
7.0 GROWTH-INDUCING AND CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

7.1 GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS

Section 15126.2(d) of the CEQA Guidelines requires a discussion of the growth-inducing impacts of proposed projects. Growth-inducing impacts are secondary, or indirect, impacts that could occur as a result of the project that are manifested as changes in land use patterns, population density and growth rates; and related effects on traffic, public services, air, water, biological and other environmental resources.

Over the past several decades, the Bureau of Engineering has designed and constructed numerous wastewater conveyance system projects. The issue of potential growth inducement resulting from an increase in sewer conveyance capacity has been raised in the past by various individuals and organizations. The primary issue is whether the provision of sewer capacity induces growth, which would otherwise not occur. This section addresses the role that wastewater conveyance capacity plays in the growth of the City.

The primary types of growth that occur in the City are land use development and population. Because these types of growth are distinct, and interrelated, this section examines the relationship of sewer conveyance capacity with each type of growth.

LAND USE DEVELOPMENT AND WASTEWATER CONVEYANCE

The development of land in the City is governed by the land use and zoning designations of particular parcels. Unless conditional use permits, density transfers or variances are obtained from the Planning Department, development must conform to the type and density designated for that parcel. Zoning reflects the land use policies contained in the General Plan.

The decision of a land owner to develop a single parcel or numerous parcels of land may be based on personal or economic reasons. Whether personal, economic or both, the availability of wastewater conveyance capacity is not likely to be a consideration in the decision to develop. Once the decision to develop a parcel has been made, permission to connect to the wastewater collection system must be obtained as part of the building permit process. A sewer connection permit can only be obtained if adequate capacity to serve the proposed development is available. Sewer connection and other building permit fees are charged in proportion to the density of development proposed. The high sewer connection fees and other building permit fees associated with the most intensive levels of development increase the costs of developing land in the City and can be considered economic disincentives to development.

In a mature urbanized area such as Los Angeles, the provision of wastewater conveyance capacity would not induce land development that would not otherwise occur.

POPULATION GROWTH AND WASTEWATER CAPACITY

Population within southern California and the City of Los Angeles is anticipated to grow significantly over the next 20 years and further into the future. The projected increase in population will come from two sources, natural increases and in-migration. SCAG predicts that approximately 60 percent of

projected future population growth would occur from natural causes (births minus deaths) and 40 percent would come from the in-migration of people from other areas.

Wastewater conveyance capacity is required to accommodate the increases in wastewater flows associated with the population increases. The provision of wastewater conveyance capacity will not induce either natural population growth or in-migration. SCAG has established the policy that conveyance systems, including interceptors, are not subject to its air quality conformity procedures, because of the absence of effects on population growth.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT IN LOS ANGELES

SCAG, which includes the City of Los Angeles among its member jurisdiction, has prepared the Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide and the Growth Management Plan. These plans address regional growth and related issues. In addition, the City of Los Angeles' General Plan governs land use development within its jurisdiction.

The Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide (March 1996) serves as a comprehensive overview of the issues and opportunities facing the region. This plan consists of three sections, core chapters, ancillary chapters, and bridge chapters. Core chapters include plans such as the Growth Management Plan, the Regional Mobility Plan, Air Quality Plan, and other documents that SCAG is required to produce (by federal and/or state mandates). Ancillary chapters address such issues as the economy, housing, and reflect other plans but serve only an advisory purpose for member governments. Bridge chapters link the core and ancillary chapters for other areas of concern.

The Growth Management Plan presents forecasts and policies for anticipated growth to the year 2020. The Growth Management Plan is based upon the amount of growth that is likely to occur and recognizes that there are no viable ways in which to control total growth. The Plan, however, seeks to control the distribution of growth in order to improve the balance between jobs and housing by encouraging housing growth in job rich areas and vice-versa.

The City's General Plan (comprised of the 35 Community Plans) governs the location and density of land use in the City through the zoning process. The Los Angeles City Planning Department revised the General Plan and the new plan, termed the "General Plan Framework," is intended to balance land use development, transportation, projected future population and projected future employment within the City of Los Angeles. The General Plan Framework's options include areas of targeted growth with higher land use designations and densities around commuter rail stations and along transportation corridors.

The planned growth of population along corridors would result in higher demands on infrastructure. There would be a need to accommodate greater quantities of wastewater that would be generated. Consequently, new wastewater conveyance facilities must be constructed, or existing facilities must be improved or upgraded.

CONCLUSIONS REGARDING GROWTH INDUCEMENT

Wastewater conveyance capacity is an infrastructure component of the urban environment that is necessary to safely accommodate the needs of existing and future populations. The provision of wastewater conveyance capacity, in and of itself, will not induce population growth or land use

development. Rather, wastewater conveyance capacity would allow population growth to occur within the General Plan Framework while minimizing sewage spills and the associated environmental, health and safety problems. Future land uses would generally not occur in densities higher than those allowed by the land use planning process. Any development projects beyond the scope of the City's General Plan would undergo individual environmental analysis (including impacts to the wastewater system) and would have to be approved by the City Council.

