

Chapter 9

Cumulative Impacts

9.1 Introduction

The CEQA Guidelines (Section 15355) define a cumulative impact as “two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts.” The Guidelines [Section 15130(a)(1)] further state that “an EIR should not discuss impacts which do not result in part from the project.”

Section 15130(a) of the CEQA Guidelines provides that “[A]n EIR shall discuss cumulative impacts of a project when the project’s incremental effect is cumulatively considerable...” Cumulatively considerable, as defined in Section 15065(a)(3), “means that the incremental effects of an individual project are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.”

An adequate discussion of significant cumulative impacts requires either (1) “a list of past, present, and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts, including, if necessary, those projects outside the control of the agency, or (2) “a summary of projections contained in an adopted general plan or related planning document, or in a prior environmental document which has been adopted or certified, which described or evaluated regional or area-wide conditions contributing to the cumulative impact.” This cumulative impact analysis evaluates impacts based on a list of past, present, and probable foreseeable projects.

As depicted in Table 3.11.1 (Section 3.11-Population & Housing), Turlock is forecasted to grow in population by 44,289 people between 2008 and 2030 while the Campus is forecasted to buildout by 2027 at its maximum capacity of 12,000 FTE; approximately 5,300 full-time students. During the same period of time, the County of Stanislaus is forecasted to add approximately 332,000 new residents.

Table 9.1
City of Turlock Projects
In the North West City Quadrant

Brief Description	Location
Avalon Townhomes-28 Condominiums	780 W. Monte Vista Ave.
College Park-58 SF Residential Units	2007& 2129 W. Tuolumne Rd.
Park Villas-140 Condominiums	4180 N. Golden State Blvd.
Sierra Oaks Apartments-211Units	3025 W. Christofferson Parkway
Turlock Village-133 Condominiums	900 W. Monte Vista Avenue/University Way
Victoria Estates-16 SF Residential Units	3436 & 3536 N. Golden State Blvd.

Source: City of Turlock Web Site 7-7-08

The City of Turlock has experienced extensive growth in the northwest portion of the City over the years. The NW Quadrant of the City, the area where the Campus is located, was mostly farmland when the Campus site was first located. In recent years, there has been major commercial development in the area along with significant residential growth. Table 9.1 contains a list of current approved projects that are either under construction or able to proceed to construction. A total of 453 residential units, in the immediate vicinity of the CSU Stanislaus Campus. This is typical of the growth trends in the vicinity of the Campus.

In addition to development proposed or under construction in the immediate vicinity of the Campus, there are several large projects of regional significance either approved and under construction or undergoing development review. The development of the UC Merced campus will add a major educational resource to the region and at present there are plans to develop a medical school at the new Campus near the City of Merced.

Another major project, that is in the approval stage, is the Crows Landing Business Park. This project is east of the City of Turlock but could have a major impact on the regional economy.

The CEQA Guidelines recognize that cumulative impacts may require mitigation – such as new rules and regulations, that go beyond project-by-project measures. An EIR may also determine that a project's contribution to a significant cumulative impact will be rendered less than cumulatively considerable and thus is not significant. A project's contribution is less than cumulatively considerable if the project is required to implement or fund its fair share of a mitigation measure or measures designed to alleviate the cumulative impact. The Lead Agency must identify facts and analysis supporting its conclusion that the contribution will be rendered less than cumulatively considerable [CEQA Guidelines, Section 15130(a)(3)].

When the combined cumulative impact associated with the project's incremental effect and the effects of other projects is not significant, the EIR shall briefly indicate why the cumulative impact is not significant and is not discussed in further detail in the EIR. A lead agency shall identify facts and analysis supporting the lead agency's conclusion that the cumulative impact is less than significant.

The discussion of cumulative impacts is to 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. The discussion should be guided by standards of practicality and reasonableness, and should focus on the cumulative impact to which the identified other projects contribute rather than the attributes of other projects which do not contribute to the cumulative impact.

