

## 5 Other Statutory Considerations

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

### 5.1 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. Economic and population growth does not necessarily cause significant physical changes to the environment. However, depending upon the type, magnitude, and location of growth, it can result in significant environmental effects. A project's growth-inducing potential is therefore considered significant if growth generated by the project could result in significant effects in one or more environmental issue areas.

#### 5.1.1 Employment, Household, and Population Growth

According to the San Joaquin County Forecast Summary, population in the SJCOG region is expected to grow from 728,644 in 2015 to 1,020,862 by 2040; an increase of approximately 29% percent. Employment within the region is expected to grow by approximately 79,685 jobs over the same period, an increase of approximately 25 percent (University of the Pacific 2016). As discussed in Section 4.12, *Land Use*, the proposed projects under the 2018 RTP/SCS are designed and intended to accommodate anticipated growth up to the year 2042. The projects under the 2018 RTP/SCS would be phased to respond to growth as it occurs under adopted local general plans. As a result, the 2018 RTP/SCS would not induce growth beyond that anticipated by 2042; rather, it is intended to accommodate growth in a way that will help meet objectives of the proposed Plan. Employment, population and household growth would occur within the SJCOG region regardless of whether the 2018 RTP/SCS is implemented. The land use scenario envisioned by the 2018 RTP/SCS would facilitate 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 2018 RTP/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, growth-inducing population growth impacts would be less than significant.

Implementation of the 2018 RTP/SCS would create short-term economic growth in the region as a result of construction-related job opportunities. Implementation of the 2018 RTP/SCS would also generate additional employment opportunities for roadway, vehicle, and landscape maintenance, and public transit facility clean-up. The potential 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 expected to result from economic growth generated by the 2018 RTP/SCS.

### 5.1.2 Removal of Obstacles to Growth

The majority of 2018 RTP/SCS transportation improvements are located in existing urbanized areas such as Lathrop, Stockton, and Tracy; however, projects are also located in rural or semi-rural areas. Such transportation improvements can be perceived as removing 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.

However, these improvements would not necessarily remove obstacles to growth. Rather, the 2018 RTP/SCS transportation improvements are designed to fully support compact development approach outlined in the 2018 RTP/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 2018 RTP/SCS transportation improvement projects are intended and designed to support the land use patterns established in the SCS. Therefore, the 2018 RTP/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.

## 5.2 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.

The 2018 RTP/SCS update would have an indefinite life span, assuming regular maintenance of the proposed improvements and long-term occupancy of infill and TOD projects. The proposed improvements would be located primarily in areas where transportation facilities already exist, where transportation facilities are already planned, or where transportation facilities are needed to support the new land use patterns identified in the SCS. Therefore, most proposed transportation projects are not generally expected to dramatically alter development patterns in the county and projects would support planned future development patterns. The 2018 RTP/SCS would provide a foundation for local, regional, and State officials in making decisions aimed at achieving a coordinated and balanced transportation system.

In the absence of the programmed and planned capital improvements under the 2018 RTP/SCS, traffic conditions throughout the study area would worsen as the population grows; see Section 4.14, *Transportation and Circulation*. The increasing traffic may also worsen safety problems on some roads. However, implementation of the 2018 RTP/SCS would involve certain trade-offs as it would create impacts in other issue areas that would not occur without the planned improvements.

Many of the potential adverse impacts that could occur from implementation of the 2018 RTP/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 SJCOG 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 2018 RTP/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, potential 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 5.3 below, impacts could remain potentially significant with the implementation of mitigation measures.

### 5.3 List of Significant and Unavoidable Impacts

The proposed 2018 RTP/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 AG-2: conflicts with existing zoning or land use designations of agricultural use
- Impact AG-3: conflict with or loss of forest or timberland
- Impact Bio-1: may result in impacts to special-status plant and animal species
- Impact Bio-2: may result in impacts to sensitive habitats, including federally protected wetlands
- Impact Bio-3: may impact wildlife movement, including fish migration, and/or impede the use of a native wildlife nursery
- Impact CR-1: disturbance of known or unknown historical resources
- Impact CR-2: disturbance of known or unknown archeological resources
- Impact W-2: increased water demand impacting groundwater supplies and recharge, and potentially requiring new or expanded water supplies, entitlements, or facilities
- Impact W-4: increased water demand requiring new or expanded water supplies
- Impact N-1: temporary and permanent noise level increases above applicable thresholds and placement of sensitive receptors in areas with unacceptable noise levels
- Impact N-2: generation of substantial vibration above applicable thresholds
- Impact T-1: daily hours of vehicle delay and total peak period congested VMT in the SJCOG region would increase
- Impact T-2: conflict with applicable congestion management plan programs by decreasing the levels of service

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