

P. POPULATION AND HOUSING

This section analyzes the potential impacts to population and housing that may result from implementation of the proposed project.

1. Existing Conditions

a. Population and Housing

The proposed project is located within the boundaries of San Luis Obispo County. The project site lies within the South County planning area, between the communities of Nipomo and Arroyo Grande. In terms of County growth, the South County planning area (both coastal and inland) has been significant when compared to other planning areas and the overall county. The population in South County increased approximately 66 percent between 1980 and 1990 (average growth rate of six percent). In contrast, the county experienced a 26 percent population increase between 1980 and 1990 (average growth rate of 3.76 percent) (County of San Luis Obispo, 2007). This growth illustrates the attraction of the South County planning area for residential development. The area, which has experienced, and continues to experience, the highest growth rate in South County is Nipomo, located directly west of the project site.

This dramatic growth within the South County Planning Area is placing strains on infrastructure, including road capacities, schools, and water availability. The purpose of the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) is to ensure that cities and counties have designated sufficient land to accommodate its assigned share of housing needs pursuant to the requirements of California Government Code Section 65583. "Assigned Share" is the share of regional housing need assigned to a city or county under a Regional Housing Needs Plan (RHNP) adopted by the local Council of Governments. Most recently, the HCD has issued the determination of each region's share of statewide housing need. In response, the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG) prepared and adopted a RHNP to allocate the housing needs to the cities and the unincorporated areas of the county.

As a result of the RHNP, the County must identify adequate sites for 7,020 new housing units during the period of January 1, 2001 to June 30, 2008. These sites are divided among various income group categories. As of 2003, approximately 2,439 housing units (34.7 percent of the total required) have been constructed among the various income group categories, resulting in the need for 4,581 additional housing units to be built by 2008. These additional housing needs will be met by the various cities and unincorporated areas of the county.

It should be noted that over the past decade the increase in the number of completed units countywide has averaged approximately 1.4 percent within the unincorporated portions of the county. While this average is well below the allowable 2.3 percent growth rate established by the Growth Management Ordinance (GMO) (Title 26, San Luis Obispo County Code), growth has not been evenly distributed throughout the county, and certain communities have provided a disproportionate share of dwelling unit increase (e.g., Nipomo).

To guide future development and provide adequate housing at a growth rate of 2.3 percent, the GMO has made efforts to exempt "very low" and "low and moderate" housing categories from the GMO for the purposes of encouraging growth in these categories. Additionally, to ensure

that affordable housing will be provided in the unincorporated areas of the county, County staff is currently drafting a proposed Inclusionary Housing Ordinance. The Inclusionary Housing Ordinance would require a specified amount of affordable housing in conjunction within new market-rate housing developments. Mechanisms for providing affordable housing could be accomplished by requiring an Inclusionary Housing Fee from various sources, including cities. This Inclusionary Housing Fee would be included within a Housing Trust Fund for the purposes of stimulating the development of more affordable housing, in addition to currently available federal and state grants. As of August 2008, the ordinance has not been adopted by the County Board of Supervisors.

2. Regulatory Setting

California State Planning and Zoning Law requires that every city and county prepare and adopt a long-term comprehensive general plan for the development of the respective jurisdiction. The general plan is a policy document designed to guide the physical development of the jurisdiction in a manner consistent with its physical, social, economic, and environmental goals. The general plan provides a framework of policies and programs with which local decision makers may direct the growth of the community. State law requires that every general plan must contain the following components or “elements:” Land Use, Conservation, Noise, Circulation, Open Space, Safety, and Housing. In addition, state law allows for the adoption of additional or optional elements of a general plan. These elements may address any other subjects that, in the judgment of the legislative body, relate to the physical development of the county. The County of San Luis Obispo has adopted seven optional elements: Recreation, Historic and Esthetic, Energy, Off-shore Energy, Economic and Agriculture. Housing is the only element subject to approval or disapproval by the state and the only element that must be updated on a specific timeline, generally every five years. The County adopted its housing element in October 1982, and recently amended the element in July 2004.

3. Thresholds of Significance

As defined in the CEQA Guidelines, Appendix G, and the County of San Luis Obispo Initial Study Checklist, population and housing impacts would be considered significant if the project would:

- Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure);
- Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere;
- Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere; and,
- Use a substantial amount of fuel or energy.

4. Impact Assessment and Methodology

This evaluation of population and housing impacts associated with the proposed project was based on current U.S. Census Bureau Data and Statistics and review of the County General Plan. The focus of this population and housing analysis is potential impacts resulting from implementation of the project.

5. Project-specific Impacts and Mitigation Measures

a. Project-wide

Job opportunities generated during the construction phase are considered temporary and would not affect the overall population of the county. Therefore, housing needs for temporary construction personnel are expected to be met from available temporary housing facilities (e.g., hotels), if necessary. Furthermore, temporary construction personnel may potentially be hired from local areas, thus resulting in no significant increased demand on housing.

Operation of the proposed facility would increase the number of permanent employment opportunities in order to provide services for residential home owners. Overall, the increase in job opportunities is not considered to be a significant increase to the population of the county. As a result, the proposed project would not result in a significant impact to the growth rate of the county, or to neighboring communities.

Currently, there is only sparse and scattered residential development and agricultural land uses in the immediate vicinity of the project. The proposed project includes residential and recreational development that would directly increase the population density in the immediate vicinity. Additionally, the project would require the extension of existing infrastructure (i.e., roads, sewer, and water) and the construction of new infrastructure to adequately serve the site. The population in South County planning area has increased dramatically over the past decade and is expected to show a steady continued growth through 2020. Between 2010 and 2020, the South County planning area is expected to grow by approximately 1,459. The proposed project would include the development of 101 single-family homes. Based on the San Luis County average household size of 2.49 persons and a maximum build-out of 102 single-family residences, at full permanent occupancy the project would result in a maximum population of 254 persons. Therefore, the proposed project would account for 17.4 percent of the population projected for the South County planning area from 2010 to 2020. This population increase would be considered a significant increase to the project population of the South County planning area; however, impacts associated with this increased population would be less than significant with implementation of the mitigation measures included within the various sections of this document. Furthermore, the proposed project would increase the overall existing population of the County by less than 0.1 percent.

6. Cumulative Impacts

This project in combination with the projects identified in the cumulative development scenario would increase population growth and create an increase in housing. The anticipated 0.1 percent increase would not be cumulatively significant.

This page intentionally left blank.