6.0 Long-Term Implications of the Proposed Project
6.0 LONG-TERM IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

If the proposed project is approved and constructed, a variety of short-term and long-term impacts would occur on a local level. During project grading and construction, portions of surrounding uses may be temporarily impacted by dust and noise. Short-term soil erosion may also occur during grading. There may also be an increase in vehicle pollutant emissions caused by grading and construction activities. However, these disruptions would be temporary and may be avoided or lessened to a large degree through mitigation cited in this EIR and through compliance with the City of Lancaster Municipal Code; refer to Section 5.0, Environmental Analysis.

Ultimate development of the DLSP area would create long-term environmental consequences associated with a transition in land use. Development of the proposed project and the subsequent long-term effects may impact the physical, aesthetic and human environments. Long-term physical consequences of development include increased traffic volumes; increased noise from project-related mobile (traffic) and stationary (mechanical and landscaping) sources; incremental increased demands for public services and utilities; and increased energy and natural resource consumption. Long-term visual impacts would occur with the alteration of views within the area. Incremental degradation of local and regional air quality would also occur as a result of mobile source emissions generated from project-related traffic and stationary source emissions generated from the consumption of natural gas and electricity.

6.1 IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES THAT WOULD BE INVOLVED IN THE PROPOSED ACTION SHOULD IT BE IMPLEMENTED

Approval of the proposed project would cause irreversible environmental changes, resulting in the following:

- Soil erosion due to grading and construction activities;
- Alteration of the human environment as a consequence of the development process and the project’s commitment to residential, retail/service and office/civic/public uses, which intensifies land uses in the project area;
- Utilization of various new raw materials (such as lumber, sand and gravel) for construction;
- Consumption of energy to develop and maintain the project, which may be considered a permanent investment; and
- Incremental increases in vehicular activity in the surrounding circulation system, resulting in associated increases in air pollutant emissions and noise levels.
6.2 GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS

Section 15126 of the CEQA Guidelines requires that an EIR discuss the project’s potential to foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment. The CEQA Guidelines also indicate that it must not be assumed that growth in any area is necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment. This section analyzes such potential growth-inducing impacts, based on criteria suggested in the CEQA Guidelines.

In general terms, a project may foster spatial, economic, or population growth in a geographic area if it meets any one of the following criteria:

- Removal of an impediment to growth (e.g., establishment of an essential public service and provision of new access to an area);
- Fostering economic expansion or growth (e.g., changes in revenue base and employment expansion);
- Fostering of population growth (e.g., construction of additional housing), either directly or indirectly;
- Establishment of a precedent-setting action (e.g., an innovation, a change in zoning and general plan amendment approval); or
- Development of or encroachment on an isolated or adjacent area of open space (being distinct from an in-fill project).

Should a project meet any one of the above-listed criteria, it may be considered growth inducing. The potential growth-inducing impacts of the proposed project are evaluated below against these criteria.

Note that the CEQA Guidelines require an EIR to “discuss the ways” a project could be growth inducing and to “discuss the characteristics of some projects that may encourage…activities that could significantly affect the environment.” However, the CEQA Guidelines do not require that an EIR predict (or speculate) specifically where such growth would occur, in what form it would occur, or when it would occur. The answers to such questions require speculation, which CEQA discourages (refer to CEQA Guidelines Section 15145).

POPULATION, HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT

Section 5.6, Population and Housing, provides a detailed evaluation of the existing population, housing and employment in the County of Los Angeles, City of Lancaster, and project area. Also included in Section 5.6 is an analysis of the project’s effects on existing population, housing and employment conditions. Following is a summary of the findings of the analysis with respect to the City and project area.
Population

City of Lancaster. The City’s 2000 population was an estimated 118,718 persons, representing a 22 percent increase over the 1990 population of 97,291 persons. As of January 1, 2007, the City’s population was an estimated of 143,818 persons. Population growth is expected to continue in the City, with SCAG estimating that its population will reach 168,032 persons by 2010, 191,912 persons by 2015, 215,468 persons by 2020 and 259,696 persons by 2030.\(^1\) This projection would represent a population growth of approximately 67.7 percent between 2007 and 2030.

Census Tract. The project site is located within the limits of the City of Lancaster. However, the U.S. Census reports data for a wide variety of geographic types, ranging from the entire country down to states, counties, county subdivisions, cities, census tracts, etc. Accordingly, the geographic unit that has been utilized to describe the characteristics of the project area is the census tract (CT). More specifically, the project area is located in CT 9008.02 (U.S. Census 1990)\(^2\) and CT 9008.06 (U.S. Census 2000)\(^3,4\). It is noted that the California Department of Finance reports data for counties and cities, but not for census tracts. Therefore, the Census 2000 data is the most recent data available for CT 9008.06. According to the Census 2000, the population in CT 9008.06 was an estimated 3,643 persons, which represented approximately 3.1 percent of the City’s overall population in year 2000 of 118,718 persons.

