

CHAPTER 5

Growth-Inducement Potential

This chapter analyzes the growth-inducement potential and associated secondary effects of growth impacts of the proposed program, as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

5.1 CEQA Requirements

The CEQA Guidelines require that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) evaluate the growth-inducing impacts of a proposed action (Section 15126.2[d]). A growth-inducing impact is defined by the CEQA Guidelines as:

[Discuss the way 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. Included in this are projects which 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 tax existing community service facilities, requiring construction of new facilities that could cause significant environmental effects. Also discuss the characteristic 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 can have direct and/or indirect growth-inducement potential. Direct growth inducement would result if a project involved construction of new housing. A project can have indirect growth-inducement potential if it would establish substantial new permanent employment opportunities (e.g., commercial, industrial, or governmental enterprises) or if it would involve a substantial construction effort with substantial short-term employment opportunities and indirectly stimulate the need for additional housing and services to support the new employment demand. Similarly, under CEQA, a project would indirectly induce growth if it would remove an obstacle to additional growth and development, such as removing a constraint on a required public service. An example of this indirect effect would be the expansion of a wastewater treatment plant, which might allow for more development in service areas. Under CEQA, growth is not considered necessarily detrimental or beneficial.

Based on the CEQA definition above, assessing the growth-inducement potential of the proposed program involves answering the question: “Would implementation of the proposed program

directly or indirectly support economic expansion, population growth, or residential construction?” Stormwater is typically not one of the chief public services needed to support urban development; however, water supply is needed to support urban development. Additional water supply would play a role in supporting additional growth in the Enhanced Watershed Management Program (EWMP) areas, but it would not be the single impetus to such growth. In addition, factors such as the General Plans and policies of the cities and Los Angeles County (County) and/or the availability of wastewater disposal capacity, public schools, and transportation services also influence business and residential or population growth in the EWMP areas. Economic factors, in particular, greatly affect development rates and locations.

5.2 Methodology

Growth inducement may result in adverse impacts if the growth is not consistent with the land use plans and growth management plans and policies for the area affected. Local land use plans provide for land use development patterns and growth policies that allow for the orderly expansion of urban development supported by adequate urban public services, such as water supply, roadway infrastructure, sewer service, and solid waste service. A project that would induce “disorderly” growth that is in conflict with local land use plans could indirectly cause additional adverse environmental impacts and impacts to other public services. Thus, it is important to assess the degree to which the growth accommodated by a project would or would not be consistent with applicable land use plans.

To determine direct growth-inducement potential, the proposed program was evaluated to verify whether an increase in population or employment, or the construction of new housing would occur as a direct or indirect result of the program. If either of these scenarios occurred, the proposed program could result in direct growth-inducement within the EWMP areas.

5.3 Growth-Inducement Potential and Significant and Irreversible Effects

The proposed program intends to improve stormwater quality through implementation of both structural and non-structural Best Management Practices (BMPs), with the goal of complying with the requirements of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit to reduce the impact of stormwater and non-stormwater on receiving water quality within the EWMP areas. Structural BMPs would include BMPs categorized as distributed, centralized, or regional. Distributed structural BMPs treat runoff close to the source and are typically implemented at a single- or few-parcel level. Centralized structural BMPs treat runoff from multiple parcels. Regional structural BMPs are larger in scale, and are meant to retain and/or treat the 85th percentile storm over 24 hours from a contributing area. The major functions of these three types of structural BMPs are infiltration, treatment, and storage; they may be used individually or in combination with one another. Although there would be construction involved, the structural BMPs would largely be implemented in urbanized areas including streets, sidewalks, parking lots, and parks.

The proposed program is not a land use project and its implementation would not introduce new residential or commercial buildings or any other growth-inducing land uses. The structural BMPs would augment the physical structure of established communities, blending in as part of the existing landscape and enhancing the water quality of existing communities. As a result, the proposed program would not induce population growth.

The proposed program would expand stormwater capture abilities, increasing groundwater recharge and improving the quality of stormwater runoff into receiving waters in the Los Angeles region. The program would not include construction of residential or commercial buildings and thus would not increase the demand for or require new public services and utilities facilities (including water supply, fire protection and other emergency services, public education, and parks and recreation facilities). The nature of the proposed program is to increase stormwater recharge and improve stormwater quality; such activities would not result in increased economic activity or population growth in the EWMP areas. And the amount of water recharged as part of the proposed program is anticipated to support existing water supply needs and reduce dependence on imported water supplies.

The non-structural BMPs associated with the proposed program consist of policies, actions, and activities intended to prevent pollutants from entering stormwater runoff, thus eliminating the source of the pollutants. Examples include irrigation control, covered trash receptacles, replacement of brake pads and lead in wheel weights, pet waste cleanup stations, street sweeping, catch basin cleaning, and downspout disconnect programs, all aiming to prevent and/or reduce runoff and/or pollution close to the source. These BMPs would not include construction activities and would not result in direct or indirect growth-inducement within the EWMP areas.

5.4 Secondary Effects of Growth

Implementation of the proposed program would not result in a direct or indirect increase in population or employment. The proposed program itself, therefore, is not growth-inducing and would not induce secondary effects of growth. While one of the main goals of the EWMPs is to increase infiltration and potentially increase recharge of stormwater into the groundwater basin, the amount of water potentially recharged would not be enough to indirectly support population growth and is intended to support existing water supply needs. This potential additional recharge would contribute to local water supply needs but would not alter population demographics. Therefore, there would be no secondary effects of growth.

5.5 Significant Irreversible Environmental Changes

CEQA Guidelines 21100(b) (2) and 15126.2(b) require that any significant effect on the environment that would be irreversible if the project is implemented must be identified. A project would generally result in a significant irreversible impact if:

- Primary and secondary impacts (such as roadway improvements that provide access to previously inaccessible areas, etc.) would commit future generations to similar uses.
- The project would involve a large commitment of nonrenewable resources.

- The project would involve uses in which irreversible damage could result from any potential environmental accidents associated with the project.

In accordance with Section 21100(b)(2)(B) of CEQA and Sections 15126(c) and 15126.2(c) of the CEQA Guidelines, the purpose of this section is to identify significant irreversible environmental changes that would be caused by implementation of the proposed program. Construction and operational impacts associated with implementation of the program would result in an irretrievable and irreversible commitment of natural resources through the use of fossil fuels and construction materials. Operation of the program would incrementally increase power consumption associated with stormwater BMPs requiring pump stations. The program's incremental increased use of these resources, however, would not significantly increase the overall commitment of resources associated with stormwater and would in fact increase conservation of other valuable resources. The proposed program would involve only minor incremental use of nonrenewable resources and would locate facilities primarily on lands already developed. Furthermore, since the implementing agencies would implement the mitigation measures identified in this Program Environmental Impact Report in concert with other ongoing stewardship and watershed protection activities, implementation of the proposed program would not result in significant irreversible environmental changes. When completed, the proposed program would provide a high level of water quality protection as well as increase water conservation throughout the EWMP areas.