

5.0 LONG-TERM IMPACTS

5.1 GROWTH-INDUCING EFFECTS

The *State CEQA Guidelines* require that an EIR include a discussion of the ways in which a project could cultivate economic or population growth, either directly or indirectly. Growth does not necessarily create significant physical changes to the environment. However, depending upon the type, magnitude, and location of growth, it can result in significant adverse environmental effects. Therefore, the proposed MBSST Network project's growth-inducing potential would be considered significant if it could result in significant physical effects in one or more environmental issue areas. A project may be growth-inducing (either directly or indirectly) if it fosters economic or population growth, removes obstacles to growth (e.g., roadway widening projects), or taxes community service facilities to the extent that the construction of new facilities would be necessary.

5.1.1 Economic and Population Growth

As a multi-use trail, the proposed MBSST Network project would not increase the residential or employment populations of Santa Cruz County. Rather, it would facilitate increased recreational opportunities for current residents and an alternative to passenger car travel for employees in the County. Consequently, no direct growth inducement is expected to result from MBSST Network Master Plan implementation.

The increased recreational opportunities associated with the MBSST Network project may, however, have indirect impacts by attracting trail users from outside the County. Although the proposed MBSST Network would have beneficial effects on County circulation by increasing opportunities for the use of alternative modes of transportation, an influx of visitors may result in increased recreational traffic in the County, particularly on weekends. In addition, an influx of tourists may indirectly influence the market for the development of additional commercial establishments (e.g., restaurants, hotels, bike shops) in the vicinity of the proposed MBSST Network, due to a minor increase in demand for such services that may be created by trail visitors. The proposed MBSST Network project would also directly generate short-term employment during construction of the trail. However, jobs created by this additional activity would likely be filled by the local workforce and would not result in a significant source of employment or economic growth.

For the reasons described above, the proposed MBSST Network would not directly induce economic growth, but has the potential to indirectly induce a limited amount of economic growth in the unincorporated Santa Cruz County area, as well as cities of Santa Cruz, Capitola, and Watsonville, where the proposed MBSST Network would connect to existing and under-construction trails, existing bicycle facilities, or existing commercial development in those urban areas. However, it should be recognized that the ultimate extent of urban expansion in Santa Cruz County will largely be dependent upon a variety of other factors, including market forces and land use policies. Therefore, the proposed MBSST Network project would not be growth-inducing as it would not affect long-term employment opportunities or increase the region's population.



5.1.2 Removal of Obstacles to Growth

The proposed MBSST Network project would result in the construction of new facilities for active modes of transportation in Santa Cruz County, including bicycle, pedestrian, and equestrian paths. One new public restroom facility would be constructed within the Watsonville reach, which would be constructed to serve the incremental and intermittent needs of future trail users. The new restroom facility would not require expansion or construction of new water treatment infrastructure. In addition, any new water utility lines, if required, would be sized to serve the project only. Also, no new roads would be required to serve the MBSST Network project. Because of the nature of the project as a recreational multi-use trail, the proposed MBSST Network project itself does not remove an obstacle to growth. Because the proposed MBSST Network would not require the expansion or development of new infrastructure to serve the project, it would not remove an obstacle to growth.

5.2 SIGNIFICANT AND IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

The *State CEQA Guidelines* specify that an EIR shall include a discussion of significant irreversible environmental changes which would occur if the proposed project were implemented. This includes analysis of the use of nonrenewable resources, primary and secondary impacts which commit the project area to similar uses in the future, and irreversible environmental damage.

Construction and maintenance of the proposed MBSST Network would consume building materials and energy, some of which are non-renewable resources. However, by providing opportunities for the use of alternative transportation modes (e.g., walking and bicycling), Master Plan implementation may help reduce long-term dependence on the automobile and non-renewable petroleum resources. Consequently, the MBSST Network project may have beneficial impacts related to the long-term use of non-renewable resources.

CEQA also requires decision makers to balance the benefits of a proposed project against its unavoidable environmental risks in determining whether to approve a project. The analysis contained in this EIR did not identify any Class I, *significant and unavoidable* impacts relative to the implementation of the proposed MBSST Network project.