Project Area. Table 5.1-1, Existing Land Use, outlines the distribution of residential uses within the project area and indicates that a total of 252 dwelling units exist within the project area. Assuming an average of 2.07 persons per household (CT 9008.06, Census 2000), the project area’s existing population is an estimated 522 persons.

Housing

City of Lancaster. According to the Census 2000, the total housing stock in the City of Lancaster was an estimated 41,745 housing units. This represents an increase of approximately 15 percent over the estimated 36,217 housing units reported in the Census 1990. The City’s housing stock as of January 2007 was an estimated 48,550 housing units and its vacancy rate was 8.43 percent. Comparatively, the City’s vacancy rate is double that estimated for the County (4.22 percent) and double the vacancy rate considered ideal to provide an adequate return for property owners and to provide for adequate turnover and mobility within the market. The number of persons per household in the City was 3.072 (January 2007). According to SCAG projections, the number of housing units in the City is expected to increase to 51,418 units by 2010, 58,980 units by 2015, 66,591 units by 2020 and 81,403 units by 2030. This increase in housing represents an approximately 67.7 percent increase between 2007 and 2030.

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\(^2\) According to the Census 1990, the project area involves Block Groups 1, 2, 6 and 7 of Census Tract 9008.02.
\(^3\) According to the Census 2000, the project area involves Block Groups 1 and 2 of Census Tract 9008.06.
\(^4\) Although the Census Tract boundaries changed between Census 1990 and Census 2000, they are encompassed by Census 1990 CT 9008.02 (Block Groups 1, 2, 6 and 7) is consistent with the area encompassed by Census 2000 CT 9008.06 (Block Groups 1 and 2).
Census Tract. In 2000, the total housing stock in CT 9008.06 was an estimated 1,587 housing units, or 3.8 percent of the City’s total housing stock of 41,745 units. According to Census 2000, the vacancy rate in CT 9008.06 was 11.10 percent and the number of persons per household was 2.07 persons. Therefore, the vacancy rate that exists within CT 9008.06 is approximately 32 percent more than existing in the City overall.

Project Area. As indicated in Table 5.1-1, Existing Land Use, a total of 252 housing units exist within the project area (216 multi-family units and 36 single-family).

Employment

City of Lancaster. In 2000, the City of Lancaster’s civilian labor force consisted of approximately 48,623 persons. At the time of the Census, an estimated 6.5 percent of the City’s civilian labor force (5,445 persons) was unemployed. Similar to the County of Los Angeles, most of the City’s labor force (32.3 percent) was employed in management, professional and related occupations; a substantial portion was in sales and office occupations (26.2 percent).

Census Tract. In 2000, the civilian labor force in CT 9008.06 consisted of approximately 978 persons (2.01 percent of the City’s total civilian labor force of 48,623 persons). At the time of the Census 2000, an estimated 7.3 percent (197 persons) of the civilian labor force in CT 9008.06 was unemployed. Comparatively, the unemployment rate in CT 9008.06 was slightly greater than the City’s overall unemployment rate of 6.5 percent. According to the Census 2000, the three largest occupation groups in CT 9008.06 were: 1) educational, health and social services; 2) arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services; and 3) retail trade services. The majority of the residents in CT 9008.06 filled positions in the educational, health and social services industry (Census 2000).

Project Area. As outlined in Table 5.6-3, Estimated Existing Employment, an estimated 1.13 million square feet (s.f.) of employment-generating land uses are located within the project area, including retail/service and office/civic/public uses. The estimated employment associated with these existing uses is approximately 3,126 jobs. The majority of these existing jobs are held in the office/civic/public sector.

PROJECT IMPACTS

A project could induce population growth in an area either directly or indirectly. More specifically, the development of new homes or businesses could induce population growth directly, whereas the extension of roads or other infrastructure could induce population growth indirectly.

The project area is highly urbanized. Implementation of the project, as proposed, would result in a maximum development of 924,848 s.f. of retail service uses, 973,956 s.f. of office/civic/public spaces and 3,525 dwelling units (single- and multiple-family); refer to Section 3.0, Project Description.

Based on the factors discussed below, project implementation would not result in significant growth-inducing impacts:

- The project area is currently served by existing water and wastewater facilities. Project implementation would require the expansion of existing water and wastewater facilities
to meet increased demands associated with the project. New facilities would be extended from existing facilities that are currently located within the project area without the need for the establishment of new sources of service. Proposed water and wastewater facilities would be designed to adequately serve the demand of the proposed project. The increase in demand would not reduce or impair any existing or future levels of utility services, either locally or regionally, as costs for increases in utilities and services would be met through cooperative agreements between the applicants and servicing agencies. Additionally, as individual development projects occur within the project area, service providers would review the proposed developments to determine adequate capacity and supply is available to serve individual developments. Therefore, the project would not be considered growth inducing, as it would not remove an impediment to growth through the establishment of an essential public service.

