

## 5 CEQA-Required Analysis

As required by CEQA, this chapter discusses growth inducement; significant irreversible changes; cumulative impacts; effects that the environmental review determined would not be significant; unavoidable significant effects; and the relationship between short-term and long-term uses of the environment. The chapter focuses on the growth and development that can be anticipated as a result of implementing the draft Castro Valley General Plan's policies. The impacts of specific projects that are carried out under the Plan will be addressed on a project-by-project basis pursuant to CEQA.

### 5.1 GROWTH INDUCEMENT

---

A project is considered growth-inducing if it would directly or indirectly foster economic or population growth; cause the construction of additional housing; remove obstacles to population growth; require the construction or expansion of community facilities and services; or promote or facilitate other activities that cause significant environmental effects. Because this is a program-level EIR that may be used as a first-tier environmental analysis for specific projects, it is particularly important to assess the Plan's potential for inducing growth in Castro Valley and the surrounding area.

The proposed Plan would directly result in increased population, employment and economic growth throughout Castro Valley, especially in the CBD and residential areas with vacant or under-developed lots. The Plan would have the following specific impacts on growth:

- Under build-out conditions in 2025, the proposed Plan is projected to add 4,735 new residents to the 2005 population. This is 1,035 more than ABAG's projected 2025 population; however it does include about 2,560 Five Canyons area residents who were not included in the Castro Valley Planning Area at the time ABAG's projections were generated.
- Under build-out conditions in 2025, the proposed Plan would add 2,090 housing units to the number of units in 2005. This also exceeds ABAG's projections due to the inclusion of the Five Canyons area and the fact that ABAG's 2005 projections did not reflect the County's approval of higher densities in the CBD.
- Under build-out conditions in 2025, the Plan would add 1,460 new jobs, a 16 percent increase over the estimated 9,275 existing in 2005. This is 151 fewer employees than ABAG projected.

These increases in population, housing and employment are relatively modest and would not induce growth in surrounding unincorporated communities or cities. The additional housing would help Castro Valley to provide its fair share of the regional housing allocated to Alameda County's unincorporated area. More than half of the new units would be multi-family and mixed-use development in the Central Business District and most of the remainder would be infill development on the few remaining vacant sites or redevelopment of already built-out sites in the rest of Castro Valley. Even with the projected addition of 1,460 jobs, Castro Valley will remain a predominantly residential community with more than three times as many employed residents as jobs.

Recent development trends and projected growth patterns in the greater San Francisco Bay Area suggest that the region's economic growth may be somewhat slower than it was in the last few decades however new jobs will continue to be created and the housing demand will continue to produce new physical development. The Plan proposes growth that would accommodate some of the regional demand for these additional residential units and employment. In accordance with the region's smart growth initiatives, the Plan proposes infill development and redevelopment clustered at the urban core and along transit corridors. These areas are already developed and have existing infrastructure. This type of growth would have regional traffic and air quality benefits. It also helps to preserve open space and agricultural lands at the urban fringe. The Plan's growth-inducing effects would, therefore, have a net benefit to both Castro Valley and to the region as a whole.

## **5.2 POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE CHANGES**

---

An EIR must identify any significant irreversible environmental changes that the proposed project would cause. Irreversible environmental changes may include current or future commitments to using non-renewable resources or secondary growth-inducing impacts that commit future generations to similar uses. Irretrievable commitments of resources should be evaluated to assure that such consumption is justified.

Consumption of nonrenewable resources typically includes increased energy consumption, conversion of agricultural lands, and lost access to mining reserves. No prime agricultural lands or lands under Williamson Act contracts would be converted. There are no known mineral resources in the Planning Area, so no access to mining reserves would be lost with implementation of the draft Plan. Additional development proposed in the draft Plan would require additional energy of several types. However, because new development allowed under the Plan would be urban infill development or redevelopment, it would not require the construction of major new lines for these services. PG&E anticipates being able to provide the capacity to serve this additional development.

