

# CHAPTER 5

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## Other CEQA Considerations

### 5.1 Effects Found Not To Be Significant

As required by CEQA, this EIR focuses on expected significant or potentially significant environmental effects (CEQA Guidelines Section 15143). The scoping process, including site visits, initial data review, and written comments, identified four issues where no substantial evidence existed that a potentially significant impact would occur. These issues are discussed below.

#### 5.1.1 Agricultural Resources

Nut Tree Airport is located in the northwestern portion of the City of Vacaville. City General Plan land use designations within this area consist of industrial uses and public park to the west, public open space and commercial uses to the south, commercial, industrial, and business park to the east, and industrial uses to north. The California Farmland Mapping and Monitoring System (FMMP) does not identify any land in the vicinity of the Proposed Project for agricultural uses (City of Vacaville, 2010a). Furthermore, recent surveys of agricultural resources in the project area only identified the presence of grazing land to the west of the Airport. No Prime or Unique Farmland or Farmland of Statewide or Local Importance is located in the vicinity of Nut Tree Airport (City of Vacaville, 2010a). Similarly, Nut Tree Airport, which is owned and operated by Solano County, is not designated for any form of agricultural activity by the County, and none currently occurs on the Airport. Therefore, implementation of the Proposed Project would not result in the conversion of any type of farmland to non-agricultural activities.

Additionally, no land, either on Airport property or in its general vicinity, is designated for forest land or timber production. Therefore, implementation of the Proposed Project would have no effect on resources of these types. In conclusions, no impact to agricultural or forest or timberland resources would occur as a result of the Proposed Project.

#### 5.1.2 Mineral Resources

The State Geologist classifies areas in the State of California which may contain significant mineral resources. There are four main mineral resource zone (MRZ) classifications: MRZ-1 through 4. Lands classified MRZ-1 are areas where geologic information indicates no significant mineral deposits are present. Lands classified MRZ-2 are areas that contain identified mineral resources.

Lands classified MRZ-3 are areas of undetermined mineral resource significance. Lands classified MRZ-4 are areas of unknown mineral resource potential. The Solano County General Plan does not identify the Proposed Project site as being designated either MRZ-2 or MRZ-3 (Solano County, 2008). The closest area to the Airport designated for mineral resources is located approximately two miles to the west, and is designated MRZ-2. The Solano County General Plan does identify a sand and gravel mine location on or near the project site; however, this location is closed and no longer in use (Solano County, 2008). Given that no mineral deposits have been identified on the Airport, implementation of the Proposed Project would have no impact on mineral resources.

### 5.1.3 Population and Housing

The most recent population projects available indicate that the City of Vacaville will grow from its current population of approximately 105,200 (circa 2010) to 118,700 by the year 2020; a thirteen percent change over current conditions (City of Vacaville, 2010b). Furthermore, according to the City, there are approximately 32,803 housing units currently located within City limits (City of Vacaville, 2010c), with 2.1 percent of these homes vacant. According to the City of Vacaville's Housing Element, an additional 2,901 housing units will be needed to accommodate forecasted demand (City of Vacaville, 2010b).

Implementation of the Proposed Project would generate short-term (construction-related) and long-term employment opportunities. Short-term, construction-related jobs would likely be filled by workers living in or near the City of Vacaville, and would not result in an increase in the population, or the need to build additional housing. Long-term employment opportunities resulting from the Proposed Project would be generated through the operation of proposed corporate aircraft hangars, though the number of aviation-related jobs generated by the Proposed Project would likely be below 50. The more likely inducer of employment growth would be the proposed non-aviation uses identified for Phase I of the Proposed Project. Non-aviation development, which would include business office and commercial/light industrial facilities, are estimated to generate approximately 295 new, long-term jobs.<sup>1</sup> While some future employees may be drawn from other regions and employment centers, the vast majority are likely to originate from the City of Vacaville or the greater Solano County area.

