

## 5 Other CEQA Required Discussions

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This section discusses growth-inducing impacts and irreversible environmental impacts that would be caused by the proposed project.

### 5.1 Growth Inducement

Section 15126(d) of the CEQA Guidelines requires a discussion of a proposed project's potential to foster economic or population growth, including ways in which a project could remove an obstacle to growth. Growth does not necessarily create significant physical changes to the environment. However, depending upon the type, magnitude, and location of growth, it can result in significant adverse environmental effects. The proposed project's growth inducing potential is therefore considered significant if project-induced growth could result in significant physical effects in one or more environmental issue areas.

#### 5.1.1 Population and Employment Growth

As discussed in Section 4.12, *Population and Housing*, the buildout anticipated under the 2040 General Plan could accommodate an estimated 11,486 new residents and 4,330 new dwelling units in Union City. With the estimated growth under the General Plan, Union City would have a 2040 population of 84,477 and 24,813 dwelling units. This would result in a population that would exceed ABAG growth projections by 5.5 percent. While the development capacity allowed by the 2040 General Plan would exceed ABAG forecasts by 5.5 percent, vacant and underutilized parcels within Union City would be developed or redeveloped by 2040.

As discussed under Impact PH-1 of Section 4.12, *Population and Housing*, numerous goals and policies of the 2040 General Plan are aimed at reducing the impacts associated with population and housing unit growth, such as encouraging infill in areas identified as having high growth and/or redevelopment potential.

Finally, it is the specific purpose of the project to guide growth and development in Union City such that infill development would be prioritized and open space areas would be preserved and enhanced. Therefore, by its nature, the proposed project is intended to reduce the potential for uncontrolled growth and associated environmental impacts. For the reasons discussed above, implementation of the project would not lead to such impacts.

#### 5.1.2 Removal of Obstacles to Growth

The 2040 General Plan encourages development within Union City's strategic infill areas, pursuant to 2040 General Plan Policy LU-1.3. Although development of some vacant lands within Union City would require new utility connections and possibly roadways, new development would occur primarily where existing roads, water, and sewer and other utilities are in place and in a manner that minimizes the impact of development on existing infrastructure and services. In addition, major infrastructure extensions generally are not envisioned, and improvements would be primarily limited to the replacement and upgrade of aging facilities and enhancement of existing infrastructure in key locations. All new development envisioned as part of the 2040 General Plan

would occur within City limits. Therefore, because new development would use existing facilities and major infrastructure extensions would not occur the 2040 General Plan would not inhibit growth within Union City.

## 5.2 Irreversible Environmental Effects

Section 15126(c) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that EIRs evaluating projects involving amendments to public plans, ordinances, or policies contain a discussion of significant irreversible environmental changes. CEQA also requires decision-makers to balance the benefits of a proposed project against its unavoidable environmental risks in determining whether to approve a project. This section addresses the use of non-renewable resources, the commitment of future generations to the proposed uses, and irreversible impacts associated with the development that would be facilitated by implementation of the 2040 General Plan.

Construction activity associated with planned development that would be accommodated under the 2040 General Plan would involve the use of building materials and energy, some of which are non-renewable resources. Consumption of these resources would occur with any development in the region and are not unique to Union City or the proposed the 2040 General Plan. The addition of new residential and non-residential development in the City through 2040 would irreversibly increase local demand for non-renewable energy resources such as petroleum and natural gas. Increasingly efficient building fixtures and automobile engines, as well as implementation of policies included in the 2040 General Plan, are expected to offset the demand to some degree. It is not anticipated that growth accommodated under the General Plan would significantly affect local or regional energy supplies.

Growth facilitated by the General Plan would require an irreversible commitment of city services, water supply, and wastewater treatment. As discussed in Section 4.13, *Public Services*, and Section 4.16, *Utilities and Service Systems*, impacts to public services and utilities would be reduced to a less than significant level with implementation of policies included in the 2040 General Plan.

The additional vehicle trips associated with growth through 2040 would incrementally increase local traffic, noise levels, and regional air pollutant and greenhouse gas emissions. As discussed in Section 4.2, *Air Quality*, and Section 4.7, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*, implementation of the 2040 General Plan policies, regional air pollution programs, and mitigation measures would reduce the air pollutant and GHG emissions associated with individual future development projects. Air quality pollutants would be reduced to below significance thresholds; however, GHG emissions would not be reduced to below significant thresholds. As discussed in Section 4.11, *Noise*, implementation of proposed policies and mitigation measures would reduce the noise impacts associated with future growth, however construction noise would not be reduced to a less than significant level. As discussed in Section 4.14, *Transportation/Traffic*, the 2040 General Plan policies and mitigation measures would reduce the majority of traffic impacts to a less than significant level. However, population growth facilitated by the 2040 General Plan and the region would result in additional vehicle trips on area roadways, resulting in significant and unavoidable traffic impacts on several roadways.