Irreversible changes to the physical environment could occur from the demolition of structures that are eligible for listing on the State Historic Resources Inventory but are not yet documented; the destruction of previously undocumented Native American resources; or from the development of vacant sites that are particularly well-suited for neighborhood or community parks. The Plan proposes the completion of the current inventory of historic resources in the Planning Area and site-specific research prior to development in areas with similar physical characteristics to known historic sites. Therefore, these potential impacts would be maintained at less-than-significant levels. No other irreversible changes would result from the adoption and implementation of the Draft General Plan.

## **5.3 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS**

---

A cumulative impact is one that is created as a result of the combination of the project evaluated in the EIR together with other past, present or probable projects causing related impacts. Cumulative impacts are two or more individual impacts that, when considered together, compound or increase other environmental impacts. Cumulative impacts can result

from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time. This analysis examines cumulative effects of the policies of the draft General Plan, in combination with ABAG projected growth for the other places in the urbanized East Bay counties of Alameda and Contra Costa.

## **LAND USE**

The overall changes in land use that would occur with implementation of the proposed Plan would be minimal. Therefore, no cumulative effect on land use would occur with the proposed project in combination with other reasonably foreseeable projects in the urbanized Bay Area. Even so, to the extent that other inner Bay Area communities encourage infill development of the type envisioned by the draft Plan, the environmental effects would be beneficial in the aggregate. No mitigation would be required.

The draft Plan envisions building approximately 2,090 new housing units over the build-out period until the year 2025. The addition of new housing units reflects specific changes that Alameda County adopted in 2005 to ensure that it would be able to accommodate its share of the Regional Housing Needs Assessment for the County's unincorporated areas. The draft Plan proposes to provide employment opportunities as well as housing in a community that is well-served by transit and regional transportation routes. No mitigation would be necessary.

## **PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION**

The additional population that would occur at buildout, together with anticipated growth in surrounding communities, could have a cumulative impact especially on regional parks, open space, and recreation facilities. The Planning Area's population is projected to remain about 21 percent of the population served by the Hayward Area Recreation and Park District and will decline from 2.5 to about 2.2 percent of the East Bay Regional Park District's service population. The draft Plan includes policies and actions that would increase the park acreage and recreation facilities in Castro Valley to meet the demand generated by the modest increase in population. This will avoid direct impacts on facilities within Castro Valley as well as the significant regional resources, such as Anthony Chabot Regional Park. As a result, no mitigation would be necessary.

## **PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

As an unincorporated community, Castro Valley relies on Alameda County and a variety of single and multi-purpose special districts to develop, operate, and maintain public facilities and services, such as police and fire services, schools, water supply, and wastewater collection and treatment. With the exception of the Castro Valley Unified School District and the Castro Valley Sanitary District, Castro Valley represents only part of the service area of most of these agencies. The analysis in Section 3.3: Public Facilities and Services shows that the additional development and population projected at build-out would not have a significant impact on service levels and would not require new or expanded facilities. Although some cumulative impacts could occur if public facilities were already at capacity, none of the service providers indicated such problems. Therefore, the draft Plan's impact is not anticipated to have a cumulative impact on any public facilities and services. No mitigation would be necessary.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

The transportation analysis in Section 3.4: Transportation and Circulation and the Congestion Management Program (CMP) analysis in Appendix C include evaluation of the proposed Plan's cumulative impacts on regional and CMP highway segments and transit corridors. The analysis showed that the project would contribute to the 2025 cumulative impacts on regional and local roadways but none of the impacts would be significant. No mitigation would be necessary.

## **SEISMIC, SOILS, AND LANDSLIDE HAZARDS**

Because geologic conditions are highly localized, implementation of the draft Plan would not result in cumulative geologic impacts. However, the proposed increase in population and development in a seismically-active area, as noted in Section 3.9: Seismic, Soils, and Landslide Hazards, could be considered to be a cumulative contribution to regional seismic hazards. Increased population and development in Castro Valley would also cumulatively contribute to the region's ability to recover from a major seismic event. However, the Plan includes policies and actions to reduce both the direct and cumulative impacts associated with these hazards. No mitigation would be necessary.

