

Chapter 20

## **Growth-Related Effects**

## **Legal Requirements**

Section 15126(d) of the State CEQA Guidelines and Reclamation's NEPA handbook require that growth-inducing effects of a proposed action be addressed in an EIR. The State CEQA Guidelines state the following:

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 in this are projects that would remove obstacles to population growth (a major expansion of a wastewater treatment plant might, for example, allow for more construction in service areas). Increases in the population may further tax existing community service facilities so consideration must be given to this impact. Also discuss the characteristics of some projects which may encourage and facilitate other activities that could significantly affect the environment, either individually or cumulatively. It must not be assumed that growth in any area is necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment.

A project EIR need not evaluate general growth within a community if that growth is not caused, in part, by the project being evaluated.

Section 1508.8(b) of the Council on Environmental Quality NEPA Regulations states that the definition of effects includes:

Indirect effects, which are caused by the action and are later in time or farther removed in distance, but are still reasonably foreseeable. Indirect effects may include growth inducing effects and other effects related to induced changes in the pattern of land use, population density or growth rate, and related effects on air and water and other natural systems, including ecosystems.

## **Methodology and Assumptions**

Evaluation of growth-inducing effects of the FRWP is based on a qualitative analysis of the indirect effects that could result from use of the water supply within the EBMUD ultimate service boundary (USB) and the service areas of the

City and County of Sacramento, City of Elk Grove, and City of Rancho Cordova. Indirect growth effects in the EBMUD USB are based on the analysis in the WSMP EIR (EDAW 1993, Chapter 13, pp. 13-1 through 13-13 and Exhibits 13-1 and 13-2) because the WSMP fully described anticipated growth within the USB. The evaluation of growth effects assumes that the project would improve EBMUD's drought water supply and the water system reliability as presented in Chapter 1. Estimates of growth within the USB are based on the WSMP projections and ongoing service area water demand projections developed by EBMUD.

Water supply growth effects from information provided by the City of Sacramento (Franck pers. comm.) and the County of Sacramento are summarized from the CVP Water Supply Contracts draft EIS/EIR (U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and Sacramento County Water Agency 1997) and the Sacramento County General Plan (county general plan) Update Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIP Associates, DKS Associates, and Engineering Science, Inc. et al. 1992).

This evaluation of potential growth-inducing impacts addresses whether the project would directly or indirectly

- foster economic, population, or housing growth;
- remove obstacles to growth;
- tax community service facilities; or
- encourage or facilitate other activities that cause significant environmental effects.

The analysis evaluates the potential for growth-inducing effects to result from construction of water system facilities and from use of water supplies made available under the FRWP.

## Service Area Growth

### East Bay Municipal Utility District Service Area

The existing EBMUD service area is located in the San Francisco Bay Area (Figure 1-1). The District Board of Directors has adopted a formal policy to oppose annexation to the EBMUD service area of properties located outside EBMUD's USB. In its Updated WSMP EIR, EBMUD estimated that the number of housing units in its USB by 2020 will grow by approximately 79,000 units, accommodating a projected population increase of approximately 137,000. EBMUD also projects that it will serve more than 5,600 new commercial, institutional, industrial, and irrigation accounts by 2020. Most of the population growth (59%) would occur as urban infill in the urbanized western regions of the USB. Household growth in the less urbanized eastern regions of EBMUD's

service area is expected to occur mostly on currently undeveloped land. However, the available area is very limited based on local city and county general plans. Although the total population served is anticipated to grow by approximately 10%, much of this will occur through increased densities in already developed areas. Development through buildout of local general plans will increase the total developed area within the USB by only 4%. Only a portion of that 4% will be on lands that could currently be considered relatively natural areas.

## County of Sacramento Unincorporated Areas

Sacramento County has until recently been relatively unique among California counties in that a large percentage of the population has been living in unincorporated areas. The county has become one of the fastest growing areas in the state. Recent growth is generally attributable to comparative geographic and economic advantages, such as good highway access, competitively priced land and housing, an expanding and diversifying economy, labor availability, and proximity to recreational and other cultural amenities.

