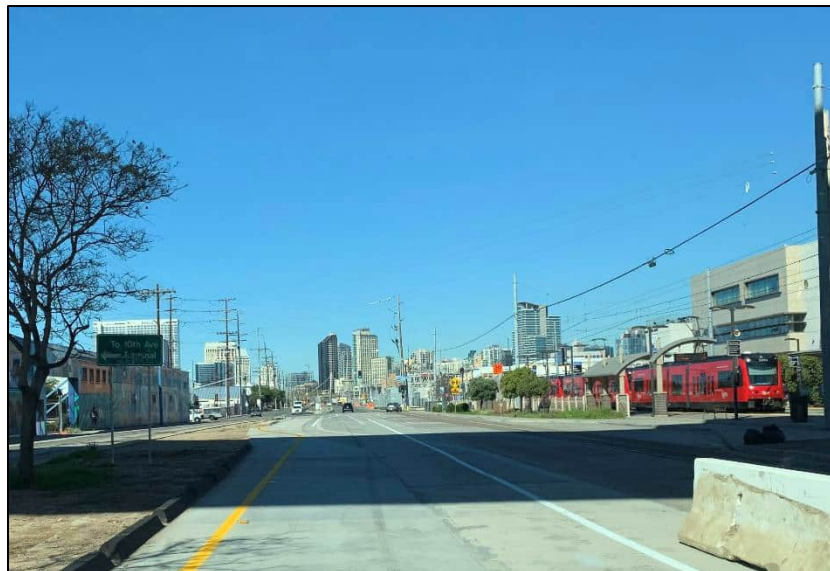


# Harbor Drive 2.0/Vesta Street Bridge Port Access Improvements Project

SAN DIEGO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA  
11-SD-I-5/SR-15 PM 9.8-R14.7/PM 0.4-R0.5  
EAs 11-431310/11-431050; EFIS Project IDs 1121000214/1120000086

## Initial Study with Proposed Negative Declaration/Environmental Assessment



**Prepared by the  
State of California, Department of Transportation**

The environmental review, consultation, and any other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by Caltrans pursuant to 23 USC 327 and the Memorandum of Understanding dated May 27, 2022, and executed by FHWA and Caltrans.



**October 2023**

# General Information about This Document

## What's in this document:

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has prepared this Draft Initial Study (Negative Declaration)/Environmental Assessment (IS[ND]/EA), which examines the potential environmental impacts of the alternatives being considered for the proposed project located in San Diego and National City and within Naval Base San Diego in San Diego County, California. Caltrans is the lead agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The document tells you why the project is being proposed; what alternatives have been considered for the project; how the existing environment could be affected by the project; the potential impacts of each of the alternatives; and the proposed avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures.

## What you should do:

- Please read this document. Additional copies of this document and the related technical studies are available for review at Caltrans District 11 Office, 4050 Taylor Street, San Diego, CA 92110; National City Public Library, 1401 National City Boulevard, National City, CA 91950; Logan Heights Branch Library, 567 S. 28<sup>th</sup> Street, San Diego, CA 92113; and the project website: <https://dot.ca.gov/caltrans-near-me/district-11/current-projects/harbordrive2>
- Attend the public hearing. November 2, 2023 at the San Diego College of Continuing Education, Cesar Chavez Campus, Rooms 101 and 103, 1901 Main Street, San Diego, CA 92113.
- We'd like to hear what you think. If you have any comments regarding the proposed project, please attend the public hearing and/or send your written comments to Caltrans by the deadline. Submit comments via U.S. mail to: Matthew Voss, Environmental Division MS 242, California Department of Transportation, District 11 Office at 4050 Taylor Street, San Diego, CA 92110. Submit comments via email to: [Vesta.Harbor.Operational.Improvements@dot.ca.gov](mailto:Vesta.Harbor.Operational.Improvements@dot.ca.gov)
- Be sure to send comments by the deadline: November 16, 2023.

## What happens next:

After comments are received from the public and reviewing agencies, Caltrans may (1) give environmental approval to the proposed project, (2) do additional environmental studies, or (3) abandon the project. If the project is given environmental approval and funding is obtained, Caltrans could design and construct all or part of the project.

## Alternative Formats:

For individuals with sensory disabilities, this document can be made available in Braille, in large print, on audiocassette, or on computer disk. To obtain a copy in one of these alternate formats, please call or write to Caltrans, Attn: Matthew Voss, Environmental Division MS 242, Caltrans District 11 Office at 4050 Taylor Street, San Diego, CA 92110; 1-858-289-1276 (Voice), or use the California Relay Service 1 (800) 735-2929 (TTY to Voice), 1 (800) 735-2922 (Voice to TTY), 1 (800) 855-3000 (Spanish TTY to Voice and Voice to TTY), 1-800-854-7784 (Spanish and English Speech-to-Speech) or 711.

11-SD-I5 PM 9.8-R14.7; 11-SD-SR15 PM 0.4-R0.5  
EAs 11-431310/11-431050; EFIS Project IDs 1121000214/1120000086

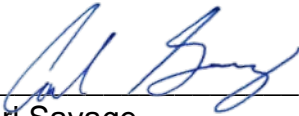
The proposed project would construct improvements along I-5 (from PM 9.8 to R14.7), SR-15 (from PM 0.4 to R0.5), Harbor Drive (from Imperial Avenue in San Diego to Mile of Cars Way in National City), and connecting arterials in the Cities of San Diego and National City, and within Naval Base San Diego in San Diego County.

## **Draft Initial Study with Proposed Negative Declaration/ Environmental Assessment**

Submitted Pursuant to: (State) Division 13, California Public Resources Code  
(Federal) 42 USC 4332(2)(C)

THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
Department of Transportation

Cooperating Agencies: U.S. Department of the Navy  
Responsible Agencies: San Diego Association of Governments, City of San Diego,  
City of National City, San Diego Unified Port District, San Diego Metropolitan  
Transportation System



Carl Savage  
Acting Deputy District Director, Environmental  
California Department of Transportation  
CEQA/NEPA Lead Agency

10/6/2023

Date

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[matthew.voss@dot.ca.gov](mailto:matthew.voss@dot.ca.gov)



# Draft Proposed Negative Declaration

Pursuant to: Division 13, Public Resources Code

## Project Description

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to construct improvements along Interstate 5 (I-5) (from Post Mile [PM] 9.8 to R14.7), State Route 15 (SR-15) (from PM 0.4 to R0.5), Harbor Drive (from Imperial Avenue in San Diego to Mile of Cars Way in National City), and connecting arterials in the Cities of San Diego and National City, and within Naval Base San Diego in San Diego County. The proposed improvements consist of dedicated and mixed-flow truck-only lanes on Harbor Drive; intelligent transportation system (ITS) improvements on Harbor Drive, SR-15, and I-5; construction of a Vesta Street Bridge connecting the east (“dry”) and west (“wet”) sides of NBSD; improvements to on- and off-ramps at SR-15/Main Street and I-5/National Avenue; pavement rehabilitation of areas with poor condition on Harbor Drive and Main Street/Vesta Street; complete street improvements including upgraded bicycle and pedestrian facilities and Americans with Disabilities ramps; sustainability improvements including zero-emission commercial vehicle infrastructure; and ancillary improvements such as striping, landscaping and drainage, and modifications to existing NBSD gates.

## DRAFT Determination

This proposed Negative Declaration (ND) is included to give notice to interested agencies and the public that it is Caltrans’ intent to adopt an ND for this proposed project. This does not mean that Caltrans’ decision regarding the project is final. This ND is subject to change based on comments received by interested agencies and the public.

Caltrans has prepared a Draft Initial Study for this proposed project and, pending public review, expects to determine from this study that the proposed project would not have a significant effect on the environment for the following reasons:

- Caltrans would implement standard avoidance and minimization measures to avoid and/or minimize all significant effects on the environment.

The proposed project would have no effect on the following resource areas:

- Agriculture and Forestry Resources
- Energy
- Land Use and Planning

- Mineral Resources
- Population and Housing
- Wildfire

In addition, the proposed project would have less than significant effects on:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Noise
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities and Service Systems

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Carl Savage  
Acting Deputy District Director, Environmental  
California Department of Transportation  
CEQA/NEPA Lead Agency

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Date

# Table of Contents

General Information about This Document.....	i
Draft Proposed Negative Declaration .....	iii
Table of Contents .....	v
List of Tables.....	viii
List of Figures.....	viii
<b>Chapter 1</b> Proposed Project.....	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1.1 Project Background.....	1
1.2 PURPOSE AND NEED .....	6
1.2.1 Purpose.....	6
1.2.2 Need .....	6
1.2.3 Independent Utility and Logical Termini .....	9
1.3 PROJECT DESCRIPTION.....	10
1.4 PROJECT ALTERNATIVES.....	11
1.4.1 Build Alternative .....	11
1.4.2 No Build (No Action) Alternative.....	21
1.4.3 Standard Measures and Best Management Practices .....	21
1.5 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT ELIMINATED FROM FURTHER DISCUSSION .....	24
1.5.1 Alternative 1 .....	24
1.5.2 Alternative 2 .....	24
1.5.3 Alternative 3 .....	25
1.6 PERMITS AND APPROVALS NEEDED .....	25
<b>Chapter 2</b> Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures .....	27
2.1 TOPICS CONSIDERED BUT DETERMINED NOT TO BE RELEVANT .....	27
2.1.1 Wild and Scenic Rivers .....	27
2.1.2 Farmlands .....	27
2.1.3 Timberlands .....	27
2.1.4 Growth .....	27
2.2 HUMAN ENVIRONMENT.....	28
2.2.1 Existing and Future Land Use.....	28

2.2.2	Consistency with State, Regional, and Local Plans and Programs .....	33
2.2.3	Coastal Zone.....	42
2.2.4	Parks and Recreational Facilities .....	46
2.2.5	Community Character and Cohesion .....	48
2.2.6	Relocations and Real Property Acquisition .....	50
2.2.7	Environmental Justice .....	51
2.2.8	Equity .....	56
2.2.9	Utilities/Emergency Services.....	60
2.2.10	Traffic and Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities .....	62
2.2.11	Visual/Aesthetics.....	67
2.2.12	Cultural Resources.....	82
2.3	PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT .....	87
2.3.1	Hydrology and Floodplain .....	87
2.3.2	Water Quality and Stormwater Runoff.....	92
2.3.3	Geology/Soils/Seismic/Topography .....	98
2.3.4	Paleontology .....	100
2.3.5	Hazardous Waste/Materials .....	101
2.3.6	Air Quality.....	109
2.3.7	Noise and Vibration.....	116
2.3.8	Energy.....	123
2.4	BIOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT .....	125
2.4.1	Natural Communities.....	125
2.4.2	Wetlands and Other Waters.....	127
2.4.3	Plant Species .....	129
2.4.4	Animal Species .....	130
2.4.5	Threatened and Endangered Species.....	132
2.4.6	Invasive Species .....	134
2.5	CUMULATIVE IMPACTS .....	135
<b>Chapter 3</b>	<b>California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Evaluation .....</b>	<b>143</b>
3.1	DETERMINING SIGNIFICANCE UNDER CEQA.....	143
3.2	CEQA ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST .....	143
3.2.1	Aesthetics.....	144
3.2.2	Agriculture and Forestry Resources.....	145
3.2.3	Air Quality.....	145

