

6 CEQA-REQUIRED ASSESSMENT CONCLUSIONS

This chapter provides an overview of the impacts of the proposed Project based on the analyses presented in Chapters 4 through 5 of this Draft EIR. The topics covered in this chapter include growth inducement, unavoidable significant impacts, and significant irreversible changes. A more detailed analysis of the effects the Project would have on the environment and proposed mitigation measures to minimize significant impacts is provided in Chapters 4.1 through 4.14.

A. Growth Inducement

Section 15126.2(d) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that an EIR discuss the ways 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. Typical growth inducing factors might be the extension of urban services or transportation infrastructure to a previously unserved or under-served area, or the removal of major barriers to development. This section evaluates the proposed Project's potential to create such growth inducements. Not all aspects of growth inducement are negative; rather, negative impacts associated with growth inducement occur only where the Project growth would cause adverse environmental impacts.

The proposed Project would involve direct growth inducement through the construction of 315 new housing units. Assuming an average household size of 2.09 persons per household, based on the Census 2010 estimate for renter-occupied units in Lafayette, the Project could bring as many as 658 new residents to the city. As described in Chapter 4.11, Population and Housing, development of the proposed Project would not exceed the level of population or housing foreseen in City planning efforts.

The proposed Project is not expected to result in indirect growth inducement because all development and improvements associated with the Project would occur on or immediately adjacent to the Project site. The Project site is a previously used site in proximity to downtown Lafayette, and would not involve the extension of infrastructure or services to a previously unserved area.

Development of the proposed Project would involve demolition and construction activities that could generate some temporary employment opportunities; however, given the temporary nature and limited number of such opportunities, it is unlikely that construction workers would relocate to Lafayette as a result of the proposed Project. Thus, the proposed Project would not be considered growth-inducing from an employment perspective.

B. Unavoidable Significant Impacts

Section 15126.2(b) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that an EIR describe any significant impacts that cannot be avoided, even with the implementation of feasible mitigation measures. This section lists the impacts for the proposed Project that were found to be significant and unavoidable. More information on these impacts is found in Chapter 4 of this Draft EIR.

Impact AES-1: The Project would block views of ridgelines, causing a *significant* impact to scenic vistas.

Impact AES-2: The Project would develop a grassy, largely undeveloped site that many members of the community consider to be a visual resource, causing an impact to visual character that would be considered *significant*.

Impact AES-3: The Project would develop a largely undeveloped site that is visible from State Highway 24, a State-designated scenic highway, blocking views to Lafayette Ridge. This would be a *significant* impact.

Impact AES-4: The Project would be lighted in conformance with the City's exterior lighting requirements. In addition, proposed lighting would be low level illumination and exterior lighting would be shielded (downward facing) to minimize light spill, glare, and reflection, and maintain "dark skies." Nevertheless, the Project would bring new light sources to the Project site, which currently contains no light sources, which would cause a *significant* impact.

Impact AQ-2: Use of heavy off-road and on-road construction equipment would produce substantial emissions of criteria air pollutants, which would exceed the BAAQMD threshold of significance for NO_x and could contribute to the O₃ and particulate matter nonattainment designations of the Air Basin. This would be a *significant* impact.

Impact AQ-5: Construction activities associated with the Project would result in a temporary increase in criteria air pollutants that exceed the BAAQMD's regional significance thresholds and, when combined with the construction of cumulative projects, would further degrade the regional and local air quality. This would be a *significant* cumulative impact.

Impact BIO-5: Proposed grading would eliminate the estimated 2 acres of native blue wildrye from the site, considered a sensitive natural community, and additional areas of native grassland could be affected by off-site wetland enhancement activities if native grasslands are present in those locations. This would be considered a *significant* impact.

Impact BIO-7: The proposed Project would remove 91 of the 117 existing trees on the site which qualify as "protected trees" under the City's Tree Protection Ordinance, eliminating about 78 percent of the trees on the site, including the 58-inch valley oak which is one of the largest trees of its kind in the City. An additional nine trees are proposed for relocation on the site, with the locations indicated in the Landscape Plan (see Figure 3-9), although no details have been provided on how they would be relocated and managed. The loss of healthy trees on the site would conflict with relevant policies and programs in the City's General Plan which call for preservation of healthy trees and native vegetation to the "maximum extent feasible." This would be considered a *significant* impact.

Impact LU-1: The Project would be inconsistent with General Plan Policy LU-2.1 and Policy LU-2.3. Policy LU-2.1 states, "Density of Hillside Development: Land use densities should not adversely affect the significant natural features of hill areas." Policy 2.3 states, "Preservation of Views: Structures in

the hillside overlay area shall be sited and designed to be substantially concealed when viewed from below from publicly owned property. The hillsides and ridgelines should appear essentially undeveloped, to the maximum extent feasible.” This would be a *significant* impact.

Impact LU-2: The proposed Project would be inconsistent with General Plan Policy LU-2.2: “Cluster Development: Preserve important visual and functional open space by requiring development to be clustered on the most buildable portions of lots, minimizing grading for building sites and roads.” This would be a *significant* impact.

Impact LU-3: The Project would be inconsistent with the several Hillside Development Permit requirements set forth in the Municipal Code. This would be a *significant* impact.

Impact TRAF-1: Under Existing plus Project conditions, the Deer Hill Road – Stanley Boulevard/Pleasant Hill Road intersection would operate at LOS F during the AM peak hour, with delay increasing by 9.0 seconds as a result of the Project. The Project would increase delay by more than 5 seconds at an intersection operating below the acceptable standard.

