

Section 3.13

Population and Housing

This section describes the existing population and housing in the Phase II project area. This is a new environmental section that was not provided in the original PEA for the Kirby Hills I project.

Environmental Setting

The following discussion was derived from the Final IS/MND for the Kirby Hills I project (CPUC 2006). This discussion also applies to the Phase II project. The California Department of Finance's January 1, 2005, estimated population of Solano County is 421,657, an increase of approximately 1% over the January 1, 2004, estimate and 6.7% over the 2000 U.S. Census (CDOF 2005). According to the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), Solano County is the fastest-growing of the nine Bay Area counties, with a population projected to reach 547,120 people by 2020 (Solano County 2005b). This 2020 estimated population would be a 38.7% increase from 2000 and a 61.2% increase since 1990.

With the Solano County population increasing at an average of 1.3% annually, the most notable change is occurring in the City of Rio Vista with a 71% increase over the past 10 years. According to the California Department of Finance's January 2004 city and county estimated populations, 95 % of residents live within the County's seven cities of Benicia, Dixon, Fairfield, Rio Vista, Suisun City, Vacaville, and Vallejo (CDOF 2005). All but two of these cities are located along Interstate 80. Benicia is located in southern Solano County near the conjunction of Highways 780 and 680. Rio Vista is located east of the project area, at the intersection of State Highways 84, 12, and 113. Unincorporated areas account for 19,650 people (Solano County, 2005b).

Partially as a result of this population increase, land uses in Solano County have become increasingly urbanized over the last 30 years. During the 2002–2004 mapping cycle, a net of 2,283 acres were converted to urban and built-up land (CDOC 2005). Despite pressures to urbanize, in some cases, urbanization is being replaced by the conservation of lands for recreational uses.

The Phase II project area is located near the City of Rio Vista, which is a small, yet rapidly growing, community with an estimated 6,837 residents as of January 1, 2005 (CDOF 2005). In Rio Vista, housing is suburban-residential and urban-

residential. Birds Landing and Collinsville are unincorporated towns immediately adjacent to the project area. Birds Landing mainly consists of a few houses and a bar at the intersection of Birds Landing and Shiloh Roads. Collinsville is a 27-acre residential area at the end of Collinsville Road.

The proposed project is located within zip code 94512. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 130 persons reside in this zip code. Housing in this area is comprised largely of single-family, owner-occupied units, with 65% houses and 35% apartment/condominiums. Housing is often agriculture related or rural residential (Solano County 2005b; Census 2000).

Regulatory Setting

ABAG developed “A Land Use Policy Framework for the San Francisco Bay Area” in July 1990, to establish a guidance framework for regional comprehensive planning. ABAG includes the governments of the nine counties in the Bay Area, including Solano County, and 99 of the 101 cities in the Bay Area. The policies in the framework encourage efficient use of existing land uses and infrastructure, subregional coordination on items of regional importance, and actions and programs that improve revenue generation and cost sharing. The following policy is applicable to the proposed Phase II project.

Policy Four. Provision of housing opportunities for all income levels are encouraged by developing city and county plans and policies that improve housing supply and afford-ability to meet local and regional needs.

The Housing Element of the Solano General Plan (2005e) presents the housing needs and establishes policies for meeting these needs, including accommodating future residential development and a moderate amount of rural residential development.

Impact Analysis

To assess the proposed project’s impacts on public services and utilities, construction-related impacts were evaluated using a qualitative assessment of construction practices on existing service and utility infrastructure.

Significance Criteria

Criteria for determining the significance of public service and utility impacts were developed based on questions contained in the environmental checklist form in Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines. Based on the checklist questions, a project may have a significant effect on the environment if it would result in:

- substantial growth in the population of an area, either directly (e.g., by proposing new homes and business) or indirectly (e.g., through extension of roads or other infrastructure);
- displacement of a substantial number of existing housing units, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere; or
- displacement of a substantial number of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

Impacts

IMPACT 3.13-1: POTENTIAL TO INDUCE SUBSTANTIAL POPULATION GROWTH IN THE PROJECT AREA

As described in the Final IS/MND, direct population growth would not occur during the construction and operation phases of the proposed project. Construction phase workers would commute from cities and metropolitan areas outside the project vicinity, such as Sacramento and the Bay Area. Impacts on population and the local housing market due to construction are therefore not expected.

During operation, the proposed project would employ up to two additional employees. It is expected that these employees and their families would reside in urban centers outside the project area and commute to the project site. Public services and utilities provided to the project site would not increase substantially, and no new jobs would be created. The minimal road improvements for the project would not encourage or make accessible development of previously undeveloped land. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in population growth or the need for additional housing because the number of workers for construction and operation would be small. Impacts would be less than significant and no mitigation would be necessary.

The proposed project would provide a major underground storage facility of natural gas purveyors. This would facilitate the maintenance of a more consistent supply of natural gas for delivery to customers statewide, reducing the potential for periodic shortages. However, this increased availability of a steady supply of natural gas is not likely to remove obstacles to growth. Therefore, the

project is not expected to directly or indirectly induce economic or population growth.

IMPACT 3.13-2: POTENTIAL TO DISPLACE SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF EXISTING HOUSING UNITS, NECESSITATING THE CONSTRUCTION OF REPLACEMENT HOUSING ELSEWHERE

As described in the paragraph above, few, if any, workers are expected to relocate to the area, and thus no new housing would be needed for the proposed project, no housing would be displaced, and no new competition for existing housing would likely occur.

IMPACT 3.13-3: POTENTIAL TO DISPLACE SUBSTANTIAL NUMBERS OF PEOPLE NECESSITATING THE CONSTRUCTION OF REPLACEMENT HOUSING ELSEWHERE

No people would be displaced by construction or operation of the proposed Phase II project. The proposed Phase II project would be mostly within open space/agricultural land, and no homes would need to be moved or demolished as a result of this Phase II project. Therefore, no people would be displaced and there would not be a need for replacement housing as a result of the proposed Phase II project.

Applicant-Proposed Measures and Mitigation Measures

There are no APMs or mitigation measures that will be implemented for impacts related to population and housing.