

7.4 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS ON LAND USE

As described in **Section 7.3**, the development of the proposed replacement airport at St. George will have some cumulative effect on overall land use development trends within southern Washington County. Washington County, Utah and Mohave County, Arizona, as well as the cities of St. George and Washington City have developed General Plans that have effectively guided planning and development activities within the areas surrounding the replacement airport and those plans will continue to serve the same purpose into the future. **As described in Chapter Five, Section 5.6.1 (in the Draft EIS), the City of St. George is conducting an airport vicinity land use planning process concurrently with this EIS.**

The intent of the planning effort is to develop a land use plan and regulations that promote compatible land uses in the proposed replacement airport environs while also establishing a planning framework that would enable local governments to capitalize on potential economic development opportunities. The Airport Vicinity Land Use Plan is considering the effects of aircraft noise, potential safety issues, and airspace protection in determining the best locations for various land uses. This plan will work in combination with the existing General Plans applicable to the area to guide future land use decisions.

Similar planning has been occurring as part of the Southern Corridor development process. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) have been working with the City of St. George, Washington City, and Hurricane to address potential cumulative impacts that could occur from growth and land use changes associated with the Southern Corridor.

The magnitude of direct impact of the project when added to the reasonable and foreseeable impacts of the Southern Corridor and other projects is relatively small compared to the availability of resources within the study area and the region. Development proposals for areas near the proposed replacement airport have not been developed in sufficient detail to allow for a realistic and reasonable determination of impacts to be considered.

As described in Chapter 6, *Smart Growth*, of the Final EIS for the Southern Corridor, issued in April 2005 by the Utah Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration, the City of St. George and Washington County have adopted city and county land use planning initiatives being adopted in Southern Utah to protect the environment while accommodating growth. St. George's land use plan is being updated to implement growth strategies over the next five years that include smart growth principles and land use controls which include mixed-use zoning, encouraging compact development, development of interspersed open space, and xeriscape principles. Implementation of these measures, along with the adoption of sustainable design principles, would ensure that available land is used efficiently and that cumulative impacts to natural

habitats, water quality and supply, and air quality are minimized. Implementation of the replacement airport would include many of these same development principles to further minimize impacts to the surrounding environment.

As shown in **Appendix D**, in the Final EIS, the City of St. George is committed to the re-zoning and redevelopment of the existing airport site as a mixed-use area for residential, commercial, administrative and professional, light industry, and/or campus land uses. This new 240-acre development is intended be a balanced community providing services and employment opportunities that are centrally located for the convenience of potential adjacent residents, while taking advantage of the picturesque panoramic views of downtown St. George and the surrounding vicinity. Located within one of the most rapidly growing areas in St. George, this proposed development of single-family homes and multi-family residences, such as town-homes, condominiums, and apartments, would expand and diversify the use of the area with the inclusion of new commercial, retail, and business enterprises.

Changes in land use can affect how environmental resources, particularly threatened and endangered species and wildlife habitats, would be affected as an area changes from undeveloped to developed. The cumulative impacts of the redevelopment plan in these specific categories are discussed in subsequent sections of the chapter.