

5 CEQA Required Conclusions

This section summarizes significant unavoidable, irreversible, growth-inducing, and cumulative impacts, as required by California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines.

5.1 GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS

The EIR must examine the potential growth-inducing impacts of the proposed Hillcrest Station Area Specific Plan. More specifically, CEQA Guidelines require that the EIR “discuss the ways in which the proposed Plan could foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly” (CEQA Guidelines §15126.2(d)). This analysis must also consider the removal of obstacles to population growth, such as improvements in the regional transportation system.

PROJECTED GROWTH

Growth-inducing impacts over an extended time period are difficult to assess with precision, since future economic and population trends may be influenced by unforeseeable events, such as natural disasters, and business and development cycles. The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) is responsible for making long-term, realistic forecasts of population, households, and employment which are based on historic trends, as well as emerging trends in markets, demographics, and local policies (ABAG, 2007). Regional and local jurisdictions and agencies use ABAG projections to guide planning efforts. The current ABAG 2007 Projections indicate that in 2035 the population could be 128,400 in 43,270 households. The projected employment is 40,800 jobs.

Table 5.1-1 City of Antioch Projected Growth

Year	Population		Households		Employment		Jobs/ Household
	Number	Percent Growth	Number	Percent Growth	Number	Percent Growth	
2005	101,500	12%	32,760	12%	20,510	4%	0.63
2010	106,000	4%	34,560	5%	22,680	11%	0.66
2015	110,400	4%	36,360	5%	25,930	14%	0.71
2020	115,000	4%	38,090	5%	29,350	13%	0.77
2025	119,600	4%	39,890	5%	33,000	12%	0.83
2030	124,000	4%	41,580	4%	36,750	11%	0.88
2035	128,400	4%	43,270	4%	40,800	11%	0.94
2005-2035 Annual Growth Rate	0.8%		0.9%		2.3%		

Source: ABAG Projections 2007; Dyett & Bhatia, 2008

However, it is likely that citywide growth will be less than the current projections, because there has been a substantial downturn in the economy. The City's historical growth rate indicates that the economic slowdown began to be seen in 2004. Based on the 2005-2035 projected annual growth rate of 0.8 percent and the California Department of Finance 2008 population estimate, the 2035 population would only be about 125,000.

The proposed Specific Plan is not considered growth-inducing. Even though the Specific Plan allows more total development and residential units in the Planning Area than the existing land use regulations, that growth will be the result of redistribution from other areas of the City rather than an addition to the growth estimated under the regional ABAG projections. Based on case studies from around the country, the implementation of rail transit generally affects the timing, location, and density of how development is accommodated in the City, but it does not affect the underlying market demand and regional growth projections. Thus in Antioch, residents and office tenants may choose to locate in the Planning Area near transit and the freeway rather than in other areas of Antioch. However the total amount of market demand in Antioch and East County will not change as a result of the eBART rail transit and the proposed transit-oriented development around the station.

The utilities infrastructure that will be built in the Hillcrest Station Area under the Specific Plan is designed to serve the new development in the Station Area. None of the infrastructure components are proposed to provide greater amounts of capacity than is required by the new development. Therefore the infrastructure proposed as part of the Station Area plan is not growth inducing. There is one sewer line that will need to be installed in the Planning Area that serves development outside the Planning Area; however this line is already planned in the City's 2003 Wastewater Collection System Master Plan.

The roadway infrastructure that is proposed in the Specific Plan is consistent with roadway improvements in the City of Antioch General Plan, and therefore is not growth-inducing beyond what the City has already decided as part of its long-term Citywide Plan. The major roadways proposed in the Hillcrest Station Area include the extensions of Viera Avenue, Slatten Ranch Road, Oakley Road, and Phillips Lane. These roadways are included in the City of Antioch General Plan.

The regional circulation improvements discussed in the proposed Plan are improvements that have been under study for a long time in East Contra Costa County, and are already listed in the Regional Transportation Plan. These include: the Hillcrest Interchange improvements, the SR 4 widening, the construction of eBART, and the construction of Phillips Lane Interchange. Thus these improvements are not new growth-inducing components of the Specific Plan, but rather are a part of ongoing regional transportation planning for the County.

5.2 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

CEQA requires that the EIR examine cumulative impacts. As discussed in CEQA Guidelines §15130(a)(1), a cumulative impact “consists of an impact which is created as a result of the combination of the project evaluated in the EIR together with other projects causing related impacts.” The analysis of cumulative impacts need not provide the level of detail required of the analysis of impacts from the project itself, but shall “reflect the severity of the impacts and their likelihood of occurrence” (CEQA Guidelines §15130(b)).

