

6.0 LONG-TERM IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROJECT

Section 15126 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines (*State CEQA Guidelines*) requires that all phases of a project must be considered when evaluating its impact on the environment, including: planning, acquisition, development, and operation. An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) must include the following as part of its analysis, as addressed in this chapter:

1. Significant irreversible environmental changes that would result from implementation of the proposed project (Section 6.2);
2. Significant environmental effects that cannot be avoided if the proposed project is implemented (Section 6.3); and
3. Growth-inducing impacts resulting from implementation of the proposed project (Section 6.4).

Additionally, this chapter will discuss the long-term implications associated with the implementation of the proposed project (addressed in Section 6.1) and the environmental effects not found to be significant (addressed in Section 6.6).

6.1 LONG-TERM IMPLICATIONS

Implementation of the proposed project would create potential long-term environmental consequences associated with a transition in land use from vacant and underutilized parcels to land uses envisioned as part of the PlaceTypes identified in the proposed Land Use Element (LUE). Long-term physical consequences of development typically include increased traffic volumes, air quality and greenhouse gas (GHG) impacts, and increased energy and natural resource consumption. Following approval of the proposed project, future individual development projects requiring discretionary actions would be subject to additional environmental review and would be permitted on a project-specific basis as they are proposed. Therefore, the use of this programmatic Recirculated Draft EIR provides an occasion for a more exhaustive consideration of long-term impacts associated with future projects facilitated by approval of the proposed LUE and Urban Design Element (UDE) project.

6.2 SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

Section 15126.2 (d) of the *State CEQA Guidelines* requires that an EIR consider and discuss significant irreversible changes that would be caused by implementation of the proposed City of Long Beach (City) General Plan Land Use and Urban Design Elements project (proposed project). Specifically, Section 15126.2 (d) states:

“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. Primary impacts and, particularly, secondary impacts (such as highway improvement which provides access to a previously inaccessible area) generally commit future generations to similar uses. Also irreversible damage can result from environmental accidents associated with the

project. Irretrievable commitments of resources should be evaluated to assure that such current consumption is justified.”

Generally, a project would result in significant irreversible environmental changes if the proposed consumption of resources is not justified, if the project would involve a large commitment of nonrenewable resources, or if the project would involve uses in which irreversible damage could result from any potential environmental accidents associated with the project.

Approval of the proposed LUE and UDE is considered a planning/policy action that would help to shape land use patterns and growth in the City through 2040. Therefore, the proposed project does not, in itself, result in any direct physical development. As described in Chapter 3.0, Project Description, one overarching strategy of the LUE is to create, restore, and preserve more open space. In addition, because the existing planning area is largely built out, future development under the proposed project would likely occur as infill development.¹ In the event that a future project under the LUE/UDE is proposed on undeveloped land, after the structural lifespan of the building is reached, it is improbable that the project site would revert to its undeveloped nature. Once implemented, the proposed project would allow for the characteristics of land in the planning area to result in an irreversible commitment of land.

Construction of future development facilitated by the proposed project would result in a commitment of limited, slowly renewable, and nonrenewable resources. Such resources may include certain types of lumber and other forest products; raw materials such as steel; aggregate materials used in concrete and asphalt such as sand and stone; water; petrochemical construction materials such as plastic; and petroleum-based construction materials. In addition, fossil fuels used by construction equipment would also be consumed. Future project construction would also result in an increased commitment of public maintenance services such as waste disposal and treatment. However, the amount and rate of consumption of these resources used during construction would not result in an inefficient or wasteful use, and would be limited in scope.

Similarly, operation of future development facilitated by the proposed project would result in the commitment of limited, nonrenewable resources and slowly renewable resources such as natural gas, electricity, petroleum-based fuels, fossil fuels, and water. Natural gas and electricity would be used for lighting, heating, and cooling of the buildings and operation of the future facilities. As discussed in Section 4.10, Energy, the projected electricity and natural gas demands are within the existing delivery capacity of current service providers, and the proposed project would not result in a significant adverse impact related to the provision of electricity or natural gas. In addition, Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR) requires conservation practices that would limit the amount of energy (California Energy Code Building Energy Efficiency Standards [Title 24, Part 6]) consumed by the proposed project. With the development of more cost-effective and accessible technologies, dependence on nonrenewable resources used in association with the future development envisioned under the proposed project may also be reduced. Furthermore, all future projects requiring discretionary actions under the proposed project would be required to undergo

¹ It is important to note that most of the City is built out, with only 585 parcels currently vacant, for a total of 212.5 acres of vacant land spread across 585 parcels.

project-specific analysis (as required by CEQA) and comply with all California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen Code) building efficiency standards (Title 24, Part 11) and mandatory residential and non-residential building requirements in the California Energy Code Building Energy Efficiency Standards (Title 24, Part 6) (as required by State law). Additionally, resources that would be used during the operation of future development projects would be similar to those currently consumed within the City. Nevertheless, the use of such resources would continue to represent a long-term commitment of essentially nonrenewable or slowly renewable resources.

