

# Chapter 5. Other Impact Considerations

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## 5.1 Cumulative Impacts

Construction and operation of the Project, including the Project Refinements, would involve direct and indirect impacts as well as cumulative impacts from the proposed Project combined with other related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions.

For purposes of analyzing the potential cumulative impacts of the Project Refinements, the definition of “cumulative impact” under CEQA has been applied. The CEQA Guidelines (14 California Code of Regulations Section 15355) define cumulative impacts as:

*“ . . . two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts. (a) The individual effects may be changes resulting from a single project or a number of separate projects. (b) The cumulative impact from several projects is the change in the environment which results from the incremental impact of the project when added to other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time.”*

Based on this definition, the following principles can be applied to the assessment of cumulative impacts of the Project.

- The aggregate impacts of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions typically cause cumulative impacts. These are the impacts (past, present, and future) of the proposed action on a given resource and the impacts (past, present, and future), if any, caused by all other related actions that affect the same resource.
- When other related actions are likely to affect a resource that is also affected by the proposed action, it does not matter who (public or private entity) has taken the related action(s).
- The scope of cumulative impact analyses can usually be limited to reasonable geographic boundaries and time periods. These boundaries should extend only as far as the point at which a resource is no longer substantially affected or where the impacts are so speculative as to no longer be truly meaningful.
- Cumulative impacts can include the impacts (past, present, and future) on a given resource caused by similar types of actions (e.g., air emissions from several individual highway projects) and/or the impacts (past, present, and future) on a given resource caused by different types of actions (e.g., air emissions from a highway project, a solid waste incinerator, and a mining facility).

An adequate discussion of cumulative impacts requires analyzing either A) “a list of past, present, and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts, including, if necessary, those projects outside the control of the agency,” or analyzing B) “a summary of projections contained in an adopted general plan or related planning document, or in a prior environmental document which

has been adopted or certified, which described or evaluated regional or area wide conditions contributing the cumulative impact” [CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(b)(1)].

As with the *Gold Line Phase II Pasadena to Montclair-Foothill Extension Final Environmental Impact Report* (the “2007 Final EIR”) and the *Gold Line Phase II Pasadena to Montclair-Foothill Extension Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Report* (the “2011 Supplemental EIR No. 1”), this cumulative impact analysis relies on method “B” described above. The analysis is based on a summary of projections contained in the adopted Southern California Association of Governments’ (SCAG) 2008 Regional Transportation Plan (2008 RTP).<sup>1</sup> SCAG encourages lead agencies to use the region-wide analysis contained in their RTP Final Program EIR as the basis for cumulative impact analyses. The 2008 RTP Final Program EIR (2008 RTP Final EIR) (SCH # 2007061126) is therefore incorporated by reference into this Supplemental EIR per Section 15150 of the CEQA Guidelines and is used as the basis for cumulative analyses. The 2008 RTP Final Program EIR may be viewed on SCAG’s website (<http://www.scag.ca.gov/RTPpeir2008/final/addendum.htm>), or by contacting the agency directly.

The 2008 RTP is a regional planning document that establishes goals, objectives, policies, and implementation priorities for the region’s transportation infrastructure through the year 2035. The 2008 RTP may be thought of as a blueprint for comprehensive transportation planning that focuses on linkages between employment and housing centers, and it favors land use patterns that emphasize density and reuse of land. One specific component of the 2008 RTP is the “Public Transportation System” element, which seeks to “ensure mobility for people without access to automobiles and to provide attractive alternatives for drive-alone motorists or discretionary riders.” In order to achieve this goal, the 2008 RTP calls for an expanded system of integrated bus service and rail transit, where existing and proposed rail stations serve as hubs for bus travel to surrounding areas.

The 2008 RTP Final EIR analyzes potential environmental impacts from implementation of transportation projects, through the year 2035, throughout a six-county region encompassing approximately 38,000 square miles. Because the Project is considered within the 2008 RTP Final EIR analysis and because both the 2008 RTP Final EIR and this Supplemental EIR to the 2007 Final EIR share a common horizon date of analysis, the 2008 RTP Final EIR and its adopted findings are the most appropriate source for identifying cumulative impacts related to the Project Refinements.

The impact discussions below consider the cumulative impacts of the Project Refinements within the framework of the cumulative regional transportation analysis contained in the 2008 RTP Final EIR.

### 5.1.1 Noise and Vibration

SCAG’s analysis of the 2008 RTP concludes that significant/adverse cumulative ambient noise increases could occur. Noise-level increases resulting from the Project, while mitigated to less-than-

<sup>1</sup> SCAG is in the process of updating their RTP and RTP Final Program EIR. However, this update would not be completed until spring 2012 and could not be included as part of analysis under this Supplemental EIR No. 2.



significant, would fall within the context of the cumulative noise increase indicated in the 2008 RTP Final EIR and not provide any cumulatively considerable increase.

