

4.10 POPULATION AND HOUSING

This section reviews existing population and housing conditions for the vicinity of the proposed project. Although the project physically crosses the cities of San Rafael, Larkspur, Corte Madera, Tiburon, and unincorporated areas of Marin County, and alternate tank sites and pipeline routes traverse Mill Valley, population and housing impacts extend beyond the physical project area. As such, for the analysis presented in this section, the study area refers to the entire MMWD service area (**Figure 3-1**). Data used for the analysis incorporates information from MMWD and ABAG.

Changes in population, employment, and housing demand are social and economic effects, not environmental effects. According to CEQA, these effects should be considered in an EIR only to the extent that they create adverse impacts on the physical environment. According to Section 15382 of the CEQA Guidelines, “An economic or social change by itself shall not be considered a significant effect on the environment.”

Public comments received in response to the Notice of Preparation related to the potential growth-inducing impacts of a new water supply source, the cost and availability of new housing, and the location of housing within the Marin County. Some of these impacts are discussed in this section; however, growth-inducing impacts are described in Section 7.3.

4.10.1 Environmental Setting

4.10.1.1 Study Area Population and Housing

As noted above, MMWD’s service area crosses several city boundaries in southern Marin County. The estimated population of MMWD’s service area in 2005 was more than 190,000, up from almost 185,000 in 2000, representing approximately 3.2 percent growth over five years. Since about 1980, growth in Marin has averaged less than one percent per year. The majority of MMWD’s services are provided to residential customers. In 2005, there were approximately 55,000 housing units within MMWD’s service area.

Table 4.10-1 depicts the projected growth in MMWD’s service area.

**Table 4.10-1
Population Projections for MMWD’s Service Area**

| 2005 | 2010 | 2015 | 2020 |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 190,800 | 195,362 | 202,155 | 205,763 |

Source: Urban Water Management Plan 2005 (MMWD 2006)

Of all the cities within MMWD’s service area, the largest is the City of San Rafael. The key project features including the plant site, intake structure, and outfall structure are also located within the City of San Rafael, in an area known as the Canal Neighborhood. This neighborhood encompasses both residential and nonresidential areas south of the San Rafael Canal and east of US 101. The neighborhood also includes the Bay Shoreline Park (including the Bay Trail), regionally important wetlands, and the San Quentin Ridge hillside.

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4.10.1.2 *Regional Population and Housing*

MMWD serves nearly 75 percent of Marin County's total population. As the areas within MMWD's service area are largely built-out, growth rates in other areas of Marin may exceed growth projected in MMWD's service area. Nevertheless, the study area population is projected to continue to represent over 72 percent of the county's population through 2020. **Table 4.10-2** shows the county's projected growth.

Table 4.10-2
Population Projections for Marin County

| | 2005 | 2010 | 2015 | 2020 |
|------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Total Population | 251,400 | 258,500 | 268,700 | 275,000 |
| Households | 103,250 | 105,560 | 108,490 | 111,290 |

Source: Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) Projections 2005

Between 2000 and 2004, the number of housing units in Marin County grew by slightly more than one percent from 104,990 to 106,598. During approximately the same period, the number of households in Marin County grew by slightly more than one percent, from 100,650 in 2000 to 103,250 in 2005. As indicated in **Table 4.10-2** above, this low growth rate is projected to remain fairly constant as developable area in the county becomes increasingly limited and development of new housing slows in response.

4.10.2 **Impacts and Mitigation Measures**

4.10.2.1 *Standards of Significance*

The following standards of significance are based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. For the purposes of this EIR, the proposed project would have a significant impact on population and housing if it would:

- 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); or
- Displace substantial numbers of people or existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

4.10.2.2 *Analytical Method*

The population and housing effects that could result from the implementation of the proposed desalination project are evaluated in the context of current and projected population for MMWD's service area and the population of Marin County.

4.10.2.3 Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Impact 4.10-1: Implementation of the proposed desalination project would not directly induce substantial population growth in the area. However, the proposed project would remove an obstacle to growth. Therefore the proposed project would indirectly contribute to growth in the service area.

Significance: Less than significant

Mitigation: No mitigation required

Discussion:

The purpose of the proposed project is to develop a water supply that would enable MMWD to provide drought relief protection and to supply water to the new development that is projected to occur within the MMWD service area based on ABAG's 2020 projections and as planned for by the local general plans.

The growth rate in both MMWD's service area and in Marin County through 2020 is consistent with historic patterns. The proposed project would not increase the projected growth in the area.

Section 7.3 addresses the potential for growth inducement in the region from the proposed desalination project.

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Impact 4.10-2: Implementation of the desalination project would not displace people or existing housing.

Significance: No impact

Mitigation: No mitigation required

Discussion:

No housing units are located within the area where the proposed project would be constructed. Project features including the plant site, intake structure, and outfall structure are located in nonresidential areas of the Canal Neighborhood in the City of San Rafael. Other project features are also located in nonresidential areas adjacent to US 101. As a result, the project would present no impact to housing or people.

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