

4.11 Population and Housing

Issues (and Supporting Information Sources):	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
11. POPULATION AND HOUSING— Would the project:				
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)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing units, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

4.11.1 Setting

Population

Population Growth

From 1990 to 2000 the population of the City of Grass Valley grew by approximately 21 percent to a total of 10,922. The growth rate in Grass Valley from 1990 to 2000 was slightly higher than in Nevada County as a whole, which experienced a 17 percent increase during the decade (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). As of January 1, 2005, the California Department of Finance estimates that Grass Valley’s population is 13,006 and the population of Nevada County is 98,955. Grass Valley currently ranks as the second most populated city in Nevada County, behind the Town of Truckee, which has an estimated population of 15,657. Nevada City, the only other city within Nevada County, has a current estimated population of 3,050 (Department of Finance, 2005).

According to the City of Grass Valley General Plan Housing Element, the population of Grass Valley and its Planning Area is projected to increase 46 percent from 16,000 in 2000 to 23,395 in 2020. Nevada County’s population is projected to increase by 45 percent from 92,033 in 2000 to 133,200 in 2020 (City of Grass Valley, 2004).

General Population Characteristics

Age

According to Census 2000 data, Grass Valley’s median age¹ is 39.3 years of age. Grass Valley’s 2000 median age is slightly lower than the median age for Nevada County (43.1 years of age),

¹ One-half of the population is older than the median age, and one-half of the population is younger than the median age.

and higher than the state of California’s median age (33.3 years of age). Census 2000 indicates that approximately 22 percent of the City’s population is aged 65 years and older and approximately 23.3 percent of the City’s population is under 18 years of age. Persons over 65 years of age comprised approximately 17.4 percent of Nevada County’s population and approximately 23.1 percent of the County’s population are under the age of 18 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).

Household Size and Number

The average household size in Grass Valley in 2000 was 2.13 persons per household, which was slightly lower than the Nevada County average of 2.47. In 2000, there were 5,016 households in the Grass Valley, and 36,894 households in all of Nevada County (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).

Employment

According to Census 2000, employed Grass Valley residents in 2000 totaled 4,768 with a 4.3 percent unemployment rate. Employed residents in Nevada County totaled 41,533 with an unemployment rate of 4.7 percent (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Labor force statistics for Nevada County and the City of Grass Valley are provided in **Table 4.11-1**.

**TABLE 4.11-1
 LABOR FORCE STATISTICS**

	1990	2000
City of Grass Valley		
In labor force	4,028	4,992
Civilian labor force	4,019	4,980
Employed	3,668	4,768
Unemployed	351	212
Unemployment rate	8.7%	4.3%
Armed forces	9	12
Not in labor force	3,144	3,769
Nevada County		
In labor force	35,440	43,669
Civilian labor force	35,370	43,624
Employed	33,210	41,553
Unemployed	2,160	2,071
Unemployment rate	6.1%	4.7%
Armed forces	70	45
Not in labor force	25,982	30,143

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau (2000)

According to the Nevada County General Plan Housing Element, Grass Valley’s employment base is largely in retail and service trades. Within Nevada County, employment opportunities are concentrated in government, transportation, and retail trade (City of Grass Valley, 2004). According to the 1997 Economic Census, there were no farming, natural resources, or mining jobs within the City of Grass Valley; however according to the 2000 Census, 108 Grass Valley residents held a job in these fields. The California Economic Development Department estimated that in 2002, there were 80 farming, natural resources, and mining jobs in Nevada County (City of Grass Valley, 2004). Approximately 43 percent of Grass Valley workers work within the City, while approximately 57 percent work outside of the City (City of Grass Valley, 2004).

Housing

The 2000 Census estimates that in 2000 there were 5,266 housing units in Grass Valley. The vacancy rate in Grass Valley in 2000 was 4.7 percent, which is indicative of a competitive housing market. **Table 4.11-2** shows the existing housing stock for the City of Grass Valley, Nevada City, the Town of Truckee, and Nevada County.

