

6.0 OTHER CEQA CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

As required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and discussed in Section 15126 of the CEQA Guidelines, this Chapter discusses growth-inducing impacts of the project, significant irreversible environmental changes, and significant unavoidable impacts.

6.2 GROWTH INDUCEMENT

CEQA requires a discussion of the ways in which a project could induce growth. CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(e) identifies 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.” Furthermore, the CEQA Guidelines require that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) address the ways a project could be growth inducing by discussing how the project may “encourage and facilitate other activities that could significantly affect the environment.” However, the CEQA Guidelines does not require a prediction or speculation of where, when, and in what form such growth would occur.

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

- A. 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.
- B. Result in economic expansion and population growth through employment opportunities and/or construction of new housing.

Each of these thresholds is discussed in further detail below. 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.

- A. Does the project have the potential to 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?

Growth in an area may indirectly result from the removal of physical impediments or restrictions to growth, as well as the removal of planning impediments resulting from land use plans and policies. In this context, physical growth impediments may include non-existent or inadequate access to an area, or the lack of essential public services (e.g., water, wastewater, etc.).

The project is consistent with existing and planned land uses in the study area and would not directly or indirectly induce unplanned population growth. The project is located in a Commercial General land use designation, where commercial development has been planned for in the Local Coastal Land Use Plan (LCLUP). The Commercial General designation supports a variety of commercial activities including downtown retail, service and office uses, shopping centers, visitor-serving facilities, health care, health care, and live-work spaces. The completion of this project would provide lodging for visitors, but there is no anticipated population growth due to the visiting population.

As discussed in **Section 4.16, Utilities and Service Systems**, and **Section 4.14, 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.

- B. Does the project have the potential to result in economic expansion and population growth through employment opportunities and/or construction of new housing?

Typically, the growth-inducing potential of a project is considered significant if it fosters growth in a secondary location, or exceeds assumptions established by pertinent land use plans or regional projections. As discussed in **Section 4.13, Population and Housing**, the project involves the development of a hotel with 129 guest rooms and supporting facilities. No permanent housing, businesses, or extensions of roads or other infrastructure are proposed in this project.

Construction of the project would result in a temporary increase in construction-related job opportunities in the local area. Construction employment is, by its nature, an employment type that requires workers to commute or travel to changing job sites, because workers may be employed

on several jobs simultaneously. The project employment opportunities created as a result of project construction and operation would not induce a substantial amount of growth, because these employment opportunities are few and/or temporary.

Therefore, the project is not anticipated to result in direct or indirect impacts related to growth.

The Alternatives for the project, analyzed in **Chapter 5.0, Alternatives**, have the potential to result in a modest amount of growth. Alternative 2, the Reduced Intensity Alternative, includes a smaller hotel with fewer rooms and a residential component. Alternative 2 involves the construction of a 66,784 square-foot, 102-room hotel on the project site, a subdivision allowing for future development of up to 16 dwelling units (8 duplexes) along Seymour Street, and the expansion of the car dealership parking lot. The future development of 16 dwelling units would result in a minor amount of growth which would be consistent with growth accounted for the City's LCLUP. Further, it is anticipated that upon completion of a subdivision map, Lots 1 and 2 would be developed with a minimum of 4 units of affordable housing. Therefore, Alternative 2 would be support implementation of the City's affordable housing goals per the LCLUP.

Alternative 3, the Multi-family Residential Alternative, would involve the construction of residential units at the project site rather than a hotel. Alternative 3 consists of a 2-story structure and a 3-story structure with 58 Multifamily Units and includes a subdivision for future development along Seymour Street (with an affordable housing component) and expansion of the car dealership parking lot, similar to Alternative 2. With the addition of 53 Multifamily Units on the project site, Alternative 3 would introduce growth to the area. While the Commercial General land use designation of the project site allows multi-family residential uses, the City deemed the site more suitable for commercial development, given the project site's frontage to State Route 1 (SR-1).

6.3 SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

According to Section 15126.2(d) of the CEQA Guidelines, an EIR must identify, evaluate, and justify significant irreversible changes that may result from full implementation of a project. There are three categories of irreversible changes identified in the CEQA Guidelines:

- Consumption of nonrenewable resources

- Primary and secondary impacts that commit future generations to similar uses
- Irreversible damage caused by environmental accidents associated with the project

6.3.1 CONSUMPTION OF NONRENEWABLE RESOURCES

Construction of the project would require the consumption of nonrenewable resources, including electricity, natural gas, asphalt, steel, and other construction materials that are considered to be available in finite supply. Renewable resources, such as lumber and other wood byproducts, would also be used. Operation of the project would also require the consumption of nonrenewable resources such as energy, fossil fuels, oils, and natural gas will be irreversibly committed during operation for heating/cooling equipment. The continued use of these resources associated with project operations represents a long-term obligation. However, neither construction nor operation would consume nonrenewable resources in amounts substantially different from or greater than typical commercial projects in the region as explained in **Section 4.7, Energy**. The project would incorporate Half Moon Bay's Building Electrification Ordinance which will assist the State in reaching Senate Bill 32 goals. The Building Electrification Ordinance requires all new building constructions to be electric-only, with no gas or propane used in the new construction. Additionally, the Building Electrification Ordinance would require electric retrofits for various types of remodels, and require fuel gas lines to be capped/decommissioned in existing buildings by 2045. The project would not affect mineral resources, or access to such resources. With the exception of prime agricultural soils, the project would not involve a large commitment of nonrenewable resources.

