

## Appendix G

# Analysis of Project Impacts Compared to Existing Conditions

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# Analysis of Project Impacts Compared to Existing Conditions

## Introduction

The analysis scenarios used in the Draft EIR are described in the Introduction to Chapter 4. As described therein, the Draft EIR analyzes future conditions, including background growth, with project implementation (referred to as “Future with Project” conditions), and compares these conditions to existing conditions in 2014. The future year used for this analysis for these topics is 2035, the horizon year of SCAG’s 2012-2035 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCAG, 2012), which provides the forecasts used to represent regional background growth in this EIR. For reasons described in the Introduction to Chapter 4, use of a Future with Project scenario is a more realistic comparison scenario for a long-range transportation planning project where improvements will be implemented gradually over time. However, for informational purposes, this appendix narratively evaluates the impacts of the Proposed Project compared to existing conditions without including future background growth.

The impact analysis contained in the Draft EIR reflects an increase in activity levels resulting from anticipated growth. On a regional level, traffic in the study area is anticipated to increase in conjunction with regional population, housing, and employment growth projected to occur in the future by SCAG. This growth will occur with or without implementation of the Proposed Project. The background growth influences the transportation analysis, and the related analyses of air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, and noise, by accounting for the increased activity levels under Future with Project conditions, although those increases would occur with or without the Proposed Project.

Potential impacts under Existing plus Project conditions are qualitatively evaluated herein. For the Existing plus Project evaluation, the following was assumed to occur:

- The projects contained in the proposed updated Project Lists would be constructed on the existing (Year 2014) transportation network
- Existing travel demand would remain as is (i.e., no changes in activity levels in Year 2014 would occur)
- Other planned transportation projects, including those under construction in Year 2014, would not be in operation (e.g., Expo Phase II, the Metro Purple Line extension to Westwood, etc.)
- The proposed TIAs fees would be implemented, including revisions to the fees, trip generation rates, exemptions, in-lieu credits, affordable housing credits, and a new transit-oriented development (TOD) credit

The impacts associated with the Existing plus Project scenario are evaluated below. Because the differences in impacts between the Existing plus Project scenario and the Future with Project scenario are associated with operational conditions, the analysis below focuses on operational impacts. Construction impacts would be the same as those documented in the Draft EIR. Similarly, impacts to Land Use and Biological Resources are not affected by background growth; therefore, these impacts are the same as those documented in the Draft EIR and these issues are not addressed herein.

## Transportation

If the proposed transportation projects included in the proposed project lists were to be implemented under Existing Conditions, the types of impacts would be similar to those described in Section 4.6, Transportation. Specifically, the following transportation impacts would be expected under Existing plus Project conditions:

- **Impacts to the Vehicle Circulation System:** The “volume-weighted” average of the volume-to-capacity (V/C) ratio under Future with Project conditions for all of the analyzed roadway segments was found to exceed that of Existing conditions (0.80 to 0.85 during the AM peak hour and 0.86 to 0.93 during the PM peak hour) and Future without Project conditions (0.83 to 0.85 during the AM peak hour and 0.90 to 0.93 during the PM peak hour). The number of roadway links projected to operate at unsatisfactory levels of service (LOS E or F) under Future with Project conditions was found to exceed the number for Existing conditions (21 percent to 29 percent during the AM peak hour and 29 percent to 40 percent in the PM peak hour) and Future without Project conditions (24 percent to 29 percent during the AM peak hour and 34 percent to 40 percent in the PM peak hour). Under Existing plus Project conditions, the reduction in vehicular capacity associated with the Proposed Project would result in a similar impact to the circulation system. However, since the increase in overall travel demand associated with background growth would not occur under Existing plus Project conditions, the change in LOS would be expected to be less than reported under Future with Project conditions compared to Existing conditions. Although the impact would be less than with Future with Project conditions, under Existing plus Project conditions, this impact would be **significant and unavoidable**.
- **Neighborhood Traffic Intrusion:** Along roadways where the Proposed Project may cause significant traffic congestion, diversion of trips could occur onto adjacent parallel routes. It is anticipated that diversion would not occur on streets that operate at LOS D or better during peak periods because the average delay is not substantial. However, for the street segments where the LOS would degrade from D to E or F, some trips could divert to adjacent streets to avoid longer travel times through congested locations. Without the increased activity levels accounted for in the Future with Project analysis, residential streets would experience less traffic intrusion. The proposed WLA TIMP and CTCSP amendments require future developments to complete the required Traffic Study and Traffic Impact procedures as described in the LADOT Traffic Study Policies and Procedures guidelines. Per the guidelines, a plan to reduce project traffic from traveling through nearby residential areas, referred to as the Residential Neighborhood Traffic Management (NTM) Program, may be required as part of the mitigation program for the project. If NTM measures are required to off-set potential residential street impacts, then, prior to project occupancy, project applicants would be required to conduct public outreach and develop a NTM plan in consultation with LADOT, the affected Council District office and the affected neighborhood. The NTM plan would be required to be prepared in conformance with the guidelines established by LADOT. While the NTM plans required by LADOT would alleviate neighborhood traffic intrusion from individual developments within the Specific Plan areas, some diversion may still occur as vehicles chose alternative travel routes under Existing plus Project conditions. However, since the increase in overall travel demand would not occur under Existing plus Project conditions, increases in neighborhood traffic intrusion would be expected to be less than under Future with Project conditions compared to Existing Conditions. Although the impact would be less than with

Future with Project conditions, under Existing plus Project conditions, this impact would be **significant and unavoidable**.

