

Chapter VI

Growth-Inducing Impacts

A. PURPOSE

Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21100(b)(5) requires an environmental impact report (EIR) to include a statement of the growth-inducing impacts of the project. Section 15126.2(d) of the State CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) Guidelines requires this statement to include a discussion of the ways in which the proposed project could foster economic or population growth or the construction of additional housing in the surrounding environment. This statement is also to address actions that, either individually or cumulatively, would remove obstacles to population growth and otherwise encourage activities that could significantly affect the environment.

B. MODESTO URBAN AREA GENERAL PLAN

California Planning Law requires each city to adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan for its physical development (Government Code Section 65300). Pursuant to Government Code Section 65302, the *City of Modesto Urban Area General Plan* (UAGP) is a statement of development policies that will guide the City of Modesto's (City's) land use decision-making to 2040.

As is usually the case with a long-term land use plan, future development under the UAGP would result in significant growth beyond existing levels. For example, the City's population was 188,856 in 2000 according to the U.S. Census of that year and had grown to 206,785 as of January 1, 2014 (State of California, Department of Finance 2015). The current incorporated area of the City is approximately 23,709 acres; the UAGP anticipates an urban area of 40,685 acres. The ultimate population projected to occur within the UAGP boundary is approximately 390,000, which represents the reasonable estimated population, based on the traffic analyses contained within this Master EIR. The UAGP presents a vision of future development for the community and a planning horizon through 2040.

By definition, a general plan is intended to accommodate future growth in a controlled manner. This accommodation is reflected in the general plan contents mandated under Government Code Section 65302. Of the eight mandatory elements, three directly relate to growth: the Land-Use Element establishes the pattern of future land uses; the Circulation Element plans the future street network, correlated to land uses; and, the Housing Element identifies the means by which the City will meet its fair share of projected regional housing needs (and, by implication, population growth) for all income groups.

The UAGP is by definition growth-inducing to the extent that it plans for and accommodates projected population growth and economic development. Specific growth-inducing activities are described below.

1. Designation of Land for Future Residential, Commercial, and Industrial Development

This designation simplifies the process of obtaining approvals to develop land for urban uses. Development within the Planned Urbanizing Area would require subsequent approval of a specific plan(s) before development may occur. With the exceptions of the Dry Creek, Tuolumne River,

and Stanislaus River Comprehensive Planning Districts (which are intended for open space uses), the proposed UAGP amendment would set the tenor for future urban expansion into the Planned Urbanizing Area. See Chapter V Section 20, “Land Use and Planning,” for more information.

The UAGP also would provide for infill development in the Baseline Developed Area and Downtown. In general, infill development would be considered less growth-inducing than the extension of urban infrastructure to previously unserved areas. The UAGP would provide for infill of currently vacant areas of the Baseline Developed Area, as well as intensification of development within the Downtown Area. Infill may marginally reduce the growth-inducing impact of the UAGP, but the fact remains that most new development within the City is projected to occur in the Planned Urbanizing Area. This new development would result in increased population, employees and housing units.

2. Improvements to and Extensions of the City’s Wastewater Treatment System

Along with adoption of the Wastewater Master Plan and Measure M, the UAGP establishes City policies encouraging the eventual expansion of the wastewater treatment plants and extension of sewer mains to serve the Planned Urbanizing Area. This expansion would enable new greenfield development at urban densities, where sanitary sewer service would be provided to accommodate this new development.

3. Extension of Police and Fire Services to Annexed Lands

The UAGP policies provide for the maintenance of police and fire service at current levels as the City expands. This maintained level would enable development of the Planned Urbanizing Area at urban densities.

4. Extension of Water Service to Lands within the Urban Area

The UAGP policies provide for the eventual extension of water service to the Planned Urbanizing Area. This extension would enable development of the Planned Urbanizing Area at urban densities, where water resources would be provided to serve this new development.

5. Transportation Improvements

The UAGP identifies future expressways, arterials, and collector roads that would serve the Planned Urbanizing Area. This circulation system would form the framework within which future local streets will be built. The road system would provide vehicle access necessary to develop the area at urban densities. The most significant new road facilities would be the North County Corridor (SR108 east of McHenry Avenue along the north boundary) and an expanded SR132 along the Kansas Avenue alignment. Meanwhile, a passenger rail service system is expected to be built as well. These transportation system improvements could be growth-inducing, as new residents could commute easily to jobs outside the region.

