

3.16 Socioeconomics and Communities Affected

3.16.1 Introduction

This section provides an evaluation of the potential effects associated with the No Build Alternative and Build Alternative Options on the socioeconomic conditions of established communities throughout the Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR Study Area. Information contained in this section is summarized from the *Socioeconomic Technical Memorandum* (Appendix I of this Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR).

3.16.2 Regulatory Framework

In accordance with NEPA (42 USC Section 4321 et seq.), CEQ regulations implementing NEPA (40 CFR Parts 1501–1508), FRA's Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts (64 FR 28545, May 26, 1999), and CEQA, FRA identified existing socioeconomic conditions within the Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR Study Area and evaluated the potential socioeconomic impacts on communities as a result of implementing the Build Alternative Options.

Federal

Civil Rights Act of 1964

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 rules that no person in the U.S. shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any federal program or activity on the grounds of race, color, or national origin. All relocation services and benefits would be administered without regard to race, color, national origin, or sex in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act (Title 42 USC Section 2000d, et seq.). Benefits for eligible owners and tenants are determined on an individual basis and explained in detail by an assigned ROW specialist.

Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970

The Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (Uniform Act) provides uniform and equitable treatment of persons displaced from their homes, businesses, non-profit associations, or farms by federal and federally assisted programs and establishes uniform and equitable land acquisition policies.

The Uniform Act requires the owning agency to notify affected owners of the agency's intent to acquire an interest in their property, including a written offer letter of just compensation that specifically describes those property interests and assigns a ROW specialist to each property owner

to assist them with this process. The Uniform Act also provides financial and advisory benefits to displaced individuals to help them relocate their residence or business. Benefits are available to owners and tenants of residential and business properties.

In compliance with the Uniform Act, property owners and tenants would receive relocation assistance and be compensated. If required, housing of last resort would be used, which may involve payments for replacement housing costs that exceed the maximum amounts allowed under the Uniform Act or other methods of providing comparable decent, safe, and sanitary housing within the financial means of the displaced persons.

State

California Relocation Assistance Act

The California Relocation Assistance Act includes requirements for just compensation for real property. Owners of private property have federal and state constitutional guarantees that their property will not be taken for public use or damaged unless they first receive just compensation. Just compensation is measured by the fair market value of the acquired property. According to the Code of Civil Procedure Section 1263.320a:

Fair market value is considered to be the highest price on the date of valuation that would be agreed to by a seller, being willing to sell, but under no particular or urgent necessity for so doing, nor obliged to sell; and a buyer, being ready, willing and able to buy but under no particular necessity for so doing, each dealing with the other with the full knowledge of all the uses and purposes for which the property is reasonably adaptable and available.

3.16.3 Methods for Evaluating Environmental Effects

This methodology identifies the approach, assumptions, and data sources for describing existing conditions for socioeconomics and analyzing environmental consequences of implementing the Build Alternative Options.

Socioeconomic indicators include historic population growth, population projections, employment, community facilities, race and ethnicity, household income, median household income and income below poverty, and limited English proficiency. Population demographic data is presented for counties, cities, and census block groups located partially or fully within the Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR Study Area, as defined below. The Build Alternative Options traverses 288 census block groups within these counties and cities, including unincorporated areas of Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, and Riverside Counties. Data for counties and cities is presented in data tables included in Appendix I of this Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR.

The evaluation of environmental consequences on socioeconomics included a qualitative assessment of residential, commercial, and other property effects resulting from acquisition; fiscal implications resulting from residential or business migration out of the community or reductions in local government revenues; potential effects on community cohesion; and changes to regional mobility and connectivity. The evaluation of environmental consequences on socioeconomics is organized as follows:

- Potential effects from acquisitions, easements, and displacements (public or private) were evaluated in compliance with the Uniform Act and broadly analyzed on a county-by-county basis. This evaluation did not identify specific properties that would be affected by land acquisition, displacement, or relocation, as construction data and potential station areas are not yet known. Specific properties that would be affected by land acquisition, displacement, or relocation would be identified in the Tier 2/Project-level analysis.
- Regional economic effects that may occur as a result of construction and operation of the Program are evaluated at the scale of the four-county region (Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, and Riverside Counties). Effects on local government services and revenue are analyzed at the scale of counties and cities.

Localized socioeconomic effects, regardless of scale, cannot be quantified until specific Project design details (i.e., construction footprint, road crossings, and station locations), construction expenditures, and the details of planned rail operations are known. Therefore, existing socioeconomic conditions within the Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR Study Area are described quantitatively, while the potential effects of the Build Alternative Options are described qualitatively in this evaluation. The Tier 2/Project-level analysis would address site-specific potential effects resulting from construction and operation of new stations, maintenance facilities, and other infrastructure.

Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR Study Area

For purposes of socioeconomic and community analysis, the Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR Socioeconomics Study Area encompasses 0.5 mile centered on the railroad centerline (0.25 mile on either side).

Data Sources

Social and economic characteristics were gathered from the U.S. Census Bureau, from the 1970 to 2010 decennial U.S. Census and the 2012-2016 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates.

