INTRODUCTION

Sections 15037 and 15061 of Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970 (Office of the Secretary of Resources, December 17, 1973) defines "...the adoption of local General Plans or elements thereof..." as a project for which an Environmental Impact Report must be prepared. This Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is written pursuant to these guidelines.

The term "environment," as defined in the Guidelines, means "the physical conditions which exist within the area which will be affected by a proposed project including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, (and) objects of historic or aesthetic significance."

Amendments to the Guidelines issued December 17, 1973 apply to this EIR as follows:

1. The degree of specificity in an EIR should correspond to the degree of specificity in the project. Section 15147.

2. An EIR on a local general plan may be of a general nature and may be combined with the general plan document. Section 15147 (b) and (c).
Where the General Plan addresses information required by the EIR, this is indicated by a reference to the specific General Plan element. Section 15147 (c).

I. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

A. Location and Boundaries

The location of St. Helena in its regional setting is shown in the map below.
The St. Helena General Plan covers all of the land within the city's corporate limits. This area coincides with the city's "sphere of influence" as defined by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCOM). The city boundaries are shown in the map on the following page.

B. Statement of Objectives

The broad objectives of the St. Helena General Plan are as follows:

1. To provide a guide for orderly urban growth and development.

2. To accommodate urban development in a manner that will minimize adverse effects on both the natural and manmade environment.

3. To comply with Sections 65100 to 65700 of the California Government Code, which require every city to prepare and adopt a General Plan.

4. To provide a basis for:
   (a) analyzing the environmental effects of specific development proposals with respect to the city's conservation and development goals, and
   (b) evaluating the consistency of development proposals with respect to city policies and standards.
(c) Technical characteristics

The St. Helena General Plan complies with Section 65302 of the Government Code which requires nine "plan elements" dealing with (1) land use, (2) circulation, (3) housing, (4) conservation, (5) open space, (6) seismic safety, (7) noise, (8) safety, and (9) scenic highways.

The General Plan follows generally the "Guidelines for Local General Plans" prepared by the Council on Intergovernmental Relations, State of California.
II. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

A. Regional Setting

St. Helena is located within the nine county San Francisco Bay Region. These nine counties have a present population of 4.6 million. The General Plans for these counties project a total population of 7.7 million by 1990.

The northernmost counties, Marin, Solano, Sonoma, and Napa, have experienced the least urbanization. Napa County has the lowest population in the region and the lowest projected increase. In 1970 Napa County had a population of 79,140; the County General Plan is based on a population of 205,000 by 1990. Most of this growth is projected to occur in the south part of the County.

The northern part of Napa County is planned and zoned mainly for agricultural uses. The rich agricultural land in the Upper Napa Valley is protected from urbanization by restrictive County land use policies and zoning.

The Napa County General Plan limits urban growth in the Napa Valley to existing urban centers; routes traffic north and south through the Valley on existing major highways (Highway 29 and the Silverado Trail); and proposes a linear parkway along the Napa River. Industrial development (other than agriculture-related industry) is limited in the plan to the southern part of the County.
Information on the physical environment of Napa County in general and the Napa Valley is found in the county General Plan and the support data prepared by the Napa County Conservation, Development, and Planning Department.

B. Local Setting

A description of the physical environment of St. Helena is found in General Plan elements dealing with Land Use, Circulation, and Environmental Resources.
III. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Impact on the physical environment has been a continuing concern of the city planning commission and city council in the preparation of the St. Helena General Plan. The following analysis describes the expected impacts on the environment of the plan elements dealing with land use, traffic circulation, housing, safety, and environmental resources.

A. Land Use Element

In general, the plan will promote a compact, orderly pattern of land uses that facilitates the provision of urban services and avoids unnecessary encroachment on the vineyards.

1. Agriculture. The plan recognizes areas of the city that presently contain high quality vineyards and designates these areas for continuing agricultural use in the foreseeable future. In general, these areas are on the outer reaches of the city or in low-lying areas subject to occasional flooding.