- Implementation of the proposed project would result in a net increase of 448,969 s.f. of retail/service uses and 333,936 s.f. of office/civic/public uses. The estimated employment associated with these proposed uses is approximately 2,105 jobs; refer to Table 5.6-3. Therefore, development of the proposed project would foster economic expansion and growth, because proposed uses would have resultant increases in the City’s revenue base and employment opportunities.

- A project could foster population growth in an area either directly (through the development of new homes) or indirectly (through the development of employment-generating land uses). Based on an estimate of 2.07 persons per household (Census 2000), the net increase of 3,273 housing units resulting from project implementation could potentially generate a population increase of approximately 6,775 persons. Additionally, employment generated by the project may result in direct growth in the City's population, because the potential exists that future employees (and their families) may choose to relocate to the City. Estimating the number of these future employees who would choose to relocate to the City would be highly speculative, because many factors influence personal housing location decisions (i.e., family income levels and the cost and availability of suitable housing in the local area). Because of the uncertainty that exists with regard to the number of new employees who may choose to relocate to the City, a more conservative analysis of impacts associated with the City’s permanent population is provided. For analysis purposes, it is assumed that 25 percent of the project’s new employees would choose to relocate to the City, creating a potential demand for 526 housing units and a resultant potential population increase of approximately 1,089 persons (based on an estimate of 2.07 persons per household).

Overall, project implementation could result in a direct increase in the City’s population of approximately 7,864 persons (approximately 6,775 persons from additional housing and 1,089 persons potentially relocating to the City to fill new positions). This would represent an approximately 5.5 percent increase in population over the City’s 2007 population estimate of 143,818 persons. Additionally, the potential population growth associated with the project would represent approximately 3.0 percent of the City’s 2030-projected population of 259,696 persons (SCAG). As the potential population growth associated with the project would represent a nominal increase over existing conditions and as it is considered consistent with SCAG’s

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5 This housing demand for 526 units is based on the assumption that approximately 2,105 net positions would be created by the project and that approximately 25 percent of the employees (approximately 526 employees) filling these positions would choose to relocate to the City.
projected 2030 population, project implementation would not induce substantial population
growth in the City.

- As indicated in Section 5.1, Land Use and Relevant Planning, to facilitate development
of the proposed project, the project involves a Zone Change and General Plan
Amendment. The DLSP has been prepared as a planning and regulatory link between
the City of Lancaster General Plan and individual, project level development within the
DLSP area. The DLSP provides area-specific land use regulations and development
guidelines for seven districts within the Downtown. A primary objective of the DLSP is to
increase intensity and to provide a variety of uses that would encourage activity within
the Downtown. Land use regulations provided by the DLSP would ensure that
development would be compatible in use and character with existing and proposed uses.

The DLSP area is located within the Lancaster CBD Redevelopment Project area; the
remainder is located within City of Lancaster Redevelopment Project No. 5 area. The
primary goal of the Lancaster CBD Redevelopment Project has been to revitalize the
historic core of the Downtown area. Portions of the DLSP area are located within Sub-
areas 6 through 11, 13, 18 and 20 of the Lancaster CBD Redevelopment Project.
Improvements identified for the Sub-areas include renovation of existing structures,
development of new structures, infill of vacant parcels, streetscape and landscape
improvements and roadway improvements. The DLSP would be consistent with the
Redevelopment Plan for the area; refer to Section 5.1.

As previously stated, the population growth attributed to the proposed project would represent
approximately 3.0 percent of SCAG’s projected growth anticipated in 2030 (259,969 persons).
This potential growth would not be considered significant since it would be well within SCAG’s
anticipated growth projections.

- The proposed project would not be growth-inducing with respect to development or
encroachment into an isolated or adjacent area of open space. The DLSP area is
located within an urbanized portion of the City and is surrounded by existing
development.

Potential growth-inducing impacts are also assessed based on a project’s consistency with
adopted plans that have addressed growth management from a local and regional standpoint.
As discussed previously, the proposed project is considered consistent with SCAG projections
and the goals of the City’s General Plan. Further, the proposed development would not require
the substantial development of unplanned/unforeseen support uses and services. As is
evidenced by the factors discussed above, project-related economic and population growth was
anticipated by both SCAG and the City’s General Plan. Thus, the proposed project would not
result in significant growth-inducing impacts.

In addition to inducing growth, a project may create a significant environmental impact if it would
displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement
housing elsewhere and/or displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the
construction of replacement housing elsewhere. The project does not propose the removal of
existing housing units. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant in this regard.