Population projections were obtained from the California Department of Finance, Demographic Research Unit. Population, household income, and employment characteristics were gathered to describe the population demographics within the Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR Study Area. The description of the socioeconomic environment also includes identification of minority, low-income, and limited English proficiency households. The source and scale of economic and demographic data is summarized in Appendix I of this Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR.

Related Resources

This evaluation incorporates data and analyses from related resources to contribute to the assessment of socioeconomics and communities affected. These related resources are identified in Table 3.16-1.

Table 3.16-1. Related Resource Inputs to Socioeconomic Assessment

| Resource | Input for Socioeconomic Assessment |
|--|---|
| Land Use and Planning (Section 3.2) | Supplemental information about the land use types and areas were used to assess the potential for displacement of residences, businesses, or community facilities due to construction of new infrastructure or stations outside of the existing railroad ROW. |
| Transportation (Section 3.3) | The location of existing and proposed transportation corridors and facilities were used to assess compatibility with the Program. The location of existing and proposed passenger rail stations was used to assess potential effects on communities. |
| Visual Quality and Aesthetics (Section 3.4) | Supplemental information about temporary effects on visual resources was used to inform visual disruptions to communities during construction. |
| Noise and Vibration (Section 3.6) | Land use and zoning data identified the location of sensitive receptors to assess the potential for disruption to communities. |
| Parklands and Community Services (Section 3.14) | Supplemental information about parklands, community services, and facilities; including service or facility type, service area, and proximity to the Build Alternative Options; were used to inform the socioeconomic assessment. |

| Resource | Input for Socioeconomic Assessment |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Environmental Justice (Chapter 4) | Socioeconomic information identified the location of EJ populations and assessed the potential for disproportionate effects. |

Notes:

EIR=environmental impact report; EIS=environmental impact statement; EJ=environmental justice;

ROW=right-of-way

3.16.4 Affected Environment

The Program Corridor crosses a large geographic area within Southern California, spanning approximately 144 miles from its western terminus in Los Angeles to its eastern terminus in Coachella. The Program Corridor occurs within an existing railroad corridor that traverses areas that have predominately been heavily modified for urban purposes, especially in the Western Section, although some areas occur in or adjacent to lands that are undeveloped or contain natural vegetation. Much of the Program Corridor from Los Angeles to Colton is urbanized. The Eastern Section of the Program Corridor is less urbanized with vacant land comprising the largest land use category within the Eastern Section of the Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR Study Area.

Historical and Projected Population

Build Alternative Option 1 (Coachella Terminus)

Between 1970 and 2010, the four-county region of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties (which the Program Corridor crosses through) grew by more than 7.4 million people. In 2010, the region was home to approximately 46.0 percent of the state of California's population. Los Angeles County has the largest population in the four-county region, followed by Orange County. Historical growth patterns between 1970 and 2010 show that Riverside and San Bernardino Counties grew at a faster rate than Los Angeles and Orange Counties; Riverside County and San Bernardino County grew at an average annual rate of 4.0 percent and 2.8 percent, respectively, while Los Angeles County and Orange County grew annually by 0.8 percent and 1.9 percent, respectively.

Population projections prepared by the California Department of Finance forecast that the population within the four-county region will continue to grow between 2018 and 2050; however, the annual growth rate is anticipated to slow to 0.5 percent annually for the region as a whole with higher annual growth rates forecast for San Bernardino County (1.0 percent) and Riverside County (1.1 percent) compared with Los Angeles County (0.3 percent) and Orange County (0.4 percent), consistent with historical trends (California Department of Finance 2018).

The four-county region is projected to grow approximately 17.0 percent overall between 2018 and 2050, for a total population of approximately 21.3 million people in 2050. By then, the four-county region will account for approximately 43.0 percent of the state population. These growth forecasts suggest that the Program Corridor between Los Angeles and San Bernardino Counties will continue to support a substantial portion of the state's population in 2050.

Build Alternative Option 2 (Indio Terminus)

Existing and projected population data and trends within Build Alternative Option 2 are the same as Build Alternative Option 1.

Build Alternative Option 3 (Indio Terminus with Limited Third Track)

Existing and projected population data and trends within Build Alternative Option 3 are the same as Build Alternative Option 1.

Employment

Build Alternative Option 1 (Coachella Terminus)

According to ACS 2012 to 2016, 5-year estimates of the largest employment sectors in the state of California include the education, health care, and social services sector, followed by the professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services sector and the retail trade sector. The employment characteristics of communities within the Program Corridor generally mirror those of the state.

Most of the economies outside the larger urban centers follow the regional trends. The education, health care, and social services sector is the leading employment division in almost all the counties and cities within the Program Corridor. The smallest employment sectors in the Program Corridor include agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting and mining; information; wholesale trade; and, public administration.

Relative to other communities within the Program Corridor, the Cities of Vernon, Indio, and Coachella are three exceptions from the general trends, as detailed below:

- The City of Vernon is an industrial city of 5.2 square miles located several miles southeast of downtown Los Angeles. The City of Vernon is home to more than 1,800 businesses that employ approximately 55,000 people (City of Vernon 2018). However, most employees are non-resident, as evidenced by the fact that the employed civilian labor force in Vernon was estimated at only 57 individuals in the ACS 2012-2016 5-year estimates. Approximately

47.0 percent of those individuals are employed in finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing (Appendix I of this Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR).