Urban communities will accommodate most of the new development in the unincorporated areas of Sacramento County. Near-term urban development will be accommodated through the buildout of planned communities because it is in these areas that urban infrastructure and public services already exist. The infill development, however, cannot accommodate all the development projected during the planning period, and the county general plan also identifies and designates new urban growth areas. These urban growth areas are primarily located in the area between the American and Cosumnes Rivers within the Sacramento County Water Agency's Zone 40 area.

Under Alternatives 2–6, facilities would be used to supply surface water for the Expanded Zone 40 area, as defined in the Central Valley Project Water Supply Contracts EIS/EIR (Bureau of Reclamation and Sacramento County Water Agency 1997). The Expanded Zone 40 area, now known as the Zone 40 area, encompasses 83,000 acres of land within the county general plan designated USB. Approximately 46,600 acres are expected to be urbanized and receive water service from the SCWA by the year 2030.

Urban growth has been conditioned on the planning and growth policies of the county general plan. Growth projections in turn establish the amount of water needed to accommodate the projected growth. Additional water supplies are needed to support projected growth.

Current annual groundwater production within Zone 40 is approximately 20,400 af. Future water supplies for the SCWA Zone 40 2030 study area would consist of up to 45,000 AFA of firm surface water, a long-term average of approximately 41,000 AFA of groundwater, and additional surface water supplies when surplus water is available.

In recent years, a number of changes have occurred within the Zone 40 area. The City of Elk Grove and the City of Rancho Cordova have incorporated. These new cities cover a large portion of the Zone 40 area. A description of these new cities is provided below.

## City of Rancho Cordova

Rancho Cordova residents voted to incorporate as a city on the November 2002 ballot. The city is a large section of the eastern part of SCWA Zone 40. According to the Census 2000 population profile for the Cordova planning area, there are a total of 96,260 persons residing within the planning area. Using the 1990 Census information and 2000 as the base year, Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) projects that housing in the Rancho Cordova planning district (including Rosemont and Gold River) will increase from 37,757 dwellings to 41,100 (9%) by 2010, and to 54,148 (43%) by 2020. Population in the area is projected to increase from 96,099 to 104,868 (9%) by 2010, and to 136,284 (42%) by 2020.

A city general plan is being developed, but in the meantime the city is operating under the Cordova Community Plan, adopted in 1978 and updated in 2002. The plan supports the influx of businesses, particularly business parks like those along the Highway US 50 corridor. Housing has not kept pace with employment in Rancho Cordova, and the plan encourages the building of subdivisions that would attract business park employees at all economic levels. Concurrently, a goal of the plan is to “provide a reliable, contaminant-free, long-term source of water to serve the community, which protects the groundwater aquifer(s) from long-term damage attributable to drawdown by the use of public/private wells.” The implementation of the FRWP would support this goal and remove an obstacle to the planned growth of the City of Rancho Cordova.

## City of Elk Grove

The City of Elk Grove was incorporated on July 1, 2000, establishing local control over land use and development services. Since incorporation, both residential and nonresidential development in Elk Grove has increased.

Originally planned as a bedroom community for residents employed in Sacramento, the City of Elk Grove has a new vision. On October 16, 2002, the City Council of Elk Grove adopted policies implementing a draft general plan until the final general plan is approved. As expressed in the draft plan, the city plans to increase the jobs/housing balance in Elk Grove and to match the numbers and types of workers living in Elk Grove with job opportunities in the city. To that end, General Plan Land Use Element map amendments increased the amount of land designated for commercial and office development and incorporated a regional commercial land use category.

According to projections by SACOG, population and employment growth rates in Elk Grove are expected to peak during the 2000–2005 period, at rates of 6.2% and 13.1%, respectively. However, SACOG projection assumptions are based on historical growth rates and jobs/housing balance data from before Elk Grove's incorporation. Because it is Elk Grove's intent to increase the jobs/housing ratio and to expand the existing commercial and industrial growth trends, the city anticipates a higher growth rate.

