

## 9.0 GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sections 15126 (d) and 15126.2 (d) of the *California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines* requires that an environmental impact report (EIR) include a discussion of the ways in which a project could foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment. Such a discussion should also identify any way in which a proposed project would remove obstacles to population growth, and discuss the characteristics of a project that may encourage and/or facilitate other activities that, either individually or cumulatively, could significantly affect the environment. CEQA emphasizes that growth in an area should not be considered beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance. The purpose of this discussion is to evaluate the growth-inducing potential of the County's proposed Area Plan. The proposed Area Plan provides the framework by which public officials will be guided on making decisions relative to development. The proposed Area Plan is consistent with regional and subregional planning policies of the South California Association of Governments (SCAG).

### GROWTH-INDUCING POTENTIAL

In general terms, a project may foster population growth in a geographic area if it meets any of the criteria identified below:

- The project removes an impediment to growth, such as through the establishment of an essential public service, or the provision of new access to an area that will facilitate additional growth.
- The project results in the urbanization of land in a remote location that will induce the growth of the undeveloped areas between the project and existing developed areas, commonly referred to as "leap-frog development."
- Economic expansion or growth occurs in an area in response to the project, such as a substantial change in revenue base or expansion of employment.
- The project establishes a precedent setting action, such as approval of a general plan amendment or change in zoning that will serve as a precedent for other similar projects.

Should a project meet any one of these criteria, it may be considered growth inducing. An evaluation of the proposed Area Plan in relation to these criteria is provided in this section.

## Removal of an Impediment to Growth

Growth in an area may occur as a direct result of the removal of physical impediments or restrictions to growth. In this context, physical growth impediments may include nonexistent or inadequate access to an area or the lack of sufficient essential public services, such as sewer and water service. The following discussion evaluates the effects of the proposed Area Plan with respect to this criterion.

Development pressures are a result of economic investment in a particular locality. These pressures help to structure the local politics of growth and the local jurisdiction's posture on growth management and land use policy. The land use policies established by the County's Area Plan will regulate growth in the County's Planning Area.

A project could indirectly induce growth by removing barriers to growth, by creating a condition that attracts additional population or new economic activity, or by providing a catalyst for future unrelated growth in the area. While a project may have a potential to induce growth, it does not automatically result in growth. Growth can only happen through capital investment in new economic opportunities by the public or private sectors.

Implementation of the Area Plan is intended to guide future growth of the County's Planning Area; particularly economic growth and the expansion of employment opportunities. The proposed Area Plan would allow the development of approximately 4,700 acres of commercial, business park, and industrial land uses.

Development permitted by the proposed land use policies would create more housing for all income levels. The proposed Area Plan allows for over 68,000 acres of residential land use, 4,700 acres of commercial, business park and industrial land use, and zero acres of mixed-use overlay district. The allowable growth would account for an increase in the population of the County from 75,000 residents in the year 2008 to approximately 200,000 residents at buildout, or 125,000 residents in population. New residents would locate in the County's Planning Area because of expanded employment and housing opportunities in the OVOV Planning Area. The majority of new housing developments are anticipated to occur on a project specific basis. The County's Planning Area would be built out and encouraged by Area Plan land use policies that are not likely to remove obstacles to additional population growth.

## Economic Growth

Development of the County's Planning Area as proposed would provide short-term construction jobs and create long-term commercial and industrial employment that would support both the local and

regional population. Because future development in the County's Planning Area is anticipated to proceed incrementally over many years, the total increased labor force needed to help support development, for short-term construction as well as long-term employment, would not be significant. The increase in labor force is expected to come from both the County's Planning Area and the City's Planning Area.

In the short term, the implementation of the proposed Area Plan may induce growth by introducing construction employment opportunities associated with the development of the new facilities. It is assumed that some of these temporary employment opportunities could result in people moving into the County's Planning Area. The chance of this occurring given the current state of the construction profession and slow down in work is not likely since jobs could probably be provided to persons already located within the County's Planning Area. Nevertheless, the potential introduction of some construction workers into the County's Planning Area would not result in a significant increase in the local population and is not considered to be growth inducing.

Long-term growth would primarily be in the form of an economic response to the increased employment opportunities that would occur within the County's Planning Area. According to Southern California Association of Government's (SCAG's) Growth Forecast, the population of the entire unincorporated Los Angeles County subregion is expected to grow from 132,797 residents in the year 2005 to 434,773 residents in the year 2035; the number of occupied housing units is expected to increase from 39,331 units in the year 2005 to 129,981 units in the year 2035; and employment in the unincorporated subregion is expected to increase from 34,592 jobs in the year 2005 to 85,289 jobs in the year 2035. This growth represents more than a doubling in population and housing, and a 150 percent increase in employment, over the 30-year period.

### **Precedent Setting Action**

The proposed Area Plan incorporates policies that would ensure that buildout of the County's Planning Area does not physically divide an existing community. The SCAG is the regional planning authority for the Southern California Region. The proposed Area Plan and Land Use Map would be consistent with SCAG's Regional Transportation Plan Policies and Compass/Growth Visioning Principles. The proposed Area Plan and Land Use Policy Map would ensure that habitat conservation plans and natural community conservation plans are not impacted within the County's Planning Area. The proposed Area Plan's policies protect and designate areas of natural environmental importance such as the Santa Clara River floodplain, local Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs), rivers, streams, and associated tributaries throughout the County's Planning Area as Open Space or Non-Urban Land Use designations. Therefore, the County's proposed Area Plan would not be a precedent-setting action.

## Development of an Isolated Area

Development can be considered growth inducing when it is not contiguous to existing urban development and “leaps” over open space areas. The proposed Area Plan designates land uses that include residential, non-residential, and open space. The County’s Planning Area consists of National forest lands, unincorporated county lands, and developed residential, commercial, and light industrial land uses which includes the adjacent Santa Clara River. The proposed Area Plan incorporates policies that will ensure that buildout of the County’s Planning Area does not physically divide an existing community. The proposed Area Plan would encourage the development of Transit Oriented Development (TOD), thereby promoting compact, walkable communities centered around high-quality train and transit systems, which, in turn, would reduce residents’ dependence on the automobile. Therefore, buildout of the proposed Area Plan would not result in the development of isolated areas.

## CONCLUSION

The existing Area Plan and the proposed Area Plan would result in growth. Based on the definition of growth inducement, an Area Plan is inherently growth inducing. The existing and proposed Area Plans provide the framework by which public officials will be guided on making decisions relative to development within the County’s Planning Area. However, it is the implementation of land use policies that will incrementally increase demands for public services, utilities, and infrastructure, and the need for medical, educational, and recreation facilities. As described in **Section 6.0, Alternatives**, both the existing and proposed Area Plan’s are consistent with regional and subregional planning policies of the SCAG. Although the proposed Area plan supports continued growth of the County’s Planning Area, it does not induce growth over amounts already established by the existing Area Plan and the regional and subregional planning policies.