In wastewater planning, the sizing of collection and treatment facilities, as well as the overall system configuration, is dependent on the future system-wide flow and the distribution of that flow within the system. Since the timing of necessary improvements is partly a function of growth, a realistic estimate of the future population to be served is fundamental to effective wastewater system planning.

The VPP Dual Force Main Project would not induce growth in population or changes in land use which would not otherwise occur. No significant growth-inducing impacts are therefore associated with the project.

7.2 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Cumulative impacts assessment is required under Section 15130 of the CEQA Guidelines when such impacts are potentially significant. Cumulative impacts, defined in Section 15355 of the CEQA Guidelines, refer to two or more individual effects, that when considered together, are considerable or that increase other environmental impacts. Cumulative impact assessment must consider not only the impacts of the proposed Project, but also the impacts from other City and private projects, which would occur during the period of performance and geographic area of the proposed Project.

There would likely be construction activities occurring in the vicinity of the VPP Dual Force Main Project as a result of other projects being built in the same general time frame. These related projects are described in Section 1.0. Some of these projects have the potential for ongoing construction at the same time and within the same general vicinity as the VPP Dual Force Main construction. Should this be the case, the VPP Dual Force Main Project, along with other construction projects, could contribute to temporary cumulative noise and vibration effects that would not otherwise occur.

However, the VPP Dual Force Main Project would have long-term beneficial cumulative effects with regards to improvements to the City of Los Angeles' wastewater collection system. The proposed Project would result in cumulative public health benefits by minimizing or eliminating the potential for the public to be exposed to wastewater that could overflow onto streets during rainy weather and flow into area channels and the Pacific Ocean. Public safety, in the short and long-term, would be improved by minimizing the potential for sewer and street collapses associated with deteriorated sewers.

The VPP Dual Force Main Project is an integral part of the City of Los Angeles' overall wastewater improvement program. The program includes major improvements to the City's wastewater treatment and water reclamation plants, as well as improvements to the vast array of smaller conveyance and collection systems. As these various improvements are completed, substantial improvements to the City's water quality will be realized. When taken together, these collective improvements will result in full secondary treatment of all wastewater collected by the City of Los Angeles, the minimization of dry and wet weather

overflows that currently occur and the provision of adequate handling capacity to serve the wastewater needs of the City's service areas for the future.

As a major element of the City's overall wastewater program, the VPP Dual Force Main Project would provide much needed corrections for deficiencies that exist. Currently, during wet weather, peak flows to the VPP have exceeded the capacity of the existing force main, which carries wastewater away from the plant to the Hyperion Treatment Plant. All of the wastewater from the VPP is carried in one sewer. As a result, that sewer cannot be shut down for maintenance.

The benefits of construction and operating the VPP Dual Force Main to work in conjunction with the existing force main would include the following:

For the reasons above, the VPP Dual Force Main Project is judged to have long-term beneficial cumulative effects with regard to the City of Los Angeles' long-term wastewater treatment and handling objectives, in terms of long-term water quality objectives of the City of Los Angeles and the Southern California region, and in terms of the public's health and safety.

Construction activities may result in cumulative effects of the following nature:

Noise and Vibration – Local residents in the near vicinity of construction activities would be exposed to noise and possible vibration. The cumulative effects, both in terms of added noise and vibration at multiple VPP Dual Force Main construction sites, and in the context of other related projects, are not considered significant due to the temporary nature of noise increases.

Air Quality – The VPP Dual Force Main Project will produce additional emissions of criteria pollutants and slightly elevated levels of carbon monoxide during construction. Emission of criteria pollutants resulting from the Project's construction would exceed the thresholds established by the SCAQMD, and therefore the Project, in conjunction with all other construction activity, would cumulatively contribute to the region's non-attainment status during the construction period. The SCAQMD prepared the AQMP (2003) to bring the region into compliance with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards as set by the EPA under the Clean Air Act Amendments (1990). The AQMD is essentially designed to address the cumulative air pollutants released into the SCAB. Because these construction-related emissions are temporary (18-24 months, depending on the construction method) and because the AQMD addresses cumulative air pollution in the SCAB, the Project would not result in long-term significant cumulative air quality impacts. In the short term, cumulative impacts could be significant if the combined emissions from the projects exceed the threshold criteria for the individual pollutants.

Transportation and Circulation – The VPP Dual Force Main Project would involve construction activities occurring simultaneously at a number of surface sites along the Project alignment. Construction of the VPP Dual Force Main Project may be occurring in the same general time and space as other related projects. In these instances, surface construction activities from both sets of Project could produce cumulative traffic effects which may be significant, depending upon a range of factors including the specific location involved and the precise nature of the conditions created by the dual construction activity (see Traffic-Related Project Construction Schedule in Table 4.2-1). Special coordination efforts

may be necessary to reduce the combined effects to an acceptable level. Overall, significant cumulative impacts are not anticipated.

Public Services – The cumulative effects on public services in the VPP Dual Force Main study area would be limited to traffic inconveniences discussed above. These effects are not considered significant.

Aesthetics – Construction activities associated with other related projects may be ongoing in the vicinity of one or more VPP Dual Force Main construction sites. To the extent that combined construction activities do occur, there would be temporary adverse visual effects of less-than-significant proportions.