3.2.4	Biological Resources.....	147
3.2.5	Cultural Resources.....	148
3.2.6	Energy.....	149
3.2.7	Geology and Soils .....	150
3.2.8	Greenhouse Gas Emissions.....	151
3.2.9	Hazards and Hazardous Materials .....	152
3.2.10	Hydrology and Water Quality .....	154
3.2.11	Land Use and Planning.....	156
3.2.12	Mineral Resources .....	156
3.2.13	Noise .....	157
3.2.14	Population and Housing .....	158
3.2.15	Public Services.....	158
3.2.16	Recreation.....	159
3.2.17	Transportation .....	160
3.2.18	Tribal Cultural Resources.....	162
3.2.19	Utilities and Service Systems.....	163
3.2.20	Wildfire .....	164
3.2.21	Mandatory Findings of Significance .....	165
3.3	CLIMATE CHANGE .....	170
<b>Chapter 4</b>	<b>Comments and Coordination.....</b>	<b>191</b>
<b>Chapter 5</b>	<b>List of Preparers .....</b>	<b>193</b>
<b>Chapter 6</b>	<b>Distribution List.....</b>	<b>195</b>
6.1	FEDERAL AGENCIES .....	195
6.2	STATE AGENCIES AND TRIBES.....	196
6.3	ELECTED OFFICIALS AND LOCAL AGENCIES/ORGANIZATIONS.....	199
<b>Chapter 7</b>	<b>References.....</b>	<b>203</b>
<b>Appendix A</b>	<b>Title VI/Non-Discrimination Policy Statement.....</b>	<b>211</b>
<b>Appendix B</b>	<b>Avoidance, Minimization and/or Mitigation Summary.....</b>	<b>213</b>
<b>Appendix C</b>	<b>List of Technical Studies .....</b>	<b>221</b>

## List of Tables

Table 1-1: Permits and Approvals .....	25
Table 2-1: Park and Recreation Facilities within 0.25-mile of the Project Limits .....	47
Table 2-2: Environmental Justice Analysis for Census Tracts in Study Area .....	52
Table 2-3: Emergency Services in the Project Area .....	61
Table 2-4: Operational Criteria Air Pollutant Emissions (tons per day).....	112
Table 2-5: MSAT Emissions (grams per day).....	113
Table 2-6: Construction-Related Daily Emissions (pounds per day) .....	114
Table 2-7: Noise Abatement Criteria .....	117
Table 3-1: Regional and Local Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plans .....	177
Table 3-2: Operational GHG Emissions (tons per day) .....	179
Table 3-3: Probabilistic Sea Level Rise Projections .....	186

## List of Figures

Figure 1-1: Regional Map.....	2
Figure 1-2: Vicinity Map.....	3
Figure 1-3: Project Overview.....	12
Figure 1-4: Proposed Vesta Street Bridge Plan View.....	13
Figure 1-5: SR-15/Main Street Off-Ramp Improvements .....	17
Figure 1-6: I-5/National Avenue On-Ramp Improvements .....	18
Figure 2-1: Jurisdictional Boundaries .....	44
Figure 2-2: Census Tracts and Environmental Justice Communities in Study Area.....	54
Figure 2-3: CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Results for the Project Vicinity.....	57
Figure 2-4: SB 535 Disadvantaged Communities in the Project Vicinity .....	59
Figure 2-5: Key View Map .....	69
Figure 2-6: Key View 1 Existing Condition – No Build Alternative .....	70
Figure 2-7: Key View 1 Proposed Condition – Build Alternative.....	71
Figure 2-8: Key View 2 Existing Condition – No Build Alternative .....	72
Figure 2-9: Key View 2 Proposed Condition – Build Alternative (Vesta Street Bridge Option 1, Cast in Place Box Girder with Outrigger Bent).....	73
Figure 2-10: Key View 2 Proposed Condition – Build Alternative (Vesta Street Bridge Option 2, Precast Wide-Flange Girder Structure with Columns) .....	74
Figure 2-11: Key View 3 Existing Condition – No Build Alternative .....	75
Figure 2-12: Key View 3 Proposed Condition – Build Alternative.....	76
Figure 2-13: Key View 4 Existing Condition – No Build Alternative .....	77
Figure 2-14: Key View 4 Proposed Condition – Build Alternative.....	78
Figure 2-15: Key View 5 Existing Condition – No Build Alternative .....	79
Figure 2-16: Key View 5 Proposed Condition – Build Alternative.....	80
Figure 2-17: FEMA Floodplain Map 06073C1903H .....	90
Figure 2-18: FEMA Floodplain Map 06073C1884H .....	91
Figure 2-19: Noise Levels of Common Activities .....	118
Figure 3-1: U.S. 2020 Greenhouse Gas Emissions (Source: U.S. EPA 2022b).....	174

Figure 3-2: California 2020 Greenhouse Gas Emissions by Scoping Plan Category  
 (Source: CARB 2022b)..... 175

Figure 3-3: Change in California GDP, Population, and GHG Emissions since 2000  
 (Source: CARB 2022a)..... 176

Figure 3-4: 2030 Extreme Risk Aversion Sea Level Rise Projection..... 187

Figure 3-5: 2050 Extreme Risk Aversion Sea Level Rise Projection..... 188

Figure 3-6: 2100 Extreme Risk Aversion Sea Level Rise Projection..... 189

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# Chapter 1 Proposed Project

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## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Harbor Drive 2.0/Vesta Street Bridge Port Access Improvements Project (proposed project) consists of two separate projects (Harbor Drive 2.0 [EA 11-43131, EFIS Project ID 1121000214] and Vesta Street Bridge [EA 11-43105, EFIS Project ID 1120000086]) which have been consolidated due to proximity between the projects and similar purpose and need, and to consider the full scope of the action in the environmental review process. The project proposes operational and functional improvements along California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) right-of-way, Harbor Drive, and adjacent roadways to address congestion in this critical urban freight corridor. From Imperial Avenue in the City of San Diego to Mile of Cars Way in the City of National City, Harbor Drive serves as a maritime Port of Entry (POE) for the Port of San Diego (Port) and San Diego's "Working Waterfront", and an access point for military personnel. The Harbor Drive corridor contains the Port's Tenth Avenue and National City Marine Terminals, Naval Base San Diego (NBSD), several large commercial shipyards (Shipyards) and other industrial facilities. It is adjacent to Portside Environmental Justice (EJ) Neighborhoods of San Diego's Barrio Logan and National City, as identified per Assembly Bill (AB) 617. There are connecting arterials from Harbor Drive to Caltrans right-of-way on Interstate 5 (I-5) and State Route 15 (SR-15). Paired improvements are proposed to both the freeway and intersecting roadways that would benefit the corridor and surrounding community. Regional and vicinity maps of the project area are shown in Figures 1-1 and 1-2, respectively.

Caltrans would act as lead agency for both the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for the proposed project. The CEQA Initial Study with proposed Negative Declaration (IS/ND) and NEPA Environmental Assessment (EA) have been prepared in accordance with Caltrans' environmental procedures, as well as State of California and federal environmental regulations.

### 1.1.1 Project Background

#### ***Harbor Drive 2.0***

Harbor Drive currently experiences high levels of congestion that slow down Port and Naval operations and produce impacts on Portside EJ Neighborhoods to the east. Neither Harbor Drive nor its connecting arterials currently have Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) technologies (computers, sensing, and communication technology used to improve transportation networks) or signal prioritization (traffic control strategy to provide extra green time for specific vehicle types) installed. This has resulted in most intersections failing to clear vehicles during peak hour traffic. Additionally, equity and sustainability remain critical issues for Portside Environmental Justice Neighborhoods with emphasis on emissions, noise, and safety emanating from the Working Waterfront truck and vehicular traffic.

Figure 1-1: Regional Map

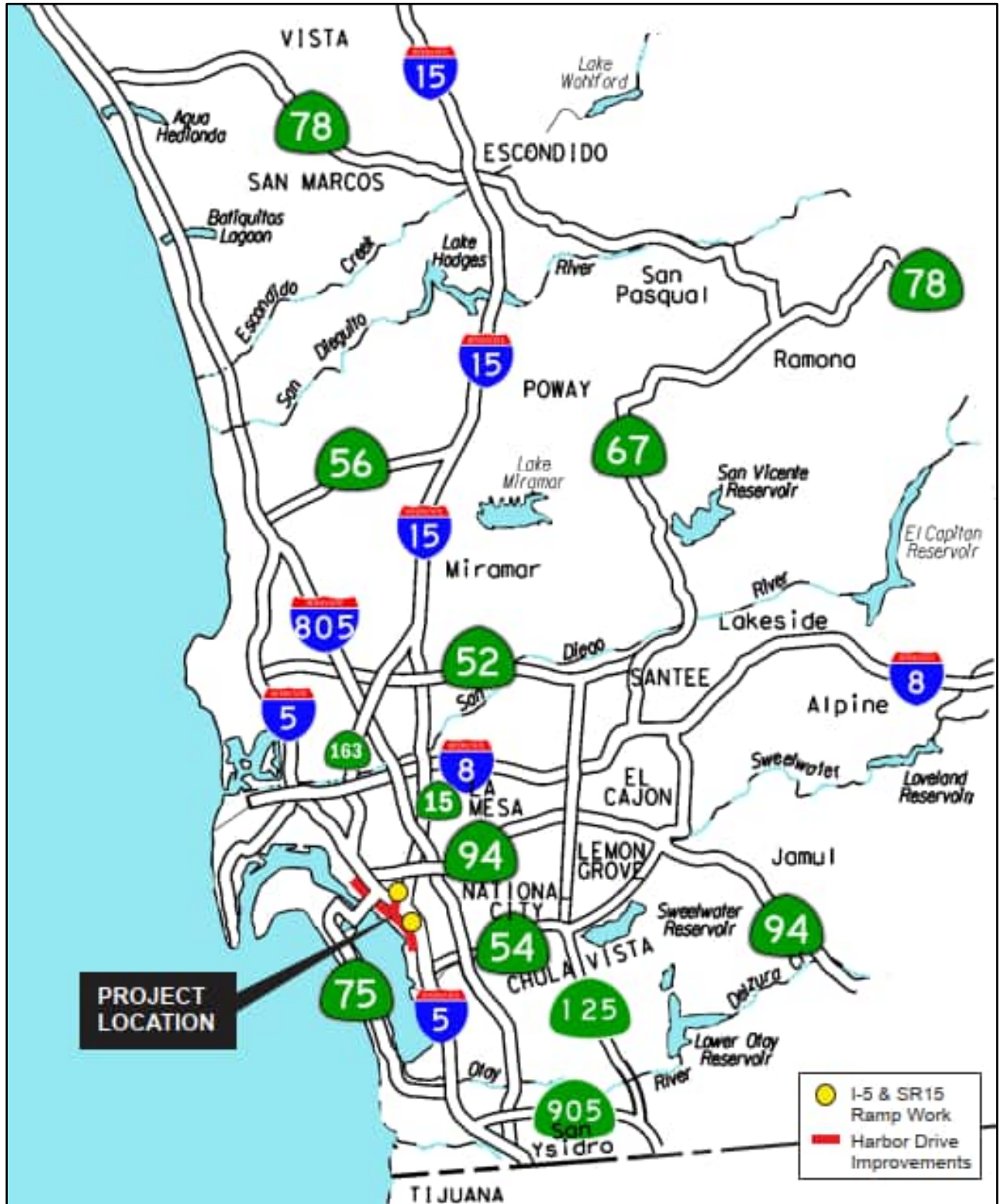


Figure 1-2: Vicinity Map



The need for a flexible freight haul road was first identified in 2013 through community and stakeholder input during an integrated planning effort conducted by the Port and was deemed a high priority by the Board of Port Commissioners in 2015. This effort produced the Harbor Drive Multimodal Corridor Study which was authorized in 2017 and a working group was formed to execute the study between the Port, City of San Diego, City of National City, NBSD, San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), Caltrans, San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS), and the Barrio Logan Community Planning Group. From 2017 to 2019, the working group met on three occasions with over 40 smaller independent meetings. Five open houses were held from 2018 to 2019. Public outreach was completed in Barrio Logan in February 2019 and in National City in September 2019.

