

## **2.1.2 Growth**

### **2.1.2.1 Regulatory Setting**

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations, which established the steps necessary to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, require evaluation of the potential environmental effects of all proposed federal activities and programs. This provision includes a requirement to examine indirect effects, which may occur in areas beyond the immediate influence of a proposed action and at some time in the future. The CEQ regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1508.8) refer to these consequences as indirect impacts. Indirect impacts may include changes in land use, economic vitality, and population density, which are all elements of growth.

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) also requires the analysis of a project's potential to induce growth. The CEQA guidelines (Section 15126.2[d]) require that environmental documents "...discuss the ways in which the proposed project could foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment..."

### **2.1.2.2 Affected Environment**

Growth inducement is defined as the relationship between the proposed transportation project and growth within the project study area. Many factors influence land use and development in an area, such as population and economic growth, desirability of certain locations, the costs and availability of developable land, physical and regulatory constraints, transportation, and the costs of sewer and water services all strongly influence where, when, and what type of development takes place. Many of these factors also influence the policies and decisions associated with land use and growth.

The affected environment for growth includes the cities of Los Alamitos and Long Beach. The City of Los Alamitos occupies an area of approximately 4.1 square miles and is currently home to approximately 11,658 residents, according to the U.S. Census Bureau 2015 American Community Survey (ACS) population estimates. This represents a very minor population increase from 11,449 residents in the 2010 Census, and from 11,536 residents in the 2000 Census. In addition, as discussed in Section 2.1.1, Land Use, of this IS/EA, the City is nearly built-out, and there is very little new development proposed in the City. The project area, in particular, is urbanized and built-out.

The City of Long Beach occupies an area of approximately 51.5 square miles with a population of approximately 470,237 residents, according to the U.S. Census Bureau 2015 American Community Survey (ACS) population estimates. Similar to the City of Los Alamitos, there was a very minor population increase in the City from 462,257 residents in the 2010 Census, and from 461,522 residents in the 2000 Census.

Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) has forecasted population growth for every jurisdiction within its boundaries, including the cities of Los Alamitos and Long Beach, as part of the approved 2016-2040 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS). According to the SCAG RTP/SCS Growth Forecast, the projected population of the City of Los Alamitos is anticipated to be 12,100 residents by 2040, representing a small projected population growth rate of 3.8 percent. The projected population

of the City of Long Beach is anticipated to be 484,500 residents by 2040, which is a projected population growth rate of 3.0 percent.<sup>1</sup>

### **2.1.2.3 Environmental Consequences**

#### ***First Cut Screening Analysis***

The proposed Build Alternatives are designed to address existing deficient geometric elements of the interchange and improve pedestrian and bicycle facilities in the project area. Therefore, the Build Alternatives would accommodate existing growth trends rather than induce new growth. Figure 2.1.2-1, The First-Cut Screening Process, shows the steps of the first-cut screening analysis which helps answer the following questions:

- To what extent would travel times, travel cost, or accessibility to employment, shopping, and other destinations be changed? Would this change affect travel behavior, trip patterns or the attractiveness of some areas to development over others?
- To what extent would a change in accessibility affect the location, rate, type, or amount of growth or land use change?
- To what extent would resources of concern be affected by this growth or land use change?

The project footprint and traffic capacity enhancements for both Build Alternatives is similar; therefore, the discussion of Alternatives 2 and 3 below is combined into a single discussion of Build Alternatives, since implementation of either Build Alternative would result in similar impacts.

#### **2.1.2.3.1 Temporary Impacts**

Due to the long-term nature of growth-related impacts, temporary impacts relative to growth are not analyzed for either the No-Build Alternative or the Build Alternatives.

