

5.0 Growth Inducement

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15126.2(d) requires that an EIR:

Discuss 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 are projects which would remove obstacles to population growth (for example, a major expansion of a waste water treatment plant might allow for more construction in service areas). Increases in the population might tax existing community services facilities, requiring construction of new facilities that could cause significant environmental effects. It must not be assumed that growth in any area is necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment.

Under CEQA, growth inducement is not considered necessarily detrimental, beneficial, or of significance to the environment. Typically, the growth-inducing potential of a project would be considered significant if it fosters growth or a concentration of population in excess of what is assumed in the applicable General or Community Plan or in projections made by regional planning agencies, such as Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG). Significant growth impacts could also occur if the project results in new infrastructure or service capacity to accommodate growth beyond the levels permitted by local or regional plans or policies.

In general, growth induced by a project is considered a significant impact if it directly or indirectly affects the ability of agencies to provide needed public services, or if it can be demonstrated that the potential growth would, in turn, result in the development of new facilities, the construction of which could significantly affect the environment. This analysis evaluates whether any of the proposed scenarios would directly or indirectly induce economic, population, or housing growth in the surrounding environment.

5.1 Direct Growth-inducing Impacts in the Surrounding Environment

The CEQA guidelines identify a project as growth-inducing if it would foster economic or population growth or result in the construction of additional housing. Examples of direct forms of growth include new employees associated with new commercial and industrial development and population increases resulting from residential development. These

5.0 Growth Inducement

direct forms of growth have the indirect effect of expanding the size of local markets and inducing additional economic activity in the area.

None of the proposed scenarios include residential uses; therefore, the Project would not directly contribute to population growth in the Project vicinity through the provision of housing. Scenarios 1 and 2 involve the continued use or permanent removal of gates on Crystal View Terrace and Green Orchard Place. These scenarios do not involve the construction of any infrastructure or new residential, commercial, or industrial development. Improvements proposed under Scenarios 3 and 4 would serve existing and future residents as part of the City of Riverside's (City's) planned buildout under the General Plan 2025; neither Scenario 3 nor 4 proposes any new residential, commercial or industrial uses that would stimulate economic growth, which could in turn induce population growth. Implementation of the proposed roadway improvements, under Scenarios 3 and 4, could have the potential to generate jobs related to construction, which would be anticipated to be filled by existing residents; however, none of the scenarios would result in the creation of new, permanent jobs, such as those associated with commercial or industrial development.

None of the scenarios would tax existing community services and facilities, requiring construction of new facilities that could cause significant environmental effects. While the proposed improvements under Scenarios 3 and 4 are intended to improve circulation, they would not remove any existing obstacles to growth, such as changes to zoning or other environmental constraints. For these reasons, no direct growth-inducing effects are associated with any scenario of the proposed Project. For similar reasons, any off-site traffic improvements, if implemented, would not contribute to population growth, induce growth or remove any existing obstacles to growth and thus would not result in growth-inducing effects.

5.2 Indirect Growth-inducing Impacts in the Surrounding Environment

A project would indirectly induce growth by reducing or removing barriers to growth or by creating a condition that attracts additional population or new economic activity. Indirect growth may also occur if it would increase the capacity of the infrastructure in an area in which the public service currently meets demand. Examples would be increasing the capacity of a sewer treatment plant or a roadway beyond that which is needed to meet existing demand.

Under Scenario 1, the gates at Crystal View Terrace and Green Orchard Place would remain in place and closed. No new roadways or other public facilities would be extended under Scenario 1, and no indirect growth inducement would occur.

Under Scenario 2, the gates at both Crystal View Terrace and Green Orchard Place would be removed. No new roadways or other public facilities would be extended under Scenario 2, and no indirect growth inducement would occur.

Under Scenarios 3 and 4, the gates at Crystal View Terrace and Green Orchard Place would be removed, and Overlook Parkway would be connected over the Alessandro Arroyo east to Alessandro Boulevard. Overlook Parkway is planned as a continuous east–west arterial in the City’s Master Plan of Roadways; therefore, these scenarios implement the General Plan 2025.