## **Evaluation of Growth-Inducing Effects**

### **East Bay Municipal Utility District Ultimate Service Boundary**

EBMUD can meet its projected USB demand during most years (See Chapter 1). However, during dry years, runoff amounts are insufficient to meet full user demands even with aggressive conservation and water recycling programs and the EBMUD supply must be drawn from reservoir supplies stored during previous years. During dry periods, storage supplies may be insufficient to supply all consumptive needs of EBMUD customers without significant rationing. Therefore, the EBMUD portion of the FRWP water supply would be used primarily to ensure that sufficient water supply is provided to reduce customer deficiencies during droughts and to ensure system reliability in case of damage to EBMUD's existing water supply and distribution system. Because the FRWP is intended to provide a supplemental water supply during drought years and to improve system redundancy and reliability, it would not contribute to new growth-inducing effects because it would not cause or remove an obstacle to growth.

### **Updated Freeport Regional Water Project Growth Effects**

Although the FRWP alternatives do not meet the definition of “growth inducing” under either CEQA or NEPA, the overall environmental consequences of projected growth within the EBMUD USB are discussed briefly below. These effects are expected to include land use, traffic, biological, socioeconomic, and other impacts. Growth-related land use effects are expected to include urban infill and higher densities or mixed uses in the western portion of the service area with new development projects and growth areas occurring mainly in the eastern undeveloped areas (including a small amount of land used for agriculture) of the USB.

Traffic impacts in the USB along the Interstate 80 and Interstate 680 corridors are expected to increase significantly with and without new projected growth. Significant increases in traffic will likely occur in the East Bay even if no new growth occurs in the USB because of projected increases in commuter traffic

throughout the East Bay from rapidly growing bedroom communities in Solano, San Joaquin, and Stanislaus Counties.

Air quality conditions in the USB are expected to continue to decline as a result of growth, although air quality conditions in the San Francisco Bay Area Air Basin (SFBAAB) are generally superior to other air basins in the state. Currently the SFBAAB is designated as an attainment area for carbon monoxide and a severe nonattainment area for ozone. The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) is implementing a Clean Air Plan to attain the ozone standard.

Biological resource effects in the USB associated with loss of native vegetation and wildlife habitat will occur as a result of urban and suburban development. Habitat losses are expected to be greatest in the eastern portion of the USB, where some new development would occur in undeveloped open space and agricultural areas. As noted above, however, the extent of these areas to be developed is limited. The Updated WSMP EIR indicates that up to 13 special-status species occur in the USB that could be adversely affected by urban and suburban growth.

Socioeconomic effects of growth in the USB could include positive economic growth resulting in new employment and business opportunities and less desirable financial effects of needed investments in infrastructure improvement projects such as roads, water distribution and wastewater treatment facilities, and education and recreation facilities.

Other growth-related impacts in the USB include possible urban runoff effects of new development from increased impermeable surfaces, increased noise levels along major transportation corridors, visual resource effects from conversion of open space and agricultural areas to urban development, and possible effects on known or unknown archaeological or historical resources.

## **Freeport Regional Water Project Growth Effects in the East Bay Municipal Utility District Ultimate Service Boundary**

Use of water under the FRWP would likely have no additional growth-inducing effects in the USB because it would not foster additional economic, population, or housing growth. This growth is projected to occur regardless of whether the FRWP is implemented because EBMUD has adequate water supplies during normal years. The FRWP will reduce rationing during droughts and provide an emergency backup supply to EBMUD's existing Mokelumne River system.

Use of the water supply under the FRWP would not directly or indirectly tax community service facilities because growth within the USB has been planned for in city and county general plans and is not dependent on implementation of the FRWP alternatives; new development projects would not be served by the

FRWP. As mentioned above, EBMUD's policy is to oppose annexation of and service to developments outside of its USB, and EBMUD is not the preferred water service provider to the project.

The FRWP could, in theory, be considered to indirectly facilitate growth decisions by service area cities and counties by reducing the amount of uncertainty that exists related to system reliability and the availability of water supply during drought conditions. However, this indirect effect is speculative and unquantifiable.

