

CHAPTER 8.0 GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS

8.1 Definition of Growth-Inducing Impacts

Section 15126.2(d) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines requires that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) describe the potential growth-inducing impacts of a proposed project. Specifically, Section 15126.2(d) states:

"Discuss the ways in which the proposed project could foster economic development or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment.... Also discuss the characteristics of some projects that may encourage and facilitate other activities that could substantially affect the environment, either individually or cumulatively. It must not be assumed that growth in any area is necessarily beneficial, detrimental or of little significance to the environment."

Normally to assess whether the proposed project may foster spatial, economic or population growth, several questions are considered:

- Would the proposed project result in the removal of an impediment to growth such as the establishment of an essential public service or the provision of new access to an area?
- Would the proposed project result in economic expansion or growth such as changes in the revenue base or employment expansion?
- Would the proposed project result in the establishment of a precedent setting action such as an innovation, a radical change in zoning or a General Plan amendment approval?
- Would the proposed project result in development or encroachment in an isolated or adjacent area of open space, as opposed to an infill type of project in an area that is already largely developed?

8.2 Analysis of Growth-Inducing Impacts

Potential project-related growth-inducing impacts related to each of the questions cited above are discussed below.

Would the proposed project result in the removal of an impediment to growth such as the establishment of an essential public service or the provision of new access to an area?

As indicated previously, the proposed project is located in an area of the City of San Juan Capistrano where all of the essential public services and/or utilities either exist or can be extended to the subject property in accordance with the adopted General Plan long-range plans for the area. Further, the existing public facilities and services, including police, fire protection services, sewer, water, and flood control facilities, and parks and recreational facilities, are adequate to serve the proposed project. Although development is proposed on this vacant property, the proposed use(s) of the site has been anticipated by the General Plan Land Use Element. As a result, there would not be any significant unanticipated service or facility demands that would result from project implementation. The increased demands for public services and facilities would not result in the need to expand an existing service or create a new service that would eliminate an existing impediment to growth because the project represents an extension of

existing development in the project environs. The resulting growth has been anticipated by virtue of the long-range plans for the area adopted by the City.

Would the proposed project result in economic expansion or growth such as changes in the revenue base or employment expansion?

Implementation of the proposed project will result in the development of the site as permitted by the City's General Plan. The Plaza Banderas Hotel project would generate additional local tax revenue from various sources (e.g. property taxes, sales taxes, gas taxes, business license fees, etc.) that would supplement the City's General Fund and may be used to implement improvements that would serve not only the proposed project but also the City as a whole. Further, implementation of the proposed project would also result in the generation of additional employment in the City, consistent with the long-term goals and objectives of both the General Plan and regional plans adopted for the area. Specifically, the City's General Plan seeks to create a "balance" of land uses, including residential, employment, and transportation/circulation, and open space and recreation. The proposed "in-fill" commercial development within the historic downtown area will aid in achieving that balance. While the proposed project does represent an expansion of the City's employment base, the overall expansion would be consistent with the long-range plans adopted by San Juan Capistrano, as indicated above. The City does not anticipate that "new" development or significant expansion of existing commercial development and employment, not already contemplated, would occur as a result of the project because the project represents "infill" development and is located in an area of the City that is currently supported by all necessary public services, facilities, utilities and related infrastructure. Aside from the extension of existing facilities to the subject property that may be required, the project would not serve to induce unanticipated growth.

Would the proposed project result in the establishment of a precedent setting action such as an innovation, a radical change in zoning or a General Plan amendment approval?

As indicated previously, although a general plan amendment and zone change are proposed by the applicant, neither of the changes to the long-range plans would result in substantial changes to the land use goals and objectives of City. Rather, the changes are necessary to allow for the site to be developed to take advantage of its unique characteristics, through the implementation of a Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP). The proposed project is consistent with the long-range plans adopted for the site, which generally promote commercial development on the Plaza Banderas Hotel property. The proposed hotel, retail/office, and restaurant land use would be implemented through the proposed CDP developed for this specific property, which will guide future development of the site. The applicant is requesting the approval of several discretionary actions (e.g., general plan amendment, zone change, architectural control, etc.) by the City Council in order to accommodate the proposed project. However, none of the actions necessary to permit the project as proposed would represent a significant or radical change to the adopted land use and related regulatory controls governing development of the subject property. The Comprehensive Development Plan would establish use and development standards for the proposed hotel, retail/office, and restaurant uses and structures. The intensity of development proposed by the applicant would not exceed either the population or employment projections forecast for the City.

Would the proposed project result in development or encroachment in an isolated or adjacent area of open space, as opposed to an infill type of project in an area that is already largely developed?

Generally, growth-inducing projects possess such characteristics as being located in isolated, undeveloped or under-developed areas, necessitating the extension of major infrastructure (e.g., sewer and water facilities, roadways, etc.) or those that could encourage the "premature" or unplanned growth in an area not planned for development (i.e., "leapfrog" development). The Plaza Banderas Hotel site is located within an urbanized area in the City (i.e., historic downtown) and will not encroach into any designated open spaces allocated in the existing long-range plans adopted by the City. As such, it is

important to note that the proposed conversion of the undeveloped site to an urban use that will support the proposed uses would not remove any obstacle to population growth since the project site is located in an area that is urbanized and designated for development. The proposed project represents development within the City's downtown area that is intended to promote and enhance both tourism and commercial revitalization within San Juan Capistrano. As indicated above, all essential infrastructure, including sewer and water facilities, storm drainage facilities, electricity and natural gas, and related utilities currently exist, or can be extended to the site without creating the need for unplanned infrastructure expansions. Utility extensions would occur consistent with the City's adopted facility plans (i.e. Master Plan of Drainage, Sewer Master Plan, Domestic Water Master Plan, Non-Domestic Water Master Plan, and Master Plan of Streets & Highways). All of the public services and facilities have adequate capacity to accommodate the proposed expansion; and, project implementation will not result in significant or unanticipated increases in demands on the infrastructure. Therefore, no significant growth-inducing impacts are anticipated.

8.3 Conclusion

The Analysis of Growth-Inducing Impacts concludes that based on the four criteria established herein, the proposed Plaza Banderas Hotel project would not result in any growth-inducing impacts. The proposed project includes only the development of a previously developed site that is designated for future development by the long-range plans adopted by the City of San Juan Capistrano. Further, the proposed uses (i.e., hotel, retail/office, and restaurant development) are not characterized by features that attract or facilitate new, unanticipated development that would ordinarily be considered growth-inducing. Conventionally, growth inducement is measured by the potential of a project or a project's secondary effects (i.e. provision of new infrastructure which supports housing or creation of jobs) to facilitate development of housing. Further, all of the infrastructure that exists in the project area (or can be readily extended to the project components) can provide an adequate level of service, including sewer, water, and storm drainage. Circulation improvements required as a result of project implementation are forecast in the long-range plans adopted by the city (i.e., Circulation Element of the General Plan). As previously indicated, project implementation will not result in any significant direct or indirect addition of residential development that would generate significant new residents or employment that would exceed those anticipated as a result of the General Plan or that would be an "attractor" of residents to the area that are not already anticipated in the General Plan. The site is not located in an isolated area that is constrained by the absence of infrastructure where the provision of infrastructure would promote further development. None of the accepted standards that distinguish growth-inducing projects characterize the proposed project; therefore, no significant growth-inducing impacts are anticipated as a result of project implementation.

