

7.0 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LOCAL SHORT-TERM USES OF MAN'S ENVIRONMENT AND THE MAINTENANCE AND ENHANCEMENT OF LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY

Both the Bypass Channel and the Channel Widening Plans would result in significant impacts experienced over three time periods: during construction (short term); until biological mitigation measures achieve specified goals (intermediate term); and operation (long term). Either flood protection plan would result in long-term reduction in the flood risk to homes and businesses in San Jose near the Guadalupe River, Ross Creek, and Canoas Creek. Reduced flood hazards would enhance land uses in the vicinity of the project area, by eliminating requirements for insurance and flood protection, and decreasing potential costs of flood-related damage.

Nearly all significant short-term impacts during construction would be reduced to less than significant by mitigation: air quality (fugitive dust generation during grading); geological resources (increased erosion and sedimentation during grading); water resources (degradation of water quality due to erosion); aesthetics and recreation (incompatible heavy construction equipment and materials working in a natural setting); noise (construction equipment noise affecting the occupants of adjacent residential areas); transportation (construction equipment trips, road and bridge closures affecting traffic flow); public services and utilities (relocation of wells and utility lines); cultural resources (ground disturbances and demolition of structures); hazardous materials (release of contaminants in excavated soil); public safety (construction activities creating safety hazards and nuisances); and socioeconomics (relocation of businesses).

Construction of the Bypass Channel Plan would have an unavoidable, significant long-term impact on residential land uses where the cohesion and integrity of neighborhood blocks would be interrupted by parcels developed as part of flood control improvements.

With either flood protection plan, significant unavoidable impacts on biological resources would occur during the short- and intermediate term until mitigation replantings are established. Riparian forest revegetation establishment could take as little as 2-3 or up to 10 years, while full replacement of the relatively mature forest found in some locations could take up to 40-50 years. Impacts would also affect aesthetics and recreation (important public and private views that include natural settings adjacent to the river, and new flood control improvements contrasting with the natural environment that would not be screened). Proposed mitigations include careful monitoring for effectiveness to expedite revegetation establishment and minimize these impacts.

No significant unavoidable impacts on biological resources would occur over the long-term operation of the either Channel Widening Plan or Bypass Channel Plan, assuming the successful implementation of mitigation measures presented in the EIR/S. These measures would enhance long-term biological productivity.

Either flood protection plan would provide numerous immediate and long-term beneficial impacts by limiting potential flooding damage and improving public safety in the vicinity of the upper Guadalupe River. This beneficial impact is considered particularly important, since future floods could have substantial repercussions throughout the project vicinity. Erosion of stream banks would be minimized, which would eliminate the need for constructing flood control protective mechanisms such as concrete channelling. Biological resources would be enhanced in the long term by the restoration of riparian forest, which is of extremely high value to fish and wildlife, and preventing the disturbance of this area by future flood control projects and development. A trail running the length of river improvements funded by the City of San Jose would provide recreational benefits.

The No-Action Alternative would not provide any of the benefits described above. Potential flooding and erosion impacts would remain, resulting in the need for flood control cleanup activity and potentially other, more intrusive modifications to the upper Guadalupe River.

The long-term consequences of either flood protection plan include enhancing local public safety and the biological integrity of the upper Guadalupe River, while substantially reducing future costs and environmental impacts associated with flood damage repair and cleanup. These enhancements are substantial when compared to the short-term and intermediate-term adverse, project-related construction impacts.

Short-Term Uses vs. Long-Term Productivity
