3.2 Growth

This section presents the methods and results of an analysis of the effects of the project on growth in the corridor. The information below is summarized from the Community Impact Assessment (CIA) prepared for the project. The CIA is incorporated by reference and is available for public review at the Solano Transportation Authority's (STA's) and Caltrans' offices.

3.2.1 Regulatory Setting

Under NEPA, a federal agency must evaluate the direct and indirect effects of a proposed action. Indirect effects are those that are caused by the proposed action but will occur later in time or further removed in distance, but are still reasonably foreseeable. Indirect effects may include "growth inducing effects" and other effects related to induced changes in the pattern of land use, population density or growth rate, and related effects on environmental resources.

CEQ NEPA regulations, 40 CFR 1508.8, define indirect effects including those that are growth related.

In addition to these growth management mechanisms, the following plans, policies, and agreements would serve to control growth potentially induced by the roadway improvements associated with the alternatives:

- **City of Fairfield Measure L.** This initiative, which was passed by Fairfield voters in 2003, bars the Fairfield City Council from changing major portions of the Fairfield General Plan without specific approval from the city's voters until 2020. Unless voters approve changes to the Fairfield General Plan, no unplanned growth would occur in the area north of Travis Air Force Base (AFB) that would have access to an improved Vanden Road or in the portion of the Fairfield planning area adjacent to Vanden Road that is designated for a greenbelt between Vacaville and Fairfield.
- **City of Vacaville Planned Growth Ordinance and Comprehensive Annexation Plan.** To a large extent, the City of Vacaville's Planned Growth Ordinance and *Comprehensive Annexation Plan* control the rate and location of growth in Vacaville. The rate of residential development in the city is controlled by the Planned Growth Ordinance, which sets a development limit of 750 residential units per year, although the actual development of residential units over the past year has averaged closer to 500 units per year. The *Comprehensive Annexation Plan*, which would largely control the location of future growth in Vacaville, identifies near- and long-term annexation areas. Within the corridor, the area east of Leisure Town Road and the area generally bound by New Alamo Creek, Nut Tree Road, and Leisure Town Road are considered potential long-term annexation areas. Any future development of these areas would be approved with phases controlling how many homes would be built per year.[1]

[1] City of Vacaville Community Development Department. 2002. Maureen Carson, Senior Planner. Vacaville, CA. May 15, 2002—telephone conversation.

- **Solano County Orderly Growth Initiative (Proposition A).** Since it was passed by voters in 1984 and subsequently adopted by the Solano County Board of Supervisors in 1994, Solano County's Orderly Growth Initiative has largely controlled growth in the unincorporated area of the County, including lands designated for agricultural uses adjacent to the east side of Leisure Town Road and adjacent to both sides of Vanden Road between Vacaville and Fairfield. This initiative, which was extended through 2028 by Measure T in November 2008, amended the Solano County General Plan to restrict redesignations of lands designated for agriculture or open space on the general plan land use map. Additionally, the initiative amended the General Plan to restrict the density of residential and other development on lands designated for agriculture and open space uses, preventing large-scale residential or mixed-use developments outside municipal areas. In essence, any development proposal for land designated as agricultural or open space must be approved by the voters unless the land is first annexed to a city.[2] In the unincorporated portions of the corridor, the initiative substantially restricts the amount of growth that is likely to occur outside areas that are already planned for future annexation by Vacaville and Fairfield. These restrictions substantially reduce the likelihood that unplanned growth would occur in the Leisure Town Road and Vanden Road areas. The 2008 General Plan for Solano County was adopted in November of 2008. Although a small portion of the land within the County designated for agriculture and open space uses was redesignated as rural residential, no redesignation occurred along the proposed Jepson Parkway.
- **Solano Irrigation District (SID) Master Agreement:** This agreement between the SID and City of Vacaville limits Vacaville's urban boundary to a line 1,500 feet east of Leisure Town Road south to the UPRR tracks. Any amendment to the Vacaville General Plan for urban uses east of the boundary line requires a joint land use study by the City of Vacaville and the SID to determine the appropriate location for the new line. Furthermore, the Vacaville General Plan contains policies stating that no development can occur east of Leisure Town Road until a decision has been made regarding where easterly development would occur.
- **Solano County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO):** The Solano County LAFCO is responsible for coordinating timely and responsible changes in local government boundaries. LAFCO must define each city and special district's Sphere of Influence, and strives to provide services while protecting agriculture and open space. LAFCO regulates, through approval or denial, the boundary changes proposed by other public agencies or individuals. LAFCO identified 11 qualitative and quantitative standards by which to evaluate annexation proposals. Six of the standards are mandatory (numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6), while the remaining five standards are discretionary. LAFCO standards include:[3]

  1. Consistency with Sphere of Influence Boundaries
  2. Changes of Organization and Reorganization of the Sphere of Influence Boundaries

[2] Solano County Department of Environmental Management. 2002. Harry Englebright, Principal Planner. Fairfield, CA. May 13, 2002—telephone conversation.

