

6.0 LONG-TERM IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

6.1 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LOCAL SHORT-TERM USES OF MAN'S ENVIRONMENT AND THE MAINTENANCE AND ENHANCEMENT OF LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY

With implementation of the General Plan Update, a variety of short-term and long-term impacts would occur on a local level. During grading and construction for development/improvement projects, portions of surrounding uses may be temporarily impacted by dust and noise. Short-term erosion may occur during grading. There may also be a minor increase in dust and vehicle emissions caused by grading and construction activities. However, these disruptions would be temporary, and may be mitigated to a large degree through goals, policies, implementation programs and mitigation cited in this report and the standards for construction as cited in the City of Bakersfield and County of Kern Municipal Code's (refer to Section 4.0, *Description of Environmental Setting, Impacts and Mitigation Measures*).

Ultimate buildout of the General Plan would create long-term environmental consequences that are associated with a transition in land use. The long-term effects of the Plan and subsequent development may impact the physical, aesthetic, and human environments. Long-term physical consequences of development include: increased traffic volumes, additional noise created by traffic, incremental increased demands for public services and utilities, and increased energy and natural resource consumption. Long-term biological resource consequences associated with grading, construction and landscaping would also include the replacement of on-site vegetation with other plant varieties. Long-term visual/aesthetic impacts include alterations of views. Incremental degradation of local and regional air quality would also be a long-term impact.

6.2 IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES THAT WOULD BE INVOLVED IN THE PROPOSED ACTION SHOULD IT BE IMPLEMENTED

Buildout of the Plan area would cause irreversible environmental changes. Implementation of the Plan would result in the following changes:

- Commitment of land, which would be physically altered.
- Vegetation removal for grading and construction activities.
- Alteration of the human environment as a consequence of the development process. The Plan represents an enhanced commitment to residential, commercial, industrial, recreational and institutional uses which intensifies land uses.

- Utilization of various new raw materials, such as lumber, sand and gravel for construction. Some of these resources are already being depleted worldwide. The energy consumed in development may be considered a permanent investment.
- Incremental increases in vehicular activity in the surrounding circulation system, resulting in associated increases in air emissions and noise levels.

6.3 GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS

Growth-inducing impacts fall into two general categories, direct and indirect. Direct growth-inducing impacts are generally associated with the provision of urban services to an undeveloped area. The provision of these services to a site, and the subsequent development, can serve to induce other landowners in the vicinity to convert their property to urban uses. Indirect, or secondary growth-inducing impacts consist of growth induced in the region by the additional demands for housing, goods, and services associated with the population increase caused by, or attracted to, a new project.

The purpose of a General Plan is to guide growth and development in a community. Accordingly, the General Plan is premised on a certain amount of growth taking place. Kern County, as well as the entire San Joaquin Valley, has experienced growth over the past three to four decades and this trend is expected to continue. The focus of the General Plan, then, is to provide a framework in which the growth can be managed and to tailor it to suit the needs of the community and surrounding area.

The 1990 Census indicated that Kern County's total population was 543,477 persons. According to the 2000 Census, Kern County's total population was 661,645 persons, indicating a growth rate of approximately 22 percent between 1990 and 2000. The County's population is projected to grow to 871,600 persons by the year 2010.¹ According to the Kern Council of Government's 2000 Regional Transportation Plan, "population growth in the County has been significant and sustained. The trend of population growth in Kern County over the last 15-20 years has been outward expansion of existing urban centers. This trend is anticipated to continue."² The Bakersfield Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) identified in the 2000 Census was consistent with that of the area identified for the County of Kern. The Bakersfield MSA ranked 51st nationwide in percent population change between 1990 and 2000.

The year 2020 population of the General Plan Update Planning area is projected to be 520,500 persons, an approximate 29 percent growth rate (118,400 persons) over the year 2001 estimated population of 402,100 persons.³

¹ California State Department of Finance, Demographic Research Unit, Interim County Projections: California.

² 2000 Regional Transportation Plan, Executive Summary, September 2000, Page 102.

³ Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan Update, January 2002.

