

6 CEQA-REQUIRED ASSESSMENT CONCLUSIONS

As required by Section 15126 of the CEQA Guidelines, this chapter provides an overview of the impacts of the proposed project based on the technical topical analyses presented in this EIR. The topics covered in this chapter include growth-inducement; unavoidable significant effects; significant irreversible changes; and impacts not found to be significant. A more detailed analysis of the effects the project would have on the environment is provided in Chapter 4, Environmental Evaluation.

A. Growth Inducement

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126(d) requires that an EIR evaluate the growth-inducing impacts of a proposed action. A project is considered to be growth-inducing if it fosters economic or population growth beyond the boundaries of the project site. Typical growth inducements might be the extension of urban services or transportation infrastructure to a previously unserved or under-served area, or the removal of major barriers to development (a major expansion of a waste water treatment plant might, for example, allow for more construction in service areas). Not all growth inducement is negative. Negative impacts associated with growth inducement occur only where the project growth would cause adverse environmental impacts.

1. Population Generation

The proposed project would result in up to 380,000 square feet of combined office/retail uses. The proposed project would not result in significant changes in the City's population or housing stock.

Furthermore, the development that could occur under the proposed project would generally constitute infill development as the project site is within an existing urbanized area. Since the project site is an infill site, the proposed project would not encourage significant further growth in development or population in the area due to extensions of existing infrastructure, since any extensions would serve and be sized to serve solely the project site. By encouraging growth within an infill area of the city, the proposed project would result in a more efficient development pattern, alleviate some of the demand for undeveloped land at the city's edge, and minimize the cost of extending infrastructure to unserved areas.

2. Employment Generation

Development under the proposed project would generate some short-term, construction-related employment opportunities. The project's labor force would be expected to be local or to come from other areas for short periods of time. It is unlikely that construction workers would relocate

to Petaluma to work on the proposed project. Thus the proposed project would not be considered growth-inducing from a short-term employment perspective.

Longer-term employment would be provided through the various commercial/retail uses that would be developed under the proposed project. These businesses would have the potential to create demand for other businesses that may choose to locate near them. To the extent that additional jobs would be created, the project could have a growth-inducing effect in the City. However, since the project is an infill, mixed-use development in a commercial gateway area that is already built up, this effect would not be expected to be significant.

B. Unavoidable Significant Impacts

Section 15126.2(b) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that an EIR describe any significant impacts that cannot be avoided, even with the implementation of feasible mitigation measures. As described in Chapter 4, most of the potential impacts from the proposed project are either less than significant, or could be mitigated to less-than-significant levels by the implementation of mitigation measures. Significant unavoidable impacts were identified for air quality, hydrology and water quality, traffic, and utilities.

The significant and unavoidable air quality impacts identified are as follows:

- ◆ **Impact AQ-1:** Although the project is accounted for in the City's new General Plan, the project exceeds the level of development anticipated in the regional clean air plan (*2005 Ozone Strategy*), which was based on the City's previous General Plan and its less-intense development assumptions.
- ◆ **Impact AQ-3:** The project would generate new emissions that would affect long-term air quality. A majority of the emissions generated by full buildout of the project would be produced by traffic.

C. Significant Irreversible Changes

Section 15126.2(c) of the CEQA Guidelines requires a discussion of the extent to which a proposed project will commit nonrenewable resources to uses that future generations will probably be unable to reverse. A project would generally result in a significant irreversible impact if:

- ◆ Primary and secondary impacts would commit future generations to similar uses.
- ◆ The project would involve a large commitment of nonrenewable resources.

- ◆ The project would involve uses in which irreversible damage could result from any potential environmental accidents associated with the project.

1. Changes in Land Use that Commit Future Generations

Implementation of the proposed East Washington Place project would result in the conversion of land previously developed for institutional and recreational uses to retail and commercial. Development of the project site would constitute a long-term commitment to retail, commercial and parking uses on the site. It is unlikely that circumstances would arise that would convert the land to other uses or return the site to a natural, undeveloped condition. However, alteration of the project site is consistent with the Petaluma General Plan which envisions redevelopment of the site and given its location within an already urbanized area and its past urban use as a school site, it is unlikely that the site would return to a viable natural state otherwise.

2. Commitment of Nonrenewable Resources

Development of the project site would irretrievably commit nonrenewable resources to the construction and maintenance of proposed buildings and roadways. The building materials and energy consumed as part of development under the project would include, but are not limited to, nonrenewable and limited resources such as oil, gasoline, lumber, sand and gravel, asphalt, water, steel, and similar materials. Increased energy demands would be used for construction, lighting, heating, and cooling of retail/office spaces, and transportation of people within, to, and from the project area. The project's Development Standards state that "all facilities shall, to the greatest extent possible, incorporate energy conservation measures in conformance with City standards and subject to design review." Some energy savings would be realized if such energy conservation measures were employed; however, specific measures have not yet been identified for this project. A discussion and designation of appropriate conservation measures would take place as part of the project review by the Planning Commission, SPARC, and the City Council.

3. Irreversible Damage from Environmental Accidents

No significant environmental damage, such as an accidental spill or explosion of hazardous materials, is anticipated as a result of implementing the proposed project. The project would not involve the use or transport of hazardous materials.

D. Impacts Found Not to be Significant

CEQA allows environmental issues for which there is no likelihood of an impact to be "scoped out" during the EIR scoping process and not covered in an EIR. This section summarizes previous findings regarding the areas of concern which were "scoped out" and are not considered further in this EIR:

- ◆ **Mineral Resources.** The project site was already developed with urban uses and there are no mineral extraction operation activities on-site. In addition, the City's General Plan does not designate this area as a locally-important mineral resource recovery site. Therefore, replacement of the existing urban uses with the proposed project would not result in impacts to important mineral resources.