## **HYDROLOGY, FLOODING, AND WATER RESOURCES**

The additional development under the draft Plan would have to comply with County floodplain, grading, stormwater management, and watercourse protection requirements that mitigate direct impacts on water quality. Because development in the Castro Valley Planning Area will continue to release stormwater runoff and treated wastewater into the San Francisco Bay, this impact, together with the combined discharge from other Alameda County communities, could have a significant cumulative effect. The Alameda County Flood Control and Water District, Castro Valley Sanitary District, and every other agency that discharges into San Francisco Bay is subject to the requirements of a National Pollution Discharge and Elimination System (NPDES) permit that was issued by the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) in 1997 and has been modified several times since then. The permit includes requirements to prevent stormwater pollution, and protect and restore creeks and wetland habitat. The proposed policies related to water quality and the programs described in Section 3.10, Hydrology, Flooding, and Water Resources are intended to deal with regional water quality issues and will contribute to the continuing mitigation and alleviation of potential cumulative water quality impacts. No mitigation would be necessary.

## **AIR QUALITY**

The additional growth and development that would occur under the draft Plan is consistent with the assumptions underlying the Bay Area Clean Air Plan. The proposed development is intended to promote greater use of transit and to encourage bicycle and pedestrian activity. As discussed in Section 3.7: Air Quality, transit-oriented development and pedestrian safety

projects would ultimately help achieve regional air quality goals, thus resulting in a cumulative air quality benefit. No mitigation would be necessary.

## **CULTURAL RESOURCES**

The proposed Plan includes policies to promote preservation of the Planning Area's cultural resources, which include potentially significant archeological resources from pre-European settlement. The Plan also proposes policies and programs that would increase opportunities for identifying and protecting resources that contribute to Castro Valley's historical character. Implementation of these policies and actions would mitigate the potential impacts of development under the draft Plan. State-mandated mitigations and policies address and prevent impacts to archaeological and cultural resources and would prevent any cumulative impacts. No mitigation would be necessary.

## **VISUAL QUALITY**

The changes in visual quality under the proposed Plan would be minimal with the exception of within the Central Business District, where more dense development than what exists could occur. Although the visual appearance of the CBD is anticipated to change, the changes are expected to be beneficial because of the draft Plan's policies and proposals for design standard and guidelines. The Plan proposes to constrain development on the surrounding hillsides, so changes in views and the appearance of these residential areas are expected to be negligible. No mitigation would be necessary.

## **5.4 IMPACTS FOUND TO BE NOT SIGNIFICANT**

---

CEQA requires that an EIR provide a brief statement indicating why various possible significant impacts were determined to be not significant and were not discussed in detail. Chapter 3 of the EIR discusses all potential impacts, regardless of their magnitude, except for agricultural resources and mineral resources. With the approval of Measure D, which established a countywide urban growth boundary, all agricultural areas around Castro Valley were excluded from the Planning Area. About 17 acres within the Planning Area remain zoned for agriculture, but none of these parcels are prime farmland or under Williamson Act contract. There are no known mineral resources in the Planning Area.

## **5.5 UNAVOIDABLE SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS**

---

CEQA requires that an EIR discuss any significant environmental impacts that cannot be avoided under full implementation of the proposed project. If there are impacts that cannot be avoided or mitigated to less than significant levels, the EIR must explain why the project is being proposed despite such impacts. The draft Plan's proposed policies and actions would avoid or eliminate all of the Plan's potentially significant impacts. There are, therefore, no potentially significant impacts that are unavoidable or that cannot be mitigated.

## **5.6 CHANGES IN LAND USE THAT WOULD COMMIT FUTURE GENERATIONS**

---

CEQA requires consideration of impacts that might not be significant during the immediate future but could be significant in the future because they would commit future generations to actions that could be detrimental to the environment. (Guidelines Section 15065(a)(2))

While the proposed Plan would allow for growth in the CBD and other parts of the Planning Area, as noted above, this increased development would primarily occur as infill or as redevelopment of previously developed sites. Moreover, because there is little vacant land available for development within the Planning Area, the amount of vacant land that would become developed as a result of implementing the proposed Plan would be minimal. As a result, there will not be any significant land use changes that would commit future generations to actions that are detrimental to the environment.