

6. CEQA-Required Assessment Conclusions

This chapter provides an overview of the impacts of the proposed project based on the analyses presented in Chapters 4.0 through 5.0 of this Draft EIR. The topics covered in this chapter include impacts found not to be significant, growth-inducing impacts, and significant irreversible changes to the environment. A more detailed analysis of the effects that the proposed project would have on the environment, and proposed mitigation measures to minimize significant impacts, are provided in Chapters 4.1 through 4.9.

6.1 IMPACTS FOUND NOT TO BE SIGNIFICANT

CEQA Guidelines Section 15128 allows environmental issues for which there is no likelihood of a significant impact to be briefly discussed and not analyzed further in the EIR. An Initial Study was prepared for the proposed project (see Appendix A, Initial Study, of this Draft EIR). Based on the analysis contained in the Initial Study and based on comments received, as well as the existing conditions on the project site and surrounding area it was determined that development of the proposed project would not result in significant environmental impacts for the following environmental issues:

- Aesthetics
- Agricultural and Forestry Resources
- Energy
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Wildfire

In addition, based on the analysis contained in the Initial Study it was determined that development of the proposed project would not result in significant environmental impacts for some of the significance criteria in the following topic areas and therefore, impacts related to these criteria are not analyzed further in this Draft EIR. The specific criteria are listed in Table 2-1 in Chapter 2, Executive Summary, of this Draft EIR.

- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Noise
- Transportation
- Utilities and Service Systems

CEQA-REQUIRED ASSESSMENT CONCLUSIONS

6.2 GROWTH INDUCEMENT

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(d) requires that an EIR discuss the ways in which a proposed project could foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment. Typical growth inducing factors might include the extension of urban services or transportation infrastructure to a previously unserved or under-served area, or the removal of major barriers to development. This section evaluates the proposed project's potential to induce growth. Not all aspects of growth inducement are negative; rather, negative impacts associated with growth inducement occur only where the growth associated with the proposed project would cause adverse environmental impacts.

Growth-inducing impacts can be either direct or indirect. Direct growth-inducing impacts are generally associated with providing urban services to an undeveloped area. Indirect, or secondary growth-inducing impacts, consist of growth induced in the region by additional demands for housing, goods, and services associated with the population increase caused by, or attracted to, a new project.

As described in Chapter 3, Project Description, of this Draft EIR, the proposed project would result in 242 new housing units, including 39 new senior housing units, and 20,000 square feet of retail space. Implementation of the proposed project would directly induce growth by providing new residential and non-residential growth development, as described in the Project Description. The proposed project would accommodate up to 695 new residents, to the city of Cupertino, and approximately 70 new employees, which is 65 fewer employees than currently work on the project site.

The proposed project can be considered growth inducing because it generates new growth in the Oaks Shopping Center site. Development on this site would consist of infill, mixed-use redevelopment on an underutilized site that currently contains a one-story shopping center and surface parking. The infrastructure needed to serve the proposed project is largely in place, and new growth would be required to comply with the City's General Plan, zoning regulations, and standards for public services and utilities. Indirect or secondary effects associated with this growth would not represent a new significant environmental impact which has not already been addressed in the individual resource chapters of this Draft EIR.

Growth under the proposed project would have beneficial effects as well. The proposed project would provide additional housing for people working in Cupertino and other surrounding communities, and would also provide additional local employment and shopping opportunities for existing and future residents, thereby reducing Cupertino's contribution to regional commute traffic. State law requires the City to promote the production of housing to meet its fair share of the regional housing needs allocation made by the Association of Bay Area Governments, and the proposed project would assist the City in satisfying these requirements. Although development from the proposed project would involve construction activities that could generate some temporary employment opportunities, it is unlikely that construction workers would relocate to Cupertino to work on construction of the proposed project.

The proposed project allows for additional growth that encourages sustainable patterns of urban land uses. This growth would be consistent with the General Plan.

CEQA-REQUIRED ASSESSMENT CONCLUSIONS

6.3 SIGNIFICANT AND IRREVERSIBLE CHANGES

Section 15126.2(c) of the CEQA Guidelines requires an EIR to discuss the extent to which a proposed Project would commit nonrenewable resources to uses that future generation would probably be unable to reverse. The three CEQA-required categories of irreversible changes are discussed below.

6.3.1 LAND USE CHANGES THAT COMMIT FUTURE GENERATIONS

As described in Chapter 3, Project Description, of this Draft EIR, the proposed project will maintain the land use pattern of the General Plan and zoning maps. The proposed project consists of demolishing the existing retail/office buildings and constructing 18 new buildings for residential and retail uses. Redevelopment of the Oaks Shopping Center would intensify the use of the site. Specifically, the Oaks Shopping Center site would be converted from an approximately 71,250-square-foot commercial building into two mixed-use, multi-family residential buildings, including senior housing and with ground floor neighborhood-serving retail, three rowhouse buildings, and 13 townhouse buildings.

Once development of the proposed project occurs, it would not be feasible to return the developed land to its existing (pre-project) condition. However, because the project site is already developed with urban uses, redevelopment under the proposed project would not represent a substantial change in land use.

6.3.2 IRREVERSIBLE DAMAGE FROM ENVIRONMENTAL ACCIDENTS

Potential environmental accidents of concern are those that would have adverse effects on the environment or public health due to the nature or quantity of material released during an accident and the receptors exposed to that release. Demolition and construction activities associated with development of the proposed project would involve some risk of environmental accidents; however, these activities would be monitored by local, State, and federal agencies, and would follow professional industry standards for safety and construction. The land uses proposed by the proposed project would not include any uses or activities that are likely to contribute to or be the cause of a significant environmental accident. As a result, the proposed project would not pose a substantial risk due to environmental accidents.

6.3.3 LARGE COMMITMENT OF NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCES

Consumption of nonrenewable resources includes increased energy consumption, conversion of agricultural lands, and lost access to mining reserves. Redevelopment of the proposed project site would require water, electric, and gas service, as well as additional resources for construction. Construction and ongoing maintenance of the proposed project would irreversibly commit some materials and nonrenewable energy resources. Materials and resources used would include, but are not limited to, nonrenewable and limited resources such as oil, gasoline, sand, gravel, asphalt, and steel. These materials and energy resources would be used for infrastructure development, transportation of people and goods, and utilities to operate the project. During the operational phase of the proposed project (post-

CEQA-REQUIRED ASSESSMENT CONCLUSIONS

construction), energy sources including oil and gasoline would be used for lighting, heating, and cooling of residences and retail space, as well as transportation of people to and from the project site.

The proposed project would be required to comply with and implement several measures that would offset or reduce the need for nonrenewable resources. For example, the proposed project is required to comply with all applicable building and design requirements, including Title 24 relating to energy conservation. With compliance with Part 11 of Title 24, also known as CALGreen, the State's Green Building Standards Code, the proposed project is required to reduce water consumption by 20 percent, divert 50 percent of construction waste from landfills, and install low pollutant-emitting materials. The proposed project would also implement environmentally sustainable standards for demolition, construction, and operation. Further, the City does not contain any agricultural land or a mining reserve; therefore, there would be no impact with regards to those resources (see Section 6.1, Impacts Found Not to be Significant, above).

Although the construction and operation of the proposed redevelopment project would involve the use of nonrenewable resources, through the inclusion of energy-conserving project features and compliance with applicable standards and regulations, the proposed project would not represent a large commitment of nonrenewable resources.