6. Multiplier Effect

The proposed UAGP amendment would also induce indirect growth through a *multiplier effect*. A multiplier effect describes the web of impacts resulting from the economic relationships between the City and the surrounding region. Increased housing and job opportunities in Modesto may have a multiplier effect on other communities in the region, whereby the City provides housing that may support employment centers outside Modesto and provides jobs for those who live outside Modesto. This multiplier effect can manifest itself in growth as well as in associated traffic. The extent to which the multiplier effect induces housing and job growth beyond Modesto's planning area, where that growth may be located, and the intensity of that growth, cannot be quantified at this time.

C. POLICIES THAT ADDRESS GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS

A general plan is by definition growth-inducing. In Modesto, this effect is moderated to some extent by the Community Growth Strategy, Community Development, and Community Services and Facilities policies of the UAGP (see Chapters II, III, VI, & VII). Development within each of the Comprehensive Planning Districts (CPDs) would be timed to coincide with the availability of sewer service and would be required to comply with the individual specific plans that would be adopted for each CPD. In addition, development within these areas would be required to carry the costs associated with providing infrastructure services and systems. As a result, future growth consistent with the UAGP would occur in a measured way, at urban densities, with sufficient infrastructure to serve that growth. While not halting growth, this strategy ensures that growth does not occur in a manner that is wasteful of resources or that stretches infrastructure systems beyond their existing or planned capacities. The following proposed UAGP amendment policies would reduce growth-inducing impacts:

GOAL II.A

Urban Area Growth Review. A review of the growth trends in the Modesto Urban Area should be held on a periodic basis to identify urban areas that need upgraded infrastructure or an extension of new infrastructure during the subsequent five years. This review should be focused on the following policies:

Policy II.A.1

Land Supply. Maintain a five-year supply of available developable land served with urban infrastructure. Consider both underdeveloped urban and non-urbanized land.

Policy II.A.2

Contiguous Development Tied to Other Goals. Keep urban development as contiguous as possible in order to minimize urbanization of valuable farmland, foster resident convenience, improve air quality, reduce automobile vehicle miles traveled, improve public health and safety, and provide for economy in City services.

Policy II.A.3

Development Follows Annexation. Annex residential growth and development within the Modesto Urban Area General Plan boundary before development occurs.

Policy II.A.4

Direct Growth Inward. Direct urban growth to areas currently served with City services.

Additional mitigating policies in the UAGP include the following:

Policy III.I.4

Specific Plan Financing. Each Specific Plan should be accompanied by a long-range financing strategy that provides reasonable estimates of the costs of on- and off-site infrastructure to support the proposed development pattern. The strategy should generally address public facility funding for any development project that serves to implement the subject Specific Plan. If new public facilities are required that will also serve the broader community, the Specific Plan should include options for broad-based funding mechanisms. Each Specific Plan should address the need to provide water, wastewater and storm drainage infrastructure, in the context of the required Facilities Master Plan and Infrastructure Master Plan (prepared at developer's expense).

Policy VI.A.1

Implement the demand management and conservation measures identified in the City's adopted Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP). During review of development proposals, require that all developments reduce their potable water demand. Refer to the UWMP for potential techniques to reduce potable water demand.

Policy VI.A.2

Require water infrastructure master plans for public infrastructure and/or when otherwise pertinent to provision of water service at adopted service levels for the specific plan areas or other projects depending on site issues and location.

Policy VI.D.6

Construct, operate, maintain, and replace wastewater facilities in a manner that will provide the best possible service to the public. In developing implementation plans, consider rehabilitation of essential existing facilities, expansion to meet current excess demand, and the timely expansion for future demand.

Policy VI.E.2

Require wastewater infrastructure master plans for the specific public infrastructure or when otherwise pertinent to provision of service at adopted service levels for the specific plan areas or other projects depending on site issues and location.

This approach ensures that development within the Planned Urbanizing Area would occur as demand arises and services are available, and that future roads and utility extensions would be sized appropriately to serve planned development. This would not eliminate the growth-inducing impacts of the proposed UAGP amendment, but would moderate the rate at which those impacts occur.