The proposed Harbor Drive 2.0 project concept for introducing dedicated truck lanes with ITS technologies was identified as a priority strategy to improve goods movement in a cost-effective manner, while addressing the equity-related concerns of safety, mobility, and health in surrounding Portside neighborhoods. An interagency Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed in October 2020 between Caltrans District 11, SANDAG, and the Port to recognize the important role of the project concept and make a commitment to implementation. The proposed Harbor Drive 2.0 project was subsequently identified as a priority by local stakeholders and incorporated into the City of San Diego's 2021 Barrio Logan Community Plan Update and the San Diego County Air Pollution Control District's (SDAPCD) 2021 Portside Community Emissions Reductions Plan (SDAPCD 2021).

### ***Vesta Street Bridge***

Separate but related to the Harbor Drive 2.0 effort, planning for a grade-separated structure on Vesta Street over Harbor Drive connecting the east (dry) and west (wet) sides of NBSD, along with associated freeway improvements, began around 2007. A Project Study Report/Project Development Support (PSR/PDS) document, dated November 21, 2007, was completed by Caltrans and included five locations for potential improvements in the area defined by the San Diego Bay to the west, I-5 to the east, the Tenth Avenue Marine Terminal to the north, and the National City Marine Terminal to the south. The current Vesta Street Bridge concept encompasses the improvements in, and in the vicinity of, one of those five locations. A Supplemental Engineering Report (SER) was then completed in October 2012 to allow sponsoring agencies to solicit funding from other sources and further assess alternatives.

An alternative presented in the initial PSR/PDS for the Vesta Street Bridge was to construct a direct access ramp, a type of elevated structure for vehicles to directly access Harbor Drive to and from SR-15; however, it was determined that this alternative would preclude access to and from SR-15 at 32<sup>nd</sup> Street and Wabash Boulevard. In addition, this alternative had significant right-of-way and environmental impacts to NBSD and surrounding businesses and did not provide for optimum internal base circulation. It was determined that other alternatives would be studied.

The SER recommended the “Direct Connector Ramps/Vesta Street Bridge” alternative, which included direct connectors from SR-15 to Harbor Drive, a bridge at Vesta Street over Harbor Drive and the railroad tracks, and other operational improvements. The project was archived until funding to develop the Project Approval and Environmental Document (PA&ED) phase could be secured, which ultimately began in December 2020. To further minimize project impacts, it was decided to remove the direct connector ramps from the scope of the project and implement signal prioritization technology at three key intersections within the project area. Other proposed improvements carried from the SER include widening of the southbound (SB) off-ramp from SR-15 to Main Street, pavement rehabilitation at the 32<sup>nd</sup> Street/Harbor Drive intersection, and opening NBSD’s Gate 29 located near the Main Street/Vesta Street intersection.

The proposed Vesta Street Bridge would facilitate direct vehicular connectivity between the east (dry) and west (wet) portions of NBSD that are currently separated by rail lines and Harbor Drive. Vehicles would not need to utilize the city street network with the Vesta Street Bridge in place between the east and west sides of NBSD. This would reduce out of direction travel and relieve traffic congestion at existing NBSD gates and adjacent intersections. Given the nexus with project improvements identified during planning for Harbor Drive 2.0, both in proximity and purpose, the Vesta Street Bridge concept has now been integrated with Harbor Drive 2.0 to comprise the proposed project for purposes of the environmental review process.

Both the Harbor Drive 2.0 and Vesta Street Bridge projects, now consolidated as the proposed project in this Draft IS/EA, were identified in SANDAG’s 2021 Regional Transportation Plan under the South Bay to Sorrento corridor projects (Project IDs GM06 and GM09, respectively). As part of PA&ED phase for the current project (Harbor Drive 2.0 and Vesta Street Bridge), additional coordination meetings with NBSD, the City of San Diego, the City of National City, SANDAG, the Port, MTS, Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway, and the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) have occurred. The project has been showcased in community events such as the Clean California Community Day held on March 25, 2023, and the 53rd Annual Chicano Park Day Celebration held on April 22, 2023. Additionally, the project was presented at the Barrio Logan Community Planning Group meeting on May 31, 2023, and to the San Diego Regional Military Working Group on September 11, 2023.

The proposed project would be funded using funds from the Federal Surface Transportation Block Grant Program, CBI Environmental Grant Program, 2022 Trade Corridor Enhancement Program (TCEP), and other as-yet-undetermined sources from federal, state, and local governments.

## 1.2 PURPOSE AND NEED

### 1.2.1 Purpose

#### ***Harbor Drive 2.0***

The purpose of the Harbor Drive 2.0 project is to:

- Improve goods movement efficiency, especially at last mile points;
- Improve multimodal access to Working Waterfront facilities for employees, including shipyards, maritime cargo terminals, and NBSD;
- Improve community safety, mobility, and health by reducing truck idling and encouraging the use of a dedicated truck route;
- Ensure cost-effectiveness by using existing right-of-way and employing technology; and
- Improve pavement service life at specific locations.

#### ***Vesta Street Bridge***

The purpose of the Vesta Street Bridge project is to:

- Improve vehicular and multi-modal connectivity between the east (dry) and west (wet) campuses of NBSD;
- Enhance traffic and freight operations within the project area;
- Improve pavement service life at specific locations; and
- Complete operational improvements of adjacent roads accessing existing Naval Gates.

### 1.2.2 Need

#### ***Harbor Drive 2.0***

##### *Connected, Sustainable, and Efficient Goods Movement*

Designated truck routes currently overlap with passenger and transit vehicle routes along the Harbor Drive corridor, constraining traffic flows, decreasing travel time reliability, and increasing truck idling during peak hours. These conditions would worsen with future expansion at the Port and NBSD. Existing traffic signal infrastructure does not meet current standards. These factors limit goods movement between terminals and regional freeways, leading to the diversion of trucks onto prohibited residential streets to

bypass traffic. Upgrades to the infrastructure would provide more efficient traffic operations through prioritization. Improvements to on/off-ramps at SR-15 and I-5 would also provide for more efficient goods movement between terminals and regional freeways.

### *Working Waterfront Access*

Currently, gate operations and checkpoints at Working Waterfront employers lead to the formation of excessive queuing at key intersections and arterials on Harbor Drive. This is most notable at NBSD where numerous security checkpoints form queues that exceed turn pocket capacity, spilling over into mainline traffic and degrading conditions at intersections in the area. Upgrades to the infrastructure, including addition of dedicated truck lanes, freight signal prioritization, truck reservation systems, and gate operating systems would provide for improved access to the Working Waterfront. The construction of the Vesta Street Bridge connecting the east (dry) and west (wet) sides of NBSD would also improve mobility throughout the Working Waterfront.

### *Community Impacts*

Barrio Logan and National City are among communities in San Diego County suffering most from the environmental impacts of transportation. Historic equity and environmental justice issues for Portside communities include noise, emissions, and unequitable roadway conditions emanating from transportation-related Working Waterfront activities, including trucks bypassing through restricted residential streets. Dedicated truck lanes and ITS features proposed as part of the project would enable trucks to travel to and from the Working Waterfront and regional freeways via designated, non-residential routes. In support of efforts from the Port, infrastructure would be installed to advance sustainable freight, enable alternative fuels charging, and achieve emission reduction targets of Portside communities. In addition, the current configuration of the National Avenue/28<sup>th</sup> Street to northbound (NB) I-5 on-ramp has been identified as a location that exhibits unsafe conditions for pedestrian users due to the current configuration of the ramp (uncontrolled approaches to the on-ramp and lack of signalized pedestrian crossings). The proposed modification of the on-ramp entrance (transition from an existing controlled intersection), enhancement of adjacent pedestrian facilities to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards (sidewalks and curb ramps), and striping for a dedicated bike facility would improve community safety in this area.

### *Complete Streets Enhancements*

The existing bike and pedestrian infrastructure does not meet current standards in multiple areas. High volumes of pedestrians crossing Harbor Drive to access Working Waterfront employers exceed the capacity of adjoining sidewalks at first/last mile connections to transit and active transportation facilities, most notably near worksites. This discourages multimodal and active transportation usage by workers and residents alike. SANDAG is leading design and implementation of the Bayshore Bikeway Barrio Logan Segment along Harbor Drive, which is anticipated for completion in 2025. Both

this project and the Bayshore Bikeway would be coordinated efforts to upgrade the existing bike and pedestrian infrastructure to restore access to the Working Waterfront and complete necessary first/last mile connections.

### *Pavement Rehabilitation*

Numerous areas along Harbor Drive and connecting arterials to SR-15 and I-5 exhibit distressed pavement conditions. Pavement rehabilitation would maintain safe roadway conditions and reduce the need for ongoing repairs as conditions continue to deteriorate. Areas throughout the Harbor Drive corridor have been identified and would be upgraded as part of efforts to improve safety and efficiency along Harbor Drive.

### **Vesta Street Bridge**

#### *Improve Vehicular and Multimodal Connectivity*

From the Harbor Drive Multimodal Corridor Study (Port 2020), it was determined that NBSD is the largest trip generator along the Harbor Drive corridor. The base is separated into “wet,” “dry side north,” and “dry side south” areas, with multiple secured entrances to access each area of the base. Currently, drivers at NBSD are required to exit the base and go through city streets to travel between east (dry) and west (wet) campuses, requiring re-entry through security and causing traffic congestion at existing NBSD gates and adjacent intersections. The only existing pedestrian direct connection between the dry and wet campuses is an existing, non-ADA-compliant footbridge between both campuses. Additionally, the continued growth of NBSD and adjacent jurisdictions, including the City of San Diego, the City of National City, and the Port, has caused increased traffic congestion, hindering mobility in nearby communities and negatively impacting operations at NBSD and the Port. The Port’s maritime freight operations are a critical element of the regional economy. Therefore, ensuring adequate commercial vehicle traffic connectivity between the marine terminals and the regional highway system (SR-15 and I-5) is paramount to the economic vitality of the region.

The addition of a Vesta Street Bridge would facilitate vehicular circulation and connectivity between the dry and wet campuses of NBSD without having to leave the base, effectively reducing traffic congestion at the NBSD gates and adjacent intersections. Furthermore, the bridge would facilitate accessible active transportation between the dry and wet campuses with the addition of a sidewalk and two bicycle lanes (one in each direction of travel) on the bridge deck and approach roadways. Additionally, these operational improvements, including the proposed signal prioritization technology, would improve mobility and goods movement, provide more efficient commercial vehicle access and connectivity to the interregional freeway network from the Port marine terminals, and divert commercial vehicles away from adjacent neighborhoods.

#### *Enhance Traffic Operations*

The purpose of the proposed SB SR-15 Main Street off-ramp widening (see Section 1.3 – Project Description below for further detail) is to accommodate an expected increase

of vehicular traffic that would be entering Gate 29 near the intersection of Main Street and Vesta Street and using the proposed Vesta Street Bridge to access the wet side of NBSD. Traffic would exit SR-15 via the SB off-ramp to Main Street, turn left at Main Street, and then turn right at Vesta Street to access the dry side of the base via Gate 29. Gate 7, near the intersection of Harbor Drive and Vesta Street on the wet side of the base, would be permanently closed due to the proposed Vesta Street Bridge.

The signal prioritization technology proposed at the 32<sup>nd</sup> Street/Harbor Drive, SR-15 (Wabash Boulevard)/32<sup>nd</sup> Street/Norman Scott Road, and SR-15 SB Off-Ramp/Main Street intersections would improve traffic operations and mobility and provide more efficient commercial vehicle access and connectivity from the freeway network (SR-15) to NBSD and Port marine terminals. This would improve goods movement and divert commercial vehicles away from adjacent neighborhoods.

#### *Improve Pavement Service Life*

Pavement is deteriorating within the project limits, specifically at the intersections of 32<sup>nd</sup> Street/Harbor Drive and Main Street/Vesta Street. Pavement rehabilitation would maintain safe roadway conditions and reduce the need for ongoing repairs as conditions continue to deteriorate.

