

17.0 Growth Inducing Impacts

17.1 CEQA Requirements

CEQA Guidelines section 15126.2 states that an 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 waste water 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 characteristic 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.

17.2 Impact Analysis

Urban development of the McKinleyville Town Center site has been envisioned by the County at least since the original McKinleyville Community Plan was adopted in 2002. This is reflected in the fact that, as described in Section 3.2, Community Plan, General Plan, and Zoning, the Community Plan identifies the site as town center and the General Plan designates the site for a range of urban development types. The programmatic environmental impacts of developing the site were most recently addressed as part of the analysis countywide development impacts addressed in the 2017 General Plan EIR.

As part of its process to develop the proposed Q-Zone regulations, the County evaluated, at a general level, the potential development capacity of the McKinleyville Town Center site under existing zoning regulations. Additional residential development capacity within the areas designated R-2, R-3, R-4 and Mixed Use was projected at about 4,286 units. Non-residential development capacity with the areas designated C-2 was estimated at about 629,000 square feet of building area. Table 4-1, Projected New Mixed Use Town Center Development Capacity, shows that residential development capacity under the proposed zoning actions would be about 2,650 units, with non-residential building development capacity projected at 904,000 square feet.

The proposed rezoning and “Q-zone” overlay would reduce residential development capacity and increase non-residential building capacity relative to that projected under existing zoning. In this context, the proposed project would reduce population growth relative to that anticipated by the General Plan and Community Plan, and increase growth inducement relative to non-residential employment generation. Population-related environmental impacts (e.g., impacts on public services such as schools and police/fire protection services, and parks) would be lessened relative to those from residential buildout under existing zoning. Conversely, with increased non-residential building capacity, employment-associated impacts would increase relative to those from commercial development buildout under existing zoning.

The growth-inducing impacts of increased employment are addressed throughout this EIR.

Community Plan policies are intended to create a sustainable Town Center, with a balance and phasing of jobs and housing that minimizes VMT. A significant amount of McKinleyville’s more urban residential and commercial growth would be located in the Town Center. The McKinleyville Community Plan seeks to balance economic expansion, job production and location, and housing to maximize the sustainability of the McKinleyville community and minimize sprawl and isolated growth.