[3] Solano Local Agency Formation Commission, *Standards and Procedures, Glossary of Terms, Fees and Forms, Meeting Schedule, and Map and Description Requirements,* adopted March 1, 1999, last amended March 3, 2003.

3. Consistency with Appropriate City General Plan, Specific Plan, Area-wide Plan and Zoning Ordinance
4. Consistency with County General Plan
5. Requirement for Pre-approval (the affected agency shall have approved a specific plan, pre-zoning, or equivalent)
6. Effect on Natural Resources
7. Relationship to Established Boundaries, Streets and Road, Lines of Assessment, Remaining Unincorporated Territory; Proximity to Other Populated Areas; Assessed Valuation
8. Likelihood of Significant Growth and Effect on Other Incorporated or Unincorporated Territory
9. Protection of Prime Agricultural Land
10. Provision and Cost of Community Services
11. The Effect of the Proposed Action on Adjacent Areas, Mutual Social and Economic Interests, and on Local Governmental Structure

The legislature provided specific policy direction to LAFCO in the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000. Specifically, LAFCO is directed to:

1. Encourage orderly growth and development ….logical formation and determination of local agency boundaries (Section 56001).
2. Encourage and provide for "Planned, well-ordered, efficient urban development patterns with appropriate consideration of preserving open space lands" (Section 56300).
3. Discouragement of urban sprawl, preserving open space and prime agricultural lands, efficiently providing government services and the encouragement of orderly formation and development of local agencies based upon local conditions and circumstances (Section 56301).

3.2.2 Affected Environment

Demographic characteristics of the corridor, including projected population growth rates, are presented in Section 3.4, Community Impacts. Various local, regional, and national forces that reflect ongoing social, economic, and technological changes influence growth rates and patterns. The rate and location of population growth and economic development that occurs in a specific area is controlled, to some extent, by local and county governments through zoning, land use plans, policies, and decisions regarding development applications. Local governments and other regional, State, and federal agencies also make decisions about infrastructure (e.g., roads, water facilities, and wastewater facilities) that may influence growth rates and the location of future development.

Transportation infrastructure is one component of the overall infrastructure that may serve planned growth. This infrastructure may also hasten or shift planned growth or encourage and intensify unplanned growth in an area. Transportation projects may induce growth when they directly or indirectly promote, hasten, shift, or intensify planned growth or encourage unplanned growth in a

community or region. An example of a growth-inducing transportation project is construction of a new roadway through an undeveloped area, which could promote unplanned growth.

The intent of the Jepson Parkway Project, which recognizes that growth and development in the region would occur, is to increase the capacity of existing roadways through the corridor, provide better linkages between these roadways, and provide a better connection to I-80 and SR 12. Growth outlined in approved local plans is expected to increase traffic congestion along the corridor, and the project is needed to accommodate traffic associated with future planned growth. With the exception of the Walters Road Extension, the project would not introduce a new transportation facility to the corridor or necessarily provide new access to parts of the corridor. The Walters Road Extension would pass through an area designated for future development by the City of Fairfield.

Roadway improvements under this project, however, would increase the capacity of the various roadways proposed to make up Jepson Parkway. Jepson Parkway would also improve access to I-80 and SR 12 by relieving congestion on roadways connecting to these regional facilities. These improvements could create additional pressure to develop areas with good access to Jepson Parkway, potentially hastening planned growth or promoting unplanned growth in and near the corridor. Specific areas of concern to each alternative are discussed below.

3.2.3 Impacts (including Permanent, Temporary, Direct, Indirect, and Cumulative)

Methodology

The analysis of effects related to growth was based on a qualitative assessment that evaluated the compatibility and consistency of the alternatives with applicable plans, programs, and policies described in Section 3.1, Land Use.

Summary of Growth Inducement Impacts

This section compares the growth inducement potential of each alternative. As described in detail below, none of the alternatives are considered growth inducing when the existing regulatory framework is considered. Specifically, growth is anticipated based on approved local planning and growth management mechanisms (such as general plan land use designations and policies, zoning designations, urban limit lines, and a variety of inter-jurisdictional agreements and voter initiatives).

Impact GR-1: Would the Alternatives Induce Growth?

Alternative A. Under Alternative A, the proposed roadway improvements would not be constructed and subsequently would not expand roadway capacity or increase access within the corridor. Therefore, this alternative would not induce growth in the corridor.

