

6.0 GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter analyzes the potential environmental consequences of the foreseeable growth and development that could be induced by implementation of the proposed project. Section 15126(d) of the State *CEQA Guidelines* requires that the growth-inducing effects of a proposed project be addressed in an EIR. The evaluation of whether a project would result in growth-inducing effects focuses on the consideration of factors outlined in §15126.2(d) of the State *CEQA Guidelines*, which are described below.

6.2 GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS

Sections 15126(d) and 15126.2(d) of the State *CEQA Guidelines* require that an EIR analyze growth-inducing impacts and state that an EIR should discuss the ways in which the project could foster economic or population growth or construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment. This section examines 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. An assessment of other projects that could affect the environment, individually or cumulatively, is also required. To address this issue, potential growth-inducing effects were examined through analysis of the following questions:

- *Would the project remove obstacles to growth (e.g., through the construction or extension of major infrastructure facilities that do not presently exist in the project area, or through changes in existing regulations pertaining to land development)?*
- *Would this project result in the need to expand one or more public services to maintain desired levels of service?*
- *Would this project foster population growth (e.g., construction of additional housing), either directly or indirectly?*
- *Would this project encourage or facilitate economic effects that could result in other activities that could significantly affect the environment?*
- *Would this project promote the development of or encroachment on an isolated or adjacent area of open space (being distinct from an in-fill project)?*
- *Would approval of this project involve some precedent-setting action that could encourage and facilitate other activities that could significantly affect the environment?*

State *CEQA Guidelines* require an EIR to “discuss the ways” a project could be growth-inducing and to “discuss the characteristics of some projects that may encourage...activities that could significantly affect the environment.” However, the State *CEQA Guidelines* do not require that an EIR predict (or speculate) specifically where such growth would occur, in what form it would occur, or when it would occur. The

answers to such questions require speculation, which CEQA discourages; refer to State *CEQA Guidelines*, §15145.

It should be noted that growth-inducing effects are not to be construed as necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment (State *CEQA Guidelines*, Section 15126.2(d)). This issue is presented to provide additional information on ways in which the proposed project could contribute to significant changes in the environment beyond the direct consequences of developing the proposed land uses as described in earlier sections of this Draft EIR.

REMOVAL OF OBSTACLES TO GROWTH

Land development projects can remove barriers and constraints or provide new or improved access, thus encouraging growth in the area that has been already planned or approved through the general planning process. This planned growth is reflected in the general plan land use element, approved with the underlying assumption that adequate infrastructure facilities to support the growth would be constructed at a pace consistent with the timing of development. This type of growth inducement is referred to as accommodating or facilitating growth. In addition, a project can remove barriers, provide new access or otherwise encourage growth that is not assumed as planned growth in the general plans or growth projections. This could include areas that are currently designated for open space, agricultural uses or other similar non-urban land uses, which, because of the improved access provided by the development, would experience pressure to develop into urban uses or to develop at a higher level of intensity than originally anticipated.

The current Shasta County *General Plan* land use designation for the entire proposed project site is (RA), which allows a maximum density of one dwelling unit per two acres. The proposed project would require Zone Amendment to apply the Planned Development (PD) zone district to the existing Rural Residential (R-R), with a minimum lot area of three to five acres (R-R-BA-3 and R-R-BA-5) and Unclassified (U) zoning districts. The proposed project is considered internally consistent with the overall intent of the Shasta County *General Plan* and is consistent with the intended use of the proposed Zone Amendment. Thus, the proposed project would not directly support or stimulate growth that is not accommodated by both the Shasta County *General Plan* and *Zoning Plan*.

The proposed project would provide planned transportation improvements consistent with the Shasta County *General Plan* Transportation Element and would also require other existing improvements to serve the proposed project, including water and onsite community wastewater system as noted in Section 3.0, PROJECT DESCRIPTION. Project infrastructure would not be sized to accommodate growth beyond that assumed for the proposed project. The site is surrounded by existing rural land uses and the proposed infrastructure is not designed to accommodate any additional contiguous development around the site.

In addition, the anticipated increase in infrastructure demands associated with the proposed project would not reduce or impair any existing or future levels of utility services, either locally or regionally as the costs for increases in utilities would be met through cooperative agreements between the developers and servicing entities. Therefore, the proposed project would not be considered growth-inducing, inasmuch as it would not remove an impediment to growth.

EXPANSION OF PUBLIC SERVICES

Substantial increases in population growth may tax existing community services and facilities, thus requiring the construction of new facilities that could cause significant environmental effects. The construction of new facilities may also result in the need to expand the service capacity, which would then allow future population growth. As described in Section 1.0, INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE, Section 2.6, ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS, and Section 5.13, PUBLIC SERVICES AND FISCAL IMPACTS, the proposed project would not result in significant environmental effects related to public services. Expansion of public services beyond what is currently planned for would not result from implementation of the proposed project.