Implementation of the proposed project would also result in future development that would result in an increased demand for potable water and generation of wastewater. However, as stated within Section 4.9, Utilities, future projects requiring discretionary actions would be subject to additional environmental review and would be assessed on a project-by-project basis to determine the demand on existing infrastructure. Furthermore, improved and/or new water and wastewater facilities required to support growth projections anticipated by the Southern California Association of Governments' (SCAG) 2016–2040 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) would be constructed in accordance with the demand for the new service.

In sum, future development facilitated by the proposed project could result in the depletion of nonrenewable resources. However, each future project requiring a discretionary action within the planning area would be evaluated individually, and project-specific mitigation would be mandated as needed. The commitment of limited, slowly renewable, and nonrenewable resources required for construction and operation of future development facilitated by the proposed project would limit the availability of these resources for future generations or for other uses during the life of the project. However, the use of such resources for future development would support infill growth, which in turn would support a more efficient use of non-renewable resources and would be consistent with regional and local plans, projected growth in the area, and State goals to provide housing. Therefore, although irreversible changes may result from implementation of the proposed project, such changes would not be considered significant.

6.3 SIGNIFICANT AND UNAVOIDABLE IMPACTS

As determined in the contents of this Recirculated Draft EIR, implementation of the proposed project would result in significant and unavoidable adverse impacts related to air quality, global climate change, and transportation. With implementation of mitigation measures for air quality and GHG impacts, the potential impacts identified in this Recirculated Draft EIR would remain significant and unavoidable. Due to the absence of feasible mitigation for the adverse traffic impacts under the anticipated General Plan build out scenario at 48 of the 120 study area intersections, transportation impacts identified in this Recirculated Draft EIR remain significant and unavoidable. In addition, potentially significant and unavoidable traffic impacts were identified at California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) freeway facilities. These impacts are further discussed in Chapter 8.0, Significant Unavoidable Adverse Impacts, in this Recirculated Draft EIR.

6.4 GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS

Sections 15126(d) and 15126.2(e) of the *State CEQA Guidelines* require that an EIR analyze growth-inducing impacts and state that an EIR should discuss the ways in which the proposed project could

foster economic or population growth or construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment. Growth can be induced in various ways, such as the removal of obstacles to growth (e.g., removal of development moratoriums¹ and streamlined environmental review processes), the increased economic activity in an area, and the establishment of policies or other measures that would aid in fostering additional growth. Although the inducement of growth is not considered a direct environmental effect, an assessment of growth inducement is required.

Generally, a project may lead to spatial, economic, or population growth if it meets one of the following criteria: elimination of an impediment to growth (e.g., establishment of new infrastructure or new access to an area, removal of development moratoriums); economic expansion or growth (e.g., increases in the number of employment opportunities), indirect or direct increases in population growth (e.g., construction of additional housing), enactment of a precedent-setting action (e.g., changes in general plan or zoning approvals), or development of open space areas (e.g., separate and distinct from development within infill areas).

A project that meets any one of the above-listed criteria may be considered a growth-inducing project. The potential growth-inducing impacts associated with the proposed project are evaluated below, based on these criteria (Sections 6.5.1 through 6.5.5). It should be noted that growth-inducing effects are not to be construed as necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment (*State CEQA Guidelines*, Section 15126.2(d)). This issue is presented to provide additional information on ways in which this project could contribute to significant changes in the environment beyond the direct consequences of implementing the proposed project as described in earlier sections of this Recirculated Draft EIR.

6.5 IMPACTS OF INDUCED GROWTH

6.5.1 Removal of Impediments to Growth and Development of Open Space Areas

The planning area encompasses the entirety of the City and is representative of a fully built-out urban area containing a mix of land uses. The proposed project is a planning tool that would change existing regulations pertaining to land development through the approval of both the General Plan LUE and the UDE, and would replace the existing LUE and the Scenic Routes Element (SRE). These changes would affect both the classification of land within the City and the design of development and infrastructure throughout the City. The proposed LUE would introduce the concept of “PlaceTypes,” which would replace the current approach in the existing LUE of segregating property within the City through traditional land use designations and zoning classifications. The UDE would be an entirely new element in the City’s General Plan and would replace the existing SRE.

As discussed in this Recirculated Draft EIR, the proposed project is intended to address growth that is already projected to occur, and to alleviate the existing overcrowded housing conditions. The proposed project does not include any physical improvements, but would establish new PlaceTypes

¹ Development moratoriums can be enacted by local agencies to temporarily limit growth while the effects of growth are analyzed. These moratoriums are used in an effort to promote valid public purposes and are limited in duration.

to accommodate the projected increase in population and employment in the City, and in order to alleviate overcrowding, as documented in the City's Assessment of Fair Housing report. The proposed project would accommodate projected growth and housing needs established in the City's General Plan 2013–2021 Housing Element and the SCAG 2016–2040 RTP/SCS.

