

6.0 CEQA REQUIRED DISCUSSION

As required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), this chapter provides a discussion of significant irreversible environmental changes and growth-inducing impacts that could be caused by implementation of the Ball Estates project (project).

6.1 GROWTH INDUCEMENT

CEQA requires a discussion of the ways in which a project could be growth inducing. CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(d) identify a project as growth inducing if it would “foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment.” The CEQA Guidelines do not provide specific criteria for evaluating growth inducement and state that growth in any area is “necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment.” CEQA does not require separate mitigation for growth inducement as it is assumed that these impacts are already captured in the analysis of environmental impacts (see **Chapter 4.0, Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures**). Furthermore, the CEQA Guidelines require that an environmental impact report “discuss the ways” a project could be growth inducing and to “discuss the characteristic of some projects which may encourage and facilitate other activities that could significantly affect the environment.”

According to the CEQA Guidelines, the project would have potential to induce growth if it would:

- Remove obstacles to population growth (e.g., through the expansion of public services into an area that does not currently receive these services), or through the provision of new access to an area, or a change in a restrictive zoning or general plan land use designation.
- Result in economic expansion and population growth through employment opportunities and/or construction of new housing.

In general, a project could be considered growth inducing if it directly or indirectly affects the ability of agencies to provide needed public services, or if it can be demonstrated that the potential growth significantly affects the environment in some other way. However, the CEQA Guidelines Section 15145 do not require a prediction or speculation of where, when, and in what form such growth would occur.

6.1.1 ECONOMIC, POPULATION, AND HOUSING GROWTH

Typically, the growth inducing potential of a project is considered significant if it fosters growth in a new location or in excess of what is assumed in pertinent land use plans or projections. As discussed in **Section 4.14, Population and Housing**, the project's 35 residential homes would house up to 105 people, based on Alamo's average household size of 3 people per household (United States Census Bureau, 2015). This new population would constitute approximately 1.5 percent of the projected growth in the Unincorporated Contra Costa County and 0.1 percent of the projected growth anticipated by ABAG in all of Contra Costa County (County) from 2010 to 2040 (Plan Bay Area, 2014). The 35 units proposed by the project would represent approximately 2.5 percent of the projected housing needs of the unincorporated areas 1,367 anticipated new units over 2014-2022 (ABAG, 2013). Though the project would increase population on a currently undeveloped site, this population growth would be within the growth projections.

According to the *Contra Costa County General Plan 2005-2020* (General Plan), the project site is located within the County's urban limit line (ULL). Therefore, growth on this project site is anticipated within the General Plan. In this instance, the project would be considered infill development completely surrounded by residential neighborhoods and open space located outside the ULL. Therefore, impacts related to indirect population growth are considered less than significant. For further discussion of the ULL, refer to **Section 4.11, Land Use and Planning**.

Project construction would result in a short-term increase in construction related job opportunities in the County, which would likely employ the local construction employment labor force. Due to the small project size, opportunities provided by project construction would not likely result in the relocation of construction workers to the project region. Therefore, the employment opportunities provided by construction are not anticipated to induce indirect growth in the region.

6.1.2 REMOVAL OF OBSTACLES TO GROWTH OR EXCEED CAPACITY OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES

As discussed in **Section 4.17, Utilities and Service Systems**, and **Section 4.15, Public Services and Recreation**, the project site is currently served by utilities (including water, stormwater, and sanitary sewer) and public services (including police protection, fire protection, school systems, and park facilities). Project implementation would not increase demand for these utilities or public services such that substantial upgrades would be required that would remove obstacles to growth in the project region.

6.1.3 PRECEDENT-SETTING ACTION

Development of the project site would not entail either a General Plan amendment or rezoning. By its nature, the R-20 residential zoning classification would be adhered to with development on the project site, and the Park Dedication Ordinance outlined by the County Code, Division 920 Article 920-6.2, would be met through the dedication of the open space to an appropriate land conservation organization, the HOA, or a public agency. Therefore, the project would only be growth-inducing in respect to the construction of the 35 new residential lots. This action would promote slight population growth in the area, and is below the maximum allowable density for the project site. In addition, the project would permanently protect approximately 40 acres as open space. Growth inducement beyond the project site boundaries would not be expected because the project is an infill development site, bounded on three sides by residential neighborhoods and on the fourth by park land owned and maintained by the East Bay Regional Park District.

6.1.4 REFERENCES

Association of Bay Area Governments, 2013. *Bay Area Regional Housing Need Allocation 2014-2022*.

http://www.abag.ca.gov/planning/housingneeds/pdfs/2014-22_RHNA_Plan.pdf. Accessed September 4, 2015.

Plan Bay Area 2040, 2014. The Bay Area in 2040.

<http://planbayarea.org/file10044.html>. Accessed, September 4, 2015.

The United States Census Bureau, 2015.

<http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045214/0600618,00>. Accessed, September 4, 2015.