FOSTER POPULATION GROWTH

Population

Implementation of the proposed project would result in direct population growth. As discussed in Section 5.12, POPULATION AND HOUSING, the proposed project would result in construction of 166 homes over a proposed 10 to 15-year horizon and a total of 445 residents. This would represent an approximate 0.2% increase over the current population for Shasta County as a whole.

The Shasta Regional Transportation Agency (SRTA) is the responsible agency for developing and adopting regional population forecasts for Shasta County. SRTA projects that the County's population will grow to approximately 214,364 residents by 2035 (SRTA, 2015). The proposed project would not cause SRTA's 2035 population forecast for the County to be exceeded. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would induce *less than significant* population growth in the County with respect to regional forecasts.

The Shasta County *General Plan* build-out population forecast for unincorporated Shasta County is approximately 162,900 residents. The *General Plan* assumes that the unincorporated area of the County would continue to account for approximately 40 percent of the total County population (Shasta County, 2004). Based on the most recent available data, the current population of unincorporated Shasta County is 67,354 residents (DOF, 2016). Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would induce growth in the County that is consistent with existing plans and, therefore, would be considered *less than significant* with respect to Shasta County *General Plan* forecasts.

Housing

As described in Section 3.0, PROJECT DESCRIPTION, the proposed subdivision would create 166 residential lots, along with separate parcels for open space uses. Although every approved residential lot would be entitled to an accessory dwelling unit pursuant to Government Code Section 65852.2, it is assumed that approximately 9 percent, or 15 lots would have secondary units based on historical County trends. Single-family residences would be up to 3,550 square feet in area and accessory dwelling units would be up to 1,200 square feet. Based on County-wide averages, each primary single-family dwelling would have 2.5 residents, and each secondary unit would have 2 residents.

Based on the 166 residential lots and the accommodation of 15 accessory dwelling units onsite, the proposed project is anticipated to result in a net increase above existing conditions of 445 residents at

buildout (assuming an average of 2.5 persons per household as reported by the DOF, and an additional 2 residents in each of the estimated 15 secondary units). Based on the most recent available data, the current population of the County is 179,631 (DOF, 2016a). The increase of 445 would represent a 0.2 percent increase in population for the County. Therefore, the implementation of the project would induce direct population growth in the County's population.

The housing goal of the 2014 RHNA for unincorporated portions of Shasta County is 755 units between 2014 and 2019 (2,200 units for the County as a whole). The project proposes to build up to a maximum of 166 new dwelling units, which would be constructed over a projected buildout period of 10 to 15 years. Assuming an equal number of units over the estimated 10-year buildout, this would equate to approximately 17 dwelling units per year, or 51 dwelling units during the three years of the current housing needs assessment planning period, which goes through December 31, 2019. The project would represent approximately 7 percent of the total housing needs for the five-year period in unincorporated Shasta County and approximately 2 percent of the housing needs for the County as a whole.

ENCOURAGEMENT / FACILITATION OF ECONOMIC EFFECTS

At the height of project construction, up to 20 construction workers would commute to the site on a daily basis. This workforce represents a minimal increase in employment during the construction period. Construction workers are expected to travel to the project site from various locations throughout the northern Central Valley, and the number of workers expected to relocate to the surrounding area is not expected to be significant. The proposed project would not create a temporary or substantial increase in the demand for construction worker housing. Because construction would be temporary, occurring over a relatively short period, it is not likely that it would require substantial numbers of people to relocate to the County or foster local economic growth.

Development of the proposed project would have fiscal impacts on the County similar to other residential subdivisions, including the use of police/sheriff and fire service, public utilities such as trash collection and disposal, flood control, school services, and recreational areas. The proposed project residents would generate revenue in the form of property taxes and fees, which would be available to the County to fund public services. Additionally, revenue for capital improvements would also be generated by the proposed project directly through various forms of development fees, including but not limited to fire, facilities, traffic, schools, and parks.

The fiscal impact analysis prepared for the proposed project found that the project would generally have a positive impact on the County General Fund over the period of time considered (2017 – 2026). At the estimated buildout date of 2026, the project is estimated to generate a net General Fund surplus of approximately \$72,000. The fiscal impacts of the project vary over the development period based on the proportion of each lot size that will have been developed at a given time. Larger lots are estimated to have a higher assessed value and generate more property tax and property transfer tax revenue than smaller lots, while all households are estimated to generate the same expenditures regardless of size.

As discussed in Section 3.0, PROJECT DESCRIPTION, the project proposes the formation of the Tierra Robles TRCSD as a means to provide operation and maintenance of the wastewater treatment system, maintenance of improved streets within the subdivision, management of open spaces, including preservation and fire management operations, and maintenance of drainage improvements. Government

Code §61000 et. seq, provides various means for a CSD to cover its costs independent of County revenues, allowing a CSD to operate autonomously from its host county, in this case Shasta County.