9.2 Geographic Scope

With respect to cumulative impacts, the geographic scope of potential cumulative impacts is somewhat defined by the type of impact being analyzed. With respect to Air Quality, the Geographic scope is the entire San Joaquin Valley Air Basin. The scope of Traffic

and Circulation impacts are typically limited to commute shed of a facility such as a CSU Campus.

The scope of impacts for other types of environmental concern areas, such as aesthetics, biological resources, noise, etc., tend to be more local; typically involving the campus itself and the immediate surrounding area. It should be noted, however, that some aspects of environmental effects may reach beyond the immediate setting. Wildlife impacts can have a broader regional implication but this type of regional impact is typically highly regulated (U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Game) and therefore tend to be less of an environmental concern.

9.3 Area-Wide and Regional Conditions

Physical Description

The San Joaquin Valley is long (300 miles) and relatively narrow (100 miles), and occupies an area between two of the largest metropolitan areas in California and the United States. The San Joaquin Valley contains the main transportation facilities linking the San Francisco Bay Area to the north and the Los Angeles/San Bernardino metropolitan area in the south. These facilities include major highways, (Interstate 5 and State Route 99), the Southern Pacific and Santa Fe Railroads and numerous oil and natural gas pipelines, telecommunications facilities, airports and even a deep water port in the City of Stockton.

The east to west transportation facilities are less numerous, but are critical to the inter-regional transportation network of the West Coast and the western United States. Numerous highways and rail lines cross the valley in an east-west manner, including State Routes 132, 59 and 140 which connect the major north-south transportation corridors along Inter-State 5 and State Highway 99.

Growth-Inducing Impacts

The CEQA Guidelines [Section 15126.2(d)] require a discussion of “... *ways in which the proposed project could foster economic or population growth ... in the surrounding environment,*” including the project’s potential to remove obstacles to population growth. For example, the extension of infrastructure may encourage or facilitate other activities that could significantly affect the environment.

In compliance with the State Legislative mandate expressed in the State master Plan for Education, the CSU system is obligated to continue to accommodate all fully eligible graduates from California high schools and community college transfer students. To do so, CSU Stanislaus campus must provide for the 12,000 FTE student enrollment in response to growing demand for higher education projected for the State of California. The updated Master Plan is designed to accommodate additional students generated by State-wide growth, and thus by itself will not induce population growth in the region. As such, the updated Campus Master Plan will not foster economic or population growth beyond the growth already anticipated in the region. The Master Plan will result in infill development at an existing developed University campus within an urbanized area that is well served by existing infrastructure, and extensive new infrastructure will not be

required. The project includes all necessary improvements to the existing infrastructure to serve CSU Stanislaus campus, and no excess capacity that could induce growth will be provided.

9.4 Summary of Expected Cumulative Effects

Within Chapter 3, the cumulative impacts of individual aspects of environmental consequences of the project are discussed. A summary of these discussions is contained in Chapter 2 (Summary). For purposes of analysis, there are no “significant” adverse environmental impacts expected to result because of the implementation of this project. There are, however, five areas of “potential significant” impacts whose impacts can be mitigated to a level below the threshold of significance but are impacts all the same. These areas are, Aesthetics, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Noise and Transportation & Traffic.

Traffic, Circulation, and Parking

The traffic analysis in this PEIR (see Section 3.14) addresses both project-specific and cumulative traffic and circulation impacts that account for background traffic associated with long-term regional growth and addition of traffic generated by related projects. During the near term, no potentially significant impacts are identified. At buildout, the project’s contribution to traffic will result in an impact at several intersections but the forecasted impact directly attributable to Campus growth is very small. (See Tables 3.14.3 and 4). With implementation of the identified mitigation measures, project impacts are expected to be reduced to a less than significant level. The project’s contribution to future traffic volumes will not be significant.

At the time when the University enrollment reaches 12,000 FTE students, the campus traffic together with traffic generated by the related projects will significantly impact regional roadways or Highway 99 freeway interchanges.

