

2.1.2 GROWTH INDUCEMENT

REGULATORY SETTING

NEPA and CEQA guidelines require discussion of the potential growth-inducing impacts of a proposed project. Growth inducement in terms of transportation projects can be defined as the relationship between the proposed project and future growth within the project area. A project can have direct and/or indirect growth inducement potential. Direct growth inducement would result if a project, for example, involved construction of new housing. A project would have indirect growth inducement potential if it established substantial new permanent employment opportunities (e.g., commercial, industrial or governmental enterprises) or if it involved a construction effort with substantial short-term employment opportunities that would indirectly stimulate the need for additional housing and services to support the new employment demand. Similarly, a project would indirectly induce growth if it removed an obstacle to additional growth and development, such as removing a constraint on a required public service. A project providing an increased water supply in an area where water service historically limited growth could be considered growth inducing.

State

Growth inducement may constitute an adverse impact if the growth is not consistent with or accommodated by the land use plans and growth management plans and policies for the area affected. Local land use plans provide for land use development patterns and growth policies that allow for the orderly expansion of urban development supported by adequate urban public services, such as water supply, roadway infra-structure, sewer service, and solid waste service. A project that would induce “disorderly” growth (conflict with the local land use plans) could indirectly cause additional adverse environmental impacts and other public services impacts. Thus, to assess whether a growth-inducing project will result in adverse secondary effects, it is important to assess the degree to which the growth accommodated by a project would or would not be consistent with applicable land use plans.

Growth inducement applies to the relationship between a proposed transportation project and growth within the project area. According to Caltrans, the relationship between transportation and growth is usually viewed as either “facilitation of planned growth or inducing unplanned growth (Caltrans, 2000).” A transportation improvement which is growth inducing must directly cause economic or population increases greater than what is planned by the local agency without the project. If the improvement is the cause of new development and an influx of residents and economic strength in an area, then it may be growth inducing.

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines (Section 15126.2[d]) require that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) evaluate the growth inducing impacts of a proposed action. A growth inducing impact is defined by the CEQA Guidelines as:

The way in which a 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... It is not assumed that growth in an area is necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment.

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Local

City of Elk Grove General Plan

The City of Elk Grove General plan does not identify any policies that relate to growth inducement within the City.

City of Sacramento General Plan

The City of Sacramento General Plan identifies several policies that relate to growth inducement within the City, as they relate to the proposed project.

- **Urban Growth Policy 4 - New Growth Areas:** It is the policy of the City to approve development in the City's new growth areas that promotes efficient growth patterns and public service extensions, and is compatible with adjacent developments.
- **Urban Growth Policy 12 – Smart Growth:** It is the policy of the City to promote sustainable and balanced development that makes efficient and effective use of land resources and existing infrastructure by using the following Smart Growth Principles.
 - **Bullet 4:** Foster walkable, close-knit neighborhoods through a system centers, streets, pedestrian paths and bike routes.
 - **Bullet 7:** Concentrate new development and target infrastructure investments within the urban core of the region to allow for efficient use of existing facilities, infill and reuse areas.
 - **Bullet 8:** Provide a variety of transportation choices for people to bike, walk, take transit or drive.
 - **Bullet 12:** Create a Smart Growth Regional Vision and Plan with neighboring cities, counties and other governmental entities so that regional strategies and policies can be implemented to discourage urban sprawl and address transportation, air quality, housing, land use, loss of agricultural lands and open space and other regional issues.
 - **Bullet 13:** Policies adopted by regional decision-making bodies should discourage urban sprawl, promote infill development and the concentration of development in the urban core of the region, and promote the equitable distribution of affordable housing and social services.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Northeast Quadrant

According to the Elk Grove General Plan that was adopted in November 2003, existing and future land uses in the northeast quadrant are Commercial, Medium Density Residential, and Low-Density Residential.

Southeast Quadrant

According to the Elk Grove General Plan that was adopted in November 2003, existing and future land uses in the southeast quadrant are Commercial and Commercial/Office/Multi-Family.

