Chapter 7

Cumulative and Growth-Inducing Impacts

Introduction

This chapter describes cumulative and growth-inducing impacts that would result from the project. The key sources of data and information used in the preparation of this chapter are listed and briefly described below.

The major sources used in the analysis were:

- The City of Chico General Plan (1999)
- Draft EIR for Chico General Plan (1994)
- City of Chico General Plan Five-Year Review (2002 – 2007) and Annual Report (City of Chico 2008)
- Chico General Plan, 1992 – 2012, 1995 – 1999 Fiver-Year Review (City of Chico 2000)
- State Route 32 Widening Project: State Route 99 to Yosemite Drive Initial Study (City of Chico 2007)

Environmental Setting

This section discusses state requirements related to cumulative and growth-inducing impacts that apply to the proposed project. It then describes existing conditions and development trends in the project vicinity and area.

Regulatory Setting

Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts are defined by CEQA as "two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts" (State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15355).

Cumulative impacts are further described as follows.

a) The individual effects may be changes resulting from a single project or a number of separate projects.

b) The cumulative impacts from several projects are the change in the environment which 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 (State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15355[b]).

Furthermore, according to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(a)(1):

> As defined in Section 15355, a "cumulative impact" consists of an impact that is created as a result of the combination of the project evaluated in the EIR together with other projects causing related impacts. An EIR should not discuss impacts which do not result in part from the project evaluated in the EIR.

In addition, as stated in the State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15064(i)(5):

> The mere 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.

Growth-Inducing Impacts

A growth-inducing impact is defined as the ways in which a project could "foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly in the surrounding environment" (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.2[d]). Under CEQA, an EIR must identify and evaluate potential growth-inducing impacts of proposed projects. Furthermore, CEQA requires an analysis of the project characteristics that could facilitate and encourage other activities, which could affect the environment either individually or cumulatively (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.2[d]).

Existing Conditions and Development Trends

City of Chico

Chico is physically and geographically separated from development on the west by the Sacramento River, and on the east by the southern Cascade Range. SR 99 extends north and south through Chico providing physical access to regions outside the city in those directions. Growth has been relatively stable in this area, averaging 2.9% per year, therefore it is not anticipated that significant contiguous development north of the south of Chico would occur.

Between the years of 1994 and 2007, Chico grew from 22 to 33.14 square miles through annexation law. No new annexations are currently planned until the City completes an evaluation of its ability to provide finance services to newly annexed areas. Annexation activity of residential properties has focused on existing developed areas, several largely undeveloped areas slated for future residential development have also been annexed.

There are several developments that have been recently approved in Chico. These include residential or mixed-use project.

- Northwest Chico Specific Plan – The Northwest Chico Specific Plan was adopted in December of 2005 and includes development of a 700-acres area bounded along the north and northwest by Mid Creek, on the east by Hicks Lane, and on the south by the existing developed area south of Eaton Road. There are five approved subdivisions currently approved in the plan area.
- Wildwood Estates – Planned development with 171 lots for single-family homes and 4 duplex lots.
- Mountain Vista/Sycamore Glen – The includes two subdivisions allowing for development of up to 679 residential units and up to 25,000 square feet of neighborhood commercial building area.
- Proposed Project Vicinity

The following developments have been approved in the proposed project area:

- Oak Valley Conceptual Master Plan and Subdivision Project – The Oak Valley Conceptual Master Plan and Subdivision project encompasses approximately 340 acres and is generally bounded by SR 32 on the north, Bruce Road on the west, a Pacific Gas & Electric Company 500-kV transmission line on the east, and Humboldt Road on the south. The conceptual master plan would include 230 acres of single- and multi-family residential units and approximately 109,000 square feet of community commercial uses on 10 acres. The plan includes a total of approximately 864 single-family units and 260 multi-family units. In addition, 200 very low–density residential units would be developed using a clustered housing concept. The applicant proposes to develop a first-phase subdivision including 159 single-family homes on 14.6 acres, multi-family residential on 8.2 acres, and approximately 20 acres of open space and setback from SR 32.
- Meriam Park – The Meriam Park project is a mixed-use development of 272 acres located in the southeast quadrant of Chico. The project site is located south of SR 32 and west of Bruce Road. The Meriam Park Master Plan proposes four zoning districts for the project area
  - Traditional Neighborhood Development (210.0 acres)
  - Primary Open Space, Preserve (39.0 acres)
  - Primary Open Space, Greenway (19.9 acres)
  - Public/Quasi-Public Facilities (2.9 acres)

While these developments have been approved within the city, development potential is changing in the city due to the current economic climate in the U.S. Therefore, full buildout of previously approved development within the city limits is currently unknown (Vieg pers. comm.).

