

4.0 IMPACT OVERVIEW

This chapter provides an overview of the environmental effects of the proposed project, including significant unavoidable adverse impacts, impacts not found to be significant, cumulative impacts, significant irreversible environmental changes, and growth-inducing impacts. Cross-references are made throughout this chapter to other chapters of the EIR where more detailed discussions of the impacts of the proposed project can be found.

4.1 SIGNIFICANT UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS

This section is prepared in accordance with Section 15126.2(b) of the CEQA Guidelines, which requires the discussion of any significant environmental effects that cannot be avoided if a project is implemented. These include impacts that can be mitigated but cannot be reduced to a less than significant level. An analysis of environmental impacts caused by the proposed project has been conducted and is contained in this EIR. Twelve issue areas were analyzed in detail in Chapter 3. According to the environmental impact analysis presented in Chapter 3, the proposed project would result in significant unavoidable adverse impacts related to noise from fireworks displays during special events (Chapter 3.9, Noise).

As discussed in Chapter 3.9, Noise, nighttime special events held at the project site may include fireworks displays. Fireworks displays have the potential to expose nearby sensitive receptors to noise levels that are 10 dBA or greater over existing ambient noise levels, which would result in a potentially significant impact. Mitigation measure NOISE-A would require that a special event permit be obtained for any proposed fireworks display, and that a noise management plan be incorporated into the permit prior to issuance by the local jurisdiction. Additionally, mitigation measure NOISE-B would ensure that residents in proximity to the project site are notified about any special events, including fireworks displays that could be audible at off-site locations. Nonetheless, the implementation of these mitigation measures would not ensure that increases in noise during fireworks displays would not exceed 10 dBA over existing levels. Therefore, impacts related to fireworks noise at the project site during special events would remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation.

4.2 EFFECTS NOT FOUND TO BE SIGNIFICANT

Section 15128 of the CEQA Guidelines requires the identification of impacts of a project that were determined not to be significant and that were not discussed in detail in an impacts chapter of the EIR. These issues were eliminated from further review during the Initial Study process (see Appendix A of this EIR). Therefore, the following is a brief discussion of environmental issues that were not found to be significant for the proposed project, including agriculture and forestry resources, land use and planning, and mineral resources.

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4.2.1 AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

Prior to being developed as a railroad yard, the project site was historically used for agriculture; however, it is currently zoned MR2-1 and is designated for light industrial land uses under the Community Plan. No agricultural activities currently occur on-site. Additionally, the Extent of Important Farmland Map Coverage maintained by the Division of Land Resource Protection indicates that the project area is not included in the Important Farmland Category and the adjacent properties are not utilized for agricultural purposes.¹ According to the Important Farmland in California Map, the project site is located on land that is considered “Urban and Built-up Land”.² Thus, the project site is not classified as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance.

The area surrounding the project site is currently zoned for commercial, multi-family residential, light industrial, open space, and public facility land uses. Neither the project site nor the surrounding properties are enrolled under the Williamson Act.³ Thus, the proposed project would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act Contract. Furthermore, no land on or near the project site is zoned for, or contains, forest or timberland uses. Therefore, the proposed project would not convert farmland or forest resources to a non-agricultural use, and no impacts would occur.

4.2.2 LAND USE AND PLANNING

The area surrounding the project site is primarily developed with light industrial, residential, commercial, and institutional uses. The proposed project involves the implementation of park improvements at the project site including utility infrastructure, lighting, landscaping, three event spaces, hardscaped walkways and pedestrian plazas, unstructured playground and work-out areas, and cultural interpretive theme areas. The proposed project does not include development of any large structures or buildings. Additionally, no streets or sidewalks would be permanently closed as a result of the development of the proposed project, and no separation of uses or disruption of access between land use types would occur. Therefore, the proposed project would not physically divide the established community in which the project site is located, and no impacts would occur.