- **CMP and State Freeway Facilities:** As defined by the CMP, a significant impact occurs when a project increases traffic demand on a CMP facility by 2 percent of capacity ( $V/C \geq 0.02$ ), causing LOS F ( $V/C > 1.00$ ); if the facility is already at LOS F, a significant impact occurs when a project increases traffic demand on a CMP facility by 2 percent of capacity ( $V/C \geq 0.02$ ). Under Existing plus Project conditions, some vehicles may elect to travel on the freeway facilities in the study area rather than on local streets as the quickest travel path to reach their destination. However, since the increase in overall travel demand would not occur under Existing plus Project conditions, increases in the V/C for CMP freeway facilities would be expected to be less than under Future with Project conditions compared to Existing Conditions. Minor changes in V/C (less than 0.015) were found to occur between Future with Project and Future without Project conditions for the CMP freeway facilities. Similarly, minor changes in V/C would be expected to occur under Existing plus Project conditions as compared to Existing Conditions. However, because the overall amount of traffic would not increase under Existing plus Project conditions, and in fact total VMT is expected to slightly decrease, it is not expected that traffic demand increases would exceed the CMP thresholds. Therefore, under Existing plus Project conditions, this impact would be **less than significant**.
- **Fire Protection Services/Emergency Access:** A project would normally have a significant impact on fire protection if it requires the addition of a new fire station or the expansion, consolidation or relocation of an existing facility to maintain service. Based on the City's adopted threshold of significance, the Proposed Project would not require the addition of a new fire station or the expansion, consolidation or relocation of an existing facility to maintain service. LAFD has a mandate to protect public safety and must respond to changing circumstances and therefore would act to maintain response times. Based on information provided in LAFD's Strategic Plan 2015-2017 and from meetings with LAFD staff, the ability to provide adequate fire protection services is dependent on numerous factors including staffing levels, mutual aid agreements, deployment strategies, and technological advances in equipment. Moreover, LAFD's primary determinant for assessing future service needs is based on their cumulative review and analysis of past incidents. Options available to LAFD include expanding the Fire Preemption System, increasing staffing levels and adding new fire stations(s) to underserved areas. The potential for new fire station construction is speculative at the present time and is therefore not analyzed in this document. Depending on the location of new fire protection facilities, operational impacts (primarily noise) could occur; however, such impacts are unforeseeable at this time. Therefore, under Existing plus Project Condition, the impact of the Proposed Project on fire protection and emergency access would be **less than significant**.

In addition to the potential impacts discussed above, the Proposed Project may not provide the same level of benefits under Existing plus Project conditions when compared to the Future with Project conditions analysis. Under Future with Project conditions, the transportation improvements contained on the updated project lists were found to reduce VMT per capita, reduce vehicle trips per capita, and improve travel mode shares for transit, biking and walking. Many of the improvements contained in the updated project lists are intended to complement other planned improvements in the study area. For example, the Lincoln Boulevard and Sepulveda Boulevard BRT projects would provide

enhanced north-south connections between the 96<sup>th</sup> Street transit station and Expo Phase II, which is currently under construction. The regional connectivity resulting from these types of transportation improvements would provide a greater benefit in the future as compared to the relationship of the Proposed Project's transportation improvements on the existing transportation network. However, a reduction in VMT per capita, a reduction in vehicle trips per capita, and improved travel mode shares for transit, biking and walking would still be expected to occur under Existing plus Project conditions.

## Air Quality

The following air quality impacts would be expected under Existing plus Project conditions:

- **Violate Air Quality Standards:** With implementation of the Proposed Project, VMT in the Specific Plan areas would be expected to decrease under Existing plus Project conditions due to the availability of alternative mobility options. However, as noted above, under Existing plus Project conditions, VMT per capita would not be reduced to the same level as it would under Future with Project conditions, in part because other regional transportation improvements that are currently under construction are not available transportation options at this time. Without future background growth, VMT increases associated with Future with Project conditions would not occur. However, future improvements in vehicle emissions associated with technological advances, turnover in the vehicle fleet, and more stringent emissions standards, would not occur under Existing plus Project conditions. These emissions reductions are responsible for the decrease in operational emissions associated with the Future with Project conditions as compared to Existing Conditions. Under the Proposed Project, vehicle capacity in the project area would decrease, which would alter vehicle speeds and could increase air quality emissions. However, these increases are not expected to be greater than the decreases in air quality emissions associated with reduced VMT resulting from the increase in mobility options. Taking into account all of these considerations, regional operational emissions under Existing plus Project conditions would not be reduced to the level associated with Future with Project conditions. However, because VMT would be slightly lower than Existing Conditions, operational vehicle emissions in the study area would be lower than Existing Conditions and this impact would be *less than significant*.
- **Expose Sensitive Receptors to Substantial Pollutant Concentrations:** Emissions of criteria pollutants and toxic air contaminants from mobile sources (i.e., mobile source air toxics or MSAT) are directly associated with VMT. Because VMT would be slightly lower than Existing Conditions, operations associated with the Proposed Project would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations and impacts would be *less than significant*.

## Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The following impacts related to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions would be expected under Existing plus Project conditions:

- **Generation of GHG Emissions:** The reduction in VMT associated with the Proposed Project under Existing plus Project conditions would result in a decrease in GHG emissions, although, as noted in the discussion of air quality, VMT per capita would not be reduced to the same level as it would under Future with Project conditions. Without future background growth, VMT increases associated with Future with Project conditions would not occur. However, future improvements in vehicle emissions associated with technological advances, turnover in the vehicle fleet, and more stringent emissions standards, would not occur under Existing plus

Project conditions. Taking into account all of these considerations, regional operational GHG emissions under Existing plus Project conditions would not be reduced to the level associated with Future with Project conditions. However, because VMT would be slightly lower than Existing Conditions, operational GHG emissions in the study area would be lower than Existing Conditions. Existing plus Project conditions would include construction-related emissions of GHG, which would not be associated with Existing Conditions. However, the GHG emissions would be amortized over 30 years, per SCAQMD; therefore, these emissions would not result in a substantial change in the combined construction and operational GHG emissions. This impact would be *less than significant*.

- **Impede Attainment of SCAG's Per Capita GHG Emission Reduction Targets.** SCAG has identified a range of implementation strategies to meet the CARB-mandated GHG per capita emission reduction targets for the region, including strategies pertaining to transportation. With implementation of the strategies in the 2012-2035 RTP/SCS, the region will exceed the 2020 and 2035 targets established by CARB. The Proposed Project would enable the implementation of these strategies throughout the Westside and would result in the intended outcome of encouraging the use of alternative modes of transportation, thereby minimizing the increase in vehicle travel in the region and reducing per capita GHG emissions. With implementation of the Proposed Project, VMT in the Specific Plan areas would be expected to decrease under Existing plus Project conditions due to the availability of alternative mobility options. The reduction in VMT under Existing plus Project conditions would result in a decrease in GHG emissions, although, as noted above, VMT per capita would not be reduced to the same level as it would under Future with Project conditions. The proposed transportation improvements would increase mobility options, increase access to alternative modes of transportation, and reduce future transportation emissions; therefore, these improvements would advance the goals of the 2012-2035 RTP/SCS. Because the Proposed Project would not impede attainment of SCAG's per capita GHG emission reduction targets as established in the 2012-2035 RTP/SCS, the impact would be *less than significant*.

## Noise and Vibration

The following noise impacts would be expected under Existing plus Project conditions:

- **Generate Excessive Noise Levels above Standards or Generate a Substantial Permanent Increase in Ambient Noise Levels:** Changes in vehicle operations in the project area under Existing plus Project conditions could alter vehicle speeds and traffic-related noise. As with Future with Project conditions, implementation of bus-only lanes would result in increased average bus speeds. In addition, intersection and ITS improvements would increase vehicle speeds on some roadways during some time periods. Conversely, other improvements may involve reducing the number of travel lanes on a roadway to provide bus rapid transit lanes and bicycle lanes. This may shift vehicles onto the remaining travel lane(s) and may result in lower traveling speeds during certain time periods. While decreased vehicle speeds could result in lower vehicle noise levels compared to Existing Conditions, increases in bus and private vehicle speeds could result in higher vehicle noise levels compared to Existing Conditions. Despite these changes, the overall study area speed is not anticipated to change substantially and impacts related to ambient noise levels from private vehicles would be *less than significant*.

Under Existing plus Project conditions, the Proposed Project would result in the same improvements to bus operations as would occur under Future with Project conditions. As with Future with Project conditions, curb-running BRT could increase noise levels at some sensitive land uses by more than 3 dBA. Therefore, noise levels from improvements to bus service, particularly curb-running BRT, could increase noise levels at some sensitive land uses by more than 3 dBA. This would be a potentially ***significant and unavoidable impact***.

- **Generate Excessive Groundborne Vibration:** Operation of the Proposed Project would not involve any stationary sources of vibration. Vehicular traffic could generate vibration during operation. Typical vibration from road traffic is near the threshold of perception for humans. Therefore, as with Future with Project conditions, under Existing plus Project conditions, vibration impacts associated with project operation would be ***less than significant***.