In order to assess cumulative impacts, the EIR must analyze either a list of past, present, and probable future projects or a summary of projections contained in an adopted general plan or related planning document. In conducting the analysis for this EIR, ABAG population and employment projections for the City of Antioch were reviewed. (See above.)

It is important to note that the proposed Hillcrest Station Area Specific Plan is essentially a set of projects, representing the cumulative development scenario for the reasonably foreseeable future in the Planning Area. Therefore, the analysis presented in Chapter 3 represents a cumulative analysis of the Planning Area as a whole, over the next 26 years.

The air quality, circulation, climate change, and noise analyses evaluate the future development scenario as a whole, with the projected Specific Plan development and proposed transportation system applied to projected future growth in the region. Therefore, for these four issue areas, analysis of the proposed Specific Plan contained in Chapter 3 of this EIR represents both the project impacts and cumulative effects. Refer to sections 3.4 Circulation and Traffic, 3.2 Air Quality, 3.5 Climate Change and Energy Use, and 3.11 Noise. In addition, Section 3.3 Biological Resources and Section 3.9 Hydrology and Water Quality include separate discussions of the cumulative effects in these issue areas.

Other cumulative impacts would include:

- ***Aesthetics and Visual Resources.*** Buildout under the proposed Plan would change the existing visual character of the Planning Area. New development under the Specific Plan will change the Planning Area’s existing undeveloped condition by replacing open grassland and hillsides with new transit-oriented development. In the final built condition of the project, extensive landscaping and public spaces will be added, and key natural features will be preserved. There are not any other probable future projects that are planned in the Planning Area or adjacent areas that will detract from aesthetics and visual resources. Vacant sites adjacent to the Planning Area are zoned for single-family home development. As such, cumulative impacts to visual resources would be less than significant.
- ***Cultural Resources.*** A records search verified that there are no known or listed cultural resources in the Planning Area. Proposed Specific Plan policies require additional research to evaluate the eligibility of, and subsequent mitigation of, potential historic resources. Adopted General Plan policies require protocols that ensure that cultural or paleontological resources would be mitigated should accidental discovery of such resources occur. Significant resources that could be affected by construction activities would be avoided, or if this is not possible, recovered for scientific value. Research about cultural resources did not indicate any additional projects that remove or alter cultural resources in the surrounding area or the City

of Antioch, such that historical, archeological, or paleontological resources would be permanently lost. Therefore, the cumulative impacts to significant cultural or paleontological resources are expected to be less than significant.

- **Geological and Seismic Hazards.** All future projects considered under the proposed Plan would be required to comply with seismic requirements contained in the California Building Code, the City of Antioch Municipal Code, adopted General Plan and proposed Specific Plan policies. Implementation of the proposed Plan is not expected to result in an increase in seismic impacts, including those impacts related to emergency services, or geological hazards. In addition, future projects in the Planning Area would be required to comply with NPDES General Construction Permit requirements, so erosion impacts should be less than significant. Overall cumulative impacts pertaining to geology, soils and seismic hazards would be less than significant.
- **Hazardous Materials and Safety.** Future development of the Planning Area, as proposed by the Hillcrest Station Area Specific Plan, could improve existing issues associated with soil and groundwater contamination. Any necessary remediation would be completed prior to construction and, by law, future land uses must abide with the most recent laws and regulations regarding hazardous material use, generation, transport, storage, and disposal. In addition, development within the Planning Area is likely to reduce the risk of wildland fires for the surrounding area by providing improved access and circulation throughout the Study Area.

Compliance with adopted General Plan policies and proposed Specific Plan policies would ensure that fire and emergency services would be adequate to meet the demand created by new development. Therefore there would not be a contribution to a deficit in emergency services for the City of Antioch. In addition, compliance with proposed Specific Plan policies would reduce the risks inherent in allowing construction and development near high-pressure petroleum pipelines. As such, cumulative impacts pertaining to hazardous materials and safety would be less than significant.

