
5.12 - Population, Housing and Employment

5.12.1 - Introduction

This section addresses the significance of the increase in population, housing, and employment associated with the proposed project. Base data information for this section was derived from the North Fork Village-1 (NFV-1) Specific Plan, Rio Mesa Area Plan (RMAP) and EIR, the US Census (2000), and the California Department of Finance.

Rio Mesa Area Plan and EIR

The RMAP envisions growth of approximately 100,000 residents and 30,000 dwelling units as well as commercial uses to encourage jobs generating uses that will increase employment opportunities for Madera County residents, to provide greater convenience for residents and to decrease the dependence on Fresno and outside areas for jobs.

5.12.2 - Existing Conditions

The population within Madera County as of January 1, 2006, according to the California Department of Finance was 144,396 persons and 46,639 dwelling units. In the unincorporated County (outside the cities of Madera and Chowchilla), the total as of January 1, 2006, was 74,723 persons and 28,289 dwelling units. These numbers average to 3.1 persons per dwelling unit in the County and 2.64 persons per dwelling unit in the unincorporated area. The lower number in unincorporated areas is somewhat attributable to the vacation homes in the mountainous area of the County.

The County is developing rapidly. In 2000, the population was 123,109, and in 1990 it was 89,300 (U.S. Census.). The California Department of Finance projects a County population of 224,000 in the year 2020 (Madera County website 2006). In January 1, 2005, the population was 140,747 for the entire County and 73,956 for the unincorporated areas. Thus, the annual increase from 2005 to 2006 was 2.6 percent. The proposed project is adjacent to Fresno County which has a population of approximately 900,000 (California Department of Finance, 2002) and is growing rapidly.

According to the California Department of Finance, there were 59,400 jobs in Madera County during October 2006. Of those, 25,600 jobs were in the cities of Madera and Chowchilla and 23,800 were in the unincorporated areas. These numbers result in a jobs/housing ratio of 1.27:1 for the County and 1.19:1 for the unincorporated areas.

The RMAP envisions approximately 30,000 homes with a population of 100,000 and 20,000 new permanent employment positions at ultimate buildout after 2030. According to the RMAP, the population of the unincorporated portions of the County is estimated to reach 98,377 by the year 2030, while the total number of households is expected to reach 30,801. The RMAP envisions a jobs/housing ratio of 1.5:1 and sets forth interim jobs/housing ratio during project development. The recommended ratio during the development of the first 999 homes is 0:1, and the recommended ratio during the development of the next 1,000 to 2,499 homes is 0.25:1. The RMAP EIR found that the growth of population and dwelling units was less than significant with mitigation measures requiring

review of subsequent subarea plans and additional economic analysis on the interim jobs/housing balance.

5.12.3 - Thresholds of Significance

Significant impacts that could occur were determined from criteria in the CEQA Guidelines. Based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines and other agency standards, the County has determined that a project will normally have a significant impact on Population and Housing if it will:

- a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure).
- b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.
- c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

Additionally, the jobs/housing balance was identified in the RMAP EIR as an important indicator of the economic health of the community and stated that ratios of 1.0 to 1.5 jobs per household generally represent a balanced community.

5.12.4 - Project Impacts

Impact 5.12-1: Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure). (Threshold a.)

The NFV-1 area would include approximately 2,966 dwelling units. This represents a 6.3 percent increase for the County and a 10.5 percent increase for the unincorporated area of the County. Because the proposed project would tend to house permanent residents, a figure of 3.0 persons per dwelling, which approximates the countywide ratio, is used to yield a population of 8,898 persons. That represents an increase of 6.16 percent for the County and 11.9 percent increase for the unincorporated area of the County. This increase of 8,898 persons represents 11.09 percent of the additional 80,204 persons forecast by the California Department of Finance for the entire County in the year 2020. This increase in population of 8,898 represents 37.6 percent of the 23,654 persons increase in population forecast by the RMAP for the unincorporated area of the County in the year 2030. The increase is approximately 8.9 percent of the total envisioned in the RMAP. The increase in population and housing associated with the proposed NFV-1 Specific Plan is within the forecasts for the County. *The County Master Plan and the RMAP have provided for this increase, and within the context of the large amount of growth being experienced in the greater Fresno area, the impacts related to population increase are less than significant.*

Impact 5.12-2: Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. (Threshold b.)

The proposed project will not displace any homes. *No impacts would occur.*

Impact 5.12-3: Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. (Threshold c.)

The RMAP estimated employment would increase by 20,000 employees in the entire plan area. The NFV-1 Specific Plan contains 106 acres of mixed use development and 65 acres of commercial/offices uses. Since no specific commercial uses are being proposed, one method of calculating the number of jobs is to assume that 20 percent of the mixed use area (21 acres) is developed with office and commercial uses and the 65 acres of the commercial/office area is developed with half commercial and half office uses. Using an average number of employees per acre for office uses of 48.53 and 37.69 for neighborhood commercial uses from the 2004 San Joaquin Valley Growth Response Study yields 3,708 jobs in the NFV-1 Specific Plan Area. Another method of calculating the number of jobs is to use the NFV-1 Specific Plan's figures which permits up to 1,500,000 square feet of commercial and office uses. Using a standard figure of one employee per 500 square feet yields a total of 3,000 employees on the site. For purposes of this analysis, it is assumed that the proposed project would include 3,350 jobs at buildout.

Considering the 2,966 dwelling units, the proposed project would therefore produce a jobs/housing ratio of 1.13. This is higher than the ratios for both the County as a whole and the unincorporated area. According to the RMAP EIR, this ratio is between 1.0 and 1.5 and is therefore reflective of a balanced community. The NFV-1 project is consistent with the RMAP and provides opportunities for a favorable jobs/housing balance to be achieved upon buildout of the plan area. The high ratio provides job opportunities for all County residents and reduces the reliance on Fresno for employment. However, uncertainty over the timing and mix of uses achieved in the eventual buildout of the project create the potential for a less favorable balance during the initial phases of the project. However, project construction will create a large number of construction jobs during the period when homes are being built but before commercial uses are built. *Accordingly, impacts to the jobs/housing balance are less than significant.*

5.12.5 - Cumulative Impacts

The County of Madera is expected to experience significant growth in housing, population, and employment over the next twenty years. The NFV-1 project together with other related projects in the area will contribute significant population, housing, and employment effects to the cumulative effects of new development in Madera County.

5.12.6 - Mitigation Measures

Rio Mesa Area Plan and EIR

The RMAP contains two measures to mitigate the impact on population, housing, and employment.

The measures are:

1. The County shall review subsequent subarea plans, specific plans and projects to assure that development phasing does not create significant, long-term imbalances between employment generation and housing opportunities within the Area Plan.
2. The County may require individual developments to prepare economic analysis of the project impacts on the interim jobs/housing balance for Rio Mesa.

Additional Project Mitigation Measures

The proposed project results in no significant, long term imbalances between employment generation and housing. The proposed phasing of development in the NFV-1 Specific Plan indicates no significant imbalances are likely to occur. No additional economic analysis for the proposed project is warranted. No additional mitigation measures are required.

5.12.7 - Level of Significance After Mitigation

The NFV-1 project will not result in any significant adverse direct or cumulative population and housing impacts within Madera County. The project will have beneficial effects on the jobs/housing balance within Madera County. Population and housing impacts are less than significant.