3 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Introduction

This section provides an overview of the organization and content of the environmental analysis for the Sepulveda Transit Corridor Project (Project).

Chapters 3.1 through 3.20 discuss the environmental impacts as defined under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) that may result from implementation of the project alternatives, as well as proposed mitigation measures that would reduce significant impacts to less than significant levels to the extent feasible. Significant impacts that cannot be reduced to less than significant with mitigation are identified as significant and unavoidable impacts.

Chapter 3 includes evaluation of the following environmental resources:

- 3.1, Aesthetics
- 3.2, Air Quality
- 3.3, Biological Resources
- 3.4, Cultural Resources
- 3.5, Energy
- 3.6, Geology, Soils, Seismicity, and Paleontological Resources
- 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, Housing, and Growth
- 3.13, Public Services
- 3.14, Recreation
- 3.15, Transportation
- 3.16, Tribal Cultural Resources
- 3.17, Utilities and Service Systems
- 3.18, Wildfire
- 3.19, Cumulative
- 3.20, Other CEQA Considerations

For the environmental resources where it was determined that no impact would occur (i.e., Agriculture and Forestry Resources, and Mineral Resources), a brief evaluation of the impact determination is provided in 3.20, Other CEQA Considerations. For each resource evaluated in detail in Chapter 3, the format and content are as follows:

- **Regulatory and Policy Framework**: This section summarizes applicable programs, plans, and regulations at the federal, state, regional, and local levels related to the environmental topic. The regulatory setting is generally applicable for each project alternative. Regulations/policies that are alternative specific are noted.
- **Methodology**: This section describes the methods and tools that were used to assess existing conditions and identify how potential impacts for each resource were determined. This section also lists the applicable CEQA thresholds used to determine the significance of each project impact.
- **Project Measures**: This section lists the project measures relevant to the resource that would be implemented as part of the project alternatives, where applicable. Project measures are design features, best management practices, or other commitments that the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) would typically implement as part of project construction and operation.

- **Existing Conditions**: This section describes the existing conditions for each environmental resource. According to Section 15125(a) of the CEQA Guidelines, the environmental setting is used to establish the baseline physical conditions by which the impacts associated with the Project are evaluated. The environmental setting is generally based on the environmental conditions that existed when the *Notice of Preparation* for the Project was published on November 30, 2021 (Metro, 2021), with exceptions as noted in the individual environmental resource analyses.
- **Environmental Impacts**: This section provides an evaluation of impacts associated with the project alternatives and identifies whether the impacts would exceed relevant thresholds of significance. Impact significance is determined without consideration of mitigation measures, and if mitigation measures are identified—as required for "significant impacts"—impact significance conclusions are also provided following the application of mitigation measures.
- **Mitigation Measures**: This section lists the mitigation measures required to address potentially significant impacts during operation and construction for each project alternative, as applicable.

Significance Criteria

The significance criteria used in this Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) to define the level at which an impact would be considered significant in accordance with CEQA are presented under the "CEQA Threshold of Significance" subheading in each environmental resource topic. In accordance with Section 15022(a) of the CEQA Guidelines, Metro uses significance criteria based on CEQA Guidelines Appendix G; factual or scientific information and data; and regulatory standards of federal, state, regional, and local jurisdictions in which project facilities are proposed.

Impact Identification and Levels of Significance

Each environmental resource topic identifies and lists impacts sequentially. For example, "Impact BIO-1" denotes the presentation of the first impact in 3.3, Biological Resources. An impact statement precedes the discussion of each impact and provides a summary of the impact topic. In addition, the potential impacts related to operation of the Project are generally discussed before the potential impacts related to construction of the Project.

The level of significance associated with an impact is determined by comparing the environmental effects of constructing, operating, and maintaining the Project with the existing environmental conditions, and applying the identified significance threshold. This DEIR 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 Project would not cause any adverse change in the environment.
- **Less than Significant Impact**: The Project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the environment because the specified standard of significance would not be exceeded; thus, no mitigation measures are required. An impact is considered beneficial if it would result in the improvement of an existing physical condition of the environment. Beneficial impacts are identified within this less than significant impact significance category.
- **Significant Impact**: The Project would cause a substantial adverse change in the physical conditions of the environment in excess of the specified standard. Typically, the level of significance of an impact is prior to the application of feasible mitigation measures.

- **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation**: The Project 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 Project 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 Project would cause a significant adverse effect on the environment in excess of the specified standard of significance.

Mitigation Measures

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.4(a)(1) states that an Environmental Impact Report "shall describe feasible measures which could minimize significant adverse impacts." Mitigation measures identified in this DEIR were developed during the analysis and are designed to reduce, minimize, or avoid potential environmental impacts associated with the Project.