Given that projected employment growth induced by implementation of the Proposed Project would only represent 0.3 percent of the City's current population, or 0.2 percent of the City's projected population, the Proposed Project would not induce substantial population growth. Furthermore, given the low number of long-term jobs generated by the Proposed Project, relative to the City's population, as well as current vacancy rates and modest projections for future housing needs, implementation of the Proposed Project would not induce the need to develop new housing. In conclusion, implementation of the Proposed Project, while it would generate modest numbers of short-term and long-term employment opportunities in the region, would have no impact related

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<sup>1</sup> This estimate is based on an employee generation rate of one employee for every 450 sq. ft. of commercial development (ABAG, 1995).

to inducing population growth, or causing the need to construct additional housing within the City of Vacaville or the greater Solano County region.

## 5.1.4 Recreation

The closest public park to the Airport is Centennial Park, which is located less than a mile to the west of the Proposed Project site. Implementation of the Proposed Project, which would include the development of proposed improvements to Nut Tree Airport identified in its Master Plan update, would not result in the increased use of Centennial Park, or other area parks. Furthermore, the Proposed Project does not include the construction of new recreation facilities. Given that the Proposed Project would not result in the accelerated deterioration of existing parks, nor would it involve the construction of new parks, no impacts to recreational resources would occur as a result of the implementation of the Master Plan update.

## 5.2 Cumulative Impacts

CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(a) requires that an EIR discuss the cumulative impacts of a project when the project's incremental effect is "cumulatively considerable," meaning that the project's incremental effects are considerable (as defined in Section 15065(c)). Cumulative impacts refer to two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts (CEQA Guidelines Section 15355). Further, such impacts can result from individual effects which may be minor, but collectively significant over time. The discussion on cumulative impacts shall reflect the severity of the impacts and their likelihood of occurrence (CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(b)). CEQA Guidelines note that the cumulative impacts discussion does not need to provide as much detail as is provided in the analysis of project-only impacts and should be guided by the standards of practicality and reasonableness. Considering this, CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(b)(1) recommends the use of a "list" or "projection" approach in the discussion of significant cumulative impacts to adequately address cumulative impacts.

The cumulative impact analysis considered the combined effect of the proposed project and other closely related, past, present and reasonably foreseeable future projects that may be constructed or commence operation during the time of activity associated with the proposed project. The complete list of cumulative projects considered in this EIR is provided in Chapter 2, Project Description. The cumulative impacts of the Proposed Project are analyzed in detail in the impact(s) discussion located in each of the environmental resource sections (Sections 3.1 – 3.12). Please refer to those sections for a detailed discussion of potential cumulative effects of the Proposed Project.

## 5.3 Growth Inducement

### 5.3.1 CEQA Definition of Growth Inducement

The CEQA *Guidelines* require that an EIR evaluate the growth-inducing impacts of a proposed action (Section 15126.2[d]). A growth-inducing impact is defined by the CEQA *Guidelines* as:

*[T]he ways in which the 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 must not be assumed that growth in any area is necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment.*

A project can have direct and/or indirect growth inducement potential. Direct growth inducement would result if a project resulted in establishing a new demand for public services, facilities, or infrastructure, such as construction of new housing. A project can have indirect or secondary growth-inducement potential if it would establish substantial new permanent employment opportunities (e.g., commercial, industrial or governmental enterprises) or if it would involve a substantial construction effort with substantial short-term employment opportunities and indirectly stimulate the need for additional housing and services to support the new employment demand. Similarly, as explained in the CEQA Guidelines, a project would indirectly induce growth if it would remove an obstacle to additional growth and development, such as removing a constraint or increasing the capacity of a required public service.