According to the 1990 Census, the City of Bakersfield's population was 174,820 persons. The 2000 Census indicated a population of 247,057 persons, representing a growth rate of approximately 41 percent between 1990 and 2000. Thus, the City of Bakersfield grew at a faster rate than the Bakersfield MSA as a whole. In the year 2000, the City's total population represented approximately 37 percent of the County's total population. Of the City's total population in the year 2000, 243,244 persons (98.5 percent) lived in households and 3,813 persons (1.5 percent) lived in group quarters. The City's total population as of January 1, 2001 was 254,368 persons, representing approximately 37 percent of the County's total population of 685,811.⁴

The 1990 General Plan was considered to be directly growth inducing since it accommodated a population of 570,000 which was estimated at more than twice the population in 1990.⁵ Additionally, the 1990 General Plan was considered growth inducing in that it provided for the continuation of historical growth patterns in certain areas by allowing the greatest potential for growth in these areas. The anticipated growth identified in the 1990 General Plan involved the following projections:

- A net increase of 153,856 dwelling units
- Potential increase in commercial floor area of 46 million square feet
- Potential increase in industrial development of 50 million square feet
- A population increase of approximately 385,000 persons

The growth identified in the General Plan Update does not differ significantly from that identified in the 1990 General Plan. Land use designations or their associated density standards and floor area ratios have not been modified in the Update and no new land use designations (categories) were added. As with the 1990 General Plan, implementation of the General Plan Update would be considered directly growth inducing since much of the Planning area remains to be developed. Less than 17 percent of the total Planning area has been developed with residential, commercial, and industrial uses.⁶ The amount of undeveloped land in these three major land use categories is detailed as follows:

- Residential: approximately 70,689 acres designated - approximately 50 percent undeveloped;
- Commercial: approximately 7,318 acres designated - approximately 38 percent undeveloped; and
- Industrial: approximately 16,429 acres designated - approximately 60 percent undeveloped.

The General Plan Update is considered indirectly growth inducing in that it would provide for the continuation of historical growth patterns of peripheral areas by focusing new development at new mixed-use activity centers generally located in the southwest, northwest and northeast (i.e., Rosedale Ranch, rural northwest, California

⁴ California State Department of Finance, Report ESA, January 1, 2001.

⁵ Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan Final EIR, September 1989, Page 7-1.

⁶ The vast majority (approximately 55 percent) of the Planning area is designated for Open Space uses.

State University Bakersfield, and area west of Buena Vista Road). The General Plan Update includes policies that prohibit “leapfrog” development and new growth is intended to be contiguous with existing urban designated areas. Consequently, undeveloped lands may be crossed by services/utilities infrastructure supporting new development. The resultant islands of undeveloped lands may become increasingly attractive for new development due to the availability of infrastructure.

Overall, the General Plan Update is considered growth inducing, both directly and indirectly, although not to a greater extent than the 1990 General Plan.

It should be noted that the General Plan Update does include the following policies that discourage sprawling land use patterns:

- LU-G-4 Accommodate new development which channels land uses in a phased, orderly manner and is coordinated with the provision of infrastructure and public improvements.
- LU-P-3 Ensure that residential uses are located in proximity to commercial services, employment centers, public services, transportation routes, and recreational and cultural resources.
- LU-P-75 Provide for an orderly outward expansion of new "urban" development (any commercial, industrial, and residential development have a density greater than one unit per acre) so that it maintains continuity of existing development, allows for the incremental expansion of infrastructure and public services, minimizes impacts on natural environmental resources, and provides a high quality environment for living and business.
- CONS/SA-P-14 When considering proposal to convert designated agricultural lands to non-agricultural use, the decision making body of the city and County shall evaluate the following factors to determine the appropriateness of the proposal:
 - Soil quality
 - Availability of irrigation water
 - Proximity to non-agricultural uses
 - Proximity to intensive parcelization
 - Effect on properties subject to “Williamson Act” land use contracts.
 - Ability to be provided with urban services (sewer, water, roads, etc.)
 - Ability to effect the application of agricultural chemicals on nearby agricultural properties
 - Ability to create a precedent-setting situation that leads to the premature conversion of prime agricultural lands
 - Demonstrated project need
 - Necessity of buffers such as lower densities, setbacks, etc.