#### **2.1.2.3.2 Permanent Impacts**

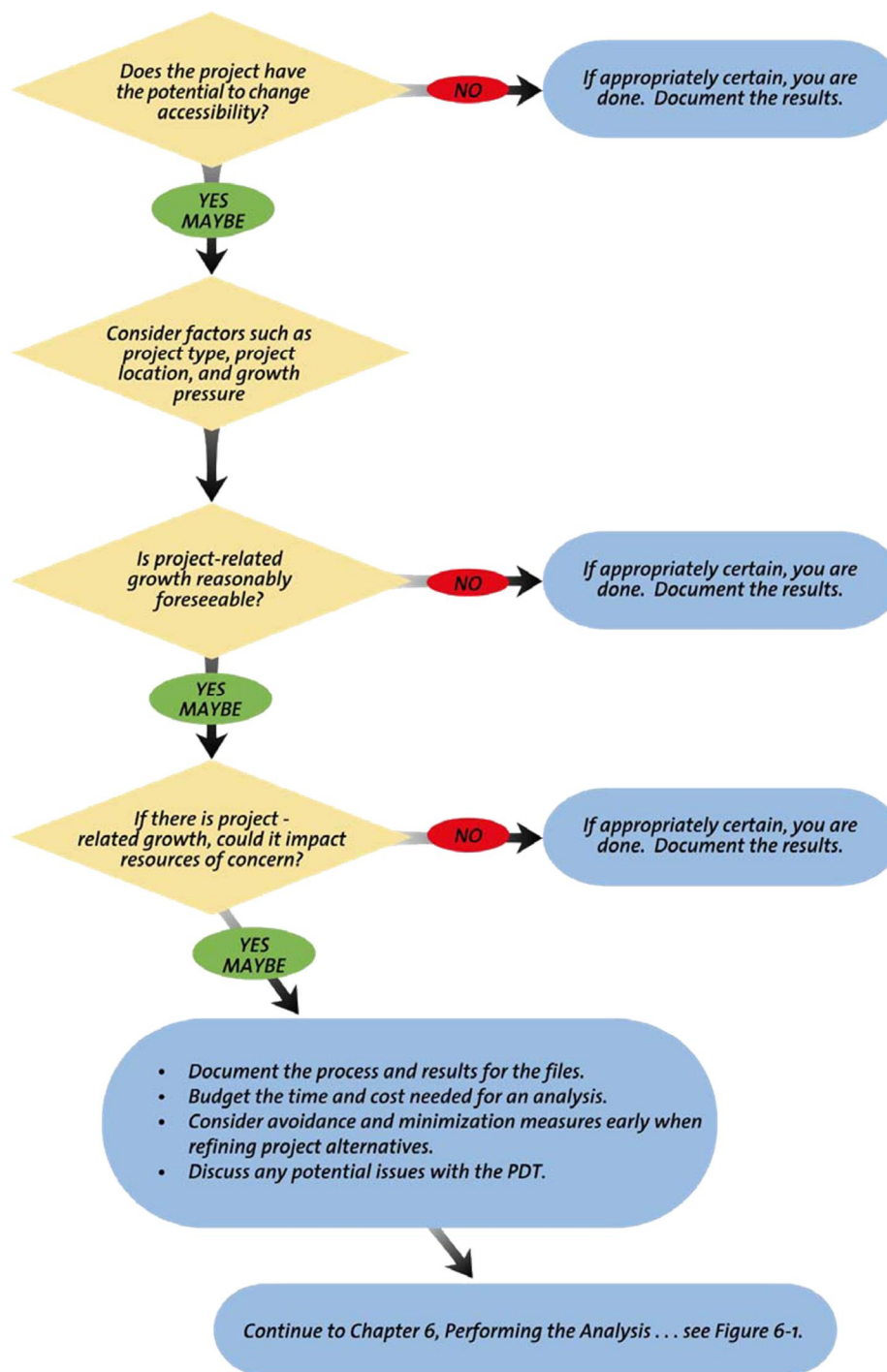
##### ***Alternative 1 (No-Build Alternative)***

The No-Build Alternative does not improve the transportation infrastructure, nor does it improve circulation within the project vicinity. Currently, the interchange has a high concentration of congestion-related accidents and experiences congestion during peak periods as a result of existing geometric elements that do not provide needed optimal traffic operations. In addition, the interchange currently has discontinuous facilities for both pedestrians and bicycle traffic. Therefore, the current condition does not improve the transportation infrastructure or traffic circulation which would result in adverse impacts related to anticipated growth in the project area.

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<sup>1</sup> Southern California Association of Governments 2016-2040 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (adopted June 2016), *Demographics and Growth Forecast*, Table 11, City Forecast 2040.

Figure 2.1.2-1: The First-Cut Screening Process



Source: California Department of Transportation, *Guidance for Preparers of Growth-related, Indirect Impact Analyses* (May 2006), p. 5-3, Figure 5-1.

### **Alternatives 2 and 3 (Build Alternatives)**

The Build Alternatives would improve existing transportation infrastructure in the project area, and therefore, would enhance access within the project area. However, the change in accessibility resulting from the project is not anticipated to affect the location, rate, type, or amount of growth projected in the cities of Los Alamitos and Long Beach because the project is located in an area that is entirely built out and urbanized. Rather, the project would improve the operational performance of the local street system by accommodating anticipated increased traffic demand in the area. Growth projections within the cities of Los Alamitos and Long Beach are forecast to be very minor, as discussed above, and project implementation would not affect or alter projected growth.

As discussed above, the project area is built-out, which is not indicative of substantial new growth in the area. The pattern and rate of population and housing growth following implementation of the Build Alternatives would be expected to remain consistent with the population anticipated by existing plans for the area. Furthermore, no new or expanded infrastructure, housing, or other similar permanent physical changes to the environment would be necessary as an indirect consequence of the Build Alternatives. The current condition along with potential development in other areas of the City increases the need for the proposed Build Alternatives, which is necessary to correct the existing condition in the area and improve traffic operations and community mobility for pedestrians and bicycle traffic. As such, project-related growth is not considered to be reasonably foreseeable with implementation of either of the Build Alternatives.

In addition, the Build Alternatives are consistent with existing and future land uses since no land use changes would occur with either of the Build Alternatives. The project is one of a number of roadway projects planned for the area, and the project is in compliance with future land uses as discussed in the General Plan.

This analysis does not continue on past the first-cut screening process because project-related growth is not reasonably foreseeable, which ends the growth analysis process as seen in Figure 2.1.2-1. Based on the first-cut screening analysis discussed above, the Build Alternatives would not be growth-inducing nor have growth-related impacts. No operational growth-related impacts are anticipated as a result of the proposed Build Alternatives, and no additional analysis related to growth is warranted.

#### **2.1.2.4 Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures**

No avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures are required.