- **Land Use.** The proposed Plan would result in less than significant land use impacts, and all future projects under regional and proposed Plan buildout would be required to mitigate their respective land use impacts. Therefore, the incremental impact of the proposed Plan, when considered in combination with buildout of the region would not result in cumulatively significant impacts related to land use.
- **Public Services and Facilities.** The public services and facilities components of the Hillcrest Station Area Specific Plan have cumulative effects but these are not significant, as they respond to the City's adopted standards.
 - **Fire and Emergency Services.** There is no existing fire station that could serve the projected development within the Planning Area and meet the response time standard. Compliance with adopted General Plan policies and proposed Specific Plan policies ensure that a new fire station, or improved access to an existing fire station will be constructed to provide adequate fire and emergency services. The addition of a new fire station or improved access to existing stations will benefit the surrounding Study Area, in addition to serving the Planning Area. Thus the impact on fire facilities resulting from the Hillcrest Station Area Specific Plan and other projects in this region would not create a significant cumulative impact. The Fire District collects impact

fees for new facilities, which will ensure that this project and projects in the surrounding area pay their fair share of the costs for the needed capital improvements.

- **Police Services.** Based on the population projections for 2035, the City of Antioch will require a police force of at least 154 officers, which entails hiring approximately 10 new officers. Of these 10, approximately six would be needed to serve the Planning Area. Proposed Plan policies ensure that the tax revenues from planned development would support the cost of new police services or an additional funding source is identified. Therefore, the cumulative impact on police services would be less than significant.
- **Schools.** New housing in the City combined with residential development in the Planning Area may require the construction or expansion of an elementary school. However, the General Plan and City regulations require that new development provide necessary funding and/or capital improvements to mitigate projected impacts on school facilities. Antioch Unified School District policies require that developers pay school impact fees for new construction of residential units and commercial space. Therefore, the cumulative impact on public schools will be less than significant.
- **Parks.** New development would provide required park-land to serve its residents and as such there would be adequate parks and recreation facilities provided. Thus there will be no significant cumulative impact. Moreover, the trail facilities proposed in the Specific Plan would be available to all City residents, and would provide an extension of the citywide trail system, and thus there is a beneficial cumulative impact as a result of the project.
- **Community Center Space.** Compliance with General Plan and proposed Specific Plan policies will ensure that the City adopted standard of 750 square feet of community space per 1,000 residents is met or exceeded for projects within the Planning Area. Therefore, the cumulative impact is less than significant.
- **Utilities.** Future development projects resulting from the proposed Specific Plan will cause an increase in population and density of development, with a resultant increase in sewer flows, water demands, stormwater runoff, and solid waste generation. Infrastructure improvements, including water mains, sewer mains, and storm drainage lines, will alleviate deficiencies in distribution and collection capacity brought on by new development. Further, future development projects in Antioch would be required to mitigate impacts on utilities and service systems on a project-by-project basis. As such, overall cumulative impacts pertaining to utilities systems would be less than significant.

5.3 IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

The EIR must also examine irreversible changes to the environment. More specifically, CEQA Guidelines require the EIR to consider whether “uses of nonrenewable resources during the initial and continued phases of the project may be irreversible since a large commitment of such resources makes removal or nonuse thereafter unlikely” (CEQA Guidelines §15126.2(c)). “Nonrenewable resource” refers to the physical features of the natural environment, such as land, waterways, etc.

WATER CONSUMPTION

New development under the proposed Specific Plan will increase the demand for public water. The pace of the City of Antioch’s growth is in large part dependent on its ability to provide adequate public facilities and services. Additional development and the resulting population and employment increases will result in a permanent increase of water consumption, which represents an irreversible environmental change.

ENERGY RESOURCES

New development under the proposed Specific Plan would result in the commitment of existing and planned sources of energy, which would be necessary for the construction and daily use of new buildings and for transportation. Buildings use electricity, natural gas, and petroleum products for power, lighting, heating, and other indoor and outdoor services, while transportation induced by development uses both oil and gas. Use of these types of energy for new development even with the proposed energy conservation and green building policies would result in the overall increased use of nonrenewable energy resources. This represents an irreversible environmental change.

CONSTRUCTION-RELATED IMPACTS

Irreversible environmental changes could also occur during the course of constructing development projects made possible by the proposed Specific Plan. Beyond the energy, fuel and water consumption impacts of construction described separately above, new construction would also result in the consumption of building materials, many of which are still made from non-renewable resources. This represents an irreversible environmental change.

5.4 SIGNIFICANT AND UNAVOIDABLE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

According to CEQA Guidelines 15126(b), an EIR must discuss any significant environmental impacts that cannot be avoided under full implementation of the proposed program. Also, this EIR must discuss why the program is being proposed, notwithstanding such impacts. The proposed policies of the Hillcrest Station Area Specific Plan described in Chapter 3 in the EIR would avoid or eliminate most potentially significant impacts. However, two impacts classified as significant and unavoidable have been identified in the issue areas of circulation and noise.