#### *Naval Gate Improvements*

A potential extension of the existing westbound left-turn lane along Harbor Drive would relieve congestion at the intersection of 32<sup>nd</sup> Street/Harbor Drive near Gate 6. Opening Gate 29 along Vesta Street during AM and PM peak hours would improve mobility and potentially alleviate traffic from other gates. The installation of signal prioritization technology at the intersections of 32<sup>nd</sup> Street/Harbor Drive and 32<sup>nd</sup> Street/Wabash Boulevard/Norman Scott Road would improve mobility and alleviate congestion near Gates 6 and 43, respectively.

### **1.2.3 Independent Utility and Logical Termini**

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) regulations (23 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 771.111[f]) require that the action evaluated:

1. Connect logical termini and be of sufficient length to address environmental matters on a broad scope.
2. Have independent utility or independent significance (be usable and be a reasonable expenditure even if no additional transportation improvements in the area are made).
3. Not restrict consideration of alternatives for other reasonably foreseeable transportation improvements.

Per FHWA guidelines on “Independent Utility and Logical Termini,” this project should satisfy an identified need, such as safety, rehabilitation, economic development, or capacity improvements, and should be considered in the context of the local area socioeconomics and topography, the future travel demand, and other infrastructure improvements in the area.

Logical termini for project development are defined as (1) rational end points for a transportation improvement, and (2) rational end points for a review of the environmental impacts. The environmental impact review frequently covers a broader geographic area than the strict limits of the transportation improvements. In the past, the most common termini have been points of major traffic generation, especially intersecting roadways. This is because in most cases traffic generators determine the size and type of facility being proposed. However, there are also cases where the project improvement is not primarily related to congestion due to traffic generators, and the choice of termini based on these generators may not be appropriate. When developing a transportation project, project sponsors should consider how the end points of the action are determined, both for the improvement itself and for the scope of the environmental analysis.

The need for this project is due to inefficient goods movement between the Working Waterfront along Harbor Drive and connecting arterials to SR-15 and I-5, access and circulation issues in the Working Waterfront, existing community health and safety issues, deficient bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and deteriorating pavement conditions in various areas. The purpose of the project is to address these issues. The project limits were based on the limits of geofencing (a virtual boundary around specific zones or locations) to be established on the state highway system to efficiently direct freight traffic; discrete locations for on/off-ramp improvements on I-5/SR-15 to improve access and circulation; and the areas of physical improvements on the local roadway system, including Harbor Drive, Vesta Street, and connecting arterials to the regional highway system. These limits were defined to encompass the whole of the action necessary to address the project needs. Therefore, the project has logical termini.

The project alternatives would address the purpose and need without additional improvements; therefore, the project has independent utility.

### **1.3 PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The proposed project would construct improvements along I-5 (from PM 9.8 to R14.7), SR-15 (from PM 0.4 to R0.5), Harbor Drive (from Imperial Avenue in San Diego to Mile of Cars Way in National City), connecting arterials in the Cities of San Diego and National City, and on Vesta Street within NBSD in San Diego County. The proposed improvements consist of dedicated and mixed-flow truck-only lanes on Harbor Drive; ITS improvements on Harbor Drive, SR-15, and I-5; construction of a Vesta Street Bridge connecting the east (dry) and west (wet) sides of NBSD; improvements to on- and off-ramps at SR-15/Main Street and I-5/National Avenue; pavement rehabilitation of areas with poor condition on Harbor Drive, Vesta Street, Main Street/Vesta Street, and the SR-15/Main Street on/off-ramps; complete street improvements including upgraded

bicycle and pedestrian facilities and ADA ramps; sustainability improvements including zero-emission commercial vehicle infrastructure; and ancillary improvements such as striping, landscaping and drainage, and modifications to existing NBSD gates.

## 1.4 PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

This section describes the proposed project that was developed to achieve the project purpose and need while reducing environmental impacts. There are two alternatives, the Build Alternative and the No Build Alternative. The Build Alternative includes the combined improvements proposed under the two individual projects, Harbor Drive 2.0 and Vesta Street Bridge.

### 1.4.1 Build Alternative

The Build Alternative, also referred to as the proposed project, includes improvements designed to improve congestion along the Harbor Drive corridor and connecting arterials and facilitate commercial vehicle connectivity between the marine terminals, Harbor Drive, and the state highway and interstate freeway systems. The proposed project consists of improvements both within Caltrans right-of-way and arterial roads under local jurisdiction, each of which is described below. An overview of the proposed project is shown in Figure 1-3. The proposed Vesta Street Bridge conceptual design is shown in Figure 1-4.

#### ***Traffic Operation Improvements***

##### *Dedicated and Mixed-Flow Lanes*

Truck-only Lanes (All-Day): Remove the existing medians, convert existing right-of-way, and re-stripe to introduce all-day, dedicated freight truck-only lanes in several sections of Harbor Drive:

- Southbound: South of Park Boulevard to 28<sup>th</sup> Street
- Southbound: Vesta Street to 8<sup>th</sup> Street
- Southbound: Civic Center Drive
- Northbound: Civic Center Drive to 8<sup>th</sup> Street
- Northbound: 8<sup>th</sup> Street to 32<sup>nd</sup> Street
- Northbound: Sampson Street

Figure 1-3: Project Overview

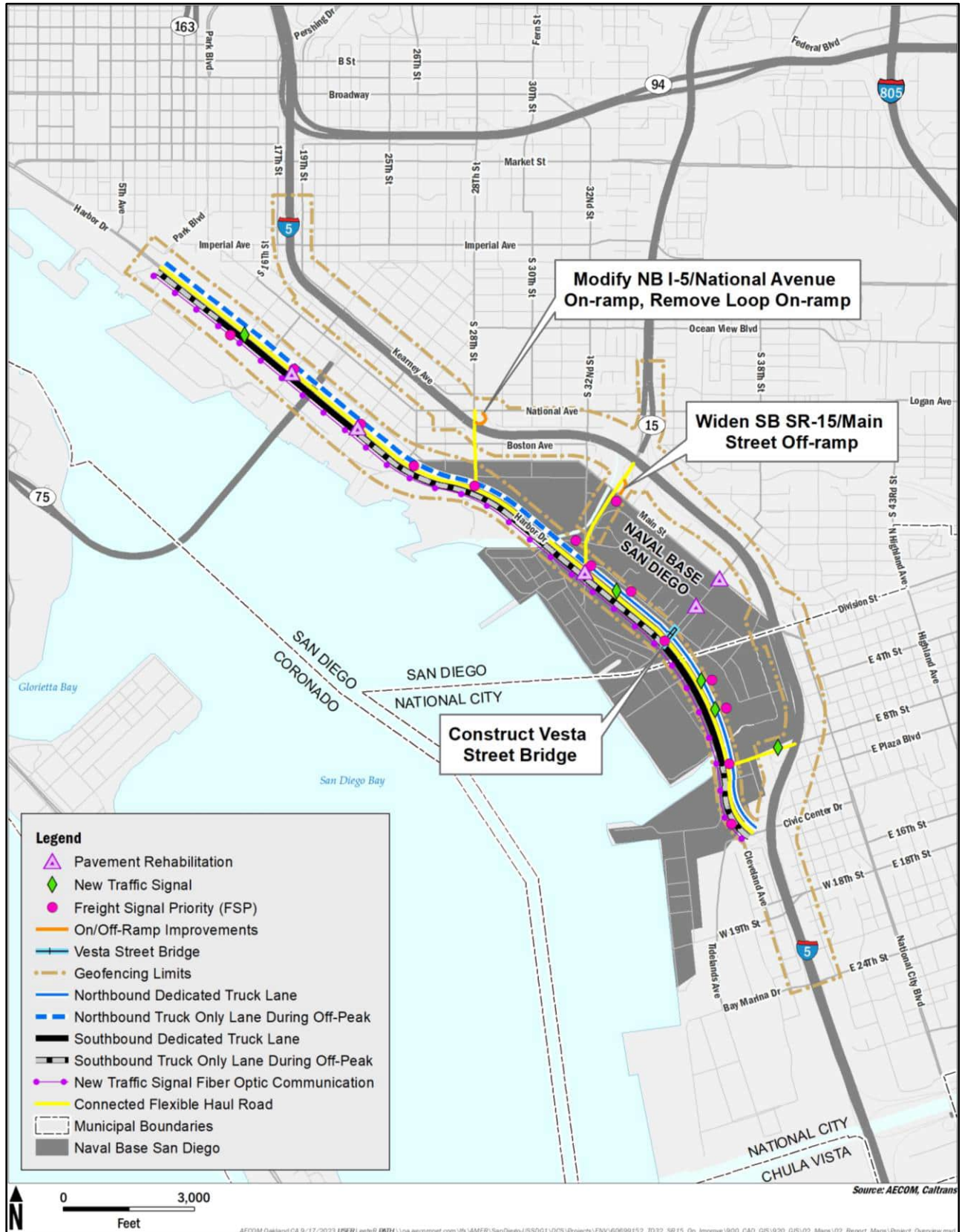
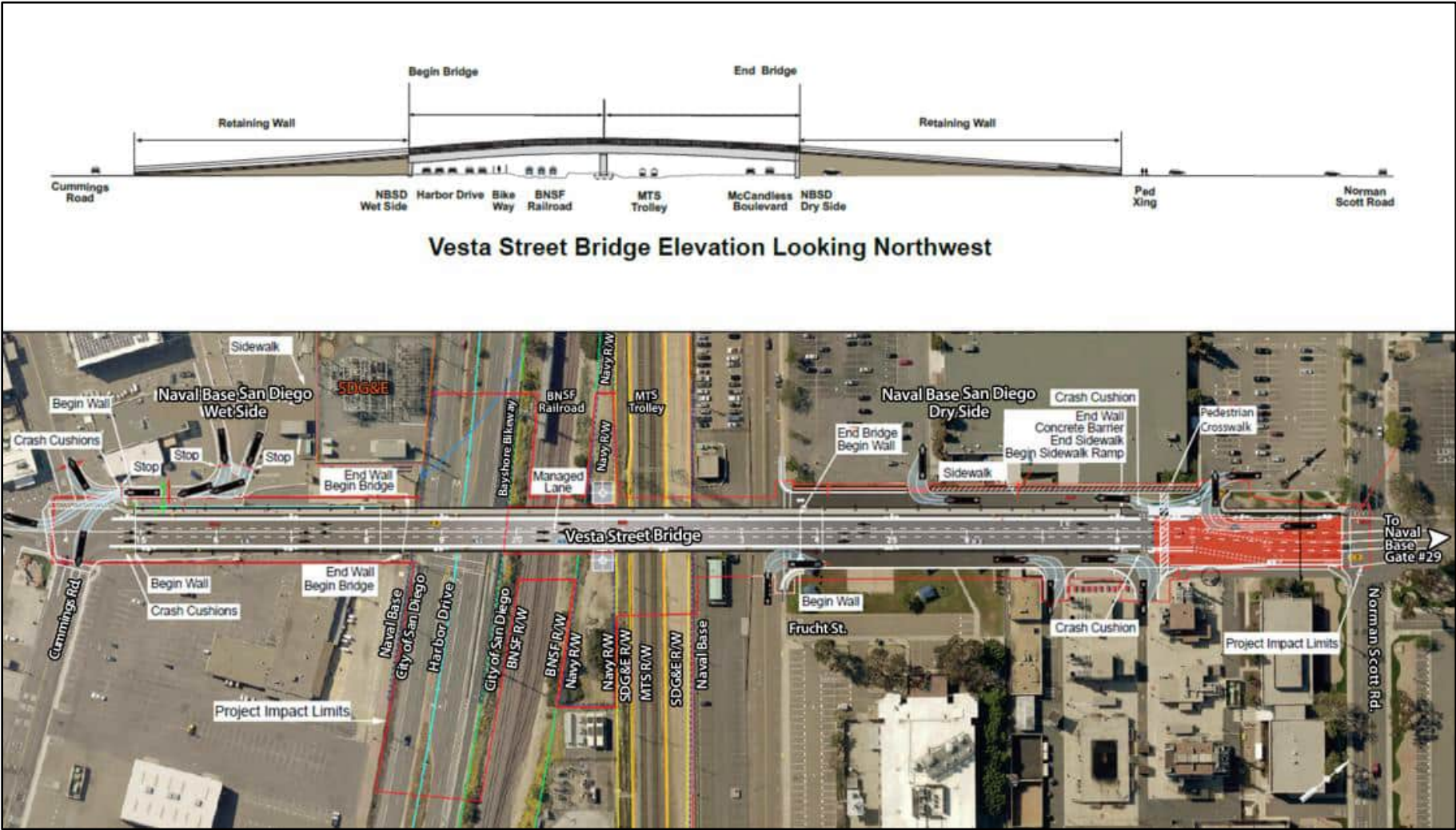