- The City of Indio has been one of Southern California's most important agricultural regions with a history of date cultivation and currently produces 41.4 million pounds of dates annually (City of Indio 2018). Historically, many residents were employed by the agricultural industry; however, development related to residential uses, recreation, tourism, and hospitality has begun to displace agriculture in the region today. Per the ACS 2012-2016 5-year estimates, the primary employment sector in Indio is arts, entertainment, and recreation and accommodation and food services, accounting for 19.9 percent of the civilian employment pool.
- In the City of Coachella, agriculture remains an important employment sector, with 11.3 percent of civilian employment attributed to agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining.

Major employers in Los Angeles County and Orange County include multiple healthcare systems (e.g., Kaiser Permanente and Los Angeles Health System), educational services (e.g., University of California and California State University), entertainment services (Walt Disney Company), and transportation services (e.g., Metro, SCRRA, and Orange County Transportation Authority).

Major employers in San Bernardino County and Riverside County include transportation services (e.g., SCRRA, Omnitrans Public Transit Agency, Riverside Transit Agency, Ontario International Airport, and Palm Springs International Airport), warehousing and logistics services (e.g., Amazon, Ross, ALDI, Harbor Freight, and Lowes), and entertainment services (Morongo Casino, Resort and Spa, Spotlight 29 Casino, and Fantasy Springs Resort Casino).

ACS 2012-2016 5-year estimates report an unemployment rate of 8.7 percent in California and 9.0 percent throughout the four-county area. The percent of the civilian labor force that is unemployed is higher than the four-county average of 9.0 percent in 12 of the 27 cities located within the four counties. The Cities of Coachella, San Bernardino, and Banning have the highest unemployment rates at 17.2 percent, 14.1 percent, and 14.0 percent, respectively.

Build Alternative Option 2 (Indio Terminus)

Existing and projected employment data and trends within Build Alternative Option 2 are the same as Build Alternative Option 1.

Build Alternative Option 3 (Indio Terminus with Limited Third Track)

Existing and projected employment data and trends within Build Alternative Option 3 are the same as Build Alternative Option 1.

Community Facilities

Build Alternative Option 1 (Coachella Terminus)

Community facilities occurring throughout the Program Corridor include parks, schools, libraries, places of worship, healthcare facilities, police and fire stations, and veteran services (Section 3.14, Parklands and Community Services, of this Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR).

Build Alternative Option 2 (Indio Terminus)

Existing community facility information and data within Build Alternative Option 2 are the same as Build Alternative Option 1.

Build Alternative Option 3 (Indio Terminus with Limited Third Track)

Existing community facility information and data within Build Alternative Option 3 are the same as Build Alternative Option 1.

Race and Ethnicity

The U.S. Census Bureau reports race and ethnicity as two separate categories. An individual can identify their race as White, Black or African American, Asian, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, Some Other Race, or Two or More Races. Ethnicity is defined as whether a person is of Hispanic origin or not. Ethnicity, therefore, is broken out in two categories: Hispanic or Latino and Not Hispanic or Latino. Individuals identifying as Hispanic may be of any race.

Build Alternative Option 1 (Coachella Terminus)

According to the 2012-2016 ACS 5-year estimates, California was home to approximately 38.7 million people. Of the total population, approximately 14.9 million people (or 38.6 percent) are of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity. The remaining 23.8 million are of non-Hispanic or Latino origin. Of the state's non-Hispanic or Latino population, the greatest number of people identified their race as White, followed by Asian, and Black or African American. Those identifying as American Indian and Alaska Native or Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander make up the smallest racial categories in the state, totaling less than 1.0 percent each of the entire population.

The racial composition trends in the four counties (Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties) follow those of the state. The greatest proportion of individuals identify their race as White, followed by Asian, and Black or African American. However, a greater percent of the population identifies as Hispanic or Latino in the four-county region (46.1 percent) compared with the state (38.6 percent). San Bernardino County has the largest Hispanic or Latino population, accounting for 51.7 percent of the county's total population. Orange County has the smallest Hispanic or Latino population, estimated at 34.2 percent of its population.

Several communities in the four-county area have a larger share of minority populations when compared with the region. The Cities of Commerce, Bell, and Pico Rivera are all predominantly Hispanic, with greater than 90.0 percent of their population descending from Hispanic or Latino ethnicity. The City of Banning in Riverside County has the highest proportion of American Indian and Alaska Native individuals, totaling almost 2.4 percent of its population. The Morongo Indian Reservation, consisting mainly of the Cahuilla and Serrano tribal groups, is located northeast of the City of Banning. Refer to Appendix I of this Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR for additional information on race and ethnicity in the counties and cities within the Program Corridor.

Build Alternative Option 2 (Indio Terminus)

Existing race and ethnicity information and data within Build Alternative Option 2 are the same as Build Alternative Option 1.