The Hillcrest Station Area Plan is being proposed because it achieves many goals for the City and the East County area that outweigh the potential significant and unavoidable impacts on traffic and noise. These goals include:

- Construction of the eBART line to provide transit service to East County;
- Location of residential and employment near the Hillcrest eBART station to generate ridership that supports the operation of eBART;
- Provision of a range of housing types not currently available in Antioch, which increases the diversity and affordability of housing in Antioch;
- The creation of pedestrian-oriented centers with shops, retail, and restaurants, and entertainment uses, which serve the entire City and improve the quality of life for all residents; and
- Creation of jobs in Antioch through the provision of large office development sites in close proximity to the freeway and eBART.

CIRCULATION

Intersection Operations

Implementation of the proposed Hillcrest Station Area Specific Plan would result in two intersections operating at less than the adopted standard: Hillcrest Avenue at East Tregallas Drive/Larkspur Avenue intersection and Hillcrest Avenue at SR 4 Eastbound Ramp intersection. The City has considered additional measures to comply with the LOS criteria at these two intersections. Measures considered include realigning Tregallas Drive and Larkspur Avenue to the south to improve vehicle storage between this intersection and the SR 4 eastbound off-ramp intersection. This change was determined to be infeasible during the planning horizon because it would require the acquiring and demolition of active and viable commercial properties, residential properties, and a church south of the Planning Area. Other measures considered, such as realigning the Hillcrest Avenue corridor and/or constructing new/modified ramps to/from SR 4 eastbound, would have similar right-of-way impacts.

Two other intersections have the potential to have significant and unavoidable impacts: the Hillcrest Avenue/East 18th Street intersection and the Neroly Road/Oakley Road intersection. Both of these intersections are outside the Planning Area and beyond the scope of the defined project. The proposed Specific Plan includes policies to support improving the operations of these intersections, but if improvements are not made than these two intersections would also operate at unacceptable LOS E or F conditions in 2035 with buildout of the Specific Plan.

Freeway Operations

There are also potential significant and unavoidable impacts to freeway operations due to the implementation of the eBART project, regional growth, and the Hillcrest Station Area Specific Plan. By 2035, due to the eBART project and regional growth, it is projected that freeway traffic will experience delay indexes of up to 3.3, traveling at 21 miles per hour average speed. The addition of development in the Hillcrest Station Area would exacerbate this congestion even further.

The construction of the SR 4/Phillips Lane Interchange has been identified by the City as the most feasible solution. If a new interchange is implemented, the delay index would remain the same or improve in the AM peak hours, and worsen only slightly in PM peak hours. This mitigation would allow the freeway to operate within the adopted standards.

The City has considered measures to address the severe traffic congestion at the Hillcrest Avenue Interchange beyond those identified in the SR 4 East Widening Project including additional ramp widening, alternative interchange configurations, and realigning local roads to improve interchange efficiency. These changes would all require the acquiring and demolition of active and viable commercial properties, residential properties, and a church south of the Planning Area. The alternatives were considered infeasible given the substantial impact to the right-of-way.

NOISE

The current City standards state that development near SR 4, the SR 4 Bypass, and the eBART project may not result in increases greater than five CNEL above existing noise levels. Four locations within the Planning Area exceed this standard. Each of these locations is adjacent to the Union Pacific Mococo railroad, and freight rail will be the primary noise source. If Union Pacific resumes freight rail service on the Mococo line, and if no grade separation is provided at Hillcrest Avenue, the noise impacts are significant. However this impact is due to the resumption of rail service, and is not an impact of the Specific Plan.

There are mitigation actions that could reduce the noise levels to a less than significant level. The grade separation at Hillcrest Avenue and the Union Pacific rail line, and a grade separation lowering the elevation of the rail line itself into a below-grade channel, would mitigate the noise impact. However since those projects are not within City control, and there is no identified funding source, these cannot be assumed as mitigations. Therefore the impacts of the railroad line noise on the proposed development under the Specific Plan are significant and unavoidable.

The policies of the Specific Plan ensure that noise impacts are mitigated to the maximum extent feasible, and that in areas where exterior noise levels cannot be met, interior noise levels are reduced below the minimum standard in order to compensate for the noise in exterior spaces.

5.5 IMPACTS FOUND NOT TO BE SIGNIFICANT

CEQA requires that an EIR provide a brief statement indicating why various possible significant impacts were determined to be not significant. Chapter 3 of this EIR discusses all potential impacts, regardless of their magnitude. A similar level of analysis is provided for impacts found to be less than significant as impacts found to be significant. Significance of an impact is assessed in relation to the significance criteria provided in each section in Chapter 3. A summary of all impacts is provided in the Executive Summary of this EIR.

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