**TABLE 4.11-2
EXISTING HOUSING STOCK**

Type of Unit	Number of Units			
	Grass Valley	Nevada City	Town of Truckee	Nevada County (inclusive)
Single Family Detached	2,464	1,087	8,344	36,312
Single Family Attached	258	53	243	873
Multifamily 2–4 units	748	106	495	1,589
Multifamily 5+ units	1,325	78	407	2,124
Mobile Homes	503	72	298	3,244
Boat, RV, van, etc.	0	0	0	140
Total	5,298	1,396	9,787	44,282

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau (2000)

4.11.2 Regulatory Context

Local

Nevada County General Plan Housing Element²

The Housing Element of Nevada County’s General Plan presents a comprehensive set of housing policies and actions for the years 2003-2008. The Housing Element and its programs cover the time frame starting in January 2003 through June 2008. A goal of the Housing Element is to

² Under the proposed project, Nevada County plans and policies would only apply to the New Brunswick site, which would not be annexed into the City of Grass Valley as part of this proposed project.

“provide for a continuing supply of affordable housing for all income segments to meet the needs of existing Nevada County residents, as well as potential future residents desiring to reside in the County” (Nevada County, 2003).

City of Grass Valley 2003–2009 Housing Element

The Housing Element of the General Plan is designed to provide the City with a coordinated and comprehensive strategy for promoting the production of safe, decent, and affordable housing within the community. The Housing Element is a five-year plan for the 2003-2009 period, which differs from other General Plan elements, which cover the period of 1999-2020. The Housing Element serves as an integrated part of the General Plan, but is updated more frequently to ensure its relevancy and accuracy. The Housing Element identifies strategies and programs that focus on:

- Matching housing supply with need;
- Maximizing housing choice throughout the community;
- Assisting in the provision of affordable housing;
- Removing governmental and other constraints to housing investment; and
- Promoting fair and equal housing opportunities

Applicable Policies

The following policies set forth in the Housing Element are applicable to the proposed project:

- Policy A-1: The City shall maintain an adequate supply of residential land in appropriate land use designations with access to public facilities and services, to accommodate projected household growth and Grass Valley’s share of Nevada County’s housing construction need for all income groups.
- Policy B-[3]: The City shall encourage new rental housing facilities for large families.
- Policy B-7: The City shall continue to allow second dwelling units in any residential zone according to standards included in the City’s Zoning Ordinance.
- Policy C-1: The City shall pursue state and federal funding assistance that is appropriate to Grass Valley’s needs to develop housing that is affordable to low- and moderate-income households.
- Policy C-2: The City shall use available local financing techniques, such as mortgage revenue bonds, mortgage credit certificates, other mortgage-backed securities, or other feasible financial assistance techniques, to assist homebuilders in developing affordable housing.
- Policy D-5: The City shall work with the Nevada County Housing Authority to maintain and increase the availability of federal rental subsidies in the City.
- Policy E-5: The City shall encourage “workforce” housing that is affordable to residents who are employed locally through a study that identifies opportunities to develop such housing and design alternatives that would make the production of such housing financially feasible.

(City of Grass Valley, 2004).

Future Housing Needs

According to the Sierra Planning Organization, Grass Valley is responsible for accommodating 1,448 additional housing units between 2001 and 2009, of which 535 units should be affordable to very low- and low-income households. The Sierra Planning Organization determines the amount of affordable housing Nevada County will need for the time period and then divides that housing among its participating jurisdictions (City of Grass Valley, 2004).

4.11.3 Impacts Discussion

Methods

Existing population, housing, and employment information was obtained primarily from Census 2000 information and California Department of Finance County Population Estimates; the City of Grass Valley Housing Element and Nevada County General Plan Housing Element also provided some existing demographic information. Efforts to determine impacts to population and housing included review of the project applicant's Socioeconomic Analysis prepared by MACTEC and comparison to existing Nevada County and City of Grass Valley General Plan policies.

Impact 4.11-1: The proposed project could indirectly induce substantial population growth in the City of Grass Valley and surrounding areas. This would be a potentially significant impact.