Cumulative Impacts

This analysis considers forecasted growth in the city, as described above, as well as other projects proposed in the project vicinity that have the potential to incrementally contribute to cumulatively considerable impacts. Cumulative impacts related to noise, air quality, biological resources, and visual resources discussed in Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6, respectively.

Cultural Resources

Construction of the proposed project may contribute to the potential cumulative loss of undiscovered significant cultural resources during construction of proposed development. However, the cultural resources mitigation measures identified for the project and summarized in Table 2-2 would preserve newly discovered significant cultural resources through identification, consultation, and monitoring. Implementation of these mitigation measures would reduce the project's incremental contribution to cultural resources impacts to a less than cumulatively considerable level.

Geology, Paleontology and Soils

There are no faults or other geologic hazards such as landslides, liquefactions, or other impacts to geologic resources or soils associated with the proposed project. The project will not contribute to cumulatively considerable impacts related to geology, paleontology, and soils.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

The project is located in the vicinity of the Humboldt Road Burn Dump from which migration of toxics is known. Additionally, the existing SR 32 roadway likely contains yellow traffic striping that may be classified as hazardous materials. Construction activities related to the project have the potential to expose people to hazardous materials or health risks related to disturbance of hazardous material. However, mitigation measures identified for the project, and identified in Table 2-2, including conforming to current rules and regulations related to hazardous materials and development and implementation of a spill prevention and control program , would reduce the project's incremental contribution to hazardous material impacts to a less than a cumulatively considerable level.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Construction of the proposed project would increase impervious surfaces in the project area and increase runoff. Pollutants generated from the construction and operation the proposed project could result in a significant cumulative impact on water quality. The project-related hydrology and water quality mitigation measures identified in Table 2-2 include improvements to the existing drainage system, conforming to recommendations included in the hydrology and storm water reports prepared for the project, obtaining an NPDES Statewide Construction General Permit, and preparation of a SWPPP. These mitigation measures will reduce the proposed project's incremental contribution to hydrology and water quality impacts to a less than cumulatively considerable level.

Land Use and Planning

The proposed widening of SR 32 is consistent with the City's General Plan, which identifies SR 32 as a four lane major arterial in the project area. The widening of SR 32 will not result in conversion of farmland to a non-agricultural use. The project does not conflict with any land use plans, policies, or regulations. The project will not contribute to cumulative impacts to land use or planning.

Traffic and Transportation

The widening of SR 32 is designed to improve safety and address congestion along the SR 32 corridor between State Route 99 and Yosemite Drive. The project improves traffic conditions and does not incrementally contribute to cumulative impacts caused by traffic generating development.

Growth Inducing Impacts

Growth rates and patterns are influenced by various local, regional, and national forces that reflect ongoing social, economic, and technological changes. Ultimately, the amount and location of population growth and economic development that occurs in a specific area is controlled, to some extent, by local and county governments through zoning, land use plans and policies, and decisions regarding development applications. Local government and other regional, state, and federal agencies also make decisions about infrastructure (such as roads, water facilities, and sewage facilities) that may influence growth rates and the location of future development.

Transportation infrastructure is one component of the overall infrastructure that may serve to accommodate planned growth. This infrastructure may also serve to hasten or shift planned growth, or encourage and intensify unplanned growth

in an area. Transportation projects may induce growth when they directly or indirectly promote, hasten, shift, or intensify planned growth or encourage unplanned growth in a community or region. Examples of growth-inducing transportation projects include construction of a new interchange on an existing freeway, which could shift and encourage growth in the vicinity of the new interchange, or construction of a new roadway through an undeveloped area, which could promote unplanned growth.

Improvements provided by the proposed project are not expected to induce unplanned growth for the following reasons:

- The City of Chico has experienced significant growth in the last 15 year growing from 45,550 in 1992 to 84,396 in 2006 (City of Chico 2008). The project was developed in response to this population growth, and the transportation improvements are intended to keep pace with this growth and local general plan buildout. The project improvements do not provide additional capacity that could induce growth beyond that already projected for the City. As a result, the project, which is designed expressly to address future deficiencies to the extent feasible, will enhance the transportation system to accommodate the City of Chico projected population growth rather than facilitate or induce such growth.
- The project would not introduce a new transportation facility to the study area, nor would it provide new access to undeveloped areas. Thus, the project is not anticipated to hasten or shift planned or unplanned growth.
- The improved capacity provided by the project would be limited to a relatively short section of roadway. Therefore, the project would not increase the highway's capacity through Chico and would provide little incentive to develop areas north or south of the city.