The proposed changes to land development regulations would not allow for unrestricted growth; rather, the proposed LUE and UDE would provide greater flexibility and a mix of compatible land uses, focus opportunities for new development in approximately 13 percent of the City within eight identified Major Areas of Change, and outline an urban framework that addresses the varying aesthetic characteristics of the City.

Due to the developed and urban context of the proposed project, implementation of the project would generally be accommodated by existing infrastructure. All future projects requiring a discretionary action would be analyzed on a project-specific basis to determine the demand and capacity for existing infrastructure to serve each specific project.

Because Long Beach is a built-out city that is surrounded by other built-out communities, continued growth in the City would not remove obstacles to growth beyond its borders or within large undeveloped open space areas. Moreover, one of the overarching goals of the proposed LUE is to create, restore, and protect open space, which would serve to restrict development within areas currently occupied by open space or planned for open space uses in the future. As opposed to inducing growth, the project strategically accommodates SCAG projected population growth to be focused along commercial corridors and transit-rich, built-out areas. Therefore, the proposed project would not be considered to be a growth-inducing project, even with the increased demand and changes to land use regulations associated with the proposed project.

6.5.2 Indirect or Direct Increases in Population Growth

Section 4.6, Population and Housing, addresses the potential growth-inducing impacts associated with the adoption and implementation of the proposed project. As discussed within Section 4.6, the proposed project does not induce growth, but rather is intended to guide growth and development in the planning area. Specifically, the proposed project aims to accommodate the growth already projected for the planning area as identified in the 2016–2040 RTP/SCS. The proposed project aims to provide a framework for strategically and sustainably focusing infill development to accommodate projected growth for the planning area through the year 2040.

Implementation of the proposed project would accommodate, but not induce, population, employment, and housing growth within the City by creating areas of focused change and would provide opportunities for increased density and intensity. The anticipated General Plan build out scenario (2040) would accommodate a projected population increase of up to 18,230 people.

Although the proposed project would accommodate socioeconomic growth projections for the City through the year 2040, the proposed project also aims to alleviate existing issues in the planning area related to a lack of affordable housing and overcrowding. As previously stated and as described further in Section 4.6, Population and Housing, the anticipated General Plan build out scenario (2040) would facilitate the future development of approximately 28,524 new housing units

throughout the planning area. Development of these housing units would not result in a corresponding increase in population, as 21,476 units are needed to accommodate large households and alleviate existing overcrowding as documented in the City's Assessment of Fair Housing report. Approval of the proposed project would also further the City's objective by allowing for the construction of sufficient new housing units equal to or in excess of the City's Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) requirement for the 2013–2021 Housing Element (i.e., a total of 7,048 units). As such, the project-related increase in housing units would not result in a direct increase in population growth in the City, as the majority of new housing units would serve to alleviate overcrowding and provide additional opportunities for affordable housing within the planning area.

The opportunities for housing development and population growth accommodated by the proposed project would be consistent with the SCAG growth projections for the City as identified in the 2016–2040 RTP/SCS. Similarly, the project would accommodate an increase in 28,511 jobs within the planning area by 2040, as projected in the 2016–2040 RTP/SCS. In order to accommodate employment growth, the project would allow for mixed uses within several of the proposed PlaceTypes and would encourage the enhancement of commercial centers throughout the City. New employment opportunities accommodated by the proposed project seek to improve the City's current jobs-to-housing imbalance by providing jobs to local residents.

In summary, the proposed project would accommodate projected growth and promote sustainable infill development patterns in an effort to accommodate population, employment, and housing growth projections identified for the City in SCAG's 2016–2040 RTP/SCS. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would constitute a less than significant impact in related to induced growth.

6.5.3 Expansion of Public Services

As discussed in Section 4.7, Public Services, the planning area is currently served by all public service providers, including police protection services, fire prevention services, public schools, public libraries, telecommunications, electricity, and natural gas. The proposed project does not include any physical improvements, but would accommodate growth projected for the City through 2040 in the 2016–2040 RTP/SCS. The projected growth within the planning area through 2040 would create an increased demand for public services within the City. All future projects requiring a discretionary action would be required to undergo project-specific environmental review to determine project-specific impacts on public services and would be required to pay applicable police, fire, and school impact fees in effect at the time such future development applications are submitted. City staff would continue to review site plans for future projects to ensure the adequate provision of public services. In addition, as is currently standard practice in the City, new public service facilities required to support projected growth would be constructed in accordance with the demand for the new service.

