

6.0 CEQA-REQUIRED ASSESSMENT CONCLUSIONS

Section 15126 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines requires that all aspects of a project must be considered when evaluating its impact on the environment, including planning, acquisition, development, and operation. This chapter provides an overview of the potential impacts resulting from the implementation of the proposed Specific Plan based on the analyses presented in Chapter 4.0 of this EIR. The topics covered in this chapter include impacts found not to be significant, growth inducement, significant and unavoidable impacts, and significant irreversible changes. A more detailed analysis of the effects the proposed Specific Plan would have on the environment and proposed mitigation measures to minimize significant impacts are provided in Sections 4.1 through 4.18 of this EIR.

6.1 GROWTH INDUCEMENT

Section 15126.2(d) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that an EIR discuss the ways in which a proposed project or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, could foster economic or population growth in the surrounding environment. Examples of projects likely to have significant growth-inducing impacts include extensions or expansions of infrastructure systems beyond what is needed to serve project-specific demand, and development of new residential subdivisions or industrial parks in areas that are only sparsely developed or are underdeveloped. Typically, development projects on sites that are designated for development and surrounded by existing suburban uses are not considered adversely growth-inducing because growth in areas that already have development and infrastructure available to serve new development are generally considered environmentally beneficial. This section evaluates the potential of the proposed Specific Plan to create such growth inducements. Not all aspects of growth inducement are negative; rather, negative impacts associated with growth inducement occur only where the growth associated with the proposed Specific Plan would cause adverse environmental impacts. As described in Section 4.14, Population and Housing, implementation of the proposed Specific Plan would not exceed the City's projections for population growth in the Specific Plan Area, as previously addressed in the City's General Plan EIR¹ and 2016-2024 Housing Element.²

The proposed Specific Plan is not expected to result in indirect growth inducement because the additional housing units and population resulting from implementation of the proposed Specific Plan have been anticipated by the City and do not exceed projections of the City. Although the General Plan does not identify a specific housing allocation for the Specific Plan Area, the total buildout of the Specific Plan Area would be less than the City anticipates through implementation of the General Plan. Additional employment growth would occur incrementally over a period of approximately 30 years and would be consistent with the planning objectives of the City, and phased development of the proposed Specific Plan.

As discussed in Section 4.15, Public Services, and Section 4.17, Utilities and Service Systems, the Specific Plan Area is not currently served by the City's public service or utility providers, including

¹ Madera, City of. 2009. City of Madera General Plan Environmental Impact Report. October.

² Madera, City of. 2015. City of Madera 2016-2024 Housing Element Update. December.

police protection services, fire prevention services, water, wastewater, telecommunications, electricity, and natural gas. The proposed Specific Plan includes physical improvements to accommodate growth which would create an increased demand for public services and utilities within the Specific Plan Area. All future projects occurring within the Specific Plan Area requiring a discretionary action would be required to undergo project-specific environmental review to determine project-specific impacts on public services and utilities, and would be required to pay applicable 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 and utilities.

Development of the proposed Specific Plan would involve construction activities that could generate some temporary employment opportunities. However, given the temporary nature of such opportunities, and given the relatively long period of time over which all phases of the proposed Specific Plan would be constructed, it is unlikely that construction workers would relocate to Madera as a result of the proposed Specific Plan. Thus, the proposed Specific Plan would not be considered growth-inducing from an employment perspective.

6.2 SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE CHANGES

Section 15126.2(d) of the CEQA Guidelines requires an EIR to discuss the extent to which the proposed Specific Plan would commit nonrenewable resources to uses that future generations would probably be unable to reverse. The three CEQA-required categories of irreversible changes are discussed below.

6.2.1 Changes in Land Use Which Commit Future Generations

The proposed Specific Plan would guide future development in the Specific Plan Area and would also involve the development of land currently used for agricultural production. Although the proposed development would commit future generations to using the Specific Plan Area for developed uses rather than agricultural purposes, such a commitment is consistent with planned uses for proposed Specific Plan Area, as identified in the City's General Plan. The General Plan has anticipated development in the Specific Plan Area that commits future generations, which was assessed under the General Plan EIR; the Specific Plan merely implements and carries out the vision of the General Plan.

6.2.2 Irreversible Damage from Environmental Accidents

Demolition and construction activities associated with implementation of the proposed Specific Plan would involve some risk for environmental accidents. However, accidental spills and soil contamination, as discussed in Section 4.9, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, would be addressed by City, State, and federal agencies, and would follow professional industry standards for safety and construction. Although there is a possibility for contaminated soil to be encountered during grading, excavation, and/or ground disturbance associated with implementation of the proposed Specific Plan, it is likely that such contamination may have resulted from agricultural operations within the Specific Plan Area. However, the risks of accidental contamination from handling construction materials or transport of these materials off site would be reduced to a less-than-significant level through compliance with the many federal, State, and local regulations regarding the handling and

disposal of such construction materials. Additionally, the land uses proposed by the proposed Specific Plan would not include any uses or activities that are likely to contribute to or be the cause of a significant environmental accident, such as industrial-related spills or leaks. As a result, the proposed Specific Plan would not pose a substantial risk of environmental accidents.