Figure 1-4: Proposed Vesta Street Bridge Plan View



Truck-only Lanes (Off-Peak): The proposed project would install ITS technology to redesignate regular through-traffic lanes as truck-only lanes during off-peak traffic periods at the following segments on Harbor Drive:

- Southbound Harbor Drive Truck-Only Lane (Off-Peak)
  - Tenth Avenue Marine Terminal (Switzer Street) to Sampson Street
  - Sicard Street to Vesta Street
  - 8<sup>th</sup> Street to Civic Center Drive
- Southbound Harbor Drive Mixed Flow with Truck Routing
  - Sampson Street to Schley Street
  - 8<sup>th</sup> Street to Civic Center Drive
  - 28<sup>th</sup> Street to Belt Street
- Northbound Harbor Drive Truck-Only Lane (Off-Peak)
  - Sampson Street (Start of Truck Only / Mixed Flow with Truck Routing)
  - Civic Center Drive to 32<sup>nd</sup> Street (Truck-Only / Mixed Flow with Truck Routing)
- Northbound Harbor Drive Mixed Flow with Truck Routing
  - Beardsley Street to Caesar Chavez Parkway

Due to the unique nature of the Working Waterfront schedules and entrance checkpoints, peak hours differ from traditional regional commuting hours with earlier start times from an extended AM peak window between 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. PM peak hours remain consistent with regional commuting hours between 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Off-peak hours would occur outside these windows.

#### *Additional Intelligent Transportation Systems*

Freight Signal Priority: Update controllers and synchronize systems to support freight signal priority along the designated truck route on Harbor Drive between the intersections of Sigsbee Street and Civic Center Drive. Freight signal priority would function to provide trucks a green light at a traffic signal rather than a red, which would reduce stops and fuel consumption and related emissions, and improve travel time reliability and traffic safety at intersections. With this technology, an onboard unit mounted to trucks sends location, speed, and estimated time of arrival (ETA) to a roadside unit mounted on a traffic signal mast arm.

Freight Queue Jumps: Introduce freight queue jumps between the intersections of Sampson Street and Craven Street (Pump Station 1) along Harbor Drive. Queue jumps would allow trucks to bypass other vehicles at these intersections and avoid queue formations.

New Traffic Signals: Introduce new controllers and detection at new access locations or intersections that require more controlled movement of traffic. This would include various locations along Harbor Drive within the project limits and along 8<sup>th</sup> Street at I-5 freeway on-ramps.

Wayfinding Gantries: Install a total of 14 wayfinding gantries (overhead structures with changeable signals and messaging) along Harbor Drive to inform users of the current lane configuration and traffic movements at intersections, and identify the appropriate vehicle usage in the correct lane configuration (e.g., truck-only, auto-only, mixed-flow, etc.).

Gate Operating System (GOS): Install a GOS to manage the flow of trucks through the Marine Terminal gates, provide truck drivers at the gate with accurate automated work assignments and reduce wait times outside the gate and truck cycle times within the terminal.

Truck Reservation System (TRS): Install a TRS which, combined with the GOS, would allow freight trucks to make appointments for cargo delivery or receipt within specific time windows. This system would automatically disperse truck reservations over a range of time to reduce the peaking of truck traffic at the gate and avoid queuing along the designated freight route.

Geofencing: Install a geofencing (a virtual boundary around specific zones or locations) system using Geographic Positioning System (GPS) and Geographic Information System (GIS) data, vehicle telematics, and other ITS technologies to track the location and path of freight trucks prior to entering or after exiting the port. Geofencing would be used to monitor and incentivize trucks to follow designated freight routes and provide disincentives, such as limited access to the TRS, to trucks that use local residential roads. Geofencing equipment would be attached to existing infrastructure and implemented on I-5 from PM 9.8 to R14.7 and on SR-15 from PM 0.4 to R0.5.

### *Vesta Street Bridge*

Construct a new bridge on Vesta Street over Harbor Drive, BNSF Railway, MTS Trolley, and McCandless Boulevard to connect the east (dry) and west (wet) sides of NBSD. The proposed bridge would accommodate one vehicular lane in each direction of travel with a reversible lane in the middle, in addition to sidewalks and bicycle lane connections on Vesta Street. Two lateral roads along Vesta Street on the east (dry) side and one lateral road on the west (wet) side of NBSD would be constructed to continue providing access to Naval facilities and serve existing traffic. The proposed bridge would also include LED (light-emitting diode) lighting attached to the bridge barriers. Two

bridge construction options are being considered during final design, both of which would have the same location and general footprint:

- Cast-in-Place (CIP) Prestressed Box Girder Structure with Outrigger Bent. This option would consist of a two-span bridge structure that is 526 feet long (two 263-foot span lengths). The outrigger bent (consisting of a 13-foot by 9-foot outrigger cap and two 9-foot diameter columns) is proposed to avoid or minimize impacts to existing underground utilities. The width of the bridge structure would be 58 feet 11 inches. The depth of the box girder would be 10 feet 9 inches.
- Precast (PC) Prestressed Wide Flange Girder Structure. This option would consist of a four-span bridge structure that is 526 feet long (with span lengths of 120 feet 6 inches, 142 feet 6 inches, 154 feet, and 109 feet, respectively). The width of the proposed bridge structure is 58 feet 11 inches. The depth of the bridge deck and wide flange girders would be 5 feet 11 inches.

A reversible lane traffic management system is being considered for the proposed Vesta Street Bridge. The system would consist of pavement delineation along the reversible lane in the center, and installation of gantries with electronic displays to indicate the direction of travel. The reversible lane would be managed with ITS technology, signage, striping, and/or retractable bollards.

#### *On/Off-Ramps*

Construct improvements to the southbound SR-15/Main Street on/off-ramp and the I-5/National Avenue northbound on-ramp. The SR-15/Main Street off-ramp would be widened to accommodate an exclusive left-turn lane along with the existing shared left turn-right -turn lane. An existing traffic signal and lighting standard would be relocated or replaced due to the proposed widening. An existing ADA curb ramp would be reconstructed, and a drainage inlet relocated due to the proposed ramp widening. Pavement segments of the SR-15/Main Street on/off-ramp would be rehabilitated up to Chollas Creek. An existing drainage inlet along the SR-15/Main Street on-ramp would be reconstructed.

The existing northbound loop on-ramps to I-5 from National Avenue and 28<sup>th</sup> Street would be repositioned to a “T” shape, and the existing on-ramp entrance from 28<sup>th</sup> Street will be closed. A dedicated right-turn lane would be constructed to lead to the modified on-ramp entrance, along with a new sidewalk and upgrades to ADA ramps.

Refer to Figures 1-5 and 1-6 for more detail on the proposed on/off-ramp improvements.

Figure 1-5: SR-15/Main Street Off-Ramp Improvements

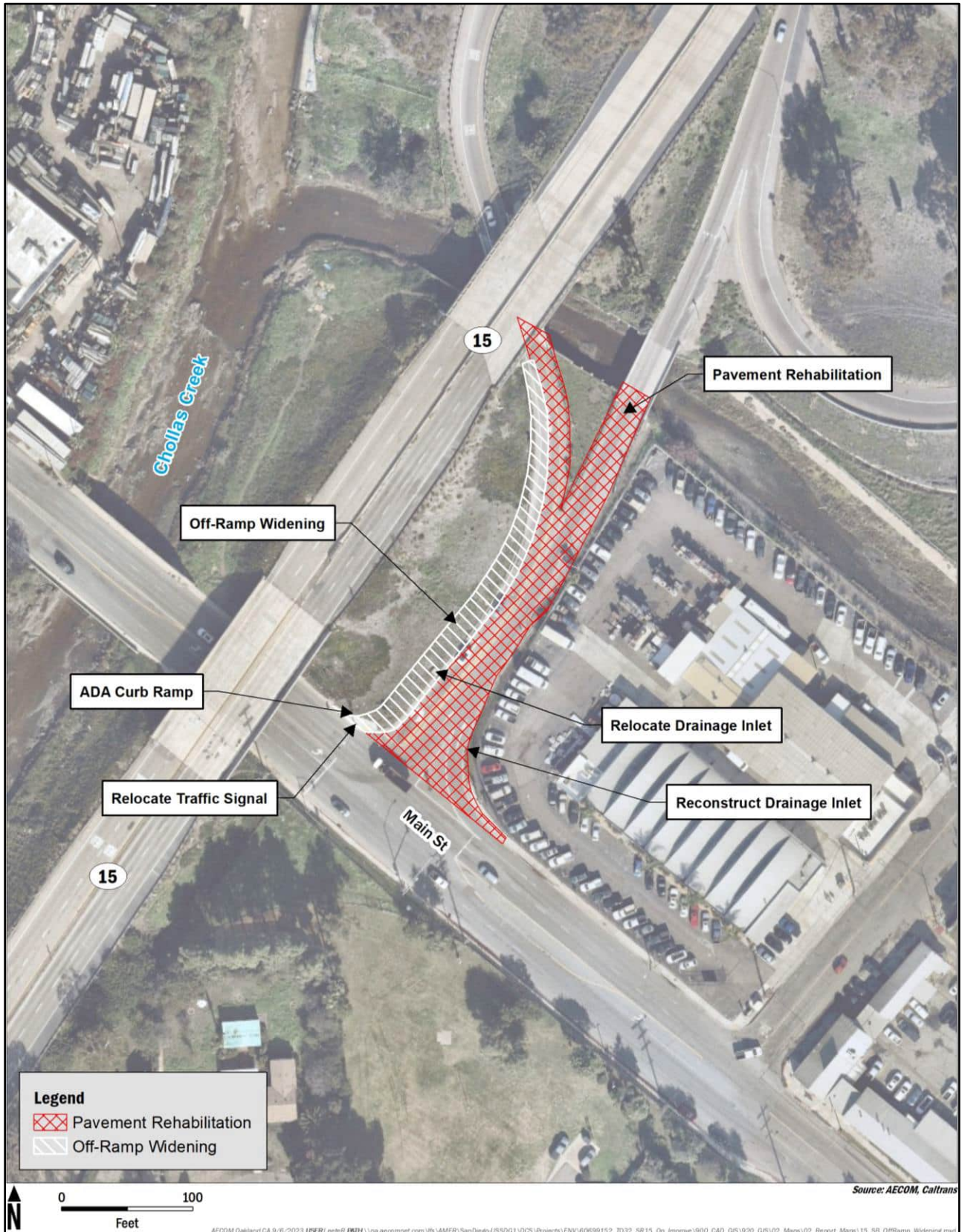


Figure 1-6: I-5/National Avenue On-Ramp Improvements



### *Pavement Rehabilitation*

Pavement rehabilitation of areas with poor conditions on Harbor Drive, Main Street/Vesta Street, Vesta Street just west of Norman Scott Road, and the SR-15/Main Street on/off-ramp. Additional locations may be identified during final project design which would occur within the built environment at existing intersections. Pavement rehabilitation methods would include cold planing (controlled removal of the surface of the existing pavement), hot mix asphalt overlay (application of a new layer of asphalt over an existing base layer of asphalt on a roadway), redevelopment of the pavement structure (replacement of surface course, base, and subbase), and enhancements including Jointed Plain Concrete Pavement.