## **East Bay Municipal Utility District Growth Policies**

The Updated WSMP EIR findings indicate that potential growth-inducing impacts could be mitigated through measures imposed by the planning agencies of city and county jurisdictions. The EBMUD Board of Directors has determined that it will continue to work with other jurisdictions to assist in mitigating the impacts of growth by:

- participating in efforts to improve regional planning in the Bay Area;
- encouraging local land use planning agencies to coordinate land use planning functions and the provision of utility services; and
- encouraging cities and counties to adopt general plans and zoning ordinances that favor high-density development and urban infill (which tends to minimize per-capita water use and environmental impacts of water delivery systems); provide incentives for more housing near public transit; and adopt ordinances that conserve open space, protect wildlife habitat, and conserve energy and water resources (EDAW 1993).

## **Sacramento County Water Agency Service Area**

While implementation of the FRWP is intended to accommodate projected growth in the service area with Zone 40 through the next 20 years, growth accommodation will have significant, and significant and unavoidable, effects on transportation, air quality, loss of farmland, water supply, groundwater quality, biological resources, and visual quality. Provision of public services and the noise environment of the county also would be affected by growth. These effects are discussed below. No loss in public recreation uses, including community and County parks or activity areas along the Sacramento River or American River Parkway, is expected from growth in the Zone 40 area. Future increases in use of existing recreation resources may result in a gradual decline in the quality of the recreational experiences.

## Transportation

Planned growth in Sacramento County, even with full implementation of all the transportation improvements identified in the Circulation Element and Transportation Plan of the county general plan, would result in significant effects. All of the major traffic impacts are considered significant and unavoidable. Mitigation measures proposed in the county general plan and the plan draft EIR could lessen their magnitude but are not likely to reduce effects to a less-than-significant level. Projected effects include:

- LOSs would exceed LOS E, the county standard, at many intersections and on freeway and roadway links.
- Volume to capacity ratios (V/C) on segments of major freeways would exceed 1.00, with some exceeding 2.00.
- Roadway improvements to reduce LOS and V/C ratios to acceptable levels could require doubling the capacity of some area freeways.

## Air Quality

Removing an obstacle to growth by implementing the FRWP to accommodate growth projected in the county and city general plans would result in significant and unavoidable effects on air quality even with full implementation of the guidelines and alternative transportation modes included in the Circulation Element of the county general plan. Those effects include:

- Substantial increases in air pollutants would result from increased traffic and development.
- Reduction in emissions and air pollutants that are required by the California Clean Air Act for areas such as Sacramento County that are in nonattainment for ozone and carbon monoxide will be difficult to achieve with increased traffic generated by accommodating growth.

## Noise

Growth consistent with the county general plan in southern and central Sacramento County could result in four significant noise impacts:

- exposure of noise-sensitive land uses to excessive aircraft noise as a result of infill development near Executive Airport and the former Mather Air Force Base, now an air freight transport facility;
- exposure of noise-sensitive land uses to excessive exterior noise levels as a result of proximity to industrial uses;

- increased traffic noise levels; and
- increased exposure of noise-sensitive development to railroad noise.

Policies in the county general plan mitigate these impacts to less-than-significant levels.

## Loss of Farmland

Approximately 4,000 acres of farmland of statewide significance exist within Expanded Zone 40. Loss of this farmland, estimated at half, as a result of projected growth is a significant and unavoidable impact. The county general plan does not contain a policy that development must take place on nonagricultural land, a policy that would impose severe restriction on growth and could result in noncontiguous and inefficient development.

## Water Supply

Overall demand for surface water is considered a significant effect. The county general plan limits development in areas if surface water supplies are not available. Groundwater overdraft is of particular concern in the Franklin-Laguna area and the City of Elk Grove and the southeast part of the county. Use of surface water rather than groundwater in all of these areas could alleviate overdraft conditions. Therefore, implementation of the FRWP could remove an obstacle—the absence of surface water supply—to growth in those areas.

