scenario would create jobs during construction activities. However, these jobs would be temporary and are anticipated to end in 2020 (see Section 2.6, *Construction Activities*, of this Draft EIR). Similar to that discussed above for the proposed project, as dwelling units are occupied under the non-clustered scenario, there would also be employment opportunities for security personnel, landscapers and other service workers, and new residents would seek shopping and entertainment opportunities in the surrounding area. However, similar to the proposed project, although the non-clustered scenario would have an indirect growth inducing effect, this effect would be less than significant due to the existing services that serve the project area, which are anticipated to be adequate to serve the limited number of dwelling units that are proposed under the non-clustered scenario.

Would approval of this project involve some precedent-setting action that could encourage and facilitate other activities that could significantly affect the environment?

Proposed Project

During the NOP public comment period for the proposed project, some commenters expressed concern that a precedent for changes in the F/TSP would follow the approval of the proposed project, and would encourage change to developments incompatible with the existing character of the community. As described in Section 2.7, *Project Approvals and Intended Uses of the EIR*, of this Draft EIR, amendments to the F/TSP and General Plan are being requested to accommodate the environmentally superior approach taken with the proposed project. An Area Plan has been prepared to provide for the orderly development of the project site in accordance with the F/TSP and the County of Orange Zoning Code.

As discussed above, the amendments included as part of the proposed project would not change the allowable use or the density beyond what was envisioned in the F/TSP, and would maintain the Santiago Canyon Road setback and the amount of open space required within individual development projects.

Although the proposed project is removing an impediment to other development within the UAR District by allowing clustering of development as opposed to a development where homes are spread throughout the entire site as envisioned by the F/TSP, it would not automatically lead to an increase in population nor require additional services over that required by the existing F/TSP for those other development(s).

The ability to update land use regulations of the type contained in the F/TSP is recognized as being within the general grant of authority to local governments to regulate land use. Municipalities may rezone property in accordance with a comprehensive plan to meet the changing needs of the community. Rezoning may involve a broad area or a single property and does not govern whether other zoning changes might be made. The amendments that are proposed as part of the project are included to update parts of the plan in light of advances in scientific and technical information relating to oak tree mitigation/restoration, fire management, preservation of biological resources, and hydrology relating to protection of resources and reduction of potential environmental impacts. Given this basis for the proposed amendments, they do not set a precedent for future land use changes or changes in plan regulations, but only reflect the reality that it is appropriate to update specific plans to reflect important new information. Further, the proposed amendments would involve legislative decision-making that rests with the Board of Supervisors of the County of Orange (the local legislature). A decision by the Board of Supervisors to change such a legislative policy in one situation does not act as a precedent that guides future legislative decision making, because each legislative decision is made based on the individual merits and must be based on the informed legislative judgment of the members of the Board after taking account of the relevant environmental, social, and economic factors.

Like the surrounding land uses, the project site would continue to be zoned for residential uses and therefore, the proposed project would not be considered a precedent setting action.

In addition, the proposed project includes an amendment to correct the methodology for analyzing traffic impacts. The proposed amendment is needed to replace outmoded traffic analysis methodologies and provide for a realistic assessment of the impacts and needed mitigation measures of traffic related to the proposed development pursuant to the provisions of the F/TSP. Modifying the methodology for analyzing traffic impacts would remove an obstacle that has inhibited growth in the F/TSP area; this would result in an indirect growth inducing impact in allowing for development of projects previously included in the F/TSP. However, development on this area has been envisioned by the F/TSP since it was approved in 1991, and would not be considered a precedent setting action.

Non-Clustered Scenario

Although the non-clustered scenario would not require an F/TSP amendment, it would require an amendment to the General Plan to achieve consistency and correct the current traffic methodology. And similar to that described above for the proposed project, the non-clustered scenario would not change existing land use regulations pertaining to land development so as to remove obstacles to future growth. Similar to the proposed project, the non-clustered scenario would be a continuation of the adjacent residential land uses and would not be considered a precedent setting action.