### *Complete Street Improvements*

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities: Upgrade bicycle and pedestrian facilities at first and last mile connections to ensure safe access to the Bayshore Bikeway and nearby transit stations. The Vesta Street Bridge and approach roadways would accommodate two bicycle lanes and a sidewalk to further connectivity throughout the area.

### *Sustainability Improvements*

Zero-Emission Vehicle Infrastructure: Install zero-emission commercial vehicle infrastructure with electric conduit infrastructure to advance sustainable freight fleets by the Port and achieve emission reduction targets of Portside communities. Zero-emission vehicle infrastructure may include charging stations, wireless charging, and/or hydrogen fuel cells and would be located within the built environment along the Harbor Drive corridor.

### *Paved Median and Intersection Movement Restriction*

A new paved median is proposed at the intersection of Harbor Drive and Beardsley Street. This paved median would restrict vehicles from Beardsley Street to left turns onto southbound Harbor Drive or southbound Harbor Drive vehicles to left turns onto eastbound Beardsley Street.

### *Naval Gate Improvements*

Extend the existing westbound left-turn lane and add a second southbound right-turn lane along Harbor Drive to relieve congestion at the intersection of 32<sup>nd</sup> Street/Harbor Drive near Gate 6. Opening Gate 29 along Vesta Street, located just south of Main Street, during AM and PM peak hours would improve mobility and potentially alleviate traffic from other gates. The installation of signal prioritization technology at the intersections of 32<sup>nd</sup> Street/Harbor Drive and 32<sup>nd</sup> Street/Wabash Boulevard/Norman Scott Road would improve mobility and alleviate congestion near Gates 6 and 43 (located on Norman Scott Road just east of 32<sup>nd</sup> Street), respectively. Construction of the Vesta Street Bridge would result in the permanent closure of Gate 7 on Vesta Street on the west (wet) side of NBSD.

### *Striping*

A combination of perpendicular parking stall striping would be introduced on the westbound lane on Boston Avenue from 28<sup>th</sup> Street to 29<sup>th</sup> Street in coordination with the Boston Avenue Linear Park project. The new parking configuration would be similar to the parking configuration along Boston Avenue south of 29<sup>th</sup> Street. A total of 29 public parking spaces would be added.

### *Landscaping and Drainage Improvements*

Landscaping would be added in the median on Harbor Drive south of 8<sup>th</sup> Street to approximately Civic Center Drive.

The existing drainage system along Vesta Street would be modified and new systems installed to collect, convey, and dispose of the surface runoff from the proposed bridge, roadway segments, and lateral roads in NBSD. Additionally, restoration of the small pocket park at NBSD at Vesta Street/McCandless Boulevard is anticipated following construction, with existing irrigation systems and plantings replaced.

The existing drainage system at the SR-15/Main Street off-ramp would be modified to accommodate the proposed improvements and collect the increased surface runoff in this area. The revised drainage system would continue to discharge to Chollas Creek.

### ***Construction Activities and Schedule***

Construction of the Build Alternative is expected to begin in 2028 and last approximately 24 months, with an opening year of 2030. Construction of various components of the project may be staggered depending on the programming of funding, right-of-way approvals, or other factors (e.g., Vesta Street Bridge construction may start or end later than the Harbor Drive improvements). Construction processes along Harbor Drive, local arterials/streets, and at the on/off-ramps would involve grading, excavation, pavement removal/repaving, trenching for conduit installation at new traffic signals, lane restriping, and erection of gantries/traffic signals over the roadway. Construction processes for the Vesta Street Bridge would involve grading, excavation, impact pile driving, foundation installation, retaining wall construction, paving, and conduit installation.

Construction would also include utility relocation and/or reinstallation to avoid conflicts. Retrofit of an existing truss tower (transmission structure) and installation of a new truss tower may be required to raise the existing overhead transmission lines approximately 30 feet to provide adequate clearance for the bridge. Raising poles may be required as well.

Construction staging would occur in various locations along the Harbor Drive corridor and within NBSD. Temporary construction easements and permanent easements would be required to implement the Build Alternative. It is anticipated that approximately 30 temporary construction easements would be needed for the project from property owners in the area, including the City of San Diego, City of National City, BNSF, MTS, NBSD, and private property owners along the corridor. Temporary and permanent

easements would be negotiated by Caltrans and/or SANDAG pending project approval and after final design. The Build Alternative would not result in any residential or commercial property relocations.

### **1.4.2 No Build (No Action) Alternative**

The No Build Alternative provides a baseline for considerations of the Build Alternative. It may be preferred if the Build Alternative has substantial impacts to the environment, does not serve the project's purpose and need, or is not economically feasible.

The No Build Alternative retains the existing conditions in the project area and would not address the purpose and need of the project. This alternative would not provide more efficient goods movement; improve Working Waterfront access and circulation; improve community safety, health and the environment; upgrade bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure; or rehabilitate areas with distressed pavement conditions.

### **1.4.3 Standard Measures and Best Management Practices**

The Build Alternative includes features designed to improve environmental conditions in the area and benefit the community. Build Alternative features such as dedicated and mixed-flow truck lanes, ITS improvements, on/off-ramp improvements, and the Vesta Street Bridge would function together to reduce congestion in the project area, which would subsequently reduce pollutant exposure in nearby neighborhoods from truck traffic and vehicle idling. Sustainability improvements, such as zero-emission vehicle infrastructure, would also improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from gas-powered vehicles. Dedicated truck lanes would reduce cut-through traffic in residential neighborhoods and improve safety for residents. Access and circulation throughout nearby neighborhoods would also be improved by minimizing freight truck use of local roads. The proposed Complete Streets improvements would improve safety and encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation along the Harbor Drive corridor, which could also have community health benefits.

Additionally, this project would incorporate standardized project measures and Best Management Practices (BMPs) which are employed on most, if not all, Caltrans projects and were not developed in response to any specific environmental impact resulting from the proposed project. These measures are addressed in more detail in Chapters 2 and 3.

- The construction contractor must comply with the SDAPCD Rule 55 and Caltrans' Standard Specifications (14-9). Section 14-9 includes specifications requiring compliance with applicable laws and regulations related to air quality, including air pollution control district, and air quality management district regulations and local ordinances. Per Section 14-9, waste or material generated from construction activities would not be disposed of by burning.

- This project is located within a designated Assembly Bill 617 Air Protection Program community; therefore, the entire project is subject to Caltrans' Standard Special Provision 5-1.33 and 7-1.02C Air Protection Program Communities. The Contractor is required to use tier 4 interim or tier 4 final engines for off-road diesel-fueled vehicles subject to 13 CA Code of Regulations § 2449 instead of the use of lowered tiered engines. However, the requirement to use tier 4 interim or tier 4 final engines does not apply to vehicles registered to operate on public roads when those vehicles are used solely to deliver materials or supplies to the job site.
- Water or dust palliative would be applied to the site and equipment as often as necessary to control fugitive dust emissions. Fugitive emissions generally must meet a "no visible dust" criterion either at the point of emissions or at the right-of-way line, depending on local regulations.
- Construction equipment and vehicles would be properly tuned and maintained, and would use low sulfur fuel as required by California Code of Regulations Title 17, Section 93114.
- Equipment and materials storage sites would be located as far away from residential and park uses as feasible, and construction areas would be kept clean and orderly.
- To the extent feasible, construction traffic would be scheduled and routed to reduce congestion and related air quality impacts caused by idling vehicles along local roads during peak travel times.
- ITS elements would be implemented to smooth traffic flow and increase efficiency.
- The construction contractor shall utilize alternative fuels such as renewable diesel for construction equipment when feasible.
- The contractor shall implement an idling limit of 5 minutes for delivery trucks and other diesel-powered equipment (with some exceptions).
- The contractor shall schedule truck trips outside of peak morning and evening commute hours and implement a Traffic Management Plan (TMP), to be developed during the design phase, to minimize the effects to traffic.
- The construction contractor shall reduce construction waste.
- The contractor shall encourage improved fuel efficiency from construction equipment through ensuring that construction equipment is maintained and properly tuned and equipment has been correctly sized for the job.

- The contractor shall provide construction personnel with the knowledge to identify environmental issues and best practice methods to minimize impacts to the human and natural environment. The contractor shall supplement existing training with information regarding methods to reduce greenhouse gas emissions related to construction.
- For hazardous waste generated on the job site, the Water Pollution Control (WPC) manager must be knowledgeable of proper handling and emergency procedures for hazardous waste as demonstrated by submitting a training certificate which indicates completion of training required under 22 CA Code of Regulations § 66265.16, as per Caltrans' Standard Specification 14-11.01.
- The construction contractor, upon discovery of unanticipated asbestos and/or hazardous substance, is required to immediately stop working in the area of discovery and notify Caltrans' Environmental Engineering per Caltrans' Standard Specification 14-11.02. Environmental Engineering will use on-call Construction Emergency Response Contract to perform any required work.
- The construction contractor is required, per Caltrans' Standard Specification 14-11.03, to handle, store, and dispose of hazardous waste under 22 CA Code of Regs Div. 4.5.
- A Lead Compliance Plan under Caltrans Standard Specification 7-1.02K(6)(j)(ii) would be required during construction when handling lead contaminated soils, as well as removal of lead-based paint, thermoplastic, painted traffic stripe, and/or pavement marking.
- Excavation, transportation, and handling of material containing hazardous waste or contamination must result in no visible dust migration. When clearing, grubbing, and performing earthwork operations in areas containing hazardous waste or contamination, at water truck or water tank must be provided on the job site per Caltrans' Standard Specification 14-11.04.
- The construction contractor is not permitted to stockpile material containing hazardous waste or contamination unless ordered. Stockpiles containing hazardous waste or contamination must not be placed where affected by surface run-on or run-off. Stockpiles are not permitted in environmentally sensitive areas (ESAs). Stockpiled material must not enter storm drains, inlets, or waters of the State. These requirements are provided in Caltrans' Standard Specification 14-11.05.
- The construction contractor is designated the generator of hazardous waste produced from materials the construction contractor has brought to the job site per Caltrans' Standard Specification 14-11.06.
- Removal of any treated wood waste (TWW) (e.g., wooden posts for guardrails, signs, barriers, or piles) would require proper handling and disposal per Caltrans'

Standard Special Provision 14-11.14. TWW products contain hazardous chemical preservatives, therefore, TWW is considered a California Hazardous Waste.

- Imported local materials from either a (1) noncommercial source, or (2) source not regulated under California jurisdiction, must be evaluated and approved for use by Environmental Engineering Branch per Caltrans Standard Specification 6-1.03B.
- Minimization measures to ensure traffic impacts resulting from construction activities would be implemented with the TMP including appropriate staging, timing, and sequencing of activities; maintenance of traffic in both directions; and advanced notification to motorists and nearby communities to inform the public of potential delays.
- Prior to construction activities, Caltrans would contact utilities, DigAlert services, and/or other applicable entities to mark underground facilities, as needed.
- Emergency service providers and first responders would be notified of construction sequencing and the potential for temporary lane closures and/or changes to traffic circulation, as identified in the TMP.

## **1.5 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT ELIMINATED FROM FURTHER DISCUSSION**

### **1.5.1 Alternative 1**

As described in Section 1.1.1 – Project Background above, various alternatives were initially considered for the Vesta Street Bridge component of the Build Alternative. One of the alternatives carried forward for further analysis and ultimately eliminated was construction of a direct access ramp, a type of elevated structure for vehicles to directly access Harbor Drive to and from SR-15. However, it was determined that this alternative would preclude access to and from SR-15 at 32nd Street and Wabash Boulevard. In addition, this alternative had significant right-of-way and environmental impacts to NBSD and surrounding businesses and did not provide for optimum internal base circulation. Community feedback also indicated a preference for no additional elevated freeway structures in the area. Therefore, this alternative was dismissed from further consideration and is not assessed in this document.