The project site is currently zoned MR2-1 and is designated for light industrial land uses under the Community Plan. Notwithstanding the current zoning and land use designations, the project site is currently developed with an IPU park, consistent with California Public Resources Code Section 5002.2(e). The IPU park has provided for public use of the project site during preparation of the LASHP General Plan and long-term planning for the project site. The LASHP General Plan provides goals and

¹ California Department of Conservation, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, County PDF Maps, Los Angeles Important Farmland 2008 Map, available at: <ftp://ftp.consrv.ca.gov/pub/dlrp/FMMP/pdf/2008/los08.pdf>, accessed: February 15, 2011.

² California Department of Conservation, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, County PDF Maps, Important Farmland in California Map, 2008, available at: ftp://ftp.consrv.ca.gov/pub/dlrp/FMMP/pdf/statewide/2008/fmmp2008_08_11.pdf, accessed: February 15, 2011.

³ California Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection, Williamson Act, Williamson Act Contract Land map, 2006, available at: ftp://ftp.consrv.ca.gov/pub/dlrp/wa/Map%20and%20PDF/CALIFORNIA%20WILLIAMSON%20ACT/ca_wa_statewide_simple_11x17.pdf, accessed: February 15, 2011.

guidelines to serve as a long-range management tool for achieving the vision and purpose of the LASHP.⁴ Additionally, the City is actively planning land use changes adjacent to and near the project site, including the aforementioned CASP.

As discussed previously, the LASHP General Plan was adopted by the CDPR Commission on June 10, 2005. The proposed project synthesizes the LASHP General Plan/EIR goals and guidelines into design concepts that would be implemented in phases as funding becomes available. As such, the proposed project would be consistent with the LASHP General Plan.

The Draft CASP was circulated for public review in November 2010 and is intended to facilitate the transformation of the area from vehicle-oriented and primarily industrial uses to a mixed-use community oriented toward pedestrian and multimodal uses. Under the CASP, the project site is located within the Greenway District. This designation primarily allows for development of recreation and open space uses, as well as supporting educational and community-related activities. Upon adoption by the City, the CASP's land use designations would become effective and govern development of the project site regardless of the underlying zoning established by the Community Plan. Furthermore, the proposed project would be consistent with the goals and guidelines set forth in the LASHP General Plan. Thus, although the proposed project is inconsistent with the existing land use and zoning designations, it would be consistent with the existing and planned land uses at the project site and in the surrounding area. Impacts would be less than significant.

No habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan applies to the project site.⁵ Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with any habitat conservation or natural community conservation plan, and no impacts would occur.

4.2.3 MINERAL RESOURCES

The project site is not located within an area containing significant mineral deposits or a surface mining district.⁶ As previously discussed, the project site is currently zoned for light industrial uses. No classified or designated mineral deposits of statewide or regional significance are known to occur on the project site. Additionally, the project site is not located in an oil field or drilling area as designated by the City.⁷ No oil wells exist or are known to have previously existed on the project site and all wells located on adjacent properties have been plugged and are not in use.⁸ Therefore, the proposed project would not cause the permanent loss of or access to any significant mineral or oil resources. No impacts would occur.

⁴ CDPR, *Los Angeles State Historic Park General Plan and Final Environmental Impact Report*, June 10, 2005.

⁵ California Department of Fish and Game, Resource Management, Natural Community Conservation Planning, available at: <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/habcon/nccp/status/index.html>, accessed: February 16, 2011.

⁶ City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning, Environmental and Public Facilities Maps, Areas Containing Significant Mineral Deposits in the City of Los Angeles Map, and Oil Drilling and Surface Mining Supplemental Use Districts Map, September 1996.

⁷ City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning, Environmental and Public Facilities Maps, Oil Field and Oil Drilling Areas in the City of Los Angeles, September 1996.

⁸ State of California Department of Conservation, Division of Oil, Gas & Geothermal Resources, Online Mapping System, available at: <http://maps.conservation.ca.gov/doms/doms-app.html>, accessed: February 15, 2011.