A Socioeconomic Assessment was prepared for the proposed project in 2004. Population growth estimates were generated through a socioeconomic model that was based on the socioeconomic impact mitigation monitoring plan for the McLaughlin Gold Mine Project which was constructed and operated by Homestake Mining Company in the 1980s in Lake, Napa, and Yolo Counties. The McLaughlin Gold Mine Project is one of the most recent gold mining projects in California that was permitted in accordance with the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act and for which a certified Environmental Impact Report and Socioeconomic Impact Mitigation Monitoring program was developed. While the McLaughlin project was located in a remote area of Lake County and the Idaho-Maryland Mine is in a populated area in the Sierra Foothills, the empirical data developed from the Socioeconomic Impact Mitigation Monitoring Program provides a general framework for estimating socioeconomic impacts associated the proposed project. Using this model, an estimate of population impacts is conservatively generated. Because the generation numbers are used from a mining project located in a remote location in the 1980s, it is anticipated that the numbers generated are actually higher than would result under the proposed project for two reasons: 1) mining in a remote location (McLaughlin) necessarily requires relocation of greater numbers of workers than a mining operation in an urbanized area; and 2) because it is more common now than it was in the 1980s to have two-income households where workers will commute to accommodate the other income-earner's career. However, it is noted that these two factors may be offset by the fact that the number of local residents that are qualified for a mining job may be lower than they were for the McLaughlin Mine project.

Nevertheless, according to the socioeconomic model prepared for the proposed project, it is anticipated that peak construction activity for the proposed project would employ up to 250 employees at one time. In addition, the proposed project’s peak operational workforce would consist of up to 400 employees. The total direct impact associated with the peak construction workforce of 250 employees is estimated to be 86 employees that would relocate to the City with 155 dependents, increasing the population by 241 persons. The total direct impact associated with the peak operation workforce of 400 employees is estimated to be 138 employees that would relocate to the City of Grass Valley with 248 dependents, increasing the population by 386 persons. **Table 4.11-3** summarizes the projected population growth anticipated to result from implementation of the proposed project.

**TABLE 4.11-3
 PROPOSED PROJECT POPULATION PROJECTIONS**

	Employees		Dependents		Total Population	
	Residing	Relocating	Residing	Relocating	Residing	Relocating
Peak Construction Employment (250 employees)						
Grass Valley	78	86	141	155	219	241
Weekly Commuters	42	44				
Nevada County	40	41				
Other Counties	2	2				
Construction Total	120	130	141	155	219	241
Peak Operations Employment (400 employees)						
Grass Valley	126	138	226	248	352	386
Weekly Commuters	67	70				
Nevada County	63	66				
Other Counties	3	0				
Operations Total	193	208	226	248	352	386
Project Total	313	338	367	403	571	627

SOURCE: MACTEC (2004)

Because it is assumed that construction workers that relocate to the area with their families would continue to reside in the area after project construction activities are completed, the total direct impact associated with a worst case combined peak construction and operation workforces of 650 employees are estimated to be 338 employees relocating to the City with 403 dependents. This represents a population increase of 627 persons, or five percent over the City’s current estimated population of 13,006. According to the City’s population projections contained in its General Plan Housing Element, between 2000 and 2020 the population in Grass Valley is expected to increase approximately 45 percent, or 7,395 persons. The direct population growth that may be associated with the project would represent approximately 8 percent of the expected growth.

As summarized in **Table 4.11-4**, it is estimated that the construction workforce would create a demand for 144 additional housing units and the operations workforce could create a demand for an additional 228 housing units. These numbers are based on McLaughlin Mine survey results, which indicated that approximately 46 percent of workers will relocate with their families for the job and 54 percent will elect not to relocate. In addition, 75 percent of the workers commuting to the project site from their current residence may rent a shared living space closer to their work location and elect not to bring their families to the community.