### **1.5.2 Alternative 2**

An additional alternative considered for the Vesta Street Bridge component of the Build Alternative was the construction of two direct connector ramps from SR-15 to Harbor Drive, along with construction of the Vesta Street Bridge and other operational improvements. This alternative would have created substantial environmental impacts to Chollas Creek. In addition, it was estimated that 85 on-street private parking spaces

would be eliminated along Harbor Drive to accommodate one of the connectors. Therefore, this alternative was dismissed from further consideration and is not assessed in this document.

### 1.5.3 Alternative 3

An alternative including a roundabout at the SR-15/Main Street intersection was considered as part of project development. The preliminary one-lane roundabout design would consist of a 135-foot inscribed circle diameter, center island diameter of 28 feet, and a 20-foot-wide lane. The preliminary roundabout design considered the future planned two-way cycle track on the south side of Main Street between Schley Street and Rigel Street (Chollas Creek to Bayshore Bikeway Multi-Use Path). However, construction of the roundabout would potentially result in right-of-way impacts, utility relocations, and additional environmental considerations. Therefore, this alternative was dismissed from further consideration and is not assessed in this document.

## 1.6 PERMITS AND APPROVALS NEEDED

The following permits, licenses, agreements, and certifications are required for project construction:

**Table 1-1: Permits and Approvals**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Permit/Approval</b>	<b>Status</b>
City of San Diego	Coastal Development Permit	Would be obtained during the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates phase.
City of National City	Coastal Development Permit	Would be obtained during the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates phase.
Port of San Diego	Coastal Development Permit	Would be obtained during the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates phase.
California Coastal Commission	Coastal Development Permit, Coastal Zone Management Act Consistency Determination (for portions of project within federal lands on NBSD)	Would be obtained during the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates phase.
California Public Utilities Commission	Approval for Railway Crossing; submittal of CPUC GO88 application	Would be obtained during the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates phase.

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# **Chapter 2      Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures**

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## **2.1 TOPICS CONSIDERED BUT DETERMINED NOT TO BE RELEVANT**

As part of the scoping and environmental analysis carried out for the project, the following environmental issues were considered but no adverse impacts were identified. As a result, no further discussion about these issues is included in this document.

### **2.1.1 Wild and Scenic Rivers**

The proposed project is in a highly urbanized area within the Cities of San Diego and National City, and NBSD. There are no wild and scenic rivers within the project limits. No direct or indirect effects to wild and scenic rivers could occur; thus, this topic is not considered further.

### **2.1.2 Farmlands**

There are no farmlands within the project limits and no direct or indirect effects to farmland could occur; thus, this topic is not considered further.

### **2.1.3 Timberlands**

There are no timberlands within the project limits and no direct or indirect effects to timberlands could occur; thus, this topic is not considered further.

### **2.1.4 Growth**

The proposed project would implement transportation improvements to address existing congestion and circulation issues along the Harbor Drive corridor and connecting arterials to the state highway system. No access to previously unserved areas would be created by the proposed project and the project would not facilitate growth. Therefore, this topic is not considered further.

## 2.2 HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

The following sections are based, in part, on a Community Impact Assessment (CIA) prepared for the proposed project, dated August 2023.

### 2.2.1 Existing and Future Land Use

#### *Affected Environment*

The project area is primarily located within the City of San Diego along the Harbor Drive corridor, with a small portion located within northwestern National City. The land use types within the project area include heavy/light industrial, service commercial, public facilities, retail, single-family residential, and recreation. Heavy industrial uses are concentrated on the west side of Harbor Drive, with the railway separating the roadway from adjacent land uses to the east. Regional highway systems are prominent as well, including I-5 and interchanges with SR-15 and State Route 75 (SR-75). The existing land uses in the project area vary considerably, with heavy and light industrial uses bordering Harbor Drive and residential communities further east. The following paragraphs describe land uses in the project limits and the study area, based on land use plans and maps of the City of San Diego (2015) and the City of National City (2011). General Plan or community plan land use designations are referenced as they provide an indication of the existing and anticipated development in each respective jurisdiction.

In the project area within the City of San Diego, land use types are described in the relevant community plans adopted for the area, which include the Downtown Community Plan and the Barrio Logan Community Plans. The northernmost portion of the project is located within the Downtown Community Plan and is adjacent to lands designated as Ballpark Mixed-Use, Mixed Commercial, Transportation, and Convention Center/Visitor. The Ballpark Mixed-Use designation is intended for a broad array of uses (eating and drinking establishments, hotels, residential uses) to accommodate major sporting facilities and visitor attractions. Petco Park, a baseball stadium home to the San Diego Padres, is located within this area just north of the project footprint. To the west of Petco Park are lands designated as Convention Center/Visitor, where land uses include hotels, open spaces, and the San Diego Convention Center. The Mixed Commercial designation is similarly intended for multiple land use types, including residential, hotels, offices, research and development, retail, and continued operation of existing service and industrial uses.

As the project moves farther south, it enters Barrio Logan, a mixed-use working neighborhood with a diversity of land uses, ranging from residential to industrial. Land use designations adjacent to Harbor Drive include Office Commercial, Heavy Industrial, Maritime Commercial, and Military Use. The Office Commercial designation provides for office employment uses with limited, complementary retail uses. Lands with this designation are located east of Harbor Drive adjacent to the Beardsley Street and Cesar E. Chavez Parkway intersections, and just north and south of the SR-75 overcrossing.

The Heavy Industrial designation provides for industrial uses emphasizing base sector manufacturing, wholesale and distribution, and primary processing uses that may have nuisance or hazardous characteristics. These land uses are mainly associated with the Port and are located on the west side of Harbor Drive from approximately Beardsley Street to 28<sup>th</sup> Street. The Maritime Commercial land use designation provides for commercial services and uses that cater to maritime industries. This land use type is generally located to the east of Harbor Drive across the railway, from about Evans Street to 28<sup>th</sup> Street. Farther east across Main Street, land use types in Barrio Logan shift to a mix of residential uses and supporting retail. The proposed Vesta Street Bridge is entirely located within NBSD in lands designated as Military Use and is adjacent to lands designated Heavy Industrial. NBSD occupies approximately 1,600 acres along the San Diego Bay in the central and southern portions of the project area.

The southernmost portion of the project is located within National City. Land uses along Harbor Drive in this portion of the project are designated Military and Industrial/Salt Production. The Industrial/Salt Production land use includes light industrial uses such as auto repair services and recycling centers, manufacturing uses, and warehousing and public storage uses. The Military land use signifies areas under military jurisdiction.

The project area is heavily affected by Port and NBSD activities. Regional commuters currently use I-5 and SR-15 and various local roadways to enter NBSD from a series of secure access gates on Harbor Drive and Norman Scott Road. Freight trucks access the Port to make deliveries via similar travel pathways. Residential neighborhoods and local retail services (restaurants, cafes, laundromats, etc.) are one block east of Harbor Drive, along Main Street, and also contribute vehicle trips to and from the area. This creates highly congested conditions in the project area, particularly during peak travel hours.

### *Developments in the Project Vicinity*

Future proposed and approved developments within approximately one mile of the proposed project are described below by jurisdiction.

#### Port of San Diego

- Port Master Plan Update (Port 2021): Update to the Port's long-range integrated master plan. Identifies planned improvements for each planning district and the addition of new hotel and retail space as well as improvements to public access and recreational resources, and in-water features such as additional recreational boat berthing space. The Master Plan encompasses an approximately 2,600-acre area and has a planning horizon of 30 years. Currently (at the time this document was prepared) in environmental review phase.
- National City Bayfront Projects: Port Master Plan Amendment (PMPA) and Bayfront Projects on the National City Bayfront. The PMPA and Bayfront Projects Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was certified by National City in November 2022. The project includes expansion of Pepper Park by 2.5 acres, realignment

of Marina Way to buffer commercial recreation and maritime uses, improvements to visual corridors and public access corridors for pedestrians and cyclists, and creation of more contiguous commercial recreation and maritime uses.

Additionally, four project-specific developments are included in the project:

- Pasha Road Closures Project – closure of Tidelands Avenue between Bay Marina Drive and West 32nd Street, and West 28th Street between Tidelands Avenue and Quay Avenue
- Bayshore Bikeway – permanent alignment of Segment 5 of the Bayshore Bikeway in National City (along McKinley Avenue in the northern end)
- GB Capital Project – Recreational Vehicle (RV) park, modular cabins, and up to four hotels with 465 rooms at the Pier 32 marina
- Pasha Connector Rail Project – connector rail track to connect the existing rail and loop track on the National City Marine Terminal to the existing Burlington Northern Santa Fe National City Yard.

#### San Diego Association of Governments

- Bayshore Bikeway – Barrio Logan Segment (32nd Street to Park Boulevard): Construction of a 2.5-mile segment of the Bayshore Bikeway along Harbor Drive between Park Boulevard and 32nd Street. Construction began in May 2022 and the bikeway is expected to open to the public in 2024.

#### City of San Diego

- Barrio Logan Community Plan Update: This community plan update guides growth and development in the approximately 1,000-acre Barrio Logan community. No specific developments are proposed in the community plan; however, key elements include a 65-acre commercial buffer between residential areas and industrial areas, multimodal improvements, new parks and public spaces, and designated truck routes outside of residential areas. The plan was adopted in 2021 and is awaiting California Coastal Commission certification.
- Harbor Drive Trunk Sewer (CIP ID #S18006): Upgrade the Harbor Drive Trunk Sewer in Imperial Avenue, Park Boulevard, and East Harbor Drive to improve the structural integrity of this reach and increase its capacity to support additional sewage flows from the Ballpark Village project. Construction began in November 2022.
- Park Boulevard at-grade railway crossing: Construct an at-grade railway crossing from the west end of Park Boulevard to Harbor Drive. Currently in design and planning, with construction planned for late 2023.
- Chicano Park Improvements (CIP ID #B20060): Storm drain improvements and ADA improvements in Chicano Park, as well as path of travel improvements to

two playgrounds and the Kiosko (bandstage) area. Currently in design, with construction planned for late 2023.

- Chollas Creek to Bayshore Multi Use Path (CIP ID #B17113): Construct new multi-use path to connect southeastern San Diego residents to the San Diego Bay, Bayshore Bikeway, and the trolley system. Project extends from Schley Street to Rigel Street along Main Street over approximately 1.2 miles. Currently in design phase with construction anticipated for 2027.
- Water line improvements (CIP ID #B00032): Construction of approximately 2,024 linear feet of 16-inch pipe to replace existing asbestos cement (AC) water mains. Construction of approximately 1,676 linear feet of new 12- and 16-inch water mains in the Port area to the west of Harbor Drive (along Cesar E Chavez Parkway, Belt Street, Sampson Street, and other local roads). Currently in design phase with construction anticipated for 2026.
- Water and sewer line improvements (CIP ID #B19166): Replacement of approximately 9,473 linear feet of existing 4-, 6-, 8-, 12-, and 16-inch diameter AC pipes with polyvinyl chloride (PVC) pipes. Construction of 493 linear feet of new water pipes and associated improvements. Currently under construction, anticipated for completion in early 2024.
- Sewer line improvements (CIP ID #B19064): Replacement of approximately 0.70 miles of existing 6, 8, and 10-inch vitrified clay (VC), concrete, and PVC mains with new 8- and 10-inch PVC pipes on Harbor Drive over Chollas Creek. Replacement of 12 isolated manholes and service laterals connecting to the sewer main. Currently in design phase with construction anticipated for 2024.
- Barrio Logan sewer line improvements (CIP ID #B22038): Replacement of approximately 919 linear feet of existing 8-, 10-, and 12-inch VC and PVC sewer mains on Boston Avenue, S. 28<sup>th</sup> Street, and Harbor Drive. Construction of approximately 1,809 linear feet of new 8-inch sewer mains. Rehabilitate approximately 899 linear feet of existing VC and PVC sewer mains. Replumb 26 sewer laterals. Currently in design phase with construction anticipated for 2027.
- Barrio Logan water line improvements (CIP ID #B22060): Replacement of approximately 5,212 linear feet of 8- and 12-inch AC water mains. Construction of approximately 55,000 square feet of AC overlay along Main Street between Schley Street and 27<sup>th</sup> Street, and along 27<sup>th</sup> Street between Boston Avenue and Main Street.