Build Alternative Option 3 (Indio Terminus with Limited Third Track)

Existing race and ethnicity information and data within Build Alternative Option 3 are the same as Build Alternative Option 1.

Household Income

Build Alternative Option 1 (Coachella Terminus)

ACS 2012-2016 5-year estimates report the median household income for the state of California to be \$63,783. In the four-county area, the median household income ranged from a high of \$78,145 in Orange County, to a low of \$54,469 in San Bernardino County. Several communities had higher median household incomes compared with the four counties, including Yorba Linda (\$119,697), La Mirada (\$81,956), and Placentia (\$80,668). Communities in the Program Corridor with the lowest median household income include Vernon (\$38,333), Bell (\$38,823), San Bernardino (\$38,456), and Coachella (\$36,124). Appendix I of this Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR provides a breakdown of households per income bracket and median household income for the counties and cities in the Program Corridor.

Build Alternative Option 2 (Indio Terminus)

Existing household income information and data within Build Alternative Option 2 are the same as Build Alternative Option 1.

Build Alternative Option 3 (Indio Terminus with Limited Third Track)

Existing household income information and data within Build Alternative Option 3 are the same as Build Alternative Option 1.

Poverty

Build Alternative Option 1 (Coachella Terminus)

According to the ACS 2012-2016 5-year estimates, statewide, 11.8 percent of families were estimated to have incomes below the poverty level. Within the four-county region, family poverty rates for three of the four counties were higher than the state average, including Los Angeles County (13.9 percent), Riverside County (12.8 percent), and San Bernardino County (15.4 percent). The family poverty rate in Orange County is lower than the state average at 8.7 percent.

Communities in the Program Corridor with the highest percentage of families in poverty include Vernon (46.7 percent), San Bernardino (28.1 percent), and Coachella (26.6 percent). Five of the six incorporated cities located in Riverside County in the Eastern Section of the Program Corridor have poverty rates exceeding 12.8 percent, which is the average poverty rate for Riverside County. Two of the five incorporated cities located in San Bernardino County in the Eastern Section of the Program Corridor have poverty rates that exceed 15.4 percent, which is the average poverty rate for Riverside County (California State Data Center 2016a). Refer to Appendix I of this Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR for additional information on poverty rates within the counties and cities in the Program Corridor.

Build Alternative Option 2 (Indio Terminus)

Existing poverty information and data within Build Alternative Option 2 are the same as Build Alternative Option 1.

Build Alternative Option 3 (Indio Terminus with Limited Third Track)

Existing poverty information and data within Build Alternative Option 3 are the same as Build Alternative Option 1.

Limited English Proficiency

Limited English proficiency is characterized in this section in terms of a U.S. Census respondent's ability to speak English. U.S. Census respondents who reported speaking a language other than English are then asked to indicate their English-speaking ability based on one of the following categories: "Very well," "Well," "Not well," or "Not at all." Those who answered "Well," "Not well," or "Not at all" are reported as "Speaking English 'Less than Very Well.'"

Build Alternative Option 1 (Coachella Terminus)

In the four counties, the percent of the population age 5 and over that speaks English "Less than Very Well" is highest for Los Angeles County (24.9 percent), followed by Orange County (20.2 percent), San Bernardino County (15.7 percent), and Riverside County (15.0 percent). Cities located in the Program Corridor with the highest rates of limited English proficiency include Coachella (47.1 percent), Bell (41.0 percent), Buena Park (32.7 percent), and Commerce (31.5 percent) (California State Data Center 2016b). Refer to Appendix I of this Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR for additional information on rates of limited English proficiency within the counties and cities in the Program Corridor.

Build Alternative Option 2 (Indio Terminus)

Existing limited English proficiency information and data within Build Alternative Option 2 are the same as Build Alternative Option 1.

Build Alternative Option 3 (Indio Terminus with Limited Third Track)

Existing limited English proficiency information and data within Build Alternative Option 3 are the same as Build Alternative Option 1.

3.16.5 Environmental Consequences

Overview

The service-level evaluation provides qualitative information on the potential economic effects of construction and operation of the Program, including construction employment, property tax effects, and operational benefits. The Tier 2/Project-level analysis would include a quantitative analysis that includes the number of short-term benefits associated with construction along with the potential property tax losses associated with property acquisitions.

It is anticipated that any of the Build Alternative Options would have an overall positive effect on the communities within and along the Program Corridor in terms of generating construction jobs,

increasing the potential for new employment opportunities around station areas, reducing congestion on highways, and improving regional connectivity.

The Build Alternative Options would generally be within existing transportation corridors through urban areas and would not further bisect communities but could increase the intensity of noise effects. Construction of the alternatives would potentially result in temporary construction effects including an increase in noise, dust, and traffic congestion, and effects would be greater in the urban areas especially where construction occurs close to sensitive uses such as residential development and schools.

No Build Alternative

The No Build Alternative, as described in Chapter 2, Program Alternatives, of this Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR, is used as the baseline for comparison. The No Build Alternative would not implement the Program associated with this service-level evaluation. Economic activity within the four-county Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR Study Area is dependent on adequate transportation infrastructure for localized and regional economic growth potential. Under the No Build Alternative, the economies of these communities would experience reduced transportation capacity, thereby affecting socioeconomic conditions. The No Build Alternative would also forego the short-term and long-term job creation and increases in sales tax revenue that is projected under the Build Alternative Options. However, potential community disruption and division associated with construction and operation of the enhanced passenger rail system would be avoided under the No Build Alternative.

