
5. STATUTORILY REQUIRED SECTIONS

INTRODUCTION

The Statutorily Required Sections chapter includes brief discussions regarding those topics, which are required to be included in an EIR, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2. The chapter includes a discussion of the proposed project's potential to induce economic or population growth, and in addition, the chapter includes lists of significant irreversible environmental changes, cumulative impacts, and significant and unavoidable impacts which would be caused by the proposed project.

GROWTH INDUCEMENT

Section 15126.2(d) of the CEQA Guidelines states that an EIR should 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." Growth can be induced in a number of ways, including through the elimination of obstacles to growth, or through the stimulation of economic activity within the region.

The City of Wheatland General Plan Update proposes substantial development for the study area. The growth-inducing impacts of the General Plan Update can be divided into two general categories, direct, and indirect. Direct growth-inducing impacts are those, which relate to the provision of the urban services to an undeveloped area (development of the physical infrastructure, roadways, and utilities). The provisions of these services to a site, and the subsequent development of the site, can serve to induce other landowners in the vicinity to convert their property to urban uses and request annexation. Indirect or secondary growth-inducing impacts consist of growth induced in the region by the additional demands for housing, goods, and services associated with the population increase caused by, or attracted to, a new project.

Because the proposed project plans for continued expansion of the City of Wheatland through additional residential growth in concert with expansion of employment within Wheatland, the adoption of the General Plan Update would result in direct growth-inducing impacts. The General Plan Update would allow urban uses in areas that are now agricultural lands, while also promoting higher density uses in areas of existing development. Buildout of the land uses specified by the General Plan Update would result in a Wheatland population of approximately 30,100 compared to the current population of approximately 3,432 in the Wheatland city limits.

The propose project could also induce growth in the eastern portion of the study area, designated as Urban Reserve. The areas adjacent to the Urban Reserve would be

designated for office parks, research and development, warehouses and light manufacturing related to research and development, general commercial uses that cater to industrial uses in this designation, professional offices, public and quasi-public uses, and similar and compatible uses. The General Plan Update does not compel all areas under the Urban Reserve designation to be built out during the planning horizon, but the designation of Urban Reserve land does signal the ultimate intent of the City to urbanize these areas. Some of the Urban Reserve land may be developed within the next 20 years provided the development proposal meets criteria specified by the City. Such development proposals would be subject to further environmental review, but are considered as a growth-inducing impact of the General Plan Update.

The proposed project would also induce growth through decisions to upgrade, expand, and extend infrastructure facilities (including streets and water and wastewater facilities) in accordance with the proposed General Plan Update. Practicality and efficiency requirements dictate that new infrastructure facilities be oversized intentionally to ensure that adequate capacities would be available for later phases of development. The short-term overcapacity of infrastructure is an inducement to development because of the appeal provided by ready access to roads and utilities.

Substantial planning considerations in the City of Wheatland have been devoted to the eventual construction of the State Route 65 Bypass. The increase in traffic capacity along this route will be an inducement to both commercial and residential growth, as developers seek to take advantage of the improved access afforded to employees and potential customers. Development of commercial uses along this route is a growth-inducing impact of the General Plan Update.

The project would indirectly induce growth by increasing development pressures along the edges of proposed urban development. As Wheatland expands to the south and north, lands within Yolo County adjacent to Wheatland will become increasingly attractive for development, particularly as infrastructure capacity is increased to these areas. This is a potential growth-inducing impact.

SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

Section 21100(b)(2)(A) of CEQA requires that an EIR identify any significant irreversible changes that would result from implementing the project. Section 15126(b), of the CEQA Guidelines suggests that irreversible environmental changes may involve uses of nonrenewable resources or irrevocable damage resulting from environmental accidents.

- Development of any of the project would involve a large commitment of nonrenewable resources;
- The primary and secondary impacts of development would generally commit future generations to similar uses (e.g., a highway provides access to a previously remote area);

- Development of the proposed project would involve uses in which irreversible damage could result from any potential environmental accidents associated with the project; or
- The phasing and eventual development of the project would result in an unjustified consumption of resources (e.g., the wasteful use of energy).