As discussed in Section 3.14, of this report, the CSU Stanislaus Physical Master Plan update provides for adequate on-campus parking for all campus activities, as well as the gradually growing student enrollment. Provisions of these facilities will work to preclude significant cumulative parking impact off-campus. No significant impact will result from parking.

Air Quality

The implementation of the Campus Master Plan together with related projects and future growth within the region will result in additional vehicle trips and the resultant air pollutant emissions within the Central Valley Air Basin. Operational emissions, primarily from vehicular trips associated with growth in student enrollment will contribute to the overall Valley Air Quality concerns. When the project’s emissions are combined with the emissions generated by related projects and future Basin-wide growth, this will result in a cumulatively significant impact unless mitigated. Mitigation of this issue must be implemented on a global scale. National, state and local regulatory programs are being implemented in California. The recent passage of SB 375, combined with the Central

Valley Blueprint program is an example of the type of program necessary to address this issue.

In 2006, the Legislature passed AB 32—The Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006,—which requires the State of California to reduce GhG emissions to 1990 levels no later than 2020. According to the California Air Resources Board (CARB), in 1990 greenhouse gas emissions from automobiles and light trucks were 108 million metric tons, but by 2004 these emissions had increased to 135 million metric tons. SB 375 asserts that “Without improved land use and transportation policy, California will not be able to achieve the goals of AB 32.

At the region-wide level, implementation of local and regional growth management policies, a reasonable jobs/housing balance, new technologies (e.g., in vehicle emission control equipment and fuel), and programs to encourage alternative modes of transportation, including public transit, will reduce cumulative impacts and work toward attaining long-term emissions reductions. At present, the Central Valley Blue Print Project is proposing standards that emphasize “Smart Growth” policies which is expected to result in Valley-Wide policies that reduce automotive use in the Central Valley Air Basin. This program will be reinforced with the passage of SB 375.

Noise

Noise generated by campus-related traffic together with traffic noise from the related projects is analyzed in Section 3.10, Noise, of this PEIR. As indicated, with the enrollment of 12,000 FTE students, the CSU Stanislaus Physical Master Plan update will contribute to overall noise impacts but the contribution will be negligible. Since this contribution is small, the project’s cumulative traffic noise impact will be less than significant.

On-site noise will be typical for university campuses in urban areas. Noise levels are not expected to change substantially as a result of the project, and future noise levels with the project will be consistent with relevant noise standards. The related projects are typical of urban uses, and are not expected to result in high noise levels, that when combined with University noise would be clearly noticeable. Cumulative noise impact will be less than significant.

Aesthetics, Light, and Glare

The Master Plan will result in infill replacement and new facilities within the interior of the CSU Stanislaus campus, including new buildings and lighting. All on-campus facility projects will be reviewed for compliance with the CSU Stanislaus Physical Master Plan design guidelines to ensure compatibility with the existing campus environment. The Master Plan works to focus new facilities within the campus interior and minimize facility growth along the campus’ perimeter. New lighting will comply with existing requirements including shielding and focusing away from the surrounding uses, and other requirements and regulations (including height, setback, landscaping, etc.) that ensure appropriate and compatible lighting and design within the existing urban environment. The campus, and the surrounding City of Turlock area, is mostly urbanized. The project does not represent a new substantial new source of lighting, or structures, that would be

introduced into an undeveloped or open space area that are currently unlighted. Cumulative aesthetic, light, and glare impacts will be less than significant.

Biological Resources and Short-term Construction Impacts

Construction activities associated with the Master Plan will result in potentially significant, albeit short-term and intermittent, impacts on biological resources on the Campus. Compliance with Federal and State laws, guidance, policies and standards will reduce the impacts to a level found to be less than significant.

9.6 Future Use of This Analysis

No further cumulative impacts analysis is required when a project is consistent with the designs and standards of the CSU Stanislaus Physical Master Plan update.