The project would involve the cumulative loss of 3.05 acres of prime agricultural soils as discussed in **Section 4.2, Agricultural Resources**. Agricultural soils are a non-renewable resources and cannot be replaced once they are lost to development. Therefore, the project will result in the consumption of this nonrenewable resource. Consistent with Policy 4-10 of the LCLUP, the project applicant will implement **Mitigation Measure Cumulative AG-1** for the loss of the limited area of prime soils by supporting the San Mateo Resource Conservation District or other City approved means of providing agricultural land protections or soils restoration.

6.3.2 LAND USE WHICH WOULD COMMIT FUTURE GENERATIONS

The project would not include changes to land use. The project is located in a Commercial General land use designation, where commercial development has been planned for in the LCLUP. Therefore, the project would support implementation of the LCLUP by developing a commercial hotel on a currently undeveloped parcel of land in a designation consistent with the City's long-range planning. The project is also located in the Town Center Planning Area, which is identified as the most urbanized portion of the City where the City intends to concentrate development. Implementation of a commercial land use at the project site would be compatible with adjacent commercial land uses at the James Ford Auto Dealership. This would provide for a continuation of the existing character of land use surrounding the project site and along SR-1 and Main Street. Therefore, the project would not unreasonably commit future generations to particular land uses as the proposed uses are in accordance with the existing planning and zoning for the property.

6.3.3 IRREVERSIBLE DAMAGE

Accidents, such as the release of hazardous materials, could trigger irreversible environmental damage. As discussed in **Section 4.9, Hazards and Hazardous Materials**, construction and operation of the proposed project would involve limited quantities of miscellaneous hazardous substances, such as gasoline, diesel fuel, solvents, paints, and other chemicals. An accidental spill of any of these substances could affect water and/or groundwater quality and, if a spill were to occur of significant quantity, the release could pose a hazard to construction workers, the public, and the environment. Improper storage, use, handling, or accidental spilling of such materials could result in a hazard to the public or the environment. However, compliance with the various regulations regarding the safe transport, use, and storage of hazardous materials as well as the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System General Construction Permit requirements would ensure that public health and safety risks are maintained at acceptable levels. Therefore, significant irreversible changes from accidental releases are not anticipated.

6.4 SIGNIFICANT UNAVOIDABLE IMPACTS

Impact AES-1. The Project would have a Substantial Adverse Effect on a Scenic Vista.

The project would interfere with the protected long-range views of the ridgelines north and east of the project site from SR-1 (Viewpoint 3). Although screening techniques and other design considerations would be used, the mass and scale of the proposed development would obstruct views of the protected ridgeline from SR-1. This is a significant and unavoidable impact.

Impact AES-2. The Project would Substantially Damage Scenic Resources, Including, but not Limited to, Trees, Rock Outcroppings, and Historic Buildings within a State Scenic Highway.

Implementation of the project would adversely alter scenic resources visible from SR-1, especially with respect to ridgeline views of the Santa Cruz Mountains. Although this section of SR-1 is not officially designated as a scenic highway, Half Moon Bay considers it as a visual area subject to regulations applicable to a scenic corridor. Project implementation would include project design treatments/asures to minimize visual intrusions at the project site; however, project implementation would still obstruct the long-range views of the ridgeline (scenic resource) as viewed from northbound SR-1 approaching the project site from the south. There are no other feasible measures available to address this impact, similar to Impact AES-1, as there is no measure that would reduce the impacts to this scenic resource given the mass and scale of the project. Therefore, this impact would be considered significant and unavoidable.

Impact AES-3. The Project would Substantially Degrade the Existing Visual Character or Quality of Public Views of the Site and its Surroundings.

Project design was developed with the intention of reflecting the visual character and visual quality of the project site's surroundings, as well as maintaining the quality of public views to preserve the heritage and character of the city. Build out of the project would result in permanent changes in the existing visual quality of public views to the project site and its surroundings, namely the long-range views of the hillsides and ridgeline available from publicly accessible viewpoints near the project site. Although the project would incorporate high quality design elements, landscaping, and screening techniques, the visual quality of the project site as seen from public viewpoints is conservatively considered to be adversely affected by the

project, given the circumstances of the project site and the proposed development (described further in **Section 4.1, Aesthetics**). This impact is considered significant and unavoidable.

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