6.5.4 Encouragement/Facilitation of Economic Effects

During construction of future development projects, a number of temporary design, engineering, and construction-related jobs would be created, increasing economic activity. This would be a direct economic effect of this project that could significantly affect the environment. Because the

proposed project is a programmatic planning and policy action, the impacts from this effect would be analyzed and any appropriate mitigation imposed on a project-by-project basis.

The proposed project would accommodate the projected increases in population, employment, and housing in the City through the year 2040. Growth associated with the anticipated General Plan build out scenario (2040) would be consistent with SCAG's regional growth forecasts for each of these topic areas for the same horizon year (2040), with the exception of housing, which would result in more housing units under the proposed project in order to alleviate existing overcrowding conditions. The population and employment growth would facilitate economic goods and services that could result in the creation of new businesses and/or the expansion of existing businesses within the planning area to address these economic needs. In addition, new commercial and office uses developed in accordance with the proposed PlaceTypes would likely generate employment opportunities that would accommodate employment growth projections for the City, as outlined in the 2016–2040 RTP/SCS. Many of the project objectives of the proposed LUE and UDE are to enhance economic vitality and create job growth allowing for new businesses in the City. Actual economic growth will depend on future market demand, site constraints, and the willingness of individual property owners. Therefore, the proposed project would have both direct and indirect economic effects that could significantly affect the environment. Because the proposed project is a programmatic policy document, the impacts from this effect would be analyzed and any appropriate mitigation imposed on a project-by-project basis.

6.5.5 Precedent-Setting Action

As previously stated, the project proposes to replace the City's existing 1989 LUE with the proposed LUE and adopt the UDE as an entirely new element of the City's General Plan. The proposed project is a comprehensive planning tool that would define future land use and design throughout the City. The proposed project represents the implementation of both the LUE and UDE, which would establish PlaceTypes, urban design guidelines, goals, and policies for the planning area. The proposed change from segregated land use designations to PlaceType classifications would apply to all parcels throughout the City. Major land use changes proposed as part of the LUE are identified as Major Areas of Change, which include the introduction of a new PlaceType category, increased density, or transit-oriented uses (see Chapter 3.0, Project Description, of this Recirculated Draft EIR). These changes to the land use definitions of the City would encourage increased density in strategic locations in order to accommodate future growth already projected for the planning area through horizon year 2040. Although adoption of the proposed LUE and UDE would set a precedent in how the City approaches land use and urban design, the project would not result in a precedent-setting action that would alter growth projections or adversely affect the environment. Specifically, goals and policies in both the LUE and UDE elements encourage greater flexibility in land uses to allow for mixed-use, infill, and transit-oriented development to focus growth in specific areas of the City and along existing transit corridors. These policies would serve to reduce air quality and GHG emissions by promoting mixed-use development and concentrating future development in areas served by transit options, thereby reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT). Therefore, the project would be beneficial to the City and region and would not represent an adverse growth-inducing impact. Moreover, adoption of the proposed LUE and UDE would be consistent with California Government

Code Sections 65300 et seq., which requires cities and counties in the State of California to periodically update their general plans.

In Chapter 3.0, Project Description, Table 3.B, Anticipated General Plan Build-Out Summary, estimates the future housing unit and non-residential square footage based on the anticipated build-out projections of the proposed LUE. Projections are based on the anticipated build-out capacity of PlaceTypes. As shown in Table 3.B, the anticipated General Plan build out scenario (2040) is projected to accommodate approximately 484,485 residents, 192,318 housing units, and 181,665 employees. As previously stated, population and employment growth projections accommodated by the proposed project have been accounted for in SCAG's 2016–2040 RTP/SCS growth projections for the City, with the exception of housing units, which would be greater under the proposed project than projected in the 2016–2040 RTP/SCS. The increase in housing units is attributed to the need for additional housing needed to alleviate existing overcrowding and provide additional housing options in the City. As discussed throughout this Recirculated Draft EIR, implementation of the LUE and UDE would result in significant and unavoidable adverse impacts related to air quality, global climate change, and transportation. However, existing land uses in Long Beach generate citywide impacts related to these three topic areas under existing conditions. Furthermore, the State of California has set goals to increase housing supply to improve affordability and reduce overcrowding, as well as reduce GHG emissions by reducing VMTs. The City believes that the proposed General Plan LUE and UDE project directly addresses the State's requirement to increase housing supply and reduce GHG emissions by promoting compact infill development near transit alternatives. Therefore, the City will be required to balance the significant unavoidable impacts associated with the project against the need to provide additional housing and accommodate projected growth within the planning area.

The City is almost entirely built out, and future development would most likely occur as infill projects. The proposed project does not include any physical improvements, and subsequent development proposals subject to discretionary review would require individual environmental analysis and associated mitigation to ensure that such subsequent impacts would not significantly affect the environment.

For the reasons stated above, the proposed project would have less than significant growth inducing impacts, and no mitigation is required.