
6.0 CEQA CONSIDERATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that each Environmental Impact Report (EIR) fully discuss the significant environmental effects of a proposed project, including (1) impacts that could not be eliminated or reduced to a less-than-significant level by mitigation measures, as part of the project, or other mitigation measures that could be implemented, (2) the significant cumulative impacts associated with development and operation of the proposed project, and (3) the growth-inducing impacts of the proposed project. This chapter summarizes the significant and unavoidable impacts and cumulative impacts identified in Chapter 5 (Environmental Analysis) of this EIR, and discusses the potential growth-inducing impacts that could result from implementation of the Mishka's Café Project (Proposed Project).

Whereas the Proposed Project would not require the adoption, amendment, or enactment of a plan, policy, or ordinance of a public agency, per CEQA Guidelines Section 15127 there is no requirement for a discussion of the relationship between short-term uses and long-term productivity in this EIR.

SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

Chapter 2 (Summary) and the Environmental Analysis Sub-chapters 5.1 and 5.2 of this EIR provide a comprehensive identification of the environmental effects of the Proposed Project and each of the project alternatives, including the level of significance both before and after mitigation.

CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

According to CEQA Guidelines Section 15355, "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 15130(a) requires that cumulative impacts be discussed when the project's incremental effect is cumulatively considerable, as defined in Section 15065(c). "Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of an individual project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects. This section identifies those significant cumulative impacts associated with development of the Proposed Project and alternatives. Section 15130 of the CEQA Guidelines states that "the discussion of cumulative impacts shall reflect the severity of the impacts and their likelihood of occurrence, but the discussion need not provide as great detail as is provided for the effects attributable to the project alone."

CUMULATIVE ENVIRONMENT

CEQA Guidelines provide that a lead agency may describe the cumulative environment by either a listing of pending, proposed, or reasonably anticipated projects, or a summary of projections contained in an adopted general plan or a related planning document that describes area-wide or regional cumulative conditions.

Some cumulative impacts have been previously analyzed and anticipated by the EIR prepared for the City of Davis General Plan Update (available at the City of Davis Planning & Building Department, 23 Russell Blvd, Davis, California, 95616). The City Community Development Department also prepared the Central Davis Historic Conservation District – Multiple Project Cumulative Impact Analysis (October 2006), which determined that demolition of the Tank House would have a less-than-significant cumulative effect on any future Central Davis historic district. Other cumulative growth impacts have generally been anticipated and are therefore not discussed further in this EIR (see Appendix A, Initial Study). Significant cumulative impacts identified in this EIR include a cumulative loss of cultural resources for the Proposed Project and Alternative 2 through Alternative 5.

SIGNIFICANT AND UNAVOIDABLE IMPACTS

Section 15126.2(b) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that an EIR describe any significant impacts that cannot be avoided, even with the implementation of feasible mitigation measures. The environmental effects of the Proposed Project and alternatives on various aspects of the environment are discussed in detail in Chapter 5 (Environmental Analysis) of this EIR. This section identifies impacts that could not be eliminated or reduced to an insignificant level by mitigation measures, as part of the Proposed Project, or other mitigation measures that could be implemented. The final determination of significant impacts will be made by the City of Davis as part of their certification action.

The alternatives to the Proposed Project are addressed in this EIR at an equal level of analysis. Table 4.0-1 provides a summary of which alternatives reduce impacts to less than significant levels. Project-specific impacts that cannot be avoided if the Proposed Project is approved as proposed include:

PROJECT-SPECIFIC SIGNIFICANT AND UNAVOIDABLE IMPACTS

- Impact 5.1-3: Consistency with design guidelines and compatibility of materials and design with the immediate context
- Impact 5.1-4: Impact on Landmark Trees and Trees of Significance
- Impact 5.2-2: Alteration, removal, or destruction of historic resources
- Impact 5.2-3: Loss or alteration of the historic setting of a National Register Property

CUMULATIVE SIGNIFICANT AND UNAVOIDABLE IMPACTS

The following significant and unavoidable cumulative impact will result from the Proposed Project and Alternative 2 through Alternative 5, plus long-range cumulative development, after applying mitigation:

- Impact 5.2-4: Cumulative loss of cultural resources

GROWTH INDUCING IMPACTS

Section 15126.2(g) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that the EIR discuss the growth-inducing impacts of the Proposed Project. Specifically, CEQA states that the EIR shall: “Discuss 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 that would remove obstacles to population growth (a major expansion of a wastewater treatment plant might, for example, allow for more construction in service areas). Increases in the population may tax existing community service facilities, requiring construction of new facilities that could cause significant environmental effects. Also discuss the characteristic of some projects which may encourage and facilitate other activities that could significantly 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.”

