

## 7.0 CEQA REQUIRED DISCUSSIONS

As required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), this chapter provides a discussion of effects not found to be significant, unavoidable significant impacts, significant irreversible environmental changes, and impacts related to growth inducement. The focus of this chapter is on the environmental effects of construction and operation of the development of the project area and the resulting growth potentially generated by the proposed development.

### 7.1 OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL TOPICS

CEQA requires a brief discussion of the potential effects of a project that have been determined not to be significant and, therefore, not required to be evaluated in detail. This section provides summary discussions of such topics where the project would have no effect.

#### 7.1.1 AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

There are no farmlands (Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmlands of Statewide Importance) or forests located within the vicinity of the project or its fully urbanized surroundings. The proposed project is located in an area designated as Urban and Built-Up Land by the California Department of Conservation's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program.<sup>1</sup> Aerial maps were used to confirm that the area is fully urbanized and there is no agriculture, farmland, or forests present in the area. Thus, there is no effect expected for these resources.

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<sup>1</sup> Santa Clara County Important Farmland 2010. Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program: California Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection, 2011.  
<ftp://ftp.consrv.ca.gov/pub/dlrp/FMMP/pdf/2010/scl10.pdf>. Accessed October 30, 2013.

## **7.1.2 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY**

### **Water Quality Standards/Waste Discharge**

The project is a bridge rehabilitation that would have no potential to generate waste water requiring treatment or discharge. Therefore, the project would have no effect on water quality standards.

### **Groundwater Resources/Groundwater Recharge**

According to the City of Sunnyvale's (City) 2010 Urban Water Management Plan, approximately 8% of water used in the City is obtained from groundwater wells in the City. The project would not interfere with groundwater recharge because the project would not substantially change impervious area over existing conditions. While the width of the bridge will increase by 6 feet, 10 inches, this widening will take place above urbanized ground surface. Effects on groundwater recharge would thus be less than significant.

### **Floodplain**

As part a review of site hydraulic conditions prepared for the NEPA review of the project, the City identified that only portion of the project area within a 100-year floodplain is the Caltrain tracks that run beneath the bridge. These flooding conditions are related to excess runoff originating from the Sunnyvale East Channel. The project completely clear-spans the floodplain and would add no features within any identified floodplain area.

### **Inundation by Seiche, Tsunami, or Mudflow**

The project site is separated from the San Francisco Bay shoreline by roughly 2 miles and limited intervening topography. Therefore, the possibility of damage from a tsunami is remote. The relatively flat topography of the project site and its immediate surroundings reduces the likelihood of mudflows to a negligible level.

## **7.1.3 LAND USE AND PLANNING**

The project would help reduce an existing physical division in the community by substantially improving pedestrian access from Kifer Road to Evelyn Avenue. While such access currently exists (via the POC and sidewalk through Heritage Park), the project would provide a more open and inviting sidewalk on the bridge structure.

About 0.25 acres of land (largely in the Home Depot parking lot) would need to be acquired and added to the Hendy Avenue right-of-way to accommodate the relocation of columns 7, 8, and 9. Through such acquisitions, these lands would change from a commercial use to an institutional use. As the City will follow all appropriate regulations regarding acquisition, there would be no conflict with any land use plan or policy related to the avoidance of any physical environmental impact.

The project area is fully urbanized and is not included within the area of any habitat conservation or natural communities plan. Therefore, the project would have no conflict with any such plans.

#### **7.1.4 MINERAL RESOURCES**

There are no known mineral resources in the vicinity of the project. Urbanization of the project site and surrounding area has resulted in removal of topsoil, and it is unlikely that any valuable resources exist. The project is not expected to disturb potential mineral deposits, and therefore would not result in the loss of availability of any known mineral resource of value to the region, state, or local community.

#### **7.1.5 POPULATION AND HOUSING**

The proposed project does not include the construction of new homes, and therefore would not directly affect population growth. The rehabilitated bridge would have the same number of auto travel lanes in each direction, with improvements to cyclist and pedestrian facilities. Since there would be no increase in vehicle capacity and only a modest increase in capacity for non-motorized travel, the project is not expected to indirectly induce substantial population growth. Construction has been planned to avoid any displacement of people or housing. The project would not be expected to have any effect on population or housing.

#### **7.1.6 PUBLIC SERVICES AND RECREATION**

The proposed project would not result in the need to physically expand public services since it would not increase population or otherwise cause an increase in demand for any public service or recreational facility.

## Utilities and Service Systems

### Wastewater

The project does not include provisions for any facilities that would produce additional wastewater. Thus, neither new nor expanded wastewater treatment facilities would be necessary.

### Solid Waste

Since the project would not alter the functional use of the existing bridge, it is not expected to have any direct or indirect effect on the production of solid waste. Waste facilities will be provided in compliance with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste. No mitigation needed.