4.3 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

According to Section 15355 of the CEQA Guidelines, cumulative impacts refer to:

“Two or more individual effects which, when considered together are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental effects. The individual effects may be changes resulting from a single project or a number of separate projects. The cumulative impact from several projects is the change in the environment that results from the incremental impact of the project when added to other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time.”

Additionally, Section 15130(a) of the CEQA Guidelines states:

“An EIR shall discuss cumulative impacts of a project when the project’s incremental effect is cumulatively considerable... When the combined cumulative impact associated with the project’s incremental effect and the effects of other projects is not significant, the EIR shall briefly indicate why the cumulative impact is not significant and is not discussed in further detail in the EIR... An EIR may determine that a project’s contribution to a significant cumulative impact will be rendered less than cumulatively considerable and thus is not significant. A project’s contribution is less than cumulatively considerable if the project is required to implement or fund its fair share of a mitigation measure or measures designed to alleviate the cumulative impact.”

Pursuant to Section 15130(b)(1)(B) of the CEQA Guidelines, the cumulative impacts analysis may include a summary of projections contained in an adopted planning document or in an adopted or certified prior environmental document that described or evaluated regional or areawide conditions contributing to the cumulative impact. The projection-based approach was used for the cumulative impacts discussion in this EIR using the conditions evaluated in the CASP Draft EIR. The project site is included within the CASP area and, as such, regional and areawide conditions discussed in the CASP Draft EIR are also applicable to the proposed project. The evaluation of cumulative impacts contained within the CASP Draft EIR was based on a review of related planning documents, as well as the identification of related projects that, in conjunction with the development of the CASP, may contribute to a cumulative impact. The related development projects were selected based on their status, location in relationship to the CASP area, size, and context.⁹ A majority of the related projects consist of residential or mixed-use (including residential and retail components) development, and all related projects are located within a 3.5-mile radius of the project site. The scale or geographic scope of related projects varies for each impact category. For instance, cumulative aesthetics or geology and soils impacts are considered localized, while cumulative air quality and traffic and transportation impacts are considered regional. The list of related

⁹ City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning, *Cornfield Arroyo Seco Specific Plan and Redevelopment Plan Draft Environmental Impact Report*, September 2011.

development projects shown in Table 4-1 is from the CASP Draft EIR, which was derived from information provided by the City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning.

**TABLE 4-1
DESCRIPTION OF RELATED PROJECTS**

Project Name	Location	Size (sf)	Description
Blossom Plaza	900 North Broadway	360,071	New 7-story building with 209 housing units (53 affordable units), 40,000 sf of retail, and a 17,000 sf plaza
Chinatown Gateway	639-643 North Broadway	321,000	280 residential units and 18,000 sf of retail in a new 6-story building
Chinatown Metro Apartments	808 North Spring Street	99,489	Adaptive reuse of a 9-story building with 123 affordable housing units
Grandview Garden	940 North Hill Street	24,000	18 loft style units above first floor retail
Lotus Gardens	715-721 Yale Street	67,241	New 5-story building with 59 affordable housing units
White Memorial	1828 Cesar East Chavez Avenue	50,000	New addition to existing hospital
Linda Vista Senior Housing	610 South Saint Louis Street	195,390	Adaptive reuse of 97 senior affordable housing units
Whittier Apartments	3555 East Whittier Boulevard	51,480	New construction of 60 multi-family housing units
Las Alturas Senior Housing	3551 East Whittier Boulevard	35,142	New construction of 78 senior housing units
First and Mission	110 South Boyle Avenue	25,349	New 2-story building with 5 live/work units
Marengo Center	1902 Marengo Street	27,175	New 3-story commercial building with offices above first floor retail
1526 Cesar East Chavez Avenue	1526 Cesar East Chavez Avenue	12,000	New building with 6 multi-family housing units

Source: City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning, *Cornfield Arroyo Seco Specific Plan and Redevelopment Plan Draft Environmental Impact Report*, September 2011.