Growth inducing impacts can result from development that directly or indirectly induces additional growth pressures that are more intense than what is currently planned for in general and community plans. An example of this would be the redesignation of property planned for agricultural uses to urban uses. The growth inducement that may result, in this example, would be the development of services and facilities that may encourage the transition of additional land in the vicinity to more intense urban uses. Another example would be the extension of urban services to a site, which may encourage conversion of non-urban lands to urban lands. Neither of these examples applies to the Proposed Project.

In general, a project may foster spatial, economic, or population growth in a geographic area if the project removes an impediment to growth (e.g., the establishment of an essential public service; the provision of the new access to an area; a change in zoning or general plan amendment approval) or economic expansion or growth occurs in an area in response to the project (e.g., changes in revenue base; employment expansion, etc). These circumstances are further described below:

- ***Elimination of Obstacles to Growth***

This refers to the extent to which a proposed project removes infrastructure limitations or provides infrastructure capacity, or removes regulatory constraints that could result in growth unforeseen at the time of project approval.

- ***Economic Effects***

This refers to the extent to which a proposed project could cause increased activity in the local or regional economy. Economic effects can include such effects as the Multiplier Effect. A multiplier is an economic term used to describe interrelationships among various sectors of the economy. The multiplier effect provides a quantitative description of the direct employment effect of a project, as well as indirect and induced employment growth. The multiplier effect acknowledges that the on-site employment and population growth of each project is not the complete picture of growth caused by the project.

ELIMINATION OF OBSTACLES TO GROWTH

The elimination of physical obstacles to growth is considered a growth-inducing effect. The Proposed Project or alternatives would be developed in a built-out, urbanized area in Davis. The project site is surrounded by existing, mixed-use commercial uses, and the Proposed Project or alternatives would be infill development on a site already served by existing urban infrastructure. It would neither require extension or expansion of services to an area where none is provided nor involve substantial improvements to existing facilities. The current capacity of City services is sufficient to accommodate the Proposed Project or any of the alternatives.

ECONOMIC EFFECTS

The Proposed Project and alternatives 2 through 5 would provide employment in the proposed ground floor cafe. The Proposed Project and alternatives 2 through 4 would also add a small number of office jobs in the proposed second and/or third stories. Some additional local employment would also be generated through what is commonly referred to as the multiplier effect. The multiplier effect tends to be greater in regions with larger diverse economies, due to a decrease in the requirement to import goods and services from outside the region.

Two different types of additional employment are tracked through the multiplier effect: indirect and induced. Indirect employment includes those additional jobs that are generated through the expenditure patterns of direct employment associated with the project. For example, retail and office workers, and residential service workers would spend money in the local economy, and the expenditure of that money would result in additional jobs. Indirect jobs tend to be in relatively close proximity to the places of employment and residence.

Induced employment follows the economic effect of employment beyond the expenditures of the employees within the project site to include jobs created by the stream of goods and services necessary to support businesses and services within the development. For example, when an employee from the project goes out to lunch, the person who serves the project employee lunch holds a job that was indirectly caused by the project. When the server then goes out and spends money in the economy, the jobs generated by this third-tier effect are considered induced employment.

The multiplier effect also considers the secondary effect of employee expenditures. Thus, it includes the economic effect of the dollars spent by those employees who support the employees of the project.

Increased future employment generated by resident and employee spending ultimately results in physical development of space to accommodate those employees. It is the characteristics of this physical space and its specific location that will determine the type and magnitude of environmental impacts of this additional economic activity. Although the economic effect can be predicted, the actual environmental implications of this type of economic growth are too speculative to predict or evaluate, since they can be spread throughout the region and beyond.

The Proposed Project and alternatives 2 through 5 would contribute to direct, indirect, and induced growth in the area and would enhance the vitality of the block and the surrounding area of Davis. However, the number of employees would be small, and the proposed café and office uses are intended to meet an existing demand and the City goals for economic development.

Impacts of Induced Growth

While economic development in the Downtown area is an intended consequence of the Proposed Project and the alternatives, growth induced directly and indirectly by the Proposed Project and alternatives could slightly affect the greater Davis area. Typical impacts associated with induced growth in the area could include: traffic congestion; air quality deterioration; loss of agricultural land and open space; loss of habitat and wildlife; impacts on utilities and services, such as fire and police protection, water, recycled water, wastewater, solid waste, energy, and natural gas; and increased demand for housing. However, the project and alternatives are small, infill commercial development intended to serve existing residents and visitors to the Downtown area, and are not anticipated to induce significant growth either directly or indirectly.