

8.0 GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS

8.1 OVERVIEW AND SUMMARY

The *California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15126.2(d)* require that an EIR “[d]iscuss the 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.”¹ This section considers the potential for the City of Solvang Water System Master Plan Update to induce growth as a result of project implementation.

8.2 THRESHOLDS FOR DETERMINING GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACT

A project has the potential to foster economic or population growth in a geographic area if it meets any of the following criteria:

- Removal of an impediment to growth (e.g., the establishment of an essential public service or the provision of new access to an area).
- Urbanization of land in a remote location (e.g., leapfrog development).
- Economic expansion or growth occurring in an area in response to a project (e.g., changes in revenue base, employment expansion, etc.).
- Establishment of a precedent-setting action (e.g., a change in zoning or general plan designation).

Should a project meet any of these criteria, it is considered growth inducing. An evaluation of this project against these four criteria is provided in the sections that follow.

8.3 GROWTH INDUCEMENT POTENTIAL

8.3.1 Removal of an Impediment to Growth

Growth in an area may result from the removal of physical impediments or restrictions to growth. In this context, physical growth impediments may include nonexistent or inadequate access to an area or the lack of essential public services. The proposed project would upgrade existing water distribution and storage infrastructure, replace water wells on the Santa Ynez River, provide water treatment facilities, and change the City’s State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) issued water right Permit 15878 to 1,980 acre-feet per year (afy) of Santa Ynez River underflow at a maximum extraction rate of up to 5 cubic

¹ *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.2(d).

feet per second (cfs). This is an increase of 927 afy of the baselines of 1,053 afy; the extraction rate would increase from 1.85 cfs to 5 cfs.

To accommodate the increase withdrawal, the City intends to extend its Existing Reach of Diversion as provided for under Permit 15878 (see **Figure 2.0-4**) to include an area approximately 1.5 miles downstream of Alisal Bridge (Additional Reach of Diversion).

These improvements and changes are intended to provide the projected water demand at full buildout of the previously adopted City of Solvang General Plan. They would provide adequate system capacity and water entitlements to serve the projected size of the City of Solvang under the existing General Plan, and would thus meet projected demand for currently planned growth within the City. No substantial excess capacity is provided in the proposed project, and water service would not be extended to any currently unserved area. Therefore, the project would not result in the removal of an impediment to growth, but rather would accommodate growth already planned to occur.

8.3.2 Urbanization of Land in a Remote Area

Development can be considered growth-inducing when it is not contiguous to existing urban development and intervening open space areas occur between developments. As discussed above, the proposed project would not extend water service to areas currently unserved by the City's water distribution system. Further, while portions of the proposed wells sites are located in unincorporated Santa Barbara County, the area is immediately contiguous to the City and has historically been served by the City in the past. The project does not propose the development of any habitable residential or commercial structures. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in the urbanization of land in a remote area.

8.3.3 Economic Expansion

The proposed project would result in the creation of temporary construction jobs during the construction of the proposed new and upgraded water infrastructure, and would likely provide some new permanent jobs at the proposed water treatment facility. However, the project would not substantially expand the City's existing employment or tax base by creating new residential or commercial areas. The intent of the proposed project, as discussed above, is to provide the infrastructure and water supply needed to meet the projected demand for the City of Solvang at buildout of the existing General Plan. Therefore, the project would not cause economic expansion.

8.3.4 Precedent-Setting Action

As discussed in **Section 2.0, Project Description** (see **Subsection 2.5**), the discretionary actions required for the proposed project to proceed consist of expenditure approvals and the approval of the Water System Master Plan Update, as well as permits from state and local agencies for well construction and operation. No General Plan amendment or Zoning Change would be required for project implementation. Therefore, the proposed project would not constitute a precedent-setting action.