

8.0 GROWTH INDUCEMENT

PURPOSE

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires the discussion of the ways in which a 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 that would remove obstacles to population growth or develop an isolated or adjacent area of open space. Such discussion should also include the characteristics of a project, which may encourage and/or facilitate other activities that, either individually or cumulatively, could significantly affect the environment. CEQA emphasizes that growth in an area should not be considered beneficial, detrimental or of little significance. The purpose of this section is to evaluate the growth-inducing potential of this project.

INTRODUCTION

The *State CEQA Guidelines* require an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to “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” (*State CEQA Guidelines*, Section 15126.2). The guidelines, though, do not require or even suggest that an EIR speculate with respect to the specific growth that the project may induce, such as where such growth would occur, in what form it would occur, or when it would occur (*State CEQA Guidelines*, Section 15145). It also must not be assumed that induced growth in a particular area is necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment (*State CEQA Guidelines*, Section 15126.2(d)).

Generally, a project may foster spatial, economic, or population growth in a geographic area if it meets any one of four criteria that are identified below:

- Removal of an impediment to growth (e.g., expansion of a wastewater treatment plant or the provision of new access to an area)
- Economic expansion or growth (e.g., changes in revenue base or 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 versus these four growth-inducing criteria is provided in the sections below.

GROWTH INDUCEMENT POTENTIAL

Removal of an Impediment to Growth

Growth in an area may result from the removal of physical impediments or restrictions to growth. In this context, physical growth impediments may include nonexistent or inadequate access to an area or the lack of essential public services.

The project site, which is undeveloped and is approximately 1.2 miles in length, is adjacent to developed land uses, which are primarily residential. Residential development is located to the south and northeast of the project site. Commercial uses are located to the north of the project site and storage and testing facilities for National Technical Systems is located to the west of the project site. Golden Valley High School is also located to the south of the project site.

Within the Santa Clarita Valley, connectivity of the street network is interrupted by topographic constraints, including rolling terrain, canyons, and the Santa Clara River. In addition, the prevalent subdivision pattern, comprised of local cul-de-sac streets with limited connectivity, acts to funnel all traffic onto collector and arterial streets. As a result, regional traffic is concentrated on a limited number of arterial streets. The Via Princessa East Extension would be one of the primary east-west arterials through the City of Santa Clarita which are planned to increase connectivity. The proposed roadway would be approximately 1.2 miles in length and would be designated as a Major Arterial Highway consistent with the General Plan.

Consequently, the project would implement one of the primary east-west arterials outlined in the City Circulation Element. This project is not growth inducing as the proposed project would facilitate circulation within an infill area of the City and does not encourage growth into the area. As such, the proposed project would not be considered growth inducing.

Economic Growth

The proposed project could potentially induce growth by introducing additional short-term employment opportunities from construction on the project site. These new, albeit temporary, employment opportunities could induce a small number of people to move into the Santa Clarita Valley. This new population could, in turn, induce incremental secondary short-term growth in the local or regional area. Additionally, the proposed project would provide enhanced connectivity to the Centre Pointe Parkway/Golden Valley Road business and commercial area thereby indirectly allowing potential long-term economic growth. Therefore, this project would not be considered to directly contribute substantial economic growth.

Precedent Setting Action

The proposed project is designated on the General Plan Circulation Element. The proposed project is the roadway extension of Via Princessa from Sheldon Avenue west to Golden Valley Road and would not require a General Plan Amendment or a zone change. Consequently, as the proposed project is not a precedent setting action, it would not be considered growth inducing.

Development of Open Space

Development of open space is considered growth inducing when it occurs on the fringes of built-up areas, or if the development “leapfrogs” over an intervening area of open space with the expectation or if it would be developed in the reasonably foreseeable future as a result of the development. The proposed project site is situated in an area that is surrounded predominantly by existing urbanized portions of the City of Santa Clarita, and a large intervening area of open space between the project and those uses would not be created. Given that the project is neither on the urban fringe nor does it “leap over” large tracts of open space, this project would not be considered growth inducing.

Conclusion

As the proposed project does not meet any of the growth-inducing criteria specified in this section, the proposed project is not considered growth inducing.

IMPACTS CREATED BY GROWTH

The proposed project is not considered growth inducing and would not have any impacts associated with growth.