Build Alternative Options 1, 2, and 3

Construction

Western Section. No construction activities would be required to implement any of the Build Alternative Options within the Western Section of the Program Corridor because the existing railroad ROW and stations from LAUS to Colton would be used. The Build Alternative Options would not require construction of new stations, new track or extensions to existing track, or the addition of sidings, wayside signals, drainage, or at-grade separations within the Western Section of the Program Corridor. When compared with the No Build Alternative, effects on land acquisition, displacement and relocations, job creation, property or sales and use tax losses, sales tax gains, or community cohesion would be negligible within the Western Section under Build Alternatives Options 1, 2, and 3.

Eastern Section. Socioeconomic and community effects are expected to be both positive and negative. In terms of negative socioeconomic and community effects, land acquisition for rail infrastructure improvements or station facilities within the Eastern Section under any of the Build

Alternative Options could result in property tax revenue losses for local jurisdictions if residential or business properties are removed from the property tax assessment roll. Community effects could include disruptions to local communities and may require displacements or relocations of residences and businesses.

Rail infrastructure improvements and potential new stations that would be needed in the Eastern Section of the Program Corridor could require land acquisitions. It is anticipated that rail infrastructure improvements for sidings, additional main line track, wayside signals, drainage, and grade-separation structures are anticipated primarily within the existing rail ROW or consist of sliver acquisitions adjacent to the existing track. Land acquisitions for new passenger rail stations could be more extensive, depending on final siting of station locations. If construction of new rail infrastructure or stations requires property outside of the existing railroad ROW, residences, businesses, or community facilities could be displaced. Site-specific effects related to potential land acquisition, displacements, and relocations would be identified and evaluated during the Tier 2/Project-level analysis.

The provisions of the Uniform Act would apply to all acquisitions of real property or displacements of persons resulting from a transportation project. Because the Uniform Act requires the owning agency to notify affected owners of the agency's intent to acquire an interest in their property, this process would occur prior to construction with services of a ROW specialist assigned to each property owner to assist him or her through the acquisition process. The Uniform Act also provides benefits to displaced individuals to assist them financially and with advisory services related to relocating their residence or business operation. Benefits are available to both owner occupants and tenants of either residential or business properties.

In addition, the potential for land acquisition in the Eastern Section could result in property tax revenue losses for local jurisdictions if residential or business properties are removed from the property tax assessment roll. Property tax losses are calculated based on the assessed value of properties that would be full or partial fee acquisitions. The acquisition of temporary and permanent easements would not result in property tax losses because the landowner would retain fee interest in the land and would continue to pay property tax.

Land acquisitions could also result in sales and use tax revenue losses, if sales and use tax-generating businesses are displaced and relocated outside of their current tax district. Relocation of businesses in the same tax district could result in temporary sales and use tax revenue losses during the time when affected businesses are closed for relocation. Site-specific effects related to potential property or sales and use tax losses would be identified and evaluated during the Tier 2/Project-level analysis.

Construction on the Eastern Section (sidings, additional main line track, wayside signals, drainage, grade-separation structures, and stations) may also temporarily affect communities along the Program Corridor. These effects could include temporary relocation of public roads or road closures resulting in local residents, commercial vehicles, and/or emergency service providers needing to find alternate routes through the construction area. Elevated levels of noise and air emissions from construction vehicles and equipment, traffic detours and vehicle delay, and visual disruption during construction under any of the Build Alternative Options in the Eastern Section could cause temporary disruptions to communities adjacent to the railroad ROW.

Although construction of any of the Build Alternative Options may potentially result in negative socioeconomic effects, construction activities within the Eastern Section would also result in several socioeconomic and community benefits including the creation of direct, indirect, and induced jobs and temporary increases in sales tax revenues within the counties and cities where the construction activities would take place.

Of the short-term employment opportunities that could be generated, the largest job growth is anticipated to be in the construction industry followed by the retail trade sector due in large part to spending on goods and services by the temporary construction workforce. Because infrastructure improvements are unknown as this time, quantitative effects related to potential short-term job creation would be identified and evaluated during the Tier 2/Project-level analysis.

During construction activities, a temporary increase in sales tax revenues would be anticipated within the counties and cities in the Eastern Section where construction would occur. This increase would result from spending associated with construction equipment and materials. Unless specifically exempted, all transactions for tangible assets utilized during construction activities would be subject to sales tax. Site-specific effects related to potential sales tax revenues would be considered during the Tier 2/Project-level analysis.