2. Urban Reserve. The General Plan Map shows certain near-in areas presently in agricultural use as a reserve for future expansion once other parts of the city have been built up. The General Plan will preserve these areas as vineyard until they are needed for urban expansion. They are not expected to be used for urban purposes for many years.
3. Housing. The General Plan Map designates close-in areas east and west of Highway 29 for "higher-density housing," areas further from the highway on the west side of the city for "lower-density housing." The overall or average density planned in areas designated for "lower-density" is six dwelling units per net acre. The density in areas planned for "higher-density" will average 10 dwelling units per net acre. In all residential areas the plan permits a mix of dwelling types, subject to policies and standards that will promote their compatibility.

The densities permitted in the plan will result in a population of approximately 15,000 people when all of the land designated for residential use in the General Plan is fully built up. The areas designated for "urban reserve" will accommodate an additional population of 4,000 if they were developed for "lower-density housing," or 6,700 if they were developed for "higher-density housing."

4. Neighborhood Business. The plan will permit city officials to approve the location of small neighborhood business centers convenient to residential neighborhoods where these appear to be desirable as the city grows. City zoning regulations will limit the range of permitted uses to food stores and closely related uses and will require careful review by the city to insure their compatibility with the surrounding uses in the neighborhood.
Locating some businesses away from existing commercial centers will help to relieve traffic congestion on Highway 29 as well as reduce the travel distance between shopping and residential areas for those goods and services that are purchased more frequently.

5. **Roadside Business.** The General Plan will prevent the expansion of the commercial "strip" along Highway 29 north of Pine Street and will set design standards for further business development along sections of highway to the south that are already partially built up.

6. **Central Business District.** The General Plan will promote a compact "downtown" business district, oriented to pedestrian shopping with easy access and offstreet parking.

7. **Industry.** An area well south of the existing developed area of the city will be developed for warehousing, distribution, and other industrial uses. This is the only area of the city which has direct rail and highway access and which can be developed for industry without causing conflicts with other urban land uses.
8. **Schools and Parks.** The General Plan limits new schools to existing school sites west of the highway. The plan assumes the eventual development of the vacant 14-acre tract adjoining the high school and Crane Park, which is owned by the school district and presently planted in vineyard.

Projections of the distribution of school enrollment will not justify a school site east of Highway 29 in the foreseeable future.

9. **Utilities.** The General Plan provides for upgrading city utilities in order to avoid a potential health hazard. Meeting the General Plan goals for water supply and sewerage will assure that all future development will be served by the city's water and sewer systems. City policy is to require the developer to pay the cost of installing water lines, sanitary sewers, and storm drains as a condition of subdivision approval.

B. **Circulation Element**

The General Plan Map indicates proposed traffic improvements that will help to relieve the congestion on Highway 29 and otherwise improve traffic circulation within the city.

The plan will reduce the present demands on Highway 29 by providing alternative north-south routes
for local traffic and by encouraging more through traffic to use the Silverado Trail.

A grid pattern of secondary streets will route local traffic around rather than through residential neighborhoods.

Proposed routes shown through agricultural areas will be built only if and when the land is developed for urban uses.

C. Housing Element

The Housing Element of the General Plan encourages the improvement of the housing supply in the city. Specifically the Housing Element commits city officials to take added responsibility for the supply of lower-income housing as other city and county policies and general economic conditions tend to increase housing costs.

D. Safety Element

The Safety Element of the General Plan commits the city to continue to maintain its high fire rating and its code enforcement programs.
E. Environmental Resource Element

The General Plan has as a major objective the wise management of the city's natural resources. The resource inventory in this plan element serves as a partial checklist of environmental concerns. The General Plan calls attention to the city's valuable water resources, natural vegetation, fish and wildlife, limited mineral deposits, productive soils, and the quality of the air.

The General Plan commits the city, alone or in cooperation with other agencies, to an on-going program of resource management. The protection of local resources will depend on the day-to-day decisions by city officials who are charged with the administration of city development regulations. The General Plan provides a frame of reference for these decisions by establishing guidelines in the form of goals, policies, and standards.

The Environmental Resource Element will have the following general impacts.