Northwest Quadrant

According to the City of Sacramento General Plan Land Use map that was updated in July 2002, existing and future land uses in the northwest quadrant are Low-Density Residential, Mixed Use, and Parks and Recreation-Open Space. However, the zoning in this area and built-up land reflects commercial and residential development within the City of Sacramento.

Southwest Quadrant

According to the Elk Grove General Plan that was adopted in November 2003, existing and future land uses in the southwest quadrant are Commercial and Medium Density Residential.

Since areas along the City of Elk Grove project limits have recently been evaluated with the City's incorporations and newly developed land use and zoning guidelines, construction of Alternative 2A or 3A would not likely result in changes to the use of surrounding land.

Components of Growth

The timing, magnitude, and location of land development and population growth in a community or region are based on various interrelated land use and economic variables. Key variables include regional economic trends, market demand for residential and non-residential uses, land availability and cost, the availability and quality of transportation facilities and public services, proximity to employment centers, the supply and cost of housing, and regulatory policies or conditions. Since the general plan of a community defines the location, type and intensity of growth, it is the primary means of regulating development and growth in California.

Capacity and Growth

Growth accommodating and growth constraining are two terms that are used to describe growth. Growth accommodating is designing a system to best handle upcoming growth trends. The City of Elk Grove has rapidly been increasing in population both before and after its incorporation in July of 2000. Its neighboring City of Sacramento and Sacramento County have also been experiencing this rapid growth. Therefore, the improvements to the Sheldon Road/SR 99 interchange would not be the direct cause of development, but a result of development and would, therefore, be growth accommodating.

Growth constraining effects occur when necessary highway improvements are not made. The City of Elk Grove needs to improve its transportation infrastructure to prevent this situation. It is assumed that within the City of Elk Grove, growth will continue to occur regardless of the highway system. More desirable land, housing, jobs, or other factors will bring new residents to the area even if there is considerable congestion on the roadways. If the highway and roadway system does not expand with the increase of new residents and businesses, the growth level will

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slow down and the level of service will continue to deteriorate. The proposed project would accommodate the planned growth in the Cities of Elk Grove and Sacramento.

Appendix G lists the 2025 roadway improvements within the study area and the expected completion year. The major improvements within the study area expected to be completed by Year 2005 would include the Sheldon Road Widening and Lewis Stein Road Widening projects. These improvements would help to increase roadway capacity within the City of Elk Grove in order to avoid growth constraining effects.

Section 2.1.5 provides information on future traffic projections based on the proposed project and growth within the City of Elk Grove and surrounding area, including the City of Sacramento and travel between the two cities. The SR 99 corridor is identified as a growth corridor according to the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG). Continued pressure for residential and suburban growth is expected to occur in this area.

**TABLE 2.1.2-1
ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS IN MTP**

Location	Roadway Improvements	Year
Sheldon Rd – Bruceville Rd to Lewis Stein Rd	Widen to six lanes	2005
Sheldon Rd – Power Inn Rd to Elk Grove-Florin Rd	Widen to four lanes	2005
Bruceville Rd – Sheldon Rd. to Cosumnes River Blvd	Widen to six lanes	2010
Lewis Stein Rd – Sheldon Rd. to West Stockton Blvd ¹	Widen to four lanes	2005
Lewis Stein Rd – Big Horn Blvd. to West Stockton Blvd	Construct a two-lane roadway	2003
Center Pkwy – West of Sheldon Rd ²	Widen to four lanes	2006
Cosumnes River Blvd – Center Pkwy to Bruceville Rd	Widen to four lanes	2008
Power Inn Rd – Calvine Rd to Sheldon Rd	Widen to four lanes	2008

Notes:

(1) Based on input from City of Elk Grove Public Works Department staff.

(2) Based on input from City of Sacramento Public Works Department staff.

Source: 2025 Metropolitan Transportation Plan, SACOG 2002.