As discussed above, the construction of the Program would be beneficial in reducing localized effects in some cases and have adverse effects in other cases. When compared with the No Build Alternative, socioeconomic effects could be substantial within the Eastern Section of the Program Corridor under Build Alternative Option 1. When compared with Build Alternative Option 1, Build Alternative Option 2 may have slightly reduced effects due to a smaller footprint associated with a shorter route alignment and reduced station options; however, the magnitude of effect would be similar and be considered substantial when compared with the No Build Alternative. When compared with Build Alternative Option 1 or 2, Build Alternative Option 3 may have slightly reduced effects due to a smaller footprint associated with a shorter route alignment, reduced station options, and reduced third track rail infrastructure. However, the magnitude of effects would be similar for Build Alternative Option 3 and considered substantial when compared with the No Build Alternative.

However, while construction of the Program within the Eastern Section could have socioeconomic effects on communities, construction activities are also anticipated to generate socioeconomic benefits in the form of new employment opportunities and increases in temporary sales tax revenue.

Operation

Western Section. During operation, passenger train frequencies proposed as part of the Program would consist of the addition of two daily, round-trip intercity diesel-powered passenger trains operating between Los Angeles and Coachella.

Operation of the Build Alternative Options in the Western Section of the Program Corridor are not anticipated to cause long-term disruptions to residences and businesses located near the existing railroad ROW. In addition, operation of the Program in the Western Section of the Program Corridor would not require land acquisitions or result in displacements or relocations, as the existing railroad infrastructure and stations would be utilized. Therefore, substantial residential or business migration out of the community or substantial reductions in revenue sources for local governments because of property tax or sales and use tax losses is not anticipated under any of the Build Alternative Options.

The long-term operation of the enhanced passenger rail system proposed as part of the Program would result in the creation of direct jobs, as well as additional indirect and induced jobs. The majority of permanent jobs resulting from long-term operation and maintenance activities of the Program would be in the economic sector of transit and ground passenger transportation, which includes jobs related to train operations, dispatching, maintenance of equipment, and maintenance of infrastructure. In the long term, the Program is also anticipated to result in job creation due to improvements to regional accessibility. For example, improvements in accessibility can result in long-term dynamic economic effects, such as enhanced labor market accessibility, increased business travel and transactions, direct transport cost savings, improved business and worker productivity, and support of tourism and other important service sectors requiring patron accessibility.

Long-term socioeconomic benefits associated with the Program would be realized within the counties and cities that the Program Corridor crosses. Enhanced passenger rail service within the Program Corridor would provide additional connections to major economic generators within the Program Corridor, including the Cities of Los Angeles, Fullerton, Riverside, and Palm Springs. The improved access would likely result in increased economic activity within cities directly served by the passenger rail, particularly near stations.

Improved access within the region and affected cities is anticipated to have social benefits including better access to jobs, community amenities, and facilities. Improving regional mobility and connections between economic and employment centers, education centers, other cultural and

recreational activity centers, and to shops and services adjacent to station areas would enhance socioeconomic conditions throughout the region.

Connecting urban areas and communities by improving access and mobility could expand employment opportunities over the larger geographic area, benefitting both employers (by expanding the labor pool) and employees (by offering more choices regarding where to live and work). Passenger rail service could also offer travel time reductions for transit patrons and regional commuters by reducing congestion by shifting trips from the roadway system to the passenger rail system.

Therefore, the improvements in regional mobility and connectivity within the Western Section of the Program Corridor associated with an enhanced passenger rail system are anticipated to result in a permanent increase in sales tax revenues within the counties and cities where the Build Alternative Options would operate. Site-specific effects related to potential sales tax revenues would be considered during the Tier 2/Project-level analysis.

When compared with the No Build Alternative, socioeconomic effects on communities within the Program Corridor would be negligible under Build Alternative Option 1. When compared with Build Alternative Option 1, Build Alternative Options 2 and 3 would have the same magnitude of effect and be considered negligible when compared with the No Build Alternative. The communities within the Program Corridor for all Build Alternative Options would also experience socioeconomic benefits from improved mobility and connectivity and the generation of new tax revenue and employment opportunities.

Eastern Section. During operation, passenger train frequencies proposed as part of the Program would consist of the addition of two daily, round-trip intercity diesel-powered passenger trains operating between Los Angeles and Coachella. Socioeconomic and community effects are expected to be both positive and negative within the Eastern Section of the Program Corridor. In terms of negative socioeconomic and community effects, land acquisition for the Build Alternative Options could result in property tax revenue losses for local jurisdictions if residential or business properties are removed from the property tax assessment roll. Community effects could include disruptions to local communities and may require displacements or relocations of residences and businesses. Site-specific effects related to potential land acquisitions, displacements, or relocations and property or sales and use tax losses would be identified and evaluated during the Tier 2/Project-level analysis.

The additional passenger rail services that would occur under any of the Build Alternative Options within the Eastern Section of the Program Corridor would result in several socioeconomic and community benefits: the creation of direct, indirect, and induced jobs; permanent increases in sales

tax revenues within the counties and cities where the Build Alternative Options would operate; and improved regional mobility and connectivity.

Within the Eastern Section of the Program Corridor, new station facilities could encourage redevelopment in the surrounding area and the potential for transit-oriented development. These additional developments could provide additional employment opportunities and new housing opportunities to address the projected employment and population growth within the Eastern Section of the Program Corridor. The potential for development around each station facility would depend on the type of station planned, which would be determined during the Tier 2/Project-level analysis. Any new development in the station areas would also result in the potential for additional property tax and sales tax revenues, which would benefit the counties and cities where the station facilities would be located.