## Water Quality

Growth in the service area could result in greater risk of contamination in the underlying groundwater aquifer. Recent trichloroethene (TCE) and perchlorate detections in wells in the Sunrise Industrial Service Area, on Mather Field, and in the Arden-Cordova Water Service Area are examples of this increasing risk. Ongoing efforts such as Aerojet's long-term cleanup of the American River Study Area will continue and could be supplemented with additional efforts in the future.

Although efforts are currently underway across the county to stabilize the regional groundwater aquifer, it is reasonable to assume that groundwater supplies will be continually relied on, within the constraints of the Water Forum agreement, to meet water needs in Sacramento County. Increased urbanization would also result in a greater risk of surface water quality degradation from more non-point-source pollutant runoff from urban areas.

## Biological Resources

A biological assessment prepared for county service areas (Bureau of Reclamation and Sacramento County Water Agency 1997) indicates that three special-status plant species and 16 animal and fish species could potentially be affected by growth in the service area and only small amounts of riparian, vernal pool, and woodland habitats that support wildlife species would be affected.

Sacramento County is developing the South Sacramento County Habitat Conservation Plan (SSHCP). Once adopted, the SSHCP is intended to be a regional approach to addressing issues related to urban development, habitat conservation, agricultural protection, and open space planning. It was initiated in 1992 and revised to its current scope in 1996. The SSHCP boundaries encompass the area south of US 50 and east of I-5, which includes unincorporated county land and the cities of Rancho Cordova and Elk Grove. It excludes the cities of Galt and Sacramento, and the Delta. The plan area holds about 317,000 acres of land both inside and outside the county's USB, of which approximately 50,000 acres are considered developable. The major goals of the SSHCP are to ensure long-term habitat viability, accommodate development of appropriate sites with fair and reasonable mitigation, protect agricultural lands, and streamline the permitting process. It is anticipated that the draft plan will be released in 2005. CEQA analysis and public hearings will follow release.

The SSHCP will provide strategies to conserve habitat for nine plants and 42 animal species using various habitats, including vernal pool grasslands, which are the dominant habitat in the SSHCP area. Additional habitat for federally listed giant garter snake and the state-listed Swainson's hawk are prominent in the HCP planning process. Habitats for these species serve as an umbrella, of sorts, for most of the other species and habitats to be covered under the HCP.

The intent of the SSHCP is to address regulatory requirements for issuance of an ESA Section 10 permit, a CWA Section 404 permit, and a DFG 1601 permit. Upon adoption of the SSHCP, the county will hold the permits. The county or another yet-to-be-decided entity will be responsible for SSHCP implementation. To mitigate impacts, land developers who convert habitat within the USB will pay a defined per-acre fee that will be used to protect, restore, maintain, and monitor habitat to mitigate development impacts.

Although the county general plan has policies that protect the urban edge and maintain migration corridors, projected growth would result in significant effects on biological resources, including:

- loss of moist grassland, emergent wetland, and riparian wetland acreage and/or habitat values;
- loss of vernal pools, including some that support special-status plant, invertebrate, and amphibian species;
- removal or degradation of riparian habitat resulting from development surrounding seasonal creeks;

- loss of individual trees, oak savanna, oak woodland, and mixed oak-conifer woodlands; and
- loss or severe degradation of habitat critical for foraging and reproduction of special-status wildlife species.

Conservation element policies included in the Sacramento County General Plan Update Draft EIR as mitigation measures would reduce most significant adverse effects to less-than-significant levels. Other significant adverse effects would be compensated for by contributions to mitigation banks or creation and enhancement of preserves.

## Visual Quality

Two significant and unavoidable impacts on visual quality of the Sacramento County environs could result from planned growth:

- alteration of the visual character of Sacramento County and
- limited visual access to large areas of open space.

## Public Services

The significant effects on provision of public services resulting from removing an obstacle to planned growth are listed below. All of the effects can be mitigated by policies specified in the county general plan and/or the Sacramento County General Plan Update Draft EIR. Effects on public services generated by growth include:

- Development anticipated under the county general plan could diminish the ability of police and fire protection districts to maintain current service standards.
- Some school districts would be adversely affected by the concentration of new growth within their boundaries; growth would also increase the need for affordable licensed childcare slots.