Construction-related waste will be treated consistent with pertinent regulations, including any requirements consistent with a demolition permit from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District. To the extent feasible, construction related waste can be recycled or repurposed.

## 7.2 SIGNIFICANT UNAVOIDABLE IMPACTS

CEQA Guidelines section 15126.2(b) requires that the EIR discuss "significant environmental effects which cannot be avoided if the proposed project is implemented." Significant unavoidable impacts are those that would not be reduced to less-than-significant levels by the mitigation measures recommended in this EIR.

No such impacts were identified in this EIR. Mitigation is provided for all identified impacts that would reduce all such impacts to a less-than-significant level.

## 7.3 SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE IMPACTS

CEQA Section 15126.2(c) requires that an EIR discuss any environmental changes that would be irreversible if a project were implemented. CEQA defines irreversible environmental changes as the irretrievable commitment of resources and/or irreversible damage resulting from environmental accidents. Irreversible changes may include current or future uses of non-renewable resources, and secondary or growth inducing impacts that commit future generations to similar uses. The CEQA Guidelines describe three distinct categories of significant irreversible changes,

including changes in land use that would commit future generations to specific uses; irreversible changes from environmental actions; and consumption of non-renewable resources.

### **7.3.1 CHANGES IN LAND USE WHICH WOULD COMMIT FUTURE GENERATIONS**

The project will rehabilitate an existing bridge. Sliver takes of existing commercial property adjacent to Hendy Avenue will be incorporated into the public right-of-way. Beyond that, the project proposes no other change in land uses. The change proposed by the project is generally consistent with the urbanized character and context of the project area.

### **7.3.2 IRREVERSIBLE CHANGES FROM ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIONS**

The project would rehabilitate an existing bridge and expand bicycle/pedestrian facilities over the Caltrain tracks. The commitment of nonrenewable resources, such as fossil fuels, necessary for construction, would be irreversible.

### **7.3.3 CONSUMPTION OF NONRENEWABLE RESOURCES**

The proposed rehabilitation efforts would require the consumption of nonrenewable resources, such as electricity, natural gas and petroleum products, and construction materials. The rehabilitated bridge would not have expanded automobile capacity, so would not lead to increased consumption of fossil fuels above existing levels.

## **7.4 GROWTH INDUCEMENT**

CEQA requires a discussion of the ways in which a project could be growth inducing. The CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(d) identify a project as growth inducing if it would “foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment.” The CEQA Guidelines do not provide specific criteria for evaluating growth inducement and state that growth in any area is “necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment.”

According to the CEQA Guidelines, a project would have potential to induce growth if it would:

- Remove obstacles to population growth (e.g., through the expansion of public services into an area that does not currently receive these services), or through the provision of new access to an area, or a change in a restrictive zoning or General Plan land use designation.
- Result in economic expansion and population growth through employment opportunities and/or construction of new housing.

In general, a project could be considered growth inducing if it directly or indirectly affects the ability of agencies to provide needed public services, or if it can be demonstrated that the potential growth significantly affects the environment in some other way. However, the CEQA Guidelines do not require a prediction or speculation of where, when, and in what form such growth would occur.<sup>2</sup>

#### **7.4.1 ECONOMIC, POPULATION, AND HOUSING GROWTH**

Typically, the growth inducing potential of a project is considered significant if it would foster growth or a concentration of population in a different location or in excess of what is assumed in pertinent general plans or land use plans, or projections made by regional planning agencies, such as the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG). The proposed bridge rehabilitation would maintain the current number of automobile travel lanes, and improve pedestrian and cyclist accessibility and mobility. Furthermore, the proposed project would not include the construction of new homes or businesses, and there would therefore be no associated economic, population, or housing growth in the project vicinity.

Construction would result in a short-term increase in construction related job opportunities in the city of Sunnyvale. However, construction workers can be expected to be drawn from the existing construction employment labor force, as construction of new development occurs throughout the City and within surrounding cities. Therefore, opportunities provided by construction of the proposed project would not likely result in the relocation of construction workers to the project region. Therefore, the employment opportunities provided by construction are not anticipated to induce indirect growth in the region.

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<sup>2</sup> CEQA Guidelines, Section 15145.

## **7.4.2 PRECEDENT SETTING ACTION**

The bridge rehabilitation would require expansion of the public right-of-way by about 0.25 acres. This additional land would be acquired from commercial properties adjacent to Hendy Avenue. Given the nature of the existing use and the surrounding environment in the vicinity of the project site, the proposed acquisition would not change the character of the area in any significant way. Furthermore, given that is a specific bridge rehabilitation project, the action would not be considered precedent setting as no further bridge expansion work is expected beyond the scope of this project that would change land uses in the area.

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