Impact TRAF-3: Under Existing plus Project conditions, the Project would reduce the average speed on northbound Pleasant Hill Road between the State Highway 24 westbound off-ramp and Acalanes Avenue during the PM peak hour from 4.6 miles per hour (mph) to 3.8 mph, a 17 percent reduction. This speed reduction of more than 10 percent is considered an unacceptable weaving condition that would substantially increase hazards, resulting in a *significant* impact.

Impact TRAF-12: Under the Cumulative Year 2030 plus Project scenario, the peak estimated 95th-percentile left-turn queue length for northbound traffic on Pleasant Hill Road at Deer Hill Road would be 306 feet during the AM peak hour, would exceed the capacity of the existing 250-foot storage lane. This would be a *significant* cumulative impact.

Impact TRAF-13: Under the Cumulative Year 2030 plus Project scenario, the peak estimated 95th-percentile left-turn queue length for northbound traffic on Pleasant Hill Road at the Project driveway would be 124 feet and 177 feet, during the school PM and commute PM peak hours, respectively, which would exceed the capacity of the 100-foot storage lane proposed in the Project plans. This would be a *significant* cumulative impact.

Impact TRAF-14: Under Cumulative Year 2030 plus Project conditions, the Project would reduce the average speed on northbound Pleasant Hill Road between the State Highway 24 westbound off-ramp and Acalanes Avenue during the PM peak hour from 2.7 miles per hour (mph) to 2.4 mph, an 11 percent reduction. This speed reduction of more than 10 percent is considered an unacceptable weaving condition that would substantially increase hazards, resulting in a *significant* cumulative impact.

Impact TRAF-15: Under Cumulative Year 2030 plus Project conditions, the addition of Project trips to Pleasant Hill Road would increase the peak hour peak direction Delay Index by approximately 0.41 for southbound traffic in the AM peak hour and northbound traffic in the PM peak hour. The Delay Index would increase by more than 0.05 for peak hour peak direction traffic where the Delay Index exceeds 2.0 on Pleasant Hill Road; the result would be a *significant* cumulative impact.

C. Significant Irreversible Changes

Section 15126.2(c) of the CEQA Guidelines requires an EIR to discuss the extent to which a project would commit nonrenewable resources to uses that future generations would probably be unable to reverse. The three CEQA-required categories of irreversible changes are discussed below.

1. Changes in Land Use that Commit Future Generations

The proposed Project involves the redevelopment of a previously used site. The site was previously quarried, and is currently developed with approximately 27,000 square feet in paved surfaces and approximately 5,000 square

feet in various structures, including a vacant single-family residence, two small office buildings, a garage, a cargo storage box, and a construction trailer. The Project would redevelop the site with 14 residential buildings, a clubhouse, a leasing office, and associated parking areas. Because the Project site is already developed and is located in an urban area, in close proximity to the downtown and existing neighborhoods and schools, the Project is not expected to result in any land use changes that would commit future generations to uses that are not already prevalent in the Project site vicinity.

2. Irreversible Damage from Environmental Accidents

Potential environmental accidents of concern include those that would have adverse effects on the environment or public health due to the nature or quantity of material released during an accident and the receptors exposed to that release. Demolition and construction activities associated with development of the proposed Project would involve some risk for environmental accidents. However, these activities would be monitored by City, State, and federal agencies, and would follow professional industry standards for safety and construction. The land uses proposed by the Project would not include any uses or activities that are likely to contribute to or be the cause of significant environmental accident. As a result, the Project would not pose a substantial risk of environmental accidents.

3. Large Commitment of Nonrenewable Resources

Consumption of nonrenewable resources includes issues related to increased energy consumption, conservation of agricultural lands, and lost access to mining reserves. The Project would require water, electric, and gas service, and resources for construction, and the ongoing operation of the Project would involve the use of nonrenewable resources. Construction and ongoing maintenance of the proposed Project would irreversibly commit some materials and nonrenewable energy resources. Materials and resources used would include, but are not limited to, nonrenewable and limited resources such as oil, gasoline, sand and gravel, asphalt, and steel. These materials and energy resources would be used for infrastructure development, transportation of people and goods, and utilities. During the operational phase of the Project

(post-construction), energy sources including oil and gasoline would be used for construction, lighting, heating, and cooling of residences, and transportation of people to and from the Project site.

The Project, however, would include several features that would offset or reduce the need for nonrenewable resources. The Project has been designed to meet the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) 2009 for Home standards to reduce energy and water consumption. The Project has been designed to meet the LEED standards for a minimum Silver certification. LEED rated buildings use key resources more efficiently when compared to conventional buildings built only to Title 24 standards. The Project would include photovoltaic panels and energy efficient equipment for a variety of building features, including but not limited to, hot water units, windows, lighting design and fixtures, appliances, HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning), and insulation. In compliance with CALGreen, the State's Green Building Standards Code, the Project would be required to reduce water consumption by 20 percent, divert 50 percent of construction waste from landfills, and install low pollutant-emitting materials. The Project landscaping plan includes native trees species and ornamental trees, both native and ornamental shrubs and groundcover, infiltration planting, and habitat and wildflower mix at the existing creek. All planting would be irrigated with an automatic water conserving irrigation system in compliance with the California Updated Model Landscape Ordinance, or the City's Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (if it has been adopted at the time of Project implementation).

Although the construction and ongoing operation of the Project would involve the use of nonrenewable resources, through the inclusion of energy-conserving Project features and compliance with applicable standards and regulations, the Project would not represent a large commitment of nonrenewable resources.

The Project site does not contain any agricultural land or a mining reserve, so it would not affect those natural resources.

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