In addition, the California High-Speed Rail Authority has proposed to construct a high-speed rail line from Los Angeles to Palmdale. One route option that is being considered would potentially traverse the project site and include a station at Union Station, approximately 0.60 miles south of the project site. This possible route would include a cut-and-cover section within the project site that would require trenching, placing the rail, and covering the segment. The construction of this route may impact the project site and would require that the park be closed temporarily. The high-speed rail line is currently under environmental review. Currently, it is expected that environmental review would be completed and approved in late 2012.

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AESTHETICS

The related projects include various mixed-use, residential, office, and industrial projects that are currently under construction, approved but not built, or proposed for development. These related projects would occur in an area that has already been impacted by urban development. The construction phase of the proposed project would represent a temporary change in the visual character of the project site and surrounding area. As the proposed project would enhance an existing recreational area, including the addition of approximately 1,000,000 square feet of new landscaping, the proposed project would represent a positive change on the aesthetics and visual character of the area. The development of the project site would be aesthetically consistent with the visual character of the existing project site and area. Therefore, the proposed project, in conjunction with the related projects, would not result in a cumulatively significant aesthetic impact.

AIR QUALITY

The SCAQMD cumulative analysis focuses on whether a specific project would result in cumulatively considerable emissions. Per CEQA Guidelines Section 15064(h)(4), the existence of significant cumulative impacts caused by other projects alone shall not constitute substantial evidence that the proposed project's incremental effects are cumulatively considerable.

As discussed in Chapter 3.2, Air Quality, construction-related emissions of criteria air pollutants would not exceed applicable mass emission thresholds established by SCAQMD, which are designed to assist the region in attaining the applicable state and national ambient air quality standards. Long-term operational emissions associated with the proposed project would also be below the applicable SCAQMD thresholds. Therefore, neither construction nor operation of the proposed project would contribute to a cumulatively considerable air quality impact.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Any potentially significant impacts of the related projects associated with special status plant and wildlife species, migratory wildlife (including wildlife corridors and native migratory bird species), and conservation plans, particularly during the construction phase, would be assessed on a project-by-project basis. Additionally, the related projects are located in a highly urban environment that does not likely include substantial habitat for biological resources. The implementation of the provided mitigation measures would reduce significant project impacts related to biological resources. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable effect, and cumulative impacts related to biological resources would be less than significant.

CULTURAL AND PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Development of the proposed project in conjunction with the related projects would result in the increased potential for encountering historical, archaeological, and paleontological resources in the project vicinity. As discussed in Chapter 3.4, Cultural and Paleontological Resources, the project site is a City-designated

Historic-Cultural Monument. Additionally, 10 designated California Historical Landmarks and two properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places are located within a 0.5-mile radius of the project site. However, the proposed project would include mitigation measures to reduce potential impacts to cultural resources. Additionally, no paleontological sites or survey areas are known to exist in the vicinity of the project site. As with the proposed project, all related projects in the vicinity would be required to comply with CEQA Section 15064.5. If cultural or paleontological resources are uncovered during construction activities, construction would cease until the find is analyzed. Therefore, the proposed project would not contribute to a significant cumulative impact related to cultural and paleontological resources.

GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Geological impacts related to future development in the City would involve hazards related to site-specific soil conditions, erosion, and ground-shaking during earthquakes. The impacts on each site would be specific to that site and its users, and would not be common or contribute to the impacts on other sites. Additionally, development on each site would be subject to uniform site development and construction standards that are designed to protect public safety and structures. Therefore, cumulative geology and soils impacts would be less than significant.

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

In the absence of established quantitative thresholds to evaluate impacts associated with GHG emissions, consistency with adopted programs and policies to reduce GHG emissions have been suggested as a method to qualitatively evaluate the significance of cumulative impacts. CEQA Guidelines Section 15064(h)(3) permits a finding that a project's effects would not be cumulatively considerable if the project would comply with the requirements in a previously approved plan or mitigation program specified by law. For purposes of this analysis, the proposed project's consistency with the goals of AB 32 is used to assess the significance of potential impacts associated with GHG emissions. As discussed in Chapter 3.6, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, the proposed project's GHG emissions fall well below all adopted levels and, thus, would be consistent with the goal of AB 32 to reduce statewide GHG emissions by 28.5 percent by the year 2020. Furthermore, the analysis of GHG emissions is, by definition, based on the cumulative impacts of the proposed project. Therefore, the proposed project would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable impact related to GHG emissions.

HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

The development of the proposed project, in conjunction with the related projects, has the potential to increase the risk of accidental release of hazardous materials. However, the implementation of mitigation measures HAZ-A through HAZ-C would reduce the potential impacts associated with the proposed project to a less than significant level. With respect to the related projects, each of the related projects would require evaluation for potential hazards, including those associated with the release of hazardous materials into the environment, or from exposure to a health hazard in excess of regulatory standards; exposure of hazardous material, substances, or waste within 0.25 miles of an existing or proposed school;

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or the location of a listed hazardous materials site. As hazardous materials and risk of upset conditions are largely site-specific, this would occur for each individual project affected, in conjunction with development proposals on these properties. Further, local municipalities are required to follow local, state, and federal laws regarding hazardous materials and other hazards. Therefore, the proposed project would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable impact.

HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

The proposed project, in conjunction with the related projects, may impact storm drainage and water quality in the area. The proposed project is located in an urban area where most of the surrounding properties are developed. The existing storm drainage system serving this area has been designed to accommodate runoff from this built-out environment. Additionally, any potentially significant impacts of the related projects associated with the violation of water quality standards, alteration of drainage patterns, water runoff, and flood hazards, would be assessed on a project-by-project basis. Substantial additional runoff does not generally occur with development of related projects since new developments would also be required to control the amount and quality of stormwater runoff coming from their respective sites. Thus, the proposed project would not contribute to a significant cumulative impact in the event that any off-site areas served by local storm drains were to increase peak flows to the system. Additionally, no cumulatively considerable impacts related to water runoff and water quality would occur.

NOISE

The analysis of potential noise impacts of the proposed project includes a discussion of future noise levels at the project site with development of the proposed project and buildout of the CASP area. As such, cumulative noise impacts are evaluated in the year 2035 without project condition shown in Table 3.9-7 within Chapter 3.9, Noise. Impacts of the proposed project and cumulative development are shown in the year 2035 with project condition.

Table 3.9-7 demonstrates that future mobile source noise levels on project area roadways would increase by a maximum of 2 dBA CNEL, which is a less than significant increase in ambient noise levels. Additionally, the proposed project would not increase future noise levels by a measurable amount and, thus, would not have a cumulatively considerable impact on future noise levels.

South of Spring Street, future noise levels would be 69 to 70 dBA CNEL at approximately 100 feet from the edge of the roadway; these noise levels are acceptable at industrial uses. However, future development along the south side of Spring Street under the proposed CASP would replace the existing industrial uses with predominantly multi-family residences. The projected 69 to 70 dBA CNEL is considered conditionally acceptable for multi-family residences and may require use of noise abatement measures and careful consideration of site design and placement of exterior uses. However, projected noise levels would not preclude future development of this area. Therefore, cumulative vehicular traffic noise impacts on future noise sensitive land uses would be less than significant.

Fireworks displays included with the proposed project have the potential to expose nearby sensitive receptors to noise levels that are 10 dBA or greater over existing ambient noise levels, which would result in a significant and unavoidable impact after the implementation of mitigation measures. The related projects also have the potential to result in increased ambient noise levels in the project area. However, the ambient noise levels in the project area are relatively high due to the urban and industrial nature of the area. In addition, fireworks displays would occur only occasionally with the proposed project. Therefore, the proposed project would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable impact.

POPULATION AND HOUSING

Many of the related projects, such as development of the CASP area, include a residential component, which would increase the number of residents and housing units in the project vicinity. However, the proposed project does not include any residential development and would not generate any new permanent residents. Any potentially significant impacts of the related projects associated with population growth would be assessed on a project-by-project basis. Therefore, cumulative impacts related to direct or indirect population growth would be less than significant.