The proposed project would lead to demolition, excavation, and construction activities as new land uses and infrastructure develop. Thus, in both the short term and the long term, the project would require a commitment of non-renewable resources, including building materials, fossil fuels, and land. A portion of the undeveloped study area lands would be committed to urban development. A large percentage of this acreage contains prime agricultural soils. Construction materials and fuels would be used to construct the various urban structures and related infrastructure. Because of the high level of investment in these uses, their subsequent reuse or reversion to generally undeveloped land is highly unlikely. As a result, the proposed project would result in an irreversible change in the Wheatland study area, including precluding use of prime agricultural soils for future cultivation.

As discussed in section 4.4, Biological Resources, a number of sensitive species and their biological habitats would be affected. Mitigation measures identified in Section 4.4 would reduce potential effects to flora and fauna. Nevertheless, the loss of foraging and breeding habitat within the Wheatland study area is irreversible.

Environmental accidents, such as the release of hazardous materials, may trigger irreversible damage. The proposed project would increase the number of individuals exposed to, but not the nature of, physical safety hazards in the Wheatland study area. Because the General Plan Update envisions an increase in industrial-related activities the proposed project would increase hazardous materials storage, handling, and transportation in the Planning Area. Consequently, a greater potential exists for an accidental release that could affect Wheatland's population.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15355 defines cumulative impacts as “two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts.” This Section further states, “Individual effects may be changes resulting from a single project or a number of separate projects.” Additionally, “The cumulative impact from several projects is [defined as] the change in the environment which results from the incremental impact of the project when added to other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time.”

The Citywide impact analyses in chapters 4.1 through 4.16 are effectively the cumulative impact analyses. The analyses examine the cumulative effects of each resource topic

through buildout of the proposed General Plan Update. Additionally, as noted in the Transportation and Circulation chapter (Chapter 4.15), future development in Yuba County outside of the City's Sphere of Influence (SOI) would result in increased impacts identified in this General Plan Draft EIR document. For example, as noted on page 4.15-39 of the Transportation and Circulation chapter, build out of proposed developments, such as Yuba Highlands and Plumas Lakes would increase vehicle trips within the study area. While not quantitatively assessed, the addition of additional development in Yuba County would increase traffic volumes on area streets and intersections. As such, traffic volumes in Wheatland are anticipated to rise, which may result in degradation to the projected levels of service that are reported in this document. Therefore, a *significant and unavoidable* cumulative traffic impact could occur. Increased vehicle trips would also result in air quality emissions and noise level increases within the study area. It is also important to note that future development potential within Yuba County but outside the City's Sphere of Influence, is outside the City's jurisdiction; therefore the extent to which it may occur, cannot be conclusively determined at this time.

SIGNIFICANT AND UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS

Section 21100(b)(2)(A) of the CEQA requires that an EIR identify any significant environmental effects that cannot be avoided if the project were implemented. Significant and unavoidable impacts are identified in Chapter 4, Environmental Setting and Impact Analysis, of this EIR, whenever the mitigation measures would not ensure that a potential impact would be reduced to a less-than-significant level. Significant and unavoidable impacts resulting from the General Plan Update include the following:

- Development associated with the proposed General Plan Update would convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural use;
- Development associated with the proposed General Plan Update would involve other changes in the existing environment, which could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use;
- Construction activities associated with buildout of the General Plan Update Study Area;
- Regional Emissions Increases;
- Development associated with the proposed General Plan Update would result in the removal of substantial flora and fauna habitat;
- Development associated with the proposed General Plan Update would result in impacts to Swainson's hawk foraging habitat within the General Plan study area;
- Noise impacts associated with increased traffic on City streets resulting from buildout of the General Plan Update study area;
- Development associated with the proposed General Plan Update would result in the increase of traffic volumes; and
- Cumulative Traffic Impacts.