As discussed above, the operation of the Program would be beneficial in reducing localized effects in some cases and have adverse effects in other cases. When compared with the No Build Alternative, socioeconomic effects could be substantial within the Eastern Section of the Program Corridor under Build Alternative Option 1. When compared with Build Alternative Option 1, Build Alternative Option 2 may have slightly reduced effects due to a smaller footprint associated with a shorter route alignment and reduced station options; however, the magnitude of effect would be similar and considered substantial when compared with the No Build Alternative. When compared with Build Alternative Option 1 or 2, Build Alternative Option 3 may have slightly reduced effects due to a smaller footprint associated with a shorter route alignment, reduced station options, and reduced third track rail infrastructure. However, the magnitude of effects would be similar for Build Alternative Option 3 and considered substantial when compared with the No Build Alternative.

While operation of the Program within the Eastern Section could have socioeconomic effects on communities, operational activities are also anticipated to generate socioeconomic benefits in the form of new employment opportunities and permanent sales tax revenue.

3.16.6 NEPA Summary of Potential Effects

Table 3.16-2 summarize the qualitative assessment of potential effects (negligible, moderate, or substantial) under NEPA for each of the Build Alternative Options. This service-level evaluation uses the Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR Study Area to determine the potential socioeconomic and community effects and, more importantly, the relative magnitude of the effect. Specific mitigation measures to reduce effects would be identified during the Tier 2/Project-level environmental process.

Table 3.16-2. NEPA Summary of Socioeconomic Effects

| Alternative Options | Potential Intensity of Effect: Western Section | Potential Intensity of Effect: Eastern Section |
|---|---|---|
| No Build Alternative ^a | Construction: None Operation: None | Construction: None Operation: None |
| Build Alternative Option 1 (Coachella Terminus) | Construction: Negligible Operation: Negligible | Construction: Substantial Operation: Substantial |
| Build Alternative Option 2 (Indio Terminus) | Construction: Negligible Operation: Negligible | Construction: Substantial Operation: Substantial |
| Build Alternative Option 3 (Indio Terminus with Limited Third Track) | Construction: Negligible Operation: Negligible | Construction: Substantial Operation: Substantial |

Notes:

^a The No Build Alternative includes existing and potential expansion of roadway, passenger rail, and air travel facilities within the Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR Study Area; however, for the service-level evaluation, identifying levels of effect from potential expansion of those facilities is speculative and would be dependent on Tier 2/Project-level specific analysis.

EIR=environmental impact report; EIS=environmental impact statement

3.16.7 CEQA Summary of Potential Impacts

Based on the information provided in Section 3.16.4 and 3.16.5, and considering the CEQA Guidelines Appendix G Checklist questions for population and housing, the Build Alternative Options are considered to have the potential to result in significant population and housing impacts when reviewed on a Program-wide basis. Placing the infrastructure improvements and new stations largely within or along the existing ROW reduces the potential for significant impacts; however, because the proposed stations have not been selected, existing housing and communities may be significantly impacted. At the programmatic analysis level, it is not possible to know the location, extent, and characteristics of impacts on population and housing.

Proposed programmatic mitigation strategies discussed in Section 3.16.8 would be applied to reduce potential impacts. Table 3.16-3 describes the CEQA significance conclusions for the Build Alternative Options; the proposed programmatic mitigation strategies that would be applied to minimize, reduce, or avoid the potential impacts; and the significance determination after mitigation strategies are applied. The identification and implementation of additional site-specific mitigation measures necessary for Project implementation would occur as part of the Tier 2/Project-level analysis.

Table 3.16-3. CEQA Summary of Impacts for Population and Housing

| Impact Summary | Mitigation Strategy | Significance with Mitigation Strategy |
|---|---------------------|---|
| <i>Would the Program induce substantial unplanned 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)?</i> | | |
| <i>Construction</i> | | |
| Western Section – No Impact. No construction impacts are anticipated at the Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR evaluation level because no physical improvements are proposed or required in the Western Section under Build Alternative Options 1,2, and 3. | Not applicable | Not applicable |
| Eastern Section – Less than Significant. Construction activities that would occur within the Program Corridor are not anticipated to induce substantial unplanned population growth, as activities are temporary and would be filled by those who reside within the region. Impacts are anticipated to be less than significant at the Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR evaluation level under Build Alternative Options 1, 2, and 3. | Not applicable | Not applicable |
| <i>Operation</i> | | |
| Western Section – No Impact. The increase in train service (two additional round-trip daily trains within the Program Corridor) would not change existing land use that would cause or contribute to physical division of communities. Therefore, no impacts are anticipated under Build Alternative Option 1, 2, or 3. | Not applicable | Not applicable |
| Eastern Section – Potentially Significant. Potentially significant impacts may result with implementation of Build Alternative Option 1, 2, or 3. Potential impacts due to population growth are dependent on the location of new infrastructure improvements. Build Alternative Options 1, 2, and 3 may result in new infrastructure that may result in additional growth within the Eastern Section of the Program Corridor. Site-specific impacts would be identified and evaluated during the Tier 2/Project-level analysis. | PH-1 LU-3 | Less than Significant. PH-1 and LU-3 would minimize, reduce, or avoid potential impacts through design and further analysis. |