PUBLIC SERVICES AND UTILITIES

Public services and utilities impacts are generally triggered by substantial population growth associated with residential and business development. The proposed project does not include either of these uses and would not induce substantial population growth in the project area. Additionally, as discussed in Chapter 3.11, Public Services and Utilities, the proposed project would not result in any significant impacts related to public services or utility systems. Thus, the proposed project would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable impact. Furthermore, each related project, as part of the environmental review process, must document that they would be adequately served by existing services and utilities or provide mitigation and/or improvements to existing utility systems to ensure proper and adequate capacity. Therefore, cumulative impacts related to public services and utilities would be less than significant.

TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC

The analysis of traffic impacts of the proposed project examines the effects of future growth in traffic in the region through consideration of traffic generated by related development in the project area, including the CASP. Consequently, impacts of cumulative growth are already incorporated into the traffic model and are reflected in the cumulative (2035) no project condition in Table 3.12-6 within Chapter 3.12, Transportation and Traffic. Impacts of the proposed project, in conjunction with related development, are shown in the cumulative (2035) plus project column in Table 3.12-6. As shown in Table 3.12-6, development of the proposed project would not combine with the related projects to cause a significant impact at any of the study intersections. Therefore, the proposed project, in conjunction with the related projects, would not cause a cumulatively considerable effect, and impacts with respect to transportation and traffic would be less than significant.

4.4 SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

California Public Resources Code section 21100(b)(2)(B) and Section 15126.2(c) of the CEQA Guidelines require that and EIR analyze the extent to which the proposed project's primary and secondary effects would impact the environment and commit nonrenewable resources to uses that future generations will not be able to reverse.

Construction of the proposed project would result in the use of nonrenewable resources, including fossil fuels, natural gas, and building materials, such as concrete. However, the proposed project does not represent an uncommon construction project that uses an extraordinary amount of raw material in comparison to other development projects of similar scope and magnitude. Additionally, the proposed project would be designed to incorporate energy and water efficiency features in accordance with Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations. The proposed project is not anticipated to consume substantial amounts of energy in a wasteful manner, and it would not result in significant impacts from consumption of utilities. No irreversible environmental changes would result from the proposed project as impacts would primarily occur during the temporary construction phase. In addition, a majority of impacts occurring during operation would not be considered significant.

4.5 GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS

Section 15126.2(d) of the CEQA Guidelines requires a discussion of the ways in which a project could induce growth. This includes ways in which a project would foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment. Section 15126.2(d) of the CEQA Guidelines states that an EIR should:

“Discuss the ways in which the proposed project could foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment. Included in this are projects which would remove obstacles to population growth (a major expansion of a waste water treatment plant might, for example, allow for more construction in service areas). Increases in the population may tax existing community service facilities, requiring construction of new facilities that could cause significant environmental effects. Also discuss the characteristics of some projects which may encourage and facilitate other activities that could significantly affect the environment, either individually or cumulatively. It must not be assumed that growth in any area is necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment.”

Induced growth is any growth that exceeds planned growth and results from new development that would not have taken place without the implementation of the proposed project. Typically, the growth-inducing potential of a project would be considered significant if it results in growth or population concentration that exceeds those assumptions included in pertinent master plans, land use plans, or projections made by

regional planning authorities. However, the creation of growth-inducing potential does not automatically lead to growth, whether it would be below or in exceedance of a projected level.

The environmental effects of induced growth are secondary or indirect impacts of the proposed project. Secondary effects of growth could result in significant, adverse environmental impacts, which could include increased demand on community or public services, increased traffic and noise, degradation of air and water quality, and conversion of agricultural land and open space to developed uses.

As discussed in Chapter 2.0, Project Description, the proposed project involves the implementation of park improvements at the project site, which is currently developed with an IPU park. The proposed project would not include the construction of any substantial buildings, residential uses, or other uses that would result in an increase in the population of the project area. The improvements to be implemented under the proposed project are not anticipated to result in an increased demand on the LASHP. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in any significant growth-inducing impacts in the project area.

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