6.2.3 Consumption of Non-Renewable Resources

Consumption of non-renewable resources includes issues related to increased energy consumption, conversion of agricultural lands, and lost access to mining reserves. The proposed Specific Plan would require water, electric, and natural gas service, as well as additional resources for construction. Construction and ongoing maintenance would irreversibly commit some materials and non-renewable energy resources. Materials and resources used during implementation of the proposed Specific Plan would include, but are not limited to, non-renewable and limited resources such as oil, gasoline, sand, gravel, asphalt, and steel. These materials and energy resources would be used for infrastructure development, transportation of people and goods, and utilities. During the operational phase of the proposed Specific Plan, energy sources including oil and gasoline would be used for lighting, heating, and cooling of residences, as well as transportation of people to and from the Specific Plan Area.

As discussed in Section 4.6, Energy, the projected electricity and natural gas demands are within the existing delivery capacity of current service providers, and the proposed Specific Plan would not result in a significant adverse impact related to the provision of electricity or natural gas. In addition, the proposed Specific Plan would comply with Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR) that requires conservation practices that would limit the amount of energy (California Energy Code Building Energy Efficiency Standards [Title 24, Part 6]) consumed through implementation of the proposed Specific Plan. With the development of more cost-effective and accessible technologies, dependence on non-renewable resources used in association with the future development envisioned under the proposed Specific Plan may also be reduced. Furthermore, all future projects requiring discretionary actions under the proposed Specific Plan would be required to undergo 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 non-renewable or slowly renewable resources.

The proposed Specific Plan also includes Sustainability Guidelines that encourage sustainable building and design practices to include compact development, reduced impervious surfaces, improved water detention and conservation, preservation of habitat areas, mixing of compatible land uses, water-efficient landscaping and irrigation, and enhanced pedestrian and bicycle amenities that reduce reliance on the use of automobiles. The proposed Specific Plan also includes landscape guidelines that promote sustainability, drought-tolerant plant materials adapted to the local climate, as well as bio-swale and basins that efficiently address stormwater management. In addition, the proposed Specific Plan presents an opportunity to integrate recycled water use for irrigation of landscaped areas of the Specific Plan Area. Green field installation of a distribution system at the

initial development stage provides opportunity to plan optimum recycled water utilization within the Plan Area.

Implementation of the proposed Specific Plan would also result in future development that would result in an increased demand for potable water and generation of wastewater. However, as stated in Section 4.17, Utilities and Service Systems, future projects requiring discretionary actions would be subject to additional environmental review and would be assessed to ensure facilities are available to accommodate development at that time.

Although the construction and ongoing operation of the proposed Specific Plan would involve the use of non-renewable resources, through the inclusion of energy-conserving features of the Specific Plan, and compliance with applicable standards and regulations, the proposed Specific Plan would not represent a an unjustified use of such non-renewable resources.

6.3 SIGNIFICANT UNAVOIDABLE IMPACTS

Section 15126.2(b) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that an EIR describe any significant impacts that cannot be avoided, even with the implementation of feasible mitigation measures. As determined in this EIR, implementation of the proposed Specific Plan would result in significant and unavoidable adverse impacts related to aesthetics, agricultural resources, air quality, land use, noise, public services and recreation, transportation, and utilities and service systems. With implementation of mitigation measures for aesthetics, air quality, land use, noise, public services, and utilities and service systems, the potential impacts identified in this EIR would still remain significant and unavoidable. Due to the absence of feasible mitigation, the adverse agricultural and transportation impacts would remain significant and unavoidable. In addition, potentially significant and unavoidable traffic impacts were identified at California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) freeway facilities, which are not within the jurisdiction of the City of Madera. This section lists the impacts for the proposed Specific Plan that were found to be significant and unavoidable.

- **Aesthetics**

- Implementation of the proposed Specific Plan would have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.
- Implementation of the proposed Specific Plan would substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings.
- Implementation of the proposed Specific Plan would create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

- **Agricultural Resources**

- Implementation of the proposed Specific Plan would convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland) to non-agricultural use.

- Implementation of the proposed Specific Plan would conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use and Williamson Act contract lands.
 - **Air Quality**
 - Implementation of the proposed Specific Plan would result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of criteria pollutants for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or State ambient air quality standards.
 - Implementation of the proposed Specific Plan could expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations.
 - **Noise**
 - Implementation of the proposed Specific Plan would generate a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the Specific Plan Area in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or in other applicable local, State, or federal standards.
 - **Public Services and Recreation**
 - Implementation of the proposed Specific Plan would include construction of fire, police, parks, and other public facilities which would have an adverse physical effect on the environment.
 - **Transportation**
 - Implementation of the proposed Specific Plan would conflict with City's General Plan level of service (LOS) policies addressing roadway facilities.
 - **Utilities and Service Systems**
 - Implementation of the proposed Specific Plan would require the construction of new water facilities which would cause significant environmental effects.
 - Implementation of the proposed Specific Plan would require the construction of new wastewater facilities which would cause significant environmental effects.
 - Implementation of the proposed Specific Plan would require the construction of new water reclamation facilities which would cause significant environmental effects.
 - Implementation of the proposed Specific Plan would require construction of new stormwater drainage facilities which would cause significant environmental effects.
-

- Implementation of the proposed Specific Plan would require construction of new electric, natural gas, and telecommunications facilities which would cause significant environmental effects.