| Impact Summary | Mitigation Strategy | Significance with Mitigation Strategy |
|--|---------------------|---|
| <i>Would the Program displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?</i> | | |
| <i>Construction</i> | | |
| Western Section – No Impact. No construction impacts are anticipated at the Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR evaluation level because no physical improvements are proposed or required in the Western Section under Build Alternative Options 1, 2, and 3. | Not applicable | Not applicable |
| Eastern Section – Potentially Significant. Potentially significant impacts may result with implementation of Build Alternative Option 1, 2, or 3. Potential impacts due to displacing substantial numbers of existing people or housing are dependent on the location of infrastructure improvements, which are currently unknown. The Program may require the acquisition of land neighboring the ROW. Site-specific impacts would be identified and evaluated during the Tier 2/Project-level analysis. | PH-1 | Less than Significant. PH-1 would minimize, reduce, or avoid potential impacts from displacing substantial numbers of existing people or housing through the implementation of a relocation mitigation plan. |
| <i>Operation</i> | | |
| Western Section – No Impact. Operational activities in the Western Section include the maintenance of existing rail infrastructure and station facilities. These maintenance activities are not anticipated to require activities that could result in the impacts associated with displacement of people that would require replacement housing. Therefore, no operational impacts are anticipated at the Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR evaluation level under Build Alternative Option 1, 2, or 3. | Not applicable | Not applicable |

| Impact Summary | Mitigation Strategy | Significance with Mitigation Strategy |
|---|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <p>Eastern Section – No Impact. Operational activities in the Eastern Section include the maintenance of existing rail infrastructure and station facilities. These maintenance activities are not anticipated to require activities that could result in the impacts associated with displacement of people that would require replacement housing. Therefore, no operational impacts are anticipated at the Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR evaluation level under Build Alternative Option 1, 2, or 3.</p> | <p>Not applicable</p> | <p>Not applicable</p> |

Notes:

EIR=environmental impact report; EIS=environmental impact statement; ROW=right-of-way

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3.16.8 Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Strategies

Identified below are proposed programmatic mitigation strategies for further consideration in the Tier 2/Project-level analysis. Specific mitigation measures, to the extent required, would be identified and discussed during Tier 2/Project-level analysis after design details are known and specific impacts are identified. Proposed programmatic mitigation strategies, consistent with state and federal regulations, could include, but are not limited to, the following:

Mitigation Strategy PH-1: During Tier 2/Project-level analysis, any required acquisitions related to the construction of infrastructure improvements (such as sidings, additional main line track, wayside signals, drainage, grade-separation structures, and stations) shall be identified. If the proposed Project would have the potential to result in property acquisitions that would require residential or commercial displacement, a relocation mitigation plan shall be prepared, in consultation with affected property owners. The relocation mitigation plan shall be designed to meet the following objectives:

- Provide affected property and business owners and tenants a high level of individualized assistance in situations when acquisition is necessary, and the property owner desires to relocate the existing use
- Coordinate relocation activities that would result in displacements to ensure all displaced persons and businesses receive fair and consistent relocation benefits
- Minimize the permanent closure of businesses and non-profit agencies as a result of property acquisition
- Within the limits established by law and regulation, minimize the economic disruption caused to property owners by relocation
- Provide regulatory compliance assistance to those business owners who require complex permitting

The relocation mitigation plan shall include, but not be limited to, the following components:

- A description of the appraisal, acquisition, and relocation process, as well as a description of the activities of the appraisal and relocation specialists
- A means of assigning appraisal and relocation staff to affected property owners, tenants, or other residents on an individual basis
- Individualized assistance to affected property owners, tenants, or other residents in applying for funding and researching areas for relocation

- Identification of a single point of contact for property owners, residents, and tenants with questions about the relocation process. This point of contact shall also act to address concerns about the relocation process; it applies to the individual situations of property owners, tenants, and other residents

Mitigation Strategy LU-2: Based on the results of Tier 2/Project-level analysis and recommendations, a construction management plan shall be developed by the contractor prior to construction and implemented during construction activities. The construction management plan shall include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Measures that minimize effects on populations and communities within the Tier 2/Project Study Area
- Measures pertaining to visual protection, air quality, safety controls, noise controls, and traffic controls to minimize effects on populations and communities within the Tier 2/Project Study Area
- Measures to ensure property access is maintained for local businesses, residences, and community and emergency services
- Measures to consult with local transit providers to minimize effects on local and regional bus routes in affected communities
- Measures to consult with local jurisdictions and utility providers to minimize effects on utilities in affected communities

Mitigation Strategy LU-3: During Tier 2/Project-level analysis, a land use consistency analysis shall be conducted to determine consistency with the applicable local jurisdictional general plans or programs. Recommendations shall be identified to avoid or minimize conflicts with sensitive land uses or environmental resources.