1. Conservation of Resources. City officials will consider the effect of development proposals on the natural environment and seek a balance between development and conservation goals.
2. **Open Space.** The General Plan preserves approximately 40% of the city in permanent open space (areas designated as agriculture or flood prone) and protects an additional 15% from urban encroachment until other areas of the city have been built up (urban reserve).

In addition, the General Plan commits the city to comparatively low development densities. (See Land Use Element.) City policies expressed in the General Plan provide for ample yards and other setbacks. The use of "planned unit" development provisions in the city zoning ordinance will result in common open space in residential areas. Land developers will be required to set aside part of their subdivisions for park purposes or make in-lieu payments to the city for park acquisition. These practices will result in the retention of permanent open space in residential neighborhoods as the city continues to build up.

3. **Seismic Safety.** There is no present evidence of any geologic fault in the vicinity of St. Helena. Even so, the General Plan commits the city to building standards that will minimize damage from seismic activity if it occurs.

4. **Scenic Highways.** The General Plan recognizes that sections of Highway 29, the Silverado Trail, and Spring Mountain Road have significant
scenic value. Policies in the General Plan commit the city to the protection of roadside views and vistas. The city will require suitable setbacks and landscaping in connection with the approval of use permits or changes in zone boundaries.

5. **Noise.** St. Helena, like most small communities, is a quiet town. Most of the noise in St. Helena is caused by truck and other vehicle traffic and the infrequent trains that pass through the city.

The General Plan recognizes that noise can be a disturbing element in the community and commits the city to policies that will minimize traffic noise and industrial noise in all areas of St. Helena.
IV. ADVERSE AFFECTS WHICH CANNOT BE AVOIDED

Many of the smaller vacant parcels designated for urban development in the General Plan are presently planted in vineyard or orchard or contain attractive mature trees. Some of the attractive quality of the city will be lost as these areas are built up.

Other adverse impacts of new development include increased traffic generated by new homes and businesses and consequent impacts on air quality and ambient noise.

V. MITIGATION MEASURES TO MINIMIZE IMPACTS

All of the General Plan elements describe measures which will minimize the adverse impacts of growth.

VI. ALTERNATIVES TO THE GENERAL PLAN

The General Plan was developed in its present form from a careful consideration of alternatives. The policies and other guidelines in the General Plan follow from the general and specific goals established for each plan element.

In general, alternative land use policies would create unnecessary conflicts between different uses of land or would result in development densities considered to be "too high" or "too low" in terms of economic, social, and environmental goals.
VII. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SHORT TERM USE AND LONG TERM PRODUCTIVITY

Not applicable. See Napa County General Plan sections dealing with the pattern of urban and non-urban development.

VIII. IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

Not applicable. In general, any change from undeveloped land to urban development represents an irreversible change in the environment.

IX. GROWTH INDUCING IMPACTS OF THE GENERAL PLAN

St. Helena will continue to be subject to strong growth pressures because of the city's attraction as a place to live, the healthy economy of the wine industry, and the proximity of St. Helena to employment and population centers in the Bay Area.

The General Plan is based on a policy of "slow growth" in accordance with a city-wide referendum in the summer of 1973. Respecting this basic policy, the plan will induce urban growth by virtue of the fact that it designates large areas for the future development of a broad range of urban uses. The General Plan Map graphically illustrates this point, particularly when it is compared with the scale and
pattern of existing development. More detailed descriptions of the potential magnitude of future development under the plan were indicated previously in the "Environmental Impact" section.

Two other general aspects of the plan will tend to keep the rate and quality of any induced development in balance with local objectives. These features of the plan are high standards of design and respect for natural constraints and resources. The same high standards of design are contained in the plan itself, while others are contained in the city's development regulations. One example of the high standards of design contained in the plan are those pertaining to industrial development. While the plan makes a definite commitment to some industrial growth, it specifically limits it to uses that are in-scale with the local natural resources and labor force. Industrial development standards are also intended to induce uses that support existing ag-related business.

The plan uses natural constraints as another means of guiding urban development. Two significant features of the plan that illustrate this point are the "potential flood" and "urban reserve" areas described previously.

In summary, the St. Helena General Plan is aimed at directing growth the plan may induce in a manner that is compatible with local values.