**TABLE 4.11-4
PROPOSED PROJECT HOUSING DEMAND PROJECTIONS**

	Resident Family Adjustment	Shared Unit Adjustment	Total Housing Units	Buy (10%)	Rent (90%)
Local, Relocating (86)	x. 0.46 (with)	x 1.0 (none)	40	4	36
	x 0.54 (without)	x 0.85	40	4	36
Weekly Commuters, Residing (42)	x 1.0 (none)	x 0.75 (shared)	31	3	28
Weekly Commuters, Relocating (44)	x 1.0 (none)	x 0.75 (shared)	33	3	29
Construction Total			144	14	130
Local, Relocating (138)	x. 0.46 (with)	x 1.0 (none)	63	6	57
	x 0.54 (without)	x 0.85	63	6	57
Weekly Commuters, Residing (67)	x 1.0 (none)	x 0.75 (shared)	50	5	45
Weekly Commuters, Relocating (70)	x 1.0 (none)	x 0.75 (shared)	52	5	47
Operations Total			228	22	206
Project Total			372	36	336

SOURCE: MACTEC (2004)

Because the project would result in an approximately 5 percent increase in local population and because the proposed project was not considered within the planning assumptions for the existing General Plan, impacts related to growth inducement and additional housing demand would be potentially significant.

Impact 4.11-2: The proposed project would indirectly displace housing units by changing the land use designation for a portion of the Idaho Maryland site from *Urban Medium Density* residential to *Manufacturing Industrial* to accommodate the proposed mining operation. This would be a potentially significant impact.

While the proposed General Plan Amendment would allow a site that is currently vacant/industrial to be used for mineral resource extraction, consistent with the City's Mineral Management Element, it would also result in a loss of land designated for residential uses (*Urban*

Medium Density Residential [UMD] within the City of Grass Valley, which could conflict with the City of Grass Valley General Plan Housing Element. The existing *UMD* land use designation is intended to accommodate single family detached and attached homes, single family patio homes, duplexes, and town houses. Both single family and multi-family housing types are facilitated by *UMD* designation (City of Grass Valley, 1999). However, the elimination of approximately 47 acres of land designated *UMD* on the Idaho Maryland site would result in the potential permanent loss of land within the City to accommodate approximately 188.5 to 376 residential units.³ The City of Grass Valley General Plan projects the need for a net increase of 2,820 new housing units in the Grass Valley Planning area from 1999 to 2020. Of these, 55% (1,551) are projected to be single family units, 45% (1,269) multi-family units (City of Grass Valley, 1999). The loss of *UMD*-designated land under the project's proposed General Plan Amendment would adversely impact the potential to provide sufficiently for the estimated increase in need for housing units within the City, resulting in a potentially significant impact.

The proposed project would not displace existing persons at the project sites.

The proposed project would result in the re-opening of a historic underground gold mine for gold extraction, associated processing, and ceramics manufacturing. The Idaho Maryland site is generally vacant with the exception of an area currently used as a lumber mill. The Round Hole site is generally vacant with the exception of a now covered underground shaft that provided access to the mine and the New Brunswick site is also generally vacant with the exception of remnants of ore bins from historical mining operations. No residences are located on the project site and thus, neither housing nor people would be displaced as a result of the proposed project.

4.11.4 Data Gaps

No data gaps.

References – Population and Housing

City of Grass Valley, 1999. *City of Grass Valley 2020 General Plan*, November 23, 1999.

City of Grass Valley, 2004. *City of Grass Valley 2003 – 2009 Housing Element*, adopted January 2004.

Nevada County, 2003. *Nevada County General Plan Housing Element*, 2003.

³ The City of Grass Valley General Plan requires between 4.01 and 8.0 residential units per gross acre in *UMD*-designated areas (City of Grass Valley, 1999).

MACTEC Engineering & Consulting, Inc., 2004. *Socioeconomic Analysis Idaho-Maryland Mine Project, Grass Valley, California*, December 17, 2004.

State of California, Department of Finance, 2005. *E-1 City / County Population Estimates, with Annual percent Change, January 1, 2004 and 2005*. Sacramento, California, May 2005.

U.S. Census Bureau, 2000. *Census 2000*, Washington D.C., 2000.