

## 5.0 OTHER CEQA CONSIDERATIONS

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As required by CEQA, this chapter provides an overview of other CEQA considerations based on the technical analyses presented in Chapter 4. The topics covered in this chapter include growth inducement, unavoidable significant impacts, significant irreversible changes, and impacts found not to be significant. The detailed analysis of the effects the project would have on the environment is provided in Chapter 4.

### 5.1 Growth Inducement

The CEQA Guidelines (§15126[g]) require that an EIR evaluate the growth-inducing impacts of a proposed action. The Guidelines define a growth-inducing impact as "...the way 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 [public works] projects that would remove obstacles to population growth. Growth is not assumed to be necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment."

Examples of projects likely to have significant growth-inducing impacts include extensions or expansions of infrastructure systems beyond what is needed to serve existing demand, and development of new residential subdivisions or industrial parks in areas that are currently only sparsely developed or are undeveloped. The environmental effects of induced growth are secondary or indirect impacts. Secondary effects of growth can result in increased demand on community and public service infrastructures, an increase in traffic, noise, or degradation of air and water quality.

Buildout under the DSP would foster economic and population growth because the plan's purpose is to foster the development of the area and encourage buildout of a unique and robust downtown area. Further, the construction of additional housing is encouraged by the DSP in order to increase the mix of uses in the downtown. These are *intended* results of the DSP. However, the policies and objectives of the DSP are to intentionally concentrate retail commercial and housing in the DSP area to help avoid suburban sprawl and the potentially growth-inducing extension of public services and infrastructure into outlying areas, thereby actively encouraging a development pattern that minimizes growth beyond the DSP boundaries.

Overall, buildout development allowed by the DSP would be less than development permitted by the existing General Plan. Infrastructure improvements are proposed to be sized to serve buildout under the DSP (i.e., project-specific demands), and would occur within an already developed area of Cotati. Therefore, DSP will not have any growth-inducing impacts. The environmental effects of DSP development are addressed in other chapters of this EIR.

### 5.2 Unavoidable Significant Impacts

According to Section 15126(b) of the CEQA Guidelines, the purpose of this section is to "describe any significant impacts, including those which can be mitigated but not reduced to a level of insignificance. Where there are impacts that cannot be alleviated without imposing an alternative design, their implications and the reasons

why the project is being proposed, notwithstanding their effect, should be described.”

Significant unavoidable impacts identified in this EIR include the following:

- Impact CULT-1: Implementation of the DSP may result in the removal or alteration of buildings that have the potential to be historic resources, or may result in development that may be incompatible with adjacent historic structures.
- Impact CULT-Cum: Implementation of the DSP plus cumulative projects may result in the removal or alteration of buildings that have the potential to be historic resources, or may result in development that may be incompatible with adjacent historic structures.

### 5.3 Significant Irreversible Changes

Section 15126.2c of the CEQA Guidelines requires that an EIR identify any significant irreversible changes to the physical environment that would result from a proposed project. Such changes typically include use of non-renewable resources or land use changes that would preclude other types of development in the future.

Resources that would be permanently and continually consumed by implementation of the DSP include water, electricity, natural gas, and fossil fuels; however, the amount and rate of consumption of these resources would not result in significant environmental impacts or the unnecessary, inefficient, or wasteful use of resources. Nonetheless, construction activities related to the DSP would result in the irretrievable commitment of nonrenewable energy resources, primarily in the form of fossil fuels, natural gas, and gasoline for automobiles and construction equipment.

The City of Cotati has a green building program that mandates the use of renewable resources, recycled products and energy saving materials and techniques where practicable. Incorporation of energy-efficient elements in the designs of buildings, as required by the City and State law, would ensure that the consumption of nonrenewable resources during ongoing operation of developments in the DSP area is minimized and that resources are not used in a wasteful manner.

The DSP would commit future generations to a different and more intense type of development within the DSP area. Once implementation of the DSP is underway, it will likely be infeasible and not desirable to change the DSP in the future to a substantially different land use, or convert back to non-urban land uses. However, this is not considered to be a significant adverse impact because the DSP area is already primarily developed with urban uses and is foreseen to continue as the urban center of the Cotati community.

### 5.4 Impacts Found Not to be Significant

Agriculture and Mineral Resources. The Initial Study prepared for the DSP (see Appendix 1.0) found that impacts to agricultural and mineral resources would not be significant and, thus, were not addressed further in this EIR. There are no lands within the DSP area that are in productive agricultural or mineral extraction use. There are

no significant mineral resources underlying the DSP area. There are no properties under a Williamson Act contract, and implementation of the DSP would not convert agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses.

Energy and Urban Decay. The CEQA standard for energy use impacts is "inefficient, wasteful or unnecessary consumption of energy". DSP impact is less than significant based on existing and recently adopted state building standards, sustainability policy of DSP and City Sustainable Building Program. Urban decay impacts would be less than significant because the DSP development plan would improve the existing blighted conditions identified under the redevelopment plan that covers most of the DSP area. Refer to Section 4.8 Land Use for an extensive discussion of policies regarding redevelopment of the DSP area.

