
SECTION 6 GROWTH INDUCEMENT

Section 15126(d) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that an EIR address the growth-inducing impacts of a proposed project. The discussion should include ways in which the project could foster economic or population growth, the construction of additional housing, or remove obstacles to population growth, either directly or indirectly.

Direct growth-inducing impacts are commonly associated with the provision of public services, utilities, and roads to a previously undeveloped area. The provision of infrastructure and services to a site can foster growth by reducing development constraints for nearby areas, thereby inducing other landowners in the area to convert their property to other uses. Direct impacts can also result from population growth taxing existing public services, or a particular development increasing the pace of density of existing surrounding developments. Indirect growth-inducing impacts include the additional demand for housing, commodities, and services that new development causes or attracts by increasing population in an area.

The City and County have planned the 683 acres of the proposed Specific Plan for growth as urban uses, as represented by each jurisdiction's general plan document. The project site is entirely within the City's Sphere of Influence. The project site consists entirely of agricultural land. The adjacent properties are developed to the north, east, and south sides of the proposed project and, as a result, it may be seen as a logical extension of urban development.

Nonetheless, the proposed entitlements would authorize development of existing agricultural land, including the extension of public utilities and construction of a road network within the site boundaries. Without those approvals, the site could not be developed at the proposed intensity. The court in *City of Antioch v. City Council of the City of Pittsburg* (1986) 187 Cal.App.3d 1325 [negative declaration for road, sewer, and water extensions to undeveloped area was overturned on basis of growth-inducing impact] opined that: "there is no indication in CEQA that mere conformity with the general plan will justify a finding that the project has no significant environmental effect. Certainly general plan conformity alone does not effectively 'mitigate' significant environmental impacts of a project." Although the Las Aldeas Specific Plan proposal is consistent with the City and County general plans, it would remove regulatory obstacles to growth and is therefore growth-inducing.

The potential for the project to induce growth to the west of its boundaries is limited. Any development to the west of Austin Road would require amendment of the City of El Centro's sphere of influence and annexation, subject to approval by LAFCO. Furthermore, the property to the west of the project site is within zone D of the El Centro Naval Air Facility Compatibility Map as depicted in Figure 3G of the Imperial County Airport Land Use and Compatibility Plan. No residential density limits or required open land exist in this zone, however, a potential annoyance from over flight exists. A deed notice is required for residential development on this property. Land uses that might produce hazards to aircraft in flight are not permitted in this area. Specific characteristics that must be avoided include: 1) glare of distracting lights which could be mistaken for airport lights, 2) sources of dust, steam, or smoke which may impair pilot

visibility, 3) sources of electrical interference with aircraft communications or navigation, and 4) any use which may attract large flocks of birds. These limitations will tend to discourage further westward development.