Alternative B. The possibility that roadway capacity and access provided under Alternative B would induce growth is a particular concern because of the large tracts of developable vacant properties and agricultural lands east of Leisure Town Road and east and west of Vanden Road. Additionally,

concerns have been expressed about growth inducement in the area north of Travis AFB that would have access to an improved Vanden Road and in the area adjacent to Vanden Road that is designated for a greenbelt between Vacaville and Fairfield.[4,5] Planned growth could also be hastened in several other parts of the corridor, including the portion of Vanden Road within the Fairfield planning area northeast of the Vanden Road/Peabody Road intersection, which is designated for future technology park uses, and the area surrounding the proposed Walters Road extension, which is designated for primarily industrial uses.

As stated previously, growth in the corridor is controlled by local planning and growth management mechanisms, including general plan land use designations and policies, zoning designations, and urban limit lines. In addition to these growth management mechanisms, the SID Master Agreement, City of Vacaville Planned Growth Ordinance and Comprehensive Annexation Plan, Solano County Orderly Growth Initiative (Proposition A), and City of Fairfield Measure L, would serve to control growth.

Overall, under Alternative B, the pressure to hasten planned development or allow unplanned growth on agricultural lands in the corridor created by improved access to commute routes would be controlled by the strong regulatory framework that is currently in place to discourage premature and unplanned growth adjacent to and near the corridor. Although these controls are potentially subject to alteration if economic and political pressures encourage local elected officials and voters to modify growth controls, they are considered strong enough to substantially slow, limit, and direct growth that would be induced by the project.

Alternative C. Alternative C would be similar to Alternative B, as described above. As stated for Alternative B, the existing regulatory framework would slow, limit, and direct growth in the corridor.

Alternative D. Alternative D would be similar to Alternatives B and C except that Alternative D does not include the Walters Road Extension. As stated above, existing regulations would control growth in the corridor.

Alternative E. The possibility that roadway capacity and access provided by Alternative E might appear to induce growth is a concern due to the large tracts of developable vacant properties and agricultural lands in unincorporated Solano County located along Peabody Road between Vacaville's southern city limit and the Putah South Canal.

As stated previously, local planning and regulatory structure control growth in the corridor. Specific to Alternative E roadway improvements, the City of Vacaville's Planned Growth Ordinance and Comprehensive Annexation Plan and the Solano County Orderly Growth Initiative (Proposition A) would control growth. Additionally, much of the developable acreage along Peabody Road is within the Vacaville-Fairfield Community Separator/Greenbelt. The Vacaville and Fairfield general plan land use

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4 City of Fairfield Department of Planning and Development (FDPD). 2002b. Eve Somjen, Assistant Director of Planning. Fairfield, CA. May 13, 2002—telephone conversation.

5 Solano County Department of Environmental Management. 2002. Harry Englebright, Principal Planner. Fairfield, CA. May 13, 2002—telephone conversation.

maps recognize limitations on development within the greenbelt area, which is designated by Solano County for extensive agricultural uses.

Impact GR-2: Would the Alternatives, in Combination with Other Development, Result in Cumulative Growth Inducement Effects?

The improved access to commute routes provided by the project would create pressure to hasten planned development or allow unplanned growth on agricultural lands in the corridor. Similarly, several other past, present, and future planned transportation improvement projects would relieve congestion and improve regional access, potentially increasing growth pressures in the Vacaville–Fairfield–Suisun City area. In particular, the recent improvement of the Leisure Town Road overcrossing/interchange and the planned construction of the Fairfield-Vacaville Multimodal Train Station would provide additional transportation access to the corridor, thereby adding to the growth pressure potentially generated by the project.

This pressure, however, would be largely offset and controlled by the strong regulatory framework of policies and development constraints that are currently in place to discourage premature and unplanned growth in the corridor. These measures include the SID Master Water Agreement, the City of Vacaville's Planned Growth Ordinance and Comprehensive Annexation Plan, the Solano County Orderly Growth Initiative, and Fairfield's Measure L. Although growth pressures cumulatively generated by the project and similar projects could overcome these growth policies and constraints, potentially resulting in development proposals that could hasten planned growth or lead to unplanned growth, the growth controls already in place are considered strong enough to substantially slow, limit, and direct growth potentially induced by the cumulative effects of these projects.

3.2.4 Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Future growth would be subject to growth controls maintained by Vacaville, Fairfield, Suisun City, and Solano County, as described above. Proposed project improvements would not induce growth because any growth would be subject to local planning and growth management mechanisms. Such mechanisms – general plan amendments and zoning changes – would involve environmental documentation, public notification and involvement, mitigation requirements, and approval by local agencies. Therefore, no specific avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures related to growth have been proposed for the project.