

Introduction

Organized by environmental resource area, this chapter provides an integrated discussion of the regulatory setting, environmental setting, and impact analyses (including mitigation measures for potentially significant impacts) associated with the San Rafael Transit Center Replacement Project (proposed project) and other build alternatives. Impacts related to the No-Project Alternative are discussed in Chapter 5, Alternatives to the Project.

Chapter Organization

This chapter is organized into the following environmental resource sections.

- 3.1, Aesthetics
- 3.2, Air Quality
- 3.3, Biological Resources
- 3.4, Cultural Resources
- 3.5, Energy
- 3.6, Geology and Soils
- 3.7, Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- 3.8, Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- 3.9, Hydrology and Water Quality
- 3.10, Land Use and Planning
- 3.11, Noise
- 3.12, Population and Housing
- 3.13, Public Services and Recreation
- 3.14, Transportation
- 3.15, Tribal Cultural Resources
- 3.16, Utilities and Service Systems
- 3.17, Wildfire

Each environmental resource section in this chapter includes the following information:

- Each section begins with a brief introductory discussion presenting an overview of the environmental resource and cross-referencing related issues addressed elsewhere in the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

- **Regulatory Setting:** Identifies the federal, state, regional, and local laws, as well as regulations, ordinances, and policies that are relevant to each environmental resource area and would be applicable to the construction and operation of the build alternatives.
- **Environmental Setting:** Provides an overview of the existing physical considerations of an environmental resource in the area at the time of, or prior to, the publication of the Notice of Preparation, which could be affected by implementation of the build alternatives. A specific study area is identified for each environmental resource, as the extent of a study area varies with each resource. The study area is defined as the limits of an area in which impacts could be expected to occur for each environmental resource. The environmental setting provides the basis of analysis of potential impacts related to each resource.
- **Environmental Impacts:** Describes the methodology used for the analysis, criteria used to determine the significance of potential impacts, and corresponding discussion of impacts associated with the build alternatives. For each potential impact, the analysis makes a significance determination (i.e., no impact, less than significant, potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or significant and unavoidable) for construction and operations. If required to reduce a potentially significant impact, feasible mitigation measures are identified. The Approach to Impact Analysis section below describes the contents of the impact analysis discussion in further detail.

A discussion of how the proposed project would contribute to cumulative impacts is discussed separately in Chapter 4, Cumulative Impacts.

Approach to Impact Analysis

Significance Criteria

The significance criteria used in this Draft EIR to define the level at which an impact would be considered significant in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) are presented under the subheading Thresholds of Significance in each environmental resource section. In accordance with Section 15022(a) of the State CEQA Guidelines, the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District uses significance criteria based on State CEQA Guidelines Appendix G; factual or scientific information and data; and regulatory standards of applicable federal, state, regional, and local jurisdictions.

Impact Identification and Levels of Significance

Each environmental resource section identifies and lists impacts sequentially. An impact statement precedes the discussion of each impact and provides a summary of the impact topic.

The level of significance associated with an impact is determined by comparing the environmental effects of the build alternatives with the existing environmental conditions and applying the identified significance threshold. This Draft EIR uses a variety of terms to describe the levels of significance of impacts identified within the environmental analysis. Each impact is categorized as one of the following:

- **No impact:** The build alternatives would not cause any adverse change in the environment.

- **Less-than-significant impact:** The build alternatives would not cause a substantial adverse change in the environment, as the specified standard of significance would not be exceeded; therefore, no mitigation measures are required.
- **Significant impact:** The build alternatives would cause a substantial adverse change in the physical conditions of the environment in excess of the specified standard. This is typically the level of significance of an impact prior to the application of feasible mitigation measures.
- **Less-than-significant impact with mitigation:** The build alternatives would cause a substantial adverse change in the physical conditions of the environment in excess of the specified standard of significance; however, one or more feasible mitigation measures would reduce environmental effects to levels below the specified standard of significance.
- **Significant and unavoidable impact:** The build alternatives would cause a substantial adverse change in the physical condition of the environment; there is no feasible mitigation available or, even with implementation of feasible mitigation measures, the build alternatives would cause a significant adverse effect on the environment in excess of the specified standard of significance.

Mitigation Measures

State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.4(a)(1) states that an EIR “shall describe feasible measures which could minimize significant adverse impacts.” Mitigation measures identified in this EIR were developed during the analysis and are designed to reduce, minimize, or avoid potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed project. The mitigation measures are numbered to correspond to the impacts they address. For example, Mitigation Measure MM-CULT-CNST-1 refers to the first mitigation measure for the first impact statement in the cultural resources section. Measures to be implemented during construction are distinguished by the inclusion of “CNST” in the mitigation measure title, and measures to be implemented during operations include “OP.”