Under Scenario 3, the proposed Project would not increase the capacity of existing public services or utility infrastructure. However, existing infrastructure (sewer, gas, and water lines) would be extended from the existing terminus of Overlook Parkway within the bridge, across the Alessandro Arroyo, through the fill crossing, to connect into existing lines near the intersection of Sandtrack Road. The improvements proposed under Scenario 3 are consistent with General Plan 2025 and accommodate existing and planned development within the vicinity. No indirect growth inducement would occur.

Under Scenario 4, the easterly connection of Overlook Parkway would be implemented (as described under Scenario 3). The connection of Overlook Parkway is consistent with the General Plan 2025 and would not induce growth. This scenario also proposes a new roadway west of Washington. The Proposed C Street would be constructed to provide an additional route in the western part of the City. The proposed alignment would bisect the Arlington Heights Greenbelt, an area characterized primarily by low-density residential and agrarian uses. The development of the Proposed C Street extension through this area could potentially induce growth and development within this agricultural area.

In 1979, City of Riverside voters passed Proposition R, the “Taxpayer’s Initiative to Reduce Costly Urban Sprawl by Preserving the City of Riverside’s Citrus and Agricultural Lands, Its Unique Hills, Arroyos and Victoria Avenue,” which calls for the preservation of agriculture through application of the Residential Agricultural Zone (RA-5) to two specific areas of the City, including the Arlington Heights Greenbelt.

Subsequently, in 1987, voters approved Measure C, entitled “Citizens’ Rights Initiative to Reduce Costly Urban Sprawl, to Reduce Traffic Congestion, to Minimize Utility Rate Increases and to Facilitate Preservation of the City of Riverside’s Citrus and Agricultural Lands, its Scenic Hills, Ridgelines, Arroyos and Wildlife Areas.” Measure C amended Proposition R by adding policies to promote agriculture. Policies established by Measure C relevant to the proposed Project include: protecting the Greenbelt streets from heavy traffic and minimizing the extension of City services and urban infrastructure into agricultural land areas, except as needed for agricultural purposes.

5.0 Growth Inducement

In order for additional growth to occur within the Greenbelt area, both Proposition R and Measure C would need to be repealed, which would require a vote by popular referendum. Additionally, because the Proposed C Street was conceptualized during the City's last comprehensive General Plan update for the purpose of accommodating future growth within the City, the Proposed C Street is in fact "growth accommodating," as opposed to "growth inducing." For the preceding reasons, implementation of Scenario 4 would not result in indirect growth inducement.

None of the scenarios that comprise the Project involve uses (i.e., residential, commercial), changes to land use, or new development that would inherently generate trips. However, all four scenarios involve changes to the traffic circulation system. For example, a new roadway that is built can sometimes "attract" trips. A new roadway can also redistribute how traffic flows within an area, possibly diverting traffic from Local Streets that are not designed to handle a high capacity of vehicles to Arterial Streets that are designed for a high capacity of vehicles during peak operating hours. Although none of the scenarios associated with the Project would generate trips in the sense that typical residential/commercial projects do, they do have the potential to redistribute and attract trips.

As discussed in Section 3.11.4.1 of this EIR, because Scenarios 3 and 4 would add new roadways not currently available to drivers, the potential for regional cut-through traffic was analyzed. The analysis examined the numbers of new vehicles coming into the Project vicinity that can be attributed to cut-through traffic (traffic that comes into the area that did not come to this area before). Specifically, the daily traffic volume changes between Scenarios 3 and 4 were analyzed against the Gates Open baseline, for both Year 2011 and Year 2035 conditions. The analysis shows that for both 2011 and 2035 conditions, the projected cut-through volumes under Scenarios 3 and 4 would be low and within the capacity that Local, Collector, and Arterial roadways within the City are designed to accommodate.

These low volumes of cut-through traffic would not be considered growth inducing. As discussed above, new infrastructure, commercial or other employment generating sectors would induce growth. Scenarios 3 and 4 would generate low volumes of regional cut-through traffic; thus, implementation of Scenarios 3 or 4 would not result in indirect growth inducement.