### **5.1.2 Cultural Resources**

SCAG's analysis of the 2008 RTP concludes that a significant cumulative impact to cultural resources would occur due to a substantial increase in urbanization in the SCAG region by the year 2035. It should be noted that the 2008 RTP, which includes the Project, is a comprehensive list of transportation and land use projects throughout Southern California, totaling \$531.5 billion. While the cumulative impacts finding relative to cultural resources in the SCAG 2008 RTP EIR is that significant impacts to cultural resources would occur, the Project Refinements are located in developed and/or highly disturbed areas. No historical or cultural resources were identified during a record search, conducted for the Project Refinements, at the South Central Coastal Information Center (SCCIC) at California State University, Fullerton or field surveys conducted on the Project Refinement sites.

As such, no impacts to cultural resources are anticipated as a result of construction of the Project Refinements. Because there is always the potential to impact unknown buried cultural resources in historically inhabited areas, cultural resources mitigation measures from the 2007 Final EIR and the 2011 Supplemental EIR No. 1 would still apply to the Project as approved and to these Project Refinements as applicable. Implementation of these mitigation measures would help minimize cumulative effects on unknown cultural resources.

The Project Refinements would not produce any long-term, indirect impacts on cultural resources. It would not increase access to sensitive cultural sites or impair the continued use of any known historic structures or sites. Therefore, inclusion of the Project Refinements as part of the Project's construction would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to impacts on cultural resources within the region.

### **5.1.3 Geological and Hazardous Materials**

SCAG's analysis of the 2008 RTP concludes that significant cumulative impacts could occur due to hazardous geologic conditions in certain locations where transportation projects are planned. However, the Project is not expected to result in any significant/adverse geologic or seismic hazards. As such, the Project Refinements would not result in cumulative impacts related to geological resources.

SCAG's analysis of the 2008 RTP concludes that the regional transportation system in the year 2035 would pose the potential for hazards to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accidental conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment. Potential impacts associated with disturbance of hazardous materials during construction of the Project would be reduced to less-than-significant levels by complying with the federal and state regulatory requirements and/or permits. Additionally, with the implementation of applicable mitigation measures identified, the potential disturbance of such materials would not contribute to a significant/adverse impact. Therefore, the Project Refinements would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to impacts related to hazardous materials.

### **5.1.4 Traffic and Transportation**

SCAG’s analysis of the 2008 RTP concludes that cumulative traffic and transportation impacts will be significant due to the regional increase in vehicle miles traveled. Methodology for the traffic analysis of the Project Refinements included using the SCAG travel demand forecasting model, and as demonstrated in Chapter 3, the Project would result in a decrease in vehicle miles travelled in the year 2035 when compared to the No-Action Alternative. As such, the Project would not result in cumulative impacts related to traffic and transportation. None of the Project Refinements would cause a change in the projections regarding vehicle miles traveled reductions.

## **5.2 Discussion of Significant Impacts**

### **5.2.1 Less-than-Significant Impacts**

The less-than-significant impacts of the Project Refinements are on cultural resources as well as traffic and transportation. No mitigation measures in these areas are required beyond what has already been established in the 2007 Final EIR, the 2007 Final EIR Addendum No. 1 and Addendum No. 2, and the 2011 Supplemental EIR No. 1. Please see the respective sections in Chapter 3 for the full discussion of these impacts.

### **5.2.2 Significant Environmental Impacts**

The potentially significant environmental impacts of the Project Refinements are on geological and hazardous materials as well as noise and vibration, although the noise impact relates only to the vibration impact on the single-family residence in the City of Azusa. These impacts can be reduced to less-than-significant levels with the implementation of the mitigation measures identified. Please see the respective sections in Chapter 3 for the full discussion of these impacts and applicable mitigation measures.

### **5.2.3 Unavoidable Significant Environmental Impacts**

The Project Refinements do not cause any unavoidable significant environmental impacts.

## **5.3 Mandatory Findings of Significance**

Under CEQA, an EIR must be prepared when certain specified impacts may result from construction or implementation of a project. A Supplemental EIR No. 2 has been prepared for the proposed project refinements, which fully addresses all of the mandatory findings of significance described below.

### **5.3.1 Degradation of the Environment**

Under Section 15065(a) of the CEQA Guidelines, a finding of significance is required if a project “has the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment.” In practice, this is the same standard as a significant impact on the environment, which is defined in Section 15382 of the CEQA Guidelines as “a substantial or potentially substantial adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project including land, air water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance.”

For the purposes of this Supplemental EIR No. 2, impacts are considered significant if a project would:

- Potentially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory.
- The project has the potential to achieve short-term environmental goals to the disadvantage of long-term environmental goals.
- Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable. (“Cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental impacts of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the impacts of past projects, the impacts of other current projects, and the impacts of probable future projects).
- The environmental impacts of a project will cause substantial adverse impacts on human beings, either directly or indirectly.

This Supplemental EIR No. 2, in its entirety, addresses and discloses all potential environmental impacts associated with implementation of the Project Refinements, including direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts. As summarized in Chapter 3 and Chapter 5, this Supplemental EIR No. 2 discloses all potential environmental impacts, the level of significance prior to mitigation, Project requirements that are otherwise required by law or are incorporated as part of the Project description, feasible mitigation measures, and the level of significance after the incorporation of mitigation measures.