### 5.3.2 Approach to Analyzing Growth Inducing Effects

The environmental impacts of induced growth are the secondary, or indirect, physical effects of growth. Secondary effects of growth inducement can include, but are not limited to, increased traffic, degradation of air quality, loss of biological resources, and increased demand on public services. Local land use plans (e.g., general plans) provide for land use development patterns and growth policies that allow for the planned expansion of urban development supported by adequate urban public services, such as water supply, roadway infrastructure, sewer service, and solid waste service. A project that would induce unplanned growth (e.g., conflict with the local land use plans or occur beyond the planning horizon of current plans) could indirectly cause additional adverse environmental impacts and other public service impacts not previously envisioned. Therefore, to assess whether a project with potential to induce growth will result in adverse secondary effects beyond what is anticipated by local jurisdictions, it is important to assess the degree to which the growth associated with a project would or would not be consistent with applicable land use plans.

### 5.3.3 Overview of Induced Growth Potential

As discussed in Section 5.1 of this chapter, the potential for the Proposed Project to induce substantial growth through the generation of new jobs or a new population base is considered less than significant. The Proposed Project is anticipated to generate temporary, construction-related jobs, and a low number of permanent jobs through the creation of non-aviation commercial and light industrial facilities. Both construction-related and operations-related jobs are expected to be filled from local employee pools, and would not create a need for additional infrastructure or new housing, and while the Proposed Project will have a beneficial impact on the region through the creation of short-term and long-term employment opportunities, the overall effect that this will have on commercial growth in the vicinity of the Airport is anticipated to be less than significant.

Regarding the regional market for general aviation in Solano County, the Proposed Project is intended to accommodate forecasted general aviation operations, rather than create a new market for aviation operations at this time. Furthermore, limitations on overall size of the airport and the number of runways it operates will naturally prevent expansive growth of this facility. Furthermore, any infrastructure required in order to support the Proposed Project would be for on-site, proposed uses, and would therefore not accommodate any additional growth in the region.

Development of the Proposed Project for the purposes of accommodating general aviation operations and providing additional income to the Airport (via non-aviation land uses) is not expected to induce substantial new population growth in the area; rather, it would serve to provide improved facilities to existing general aviation operators, as well as accommodate to future aviators who may seek to Nut Tree Airport. Implementation of the Proposed Project would add a low number of jobs to the region through the construction of non-aviation land uses, but this will not require the construction of additional housing, or induce substantial amounts of new infrastructure.

## 5.4 Energy Conservation

Pursuant to Appendix F of the CEQA Guidelines, this EIR has considered the potential energy impacts of the Proposed Project. Energy usage associated with the Proposed Project's facilities would include the lighting and operation of the proposed general aviation apron, hangars, expanded administration building, and non-aviation land uses. Energy conservation features built into the Proposed Project include the construction of solarized shade hangars, which will provide renewable energy to power apron lights and other airfield lighting. Moreover, Solano County has set forth a variety of policies requiring the consideration of energy efficiency and conservation in building design. The Proposed Project would be required to adhere to the following policies:

**Policy RS.P-49:** Ensure energy conservation and reduced energy demand in the county through required use of energy-efficient technology and practices.

**Policy RS.P-54:** Reduce Solano County's reliance on fossil fuels for transportation and other energy-consuming activities.

**Policy RS.P-59:** Encourage on-site renewable energy production and use and energy conservation measures.

In addition to these policies, the Proposed Project would be required to adhere to a variety of County programs intended to conserve energy. Such programs would include the following:

**Policy RS.I-40:** Require all County operations to use renewable energy for 50 percent or more of their energy needs.

**Policy RS.I-41:** Require that all new County buildings and major renovations and additions achieve LEED certification or meet equivalent performance standards. A LEED Silver certification level and reduced operational costs are preferred outcomes.

**Policy RS.I-48:** Require all commercial, institutional, and industrial development to reduce potential urban heat island effect by using U.S. EPA–Energy Star rated roofing materials and light colored paint, using light colored paving materials for internal roads and parking, and using shade trees to shade south and west sides of new or renovated buildings and to achieve a minimum of 50 percent shading for all parking lots surfaces. Continue to ensure compliance with existing state building requirements for energy-conserving roofing materials on nonresidential buildings in new construction and reroofing.

