

6 Other Statutory Considerations

This section discusses growth-inducing impacts, irreversible environmental impacts and significant and unavoidable impacts that would be caused by the proposed project.

6.1 Growth Inducing Impacts

Section 15126.2(g) of the *State CEQA Guidelines* requires a discussion of a proposed project's potential to induce growth. Specifically, an EIR must discuss the ways in which the proposed project could foster economic or population growth. Included in this category are projects that would remove obstacles to population growth. In addition, the EIR must discuss how the project may encourage and/or facilitate other activities that could significantly affect the environment. It must not be assumed that growth in any area is necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment.

6.1.1 Employment, Household and Population Growth

According to the AMBAG Draft 2018 Regional Growth Forecast, population in the AMBAG region is projected to grow from 762,676 in 2015 to 883,300 by 2040; an increase of approximately 16 percent. Employment within the region is projected to grow by approximately 57,400 jobs over the same period, an increase of approximately 17 percent. As discussed in Section 4.13, *Population and Housing*, the proposed projects under the 2040 MTP/SCS are designed and intended to accommodate projected growth up to the year 2040. The projects under the 2040 MTP/SCS would be phased to respond to growth as it occurs under adopted local general plans. As a result, the 2040 MTP/SCS would not directly induce growth beyond that projected by 2040; rather, it is intended to accommodate growth in a way that will help meet objectives described in Chapter 4, *Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS)*, of the proposed Plan. Employment, population and household growth would occur within the AMBAG region regardless of whether the 2040 MTP/SCS is implemented. The land use scenario envisioned by the 2040 MTP/SCS would emphasize the development of infill and transit oriented development (TOD) projects within existing urbanized areas; and therefore, may redistribute growth patterns. The location of infill and TOD projects would generally be on properties that have been identified as vacant or underutilized within applicable local jurisdictions. Infill and TOD projects would not necessarily result in significant new population growth within these jurisdictions; rather the 2040 MTP/SCS would accommodate anticipated growth and concentrate it within existing urban cores instead of on the periphery of urban areas or within rural or semi-rural areas. Therefore, direct growth-inducing population growth impacts would be less than significant.

Implementation of the 2040 MTP/SCS would create short-term economic growth in the region as a result of construction-related job opportunities. Implementation of the 2040 MTP/SCS would also generate additional employment opportunities for roadway, vehicle, and landscape maintenance and transportation facility clean-up. The employment increase may subsequently increase the demand for support services and utilities, which could generate secondary employment opportunities. This additional economic growth would likely raise the existing revenue base within the region. Although such growth may incrementally increase economic activity in the county,

significant physical effects are not likely to result from economic growth generated by the 2040 MTP/SCS.

6.1.2 Removal of Obstacles to Growth

The majority of 2040 MTP/SCS transportation improvements are located in existing urbanized areas such as Salinas, Monterey, Hollister and Santa Cruz; however, projects are also located in rural or semi-rural areas. Such transportation improvements can remove an obstacle to growth by either creating additional traffic capacity (in the case of road widening projects) or providing new or better access to undeveloped areas (in the case of road extensions). New infrastructure may also serve to accelerate or shift planned growth or encourage and intensify unplanned growth. These transportation network improvements would remove obstacles to growth in some areas of the region, which would support additional housing, population and economic growth, and therefore could be considered growth inducing.

However, the 2040 MTP/SCS transportation improvements are designed to fully support compact development approach outlined in Chapter 4, *Sustainable Community Strategy*, of the 2040 MTP/SCS and fully support the complementary transportation needs of the growing population. The SCS is designed to accommodate growth by encouraging infill and TOD development. The 2040 MTP/SCS transportation improvement projects are intended and designed to support the land use projects established in the SCS. Therefore, the 2040 MTP/SCS is consistent with projected and planned growth. Further, all transportation improvement projects are anticipated by the general plans of the applicable local jurisdictions, as all improvements have been coordinated with the applicable local jurisdiction.

6.2 Irreversible Effects

Section 15126.2(c) of the CEQA Guidelines requires a discussion of significant irreversible environmental changes that would occur as a result of a proposed project.

Many of the adverse impacts that could occur from implementation of the 2040 MTP/SCS are short-term in nature resulting primarily from construction of the proposed transportation projects, urban infill and TOD projects. Typical construction-related impacts can involve the following issues: noise, air quality, aesthetics and construction-related erosion and associated water quality impacts. In addition, though such materials would not be used in a wasteful manner, all construction activity would involve the use of non-renewable energy sources, potable water and building materials (see Section 4.6, *Energy*). The use of these resources during construction would increase demand and impact supplies across the AMBAG region.

Long-term irreversible environmental impacts are associated with increased asphalt or concrete paving and related direct and cumulative impacts to geology/soils, biological and cultural resources (historic resources); traffic circulation; and hydrology/water quality, as discussed in their respective sections of this EIR. In addition, the 2040 MTP/SCS would result in an overall increase in the urbanized character of the region. This would increase demand for potable water, electricity and other resources. The supply versus demand for these resources is evaluated by service/utility providers; thus, impacts would be determined during project specific review and as part of the overall planning process addressing regional growth. Mitigation measures have been prescribed to minimize these impacts. However, in certain instances, as discussed in Section 6.3 below, could remain significant with implementation of mitigation measures.

6.3 List of Significant and Unavoidable Impacts

The proposed 2040 MTP/SCS would result in the following significant and unavoidable impacts.

- Impact AES-1: public views of scenic vistas and designated scenic corridors
- Impact AES-2: degradation of existing visual character
- Impact AG-1: conversion of Important Farmland to nonagricultural use
- Impact AQ-2: fugitive dust and ozone precursor emissions during construction
- Impact AQ-3: increased PM10 emissions compared to 2015 existing conditions
- Impact AQ-4: exposure of sensitive receptors to substantial hazardous air pollutant concentrations and objectionable odors
- Impact B-1: substantial adverse impacts on special status plant and animal species
- Impact B-2: substantial adverse impacts on sensitive habitats, including federally protected wetlands
- Impact B-3: interference with wildlife movement
- Impact CR-1: disturbance of known or unknown historical resources
- Impact CR-2: disturbance of known and unknown archeological resources
- Impact CR-3: disturbance of known and unknown paleontological resources
- Impact E-2: generation of energy demand that may require construction of new energy facilities or the expansion of such facilities
- Impact GHG-4: not independently achieve SB 32 targets, of 40 percent below 1990 levels
- Impact GHG-5: result in a net increase in transportation projects within areas likely to be affected by sea level rise midcentury
- Impact HAZ-6: risk of loss, injury or death from wildland fire
- Impact W-2: increased water demand potentially requiring new or expanded water supplies, entitlements, or facilities
- Impact LU-2: consistency with State and local land use plans, policies or regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating environmental effects
- Impact N-1: temporary noise and vibration level increases above applicable thresholds
- Impact N-2: exposure of existing and future sensitive receptors to significant mobile source noise levels
- Impact N-3: placement of sensitive receptors in areas with unacceptable noise levels
- Impact N-4: exposure of sensitive receptors and fragile buildings to excessive vibration levels
- Impact PH-1: substantial population growth
- Impact T-1: conflict with performance measures related to totally daily hours of vehicle delay, total peak period CVMT and percent of work trips that are 30 minutes or less
- Impact T-5: increased daily VMT between the baseline 2015 conditions and 2040 conditions

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