

7.0 SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE CHANGES

The environmental effects of the Specific Plan are discussed in Section 4.0 of this EIR and are summarized in the executive summary. Section 15126.2(c) of the State CEQA Guidelines requires a discussion of “significant irreversible environmental changes which would be caused by the Specific Plan should it be implemented. Uses of nonrenewable resources during the initial and continued phases of the Specific Plan may be irreversible since a large commitment of such resources makes removal or nonuse thereafter unlikely. Primary impacts and, particularly, secondary impacts (such as a highway improvement which provides access to a previously inaccessible area) generally commit future generations to similar uses. Also irreversible damage can result from environmental accidents associated with the Specific Plan. Irretrievable commitments of resources should be evaluated to assure that such current consumption is justified.”

Construction and use of the residential and commercial uses would irreversibly commit construction materials and non-renewable energy resources to the purposes of the Specific Plan. These energy resource demands would be used for construction, heating and cooling of buildings, transportation of people and goods, as well as lighting and other associated energy needs. Non-renewable and slowly renewable resources used by the Specific Plan land uses and improvements would include, but are not limited to, lumber and other forest products; sand and gravel; asphalt; petrochemical construction materials; steel; copper; lead and other metals, water; etc. A marginal increase in the commitment of facility maintenance services would also be required. Primary Specific Plan impacts related to consumption of non-renewable and slowly renewable resources are considered to be less than significant because Specific Plan buildout would not use unusual amounts of energy or construction materials.

The Specific Plan could induce development as a result of removal of obstacles to growth. This could result in secondary environmental impacts (e.g., additional noise and traffic), and may increase the use of nonrenewable resources and energy to serve new development. However, as described in Section 5.0, *Growth Inducing Impacts*, the nature and magnitude of such impacts are speculative, and would be largely a function of local agency control, prevailing community attitudes, and future market conditions. In addition, the site is surrounded by existing urban development to the north, south and west; and by vineyards to the east. Therefore, future development in accordance with the Specific Plan would be considered infill development. The environmental impacts of any additional growth would depend upon the type, location, and magnitude of new development.

Specific Plan implementation would irreversibly commit the majority of the 826.7 acres of open agricultural lands to urban-scaled residential, commercial and commercial/business development, with the resultant loss of agricultural land. Construction of new buildings, parking lots and roadways would require substantial quantities of building materials and energy, some of which are non-renewable resources. However, consumption of such resources occurs with all development in the region, and this phenomenon is not unusual or unique in Paso Robles. The increased employment base and residential units generated by the Specific Plan would irreversibly increase the demand for finite energy resources such as petroleum and natural gas. However, the increasingly efficient building fixtures and automobile engines would temper the increased demand to some degree.



The Specific Plan would result in several traffic and circulation impacts that would be considered significant even with the implementation of identified circulation improvements that would be either directly provided by the applicant, or partially funded by the applicant through the payment of fair share traffic impact fees. The additional traffic would cause several roadways and intersections to operate unacceptable levels during peak hours which would be significant and unavoidable.

Buildout of the Specific Plan would result in the emission of air pollutants at levels that would exceed the APCD's significance thresholds for NO_x , ROC, and PM_{10} as described in Section 4.3, *Air Quality*. The Specific Plan also exceeds the thresholds set in the San Luis Obispo APCD's 2001 Clean Air Plan (CAP) which would be inconsistent with the CAP and be considered significant and unavoidable impacts. As described in Section 4.4, *Noise*, the traffic generated by the Specific Plan would increase the traffic along roads to significantly impact the sensitive receptors on and off-site. The Specific Plan would also, in combination with cumulative development, significantly impact roadway corridor noise levels to above the City's threshold.

The additional population accommodated by the Specific Plan would increase the potential to safety and geologic hazards to future residents which are considered significant but mitigable with the implementation of identified mitigation measures (refer to Section 4.5, *Safety and Geologic Hazards*). As discussed in Section 4.6, *Cultural Resources*, the Specific Plan development could result in demolition of existing structures that may be historically significant and potential disturbance of prehistoric artifacts, which would be considered a Class II, significant but mitigable impact.

As described in Section 4.7, *Aesthetics and Community Design*, the Specific Plan development would irreversibly alter the aesthetic character of the Specific Plan area from rural to a more urban condition, and would affect the viewshed from neighboring State Route 46 which would be significant and unavoidable.

Development under the Specific Plan would potentially discharge sedimentation and pollutant discharges as well as potentially increase peak stormwater discharges and volumes of runoff into the watershed (refer to Section 4.8, *Flooding and Drainage*).

The biological resources would also be impacted as a result of development and associated activities in the Specific Plan area (refer to Section 4.9, *Biological Resources*). As described in Section 4.10, *Public Services and Infrastructure*, the Specific Plan development would require the irreversible commitment of law enforcement, fire protection, sanitation, water supply, and solid waste disposal services to the Specific Plan area, which would be considered a Class II, significant but mitigable impact.