Implementation of these programs during the development of the Proposed Project would demonstrate energy conservation in the design and operation of proposed facilities, and would therefore be consistent with state (such as those identified in AB 32) and local goals and policies related to energy conservation. Furthermore, though the operation of general aviation aircraft would expend energy through the burning of fossil fuels, the energy efficiency of these aircraft are regulated by the federal government and the FAA, and are therefore outside the jurisdiction of the energy goals and policies of Solano County.

## 5.5 Significant Irreversible Environmental Impacts

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(c) requires an evaluation of the significant irreversible environmental changes that would be caused by a project if implemented, as described below:

*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. Irrecoverable commitments or resources should be evaluated to assure that such current consumption is justified.*

The CEQA Guidelines discuss the need to evaluate and justify the consumption of nonrenewable resources and the extent to which the project commits future generations to similar uses of nonrenewable resources. In addition, CEQA requires that irreversible damage resulting from an environmental accident associated with the project be evaluated.

Construction of the Proposed Project would indirectly result in commitment of nonrenewable natural resources. Construction and installation of the proposed general aviation facility, including aircraft parking apron, connecting taxiways, runway extension, hangars, and non-aviation land uses would result in the commitment of nonrenewable natural resources such as gravel, petroleum products, steel and other materials. However, use of nonrenewable natural resources would be limited due to the limited scope of new project facilities. Project operation would result in a commitment of energy resources such as fossil fuels as part of routine operation of the general aviation aircraft; however, the forecasted increase in general aviation operation levels would only constitute a twenty-five percent increase over existing conditions. Therefore, the amount of nonrenewable resources required to serve the Proposed Project would be limited. It is assumed that the rate and

amount of energy consumptions would not result in the unnecessary, inefficient, or wasteful use of resources and would be accomplished in a manner consistent with applicable laws and regulations.

Lastly, CEQA Guidelines Section 15065(a)(2) requires that this EIR evaluate if the Proposed Project would achieve short-term environmental goals at the disadvantage of long-term goals. As discussed throughout this EIR, the Proposed Project's near-term, long-term, and cumulative effects on the environment are either less-than-significant, or can be reduced to less-than-significant levels through mitigation. Though general aviation operations are forecasted to grow over time, this EIR has demonstrated that increases in aircraft operation, as well as the operation of proposed facilities at full build-out (in 2031) would have a less-than-significant effect on noise, air quality, transportation, and other environmental elements that might normally experience long-term impacts associated with the operation of an airport. Therefore, it is the conclusion of this EIR that implementation of the Proposed Project would not achieve short-term environmental goals at the disadvantage of long-term goals.

## 5.6 Significant and Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

Public Resources Code Section 21100(b) (2) requires that any significant effect on the environment that cannot be avoided be identified. Additionally, CEQA section 15093(a) allows the lead agency to determine that the benefits of a proposed project outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental impacts of implementing the project. Under this rule, the Lead Agency may approve a project with unavoidable adverse impacts if it prepares a "Statement of Overriding Considerations" that sets forth specific reasons for making such a decision.

The following impact associated with construction and operation of the Proposed Project, has been determined to be significant and unavoidable:

### Traffic and Transportation

- **Impact 3.12-7:** The Project, in conjunction with past, present and other reasonably foreseeable future development in the area, would have a significant, cumulative effect on traffic volumes on area roadways and affect levels of service at the local and CMP study intersections and freeways under Cumulative plus Project conditions.

## 5.7 References

Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), 1995. *1987 Input-Output Model and Economic Multipliers for the San Francisco Bay Region, Working Paper 95-3*, March 1995.

City of Vacaville, 2010a. Existing Conditions Technical Memo: *Agricultural Resources in Vacaville* (Figure 1). September 2010.

City of Vacaville, 2010b. City of Vacaville General Plan Housing Element. Updated April 27, 2010.

City of Vacaville, 2010c. Existing Conditions Technical Memo: *Population and Housing Conditions and Trends*. September 2010.

Solano County, 2008. *Solano County General Plan Resources Element* (Figure RS-4). Adopted November 4, 2008.