Growth Inducement Potential

Population Growth

SACOG projections for housing for Elk Grove for year 2025 are 61,759 units, while the City General Plan expects approximately 63,340 housing units. In addition, SACOG projects the City's job/housing ratio in year 2025 to be 0.65, while implementation of the General Plan has

the capacity to generate approximately 73,567 jobs with a resulting job/housing ratio of 1.16. Thus, the City of Elk Grove's General Plan would accommodate growth projected by SACOG and is anticipated to provide improved jobs/housing balance conditions in the City than what's currently estimated by SACOG.

However, buildout of the City of Elk Grove under the Sacramento County General Plan Land Use Map¹ would have accommodated 70,047 residential dwelling units and a population of approximately 215,046. This additional growth originally planned for under the Sacramento County General Plan may not be provided in the current City limits under the proposed General Plan and could be displaced to other areas in the region. In addition, future regional growth beyond 2025 anticipated by SACOG would also not be accommodated in the current City limits. This potential displaced growth would place pressure on areas adjoining the City to develop. The proposed General Plan recognizes that future urban development outside of the current City boundaries may be appropriate to accommodate future growth and identifies the Urban Study Areas as possible annexation areas for the City to accommodate such growth.

IMPACTS

No Build Alternative

The No Build Alternative could result in growth inducement to other areas in the region, which could constrain planned growth within the City of Elk Grove and create growth in rural areas not intended for growth.

Build Alternatives (2A and 3A Impacts)

The proposed highway and operational improvements would support anticipated and expected growth within the two cities. The proposed project is not expected to induce unexpected growth or to have a direct growth inducing effect on the project area.

Growth Effects Associated with Infrastructure Improvements

The proposed project is intended to correct existing operational deficiencies and to accommodate increased traffic demand generated by approved and planned development being undertaken as part of the City of Elk Grove General Plan and the City of Sacramento General Plan.

The site vicinity is planned for additional residential and commercial development in the City of Elk Grove General Plan and the City of Sacramento General Plan. Due to their proximity to the interchange, many of the trips generated by the approved and planned developments will travel through the existing Sheldon Road/SR 99 Interchange. The proposed interchange improvement project would provide needed additional capacity to accommodate existing traffic, as well as traffic generated by approved and planned developments on both the east and west sides of SR 99. In this respect, the proposed project is consistent with regional planning policy and can be

¹ Buildout estimates for the City under the Sacramento County General Plan Land Use Map take into account the approved East Franklin Specific Plan, East Elk Grove Specific Plan, Lent Ranch Marketplace Special Planning Area and other approved General Plan amendments and rezones since incorporation, a similar level of urban development for the Southeast Policy Area as the proposed General Plan, and current and maximum residential densities.

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considered growth accommodating rather than growth inducing. However, since the proposed project would increase the capacity of the existing interchange, it could be argued that this action would remove an impediment to growth by improving access to vacant land near the interchange.

An interchange already exists at the project site. The proposed interchange modification is needed to improve existing deficient interchange operational conditions and to accommodate increased traffic demand generated by approved and planned development. This need is already acknowledged in regional transportation plans. In addition, implementation of the proposed project would not involve any changes to the General Plan of either city. No aspect of the project is precedent setting, and it would not be considered growth inducing from that standpoint.

Growth approved and planned for the area is, in part, facilitated by the proposed project. Impacts associated with such residential and commercial growth, however, were addressed and analyzed at the time the City of Elk Grove and City of Sacramento adopted their respective General Plans and certified their respective General Plan EIRs.

The proposed project would support planned growth allowed for by the Elk Grove General Plan. Implementation of the proposed project would not directly stimulate additional or new growth in the project area. The location of future growth would continue to be controlled by the City of Elk Grove and City of Sacramento land use planning agencies as guided by local land use plans.

CEQA FINDING

The proposed project would serve planned growth within the City's of Elk Grove and Sacramento. Therefore the proposed project would have a **less than significant impact** on growth.