

6 CEQA-REQUIRED ASSESSMENT CONCLUSIONS

As required by CEQA, this chapter provides an overview of the impacts of the proposed project based on the technical analyses presented in Chapters 4 and 5. The topics covered in this chapter include growth inducement, unavoidable significant impacts, significant irreversible changes, and impacts not found to be significant. A more detailed analysis of the effects the project would have on the environment is provided in Chapter 4.

A. Growth Inducement

A project is considered to be growth-inducing if it fosters, directly or indirectly, economic or population growth beyond the boundaries of the project site. Typical growth inducements might be the extension of urban services or transportation infrastructure to a previously unserved or under-served area or the removal of major boundaries to development. According to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.2, this discussion of growth inducement is not intended to characterize growth as necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment.

The Specific Plan would permit a mix of residential, retail, office and civic uses through development or redevelopment in the Specific Plan Area. As discussed in detail in Chapter 4.10, Population and Housing, implementation of the Specific Plan would add 3,250 residential units over the life span of the Specific Plan. Additionally, the Specific Plan would add close to 300,000 square feet of commercial/retail space, just over 56,000 square feet of office space and about 141,000 square feet of public/institutional space, while decreasing about 8,600 square feet of heavy industrial space and just over 691,000 square feet of light industrial space.

Overall, the Specific Plan's projected build out would exceed the amount of growth that would occur under the existing General Plan for the Specific Plan Area. However, the overall rate of residential growth in the Specific Plan Area will continue to be controlled by the City's Growth Management Ordinance. Additionally, the Specific Plan is designed to help the City of Santa

Rosa control and direct growth away from green field development and focus on brown field and redevelopment opportunities. Specifically, the Specific Plan encourages the City to utilize its vacant and underutilize parcels more efficiently while encouraging higher density uses in appropriate areas of the City. Implementation of the Specific Plan would therefore absorb some growth expected in outlying areas of the City. By focusing growth within the Urban Growth Boundary, the Specific Plan works toward the City's goal to prevent urban sprawl by while meeting the housing needs of a range of Santa Rosa residents.

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. As described in Chapter 4, most of the potential impacts from the Specific Plan would be either less than significant due to the inclusion of "self-mitigation" policies in the document itself or could be mitigated to less than significant levels by the implementation of mitigation measures. Significant unavoidable impacts for the Specific Plan were identified in the following areas:

- ◆ **Impact AQ-2:** The Downtown Station Area Specific Plan would contribute to increased vehicular and residential area emissions that would exceed BAAQMD thresholds.
- ◆ **Impact TRANS-1:** Buildout of the Specific Plan in the future would exacerbate unacceptable LOS F traffic conditions in both directions on Highway 101, and unacceptable LOS E conditions on westbound State Highway 12.

C. Significant Irreversible Changes

Section 15126.2c of the CEQA Guidelines requires a discussion of the extent to which a proposed project will commit nonrenewable resources to uses that

future generations will probably be unable to reverse. A project would generally result in a significant irreversible impact if:

- ◆ Primary and secondary impacts would commit future generations to similar land uses.
- ◆ The project would involve uses in which irreversible damage could result from any potential environmental accidents associated with the project.
- ◆ The project would involve a large commitment of nonrenewable resources.

These distinct categories of irreversible changes that should be considered are further detailed below.

1. Changes in Land Use which Commit Future Generations

The Specific Plan would commit future generations to more intense development within the Specific Plan Area. It is unlikely to be economically feasible or desirable to change the Specific Plan Area in the future to a significantly different land use or convert back to non-urban uses, although some proposed mixed-use structures could presumably be converted to other uses more easily than single-use structures such as single-family homes. However, this is not considered to be a significant adverse impact, since the Specific Plan Area is already mainly developed with urban uses and is foreseen to continue as a heavily urbanized part of town with significant residential and commercial activity with or without the Specific Plan.

a. Irreversible Damage from Environmental Accidents

Implementation of the Specific Plan would not involve the use or transport of unusual hazardous materials. Thus, no significant environmental damage, such as the accidental spill or explosion of hazardous material, is anticipated as a result of development of the Specific Plan.

b. Consumption of Natural Resources

Consumption of nonrenewable resources includes issues related to increased energy consumption, conservation of agricultural lands, and lost access to

mining reserves. The Specific Plan will require additional electric and gas service, and it will require resources for construction. It is anticipated that these additional services will create an impact to the service providers, including the need for additional staff or facilities. However, the Specific Plan includes policies that address the need to make improvements to the infrastructure system. In many cases, the new structures will also be more energy conserving than the older structures that they replace since new development will need to comply with city and State regulations, such as Title 24, that require new development to incorporate energy conserving features. Additionally, the great majority of the property is not agricultural land, nor does it provide access to a mining reserve, so it would not preclude access to any natural resources.

D. Impacts Found Not to Be Significant

CEQA allows environmental issues for which there is no likelihood of an impact to be “scoped out” during the EIR scoping process and not covered in an EIR. No topics were “scoped out” to be excluded in this EIR.