While the increased demand for services would foster some economic growth, is not anticipated to be at a level that would encourage or facilitate economic effects that could result in other activities (such as demand for increased residential or commercial development, or other infrastructure improvements) that could significantly affect the environment.

PROMOTE PREMATURE OR LEAP-FROG DEVELOPMENT

Significant growth can occur if a new project is located in an isolated area and when developed it brings sufficient urban infrastructure to cause new or additional development pressure on the intervening and surrounding land. This type of induced growth leads to conversion of adjacent acreage to higher intensity uses, either unexpectedly or through accelerated development. This conversion occurs because the adjacent land becomes more suitable for development and, hence, more valuable because of the availability of the new infrastructure. This type of growth inducement is typically termed “leap frog” or “premature” development because it creates an island of higher intensity development land within a larger area of lower intensity land use.

As described in Section 3.0, PROJECT DESCRIPTION, the proposed project is located within a primarily rural residential area with parcels varying in size from 1 to 20 acres and some undeveloped land. Except for a small pocket of undeveloped land to the south, single-family rural homes predominate the areas to the west, south and east of the proposed project. The area to the north, between the proposed project and Seven Lakes Lane is largely undeveloped but contains a few residences, a gun and rod club, Clough Creek, and an area containing small lakes and ponds. This area is classified as Rural Residential in the Shasta County *General Plan* and as Rural Residential 5 acre-minimum in the *Zoning Plan*.

Further from the proposed project in all directions the site is surrounded by rural development. Surrounding development is served by existing roadway infrastructure including Old Altura Road to the west, Boyle Road to the south, Seven Lakes Road to the north, and Deschutes Road to the east. Within a mile to a mile and a half of the proposed project site there are approximately 1,005 parcels that are less than 6 acres.

Based on these existing land uses the proposed project is consistent with surrounding rural residential land use patterns and is itself filling a gap between the existing developed areas. Although, the small undeveloped parcels between the project and other homes may eventually be developed they would be expected to conform to the assumptions in the Shasta County *General Plan* and *Zoning Plan* and hence, would be consistent with other uses in the vicinity.

Lastly, the proposed project’s infrastructure would not serve any future development in or contribute to in the area, although the infrastructure could potentially accommodate contiguous development consistent with the Shasta County *General Plan*, immediately north of the site.

Based on the above discussion, the proposed project is considered consistent with the Shasta County *General Plan* and *Zoning Plan*, and in that it would result in a contiguous development pattern within this portion of the unincorporated County boundaries. The proposed project will be accessed by the existing

transportation network, and would include its utility infrastructure to serve increased demand. Therefore, the proposed project is not, and would result in any “leap-frog” or “premature” type of development.

PRECEDENT SETTING ACTION

The current Shasta County *General Plan* land use designation for the entire proposed project site is (RA), which allows a maximum density of one dwelling unit per two acres. The proposed project would require Zone Amendment to apply the Planned Development (PD) zone district to the existing Rural Residential (R-R), with a minimum lot area of three to five acres (R-R-BA-3 and R-R-BA-5) and Unclassified (U) zoning districts. Use of the Planned Development (PD) zone is not uncommon and, as discussed on Section 5.10, LAND USE AND PLANNING, “is used to when a proposed development does not fit within the parameters of the standard zone districts...and often provide common areas and other amenities not normally found in standard types of development.” Accordingly, the proposed project was designed with the intent to leave a large amount of the project site as open space. The proposed project, however, stays consistent with the land use designations by creating an overall project density of only 4.4 homes per acre. Therefore, although the proposed project will require a zone amendment, the request is consistent with the intent of the *Zoning Plan* and surrounding land uses.

The proposed project also will provide for wastewater treatment onsite through individual septic systems which will flow through Community Collection systems and ultimately to the Community Wastewater Treatment System and the project will not require usage of any offsite waste water treatment capacity.

Since the project would be consistent with the requirements set forth in Shasta County *General Plan* and *Zoning Plan*, and does not propose any other elements, or require any special considerations, the proposed project would not propose any precedent-setting actions that, if approved, would specifically allow or encourage other projects and resultant growth to occur. Additionally, the proposed project would not generate other environmental effects above and beyond those analyzed within the Shasta County *General Plan* or Chapter 5.0 or Section 6.2 of this EIR.

CONCLUSION

Based on the evaluation provided above, the proposed project is not considered to be significantly or adversely growth-inducing. The proposed project would not be developed at an intensity greater than that contained in both regional planning documents and local growth forecasts and does not include infrastructure designed to support more intensive uses of the site or surrounding areas than is provided for within the Shasta County *General Plan*. The proposed project would foster some economic growth but not require increased public services that would significantly affect the environment. Development within the project area would be responding to growth that was previously planned, and it would not create growth that would require substantial development of unplanned and unforeseen support uses and services. The location of future growth within other unincorporated Shasta County would continue to be controlled by the County as guided by adopted planning documents. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in significant or adverse growth-inducing impacts.