### Caltrans

- SH-15 State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP) Asset Management Project. 10-mile project on SR-15 which includes various improvements such as drainage, lighting, sign panels, Transportation

Management Systems, and ADA infrastructure. Currently in design phase, with construction anticipated to begin in 2025.

Caltrans/City of San Diego

- **Boston Avenue Linear Park**: As a part of the Clean California Beautification Projects, develop a pedestrian/bike path to serve the community of Barrio Logan; install a meandering pedestrian/bike path, fencing, and lighting adjacent to I-5 on Boston Avenue. Currently under construction; anticipated for completion in October 2023.

***Environmental Consequences***

The Build Alternative would serve the existing urbanized area and would not involve the development of any undeveloped land. The proposed improvements along Harbor Drive and at connecting arterials to SR-15 and I-5 would reduce congestion in the area and would not preclude any specific land uses. Connectivity to the Barrio Logan segment of the Bayshore Bikeway would be retained and is planned for in the project. The proposed project would upgrade bicycle and pedestrian facilities to ensure safe access to the Bayshore Bikeway and nearby transit stations.

The proposed Vesta Street Bridge component of the Build Alternative would be located entirely within NBSD lands and would improve connectivity between the east (dry) and west (wet) sides of NBSD. The proposed improvements would not alter land use designations in the area or result in land use conflicts by facilitating new growth or development in previously unanticipated areas. The proposed Vesta Street Bridge is intended to serve existing and future commuter traffic for NBSD, thereby reducing congestion effects in surrounding neighborhoods.

The Build Alternative would not preclude development of any of the proposed or ongoing projects and plans described in the preceding section. While some of the projects discussed would occur in similar areas as the proposed project, the project would coordinate with the appropriate agencies to ensure construction timelines are not in conflict and potential utility conflicts are avoided.

The No Build Alternative would not require any land use changes. Right-of-way in the project area would remain intact and no land use conflicts would occur aside from existing land use conflicts between industrial and residential land uses in the area.

***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

No avoidance, minimization, or mitigation is required.

## **2.2.2 Consistency with State, Regional, and Local Plans and Programs**

### ***Affected Environment***

Several regional, community, and transportation plans include the project area. The following types of plans were considered and are discussed below:

- Transportation plans/programs
- Regional growth plans
- General plans and community plans
- Local coastal plans/programs
- Habitat Conservation Programs

### ***Transportation Plans/Programs***

The proposed project is included in SANDAG's 2021 Regional Plan, which is the combined regional transportation plan (RTP), sustainable communities strategy (SCS), and regional comprehensive plan for the 18-city San Diego region (SANDAG 2021). The 2021 Regional Plan provides a long-term blueprint for the San Diego region that seeks to meet regulatory requirements, address traffic congestion; and create equal access to jobs, education, healthcare, and other community resources. The Harbor Drive 2.0 and Vesta Street Bridge projects (which together constitute the proposed project in this document) are identified in Appendix A of the 2021 Regional Plan as Project IDs GM06 and GM09, respectively.

The 2050 San Diego Regional Bicycle Plan (SANDAG 2010) is incorporated into the 2021 Regional Plan. The Regional Bicycle Plan identifies key high-priority regional Class I bikeway corridors, including the Bayshore Bikeway, San Diego River Trail, Inland Rail Trail, and Coastal Rail Trail. Of relevance to the project is the Bayshore Bikeway, which is a regional corridor that is planned to extend 24 miles around the San Diego Bay and is being implemented in segments. The Barrio Logan segment of the Bayshore Bikeway (Park Boulevard to 32nd Street) is an approximately 2.5-mile portion of the bikeway that extends along Harbor Drive in the project area.

SANDAG is also in process of preparing Comprehensive Multimodal Corridor Plans (CMCPs) for all 12 major transportation corridors in the San Diego region. CMCPs are designed to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and improve mobility throughout the region. CMCPs are one of the strategies in place to implement the 2021 Regional Plan; plans for each corridor are expected to be complete by 2025.

### *Regional Growth Plans*

SANDAG's 2021 Regional Plan also functions as a regional growth plan for the San Diego region. The San Diego region is expected to grow by nearly 437,000 people between 2016 and 2050, which will in turn drive job growth and housing demand. The SCS, included as part of the 2021 Regional Plan, concentrates anticipated development into either Mobility Hubs or Smart Growth Opportunity Areas. These focus areas are used to identify transportation improvements needed to accommodate expected growth.

### *General and Community Plans*

General and community plans were reviewed for the jurisdictions in the project vicinity including the City of San Diego General Plan (City of San Diego 2008), the Downtown Community Plan (City of San Diego 2006), the Barrio Logan Community Plan (City of San Diego 2021a), and the City of National City General Plan (City of National City 2011). The following plan policies address transportation improvements, bicycle and pedestrian improvements, and goods movement relevant to the project corridor.

#### *City of San Diego General Plan*

- Policy LU-H.1. Promote development of balanced communities that take into account community-wide involvement, participation, and needs.
  - b. Invest strategically in public infrastructure and offer development incentives that are consistent with the neighborhood's vision.
- Policy LU-H.6. Provide linkages among employment sites, housing, and villages via an integrated transit system and a well-defined pedestrian and bicycle network.
- Policy LU-I.7. Treat all people fairly with respect to the development, adoption, implementation and enforcement of transportation policies, plans, and projects.
- Policy LU-I.8. Expand public outreach on transportation policy, projects, and operations in order to get input from ethnic minorities, low-income residents, persons with disabilities, the elderly and other under-represented communities. Ensure that people who are directly affected by a proposed action are given opportunities to provide input.
- Policy LU-I.9. Design transportation projects so that the resulting benefits and potential burdens are equitable. Some of the benefits of transportation programs include improved accessibility, faster trips, more mobility choices, and reduced congestion. Common negative consequences include health impacts of air pollution, noise, crash-related injuries and fatalities, dislocation of residents, and division of communities.

### San Diego Downtown Community Plan

- Policy 5.1-P-1. Do not allow full or partial street closures by new buildings, utilities, ramps, or transportation improvements. The only allowable use enabled through a street closure is park or open space. Where a street closure to vehicular traffic may be essential, access for pedestrians and bicycles must still be maintained.
- Policy 7.1-P4. Work with appropriate transportation agencies on freeway improvements in or near the downtown area.
- Goal 7.2-G-6. A cohesive and well connected bicycle system within downtown that provides linkages within the area and to surrounding neighborhoods, including the waterfront and Port District tidelands.
- Policy 7.2-P-10. Connect downtown's Cycleways with surrounding communities, the waterfront and Port District tidelands, and transit facilities to encourage everyday commute and recreational bicycle trips within the region.

### Barrio Logan Community Plan

- Policy 2.5.3. Encourage parking management, increased use of alternative modes of transportation, and additional parking spaces to reduce parking impacts associated with port-related industries.
- Policy 2.7.17. Ensure that truck and auto ingress and egress are taken from the west side of properties facing the railway and trolley tracks in order to minimize impacts to the community east of Main Street.
- Policy 3.1.2. Support and promote complete sidewalks and intersection improvements along Harbor Drive including the intersections at: Sampson Street, Cesar E. Chavez Parkway, Schley Street, 28th Street and 32nd Street.
- Policy 3.1.7. Provide high visibility crosswalks, pedestrian countdown timers, and ADA compliant ramps at all signalized intersections.
- Policy 3.1.8. Coordinate with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to improve the pedestrian and bicycle environment, improve active transportation access to nearby communities, and reduce conflicts with motor vehicles at all freeway on- and off-ramps, undercrossings, and overcrossings.
- Policy 3.1.15. Transform unused rail and freeway rights-of-way into landscaped features to provide a pleasant and safe route where possible for pedestrians. Prioritize improvements for the areas along the east side of Harbor Drive between 32nd Street and Downtown San Diego and adjacent to I-5, SR-75 and SR-15 where the freeway is at-grade or elevated.

- Policy 3.3.7. Implement ITS strategies such as smart parking technology, dynamic message signs, adaptive signals, advance preemption at rail crossings, and traffic signal coordination to improve safety and reduce traffic congestion especially along Harbor Drive, Cesar E. Chavez Parkway, 28th Street and 32nd Street.
- Policy 3.3.8. Consider, encourage, and accommodate the use of innovative transportation improvements and emerging technologies to address regional and local transportation demand in Barrio Logan.
- Policy 3.3.9. Coordinate with the US Navy and Caltrans to reduce congestion on 32nd Street through the construction of the Vesta Street bridge at Harbor Drive and operational and ITS improvements at multiple intersections including 32nd Street, Norman Scott Road and Wabash Street, Harbor Drive and 32nd Street, Main Street and I-15 Ramps.
- Policy 3.5.1. Provide and support a continuous network of safe, convenient and attractive bicycle facilities connecting Barrio Logan to the citywide bicycle network and implementing the San Diego Bicycle Master Plan, the Regional Bike Plan, and the Bayshore Bikeway.
- Policy 3.5.4. Support opportunities to explore a Class IV cycle track connection from Harbor Drive to Main Street along 32nd Street and a Class I bicycle path adjacent to Chollas Creek in consultation with the US Navy redevelopment of the Navy Exchange and the Vesta Street Bridge project.
- Policy 3.5.5. Coordinate with Caltrans and the US Navy on multi-modal improvements along areas within and adjacent to their right-of-way, this could include, but not limited to, alternative Chollas Creek connections and alignments to/from Barrio Logan and the bayfront.
- Policy 3.7.3. Ensure that adopted goods movement routes including Harbor Drive, 28th Street and 32nd Street meet the demands of the local businesses and Maritime industries.
- Policy 3.7.4. Support the Port and Caltrans efforts to develop improvements to facilitate truck access to and from Harbor Drive and SR-15, while relieving congestion and impacts to the community's transportation network. This includes supporting and coordinating with these agencies on the Harbor Drive 2.0 project for potential "flexible" lanes in each direction of Harbor Drive would be dedicated for trucks, transit buses, and/or shuttles with the primary goal to enhance freight connectivity between the marine terminals and freeways.
- Policy 3.7.5. Discourage trucks from using local streets as a means of cutting through the community to access the freeways and marine terminals. Measures to minimize conflicts between trucks, residential needs, commuter access, and

other users of the community's neighborhood roadways, could include but not limited to:

- Implementation of traffic calming measures, such as speed humps, diverter islands, or other treatments, where appropriate.
  - Incorporate features on designated truck routes that make the prescribed streets more attractive and accommodating to these vehicles.
  - Improved truck signage regarding designated truck routes.
  - Robust enforcement of the use of truck routes, including investment in technologies and/or programs that monitor and enforce truck route compliance.
- Policy 3.7.7. Provide improvements and clear regulatory and wayfinding signage to facilitate legal local truck access within the community while minimizing impacts to residential and other sensitive uses.
  - Policy 3.7.8. Support the transition to and use of advanced clean trucks and zero emission vehicles, and strategic placement of the vehicle charging stations.

#### City of National City General Plan

- Policy LU-1-3: Use SANDAG's Regional Transportation Plan, Regional Comprehensive Plan, and Sustainable Communities Strategy as the basis for land use and transportation planning and policy development.
- Policy C-1.5. Work with state, regional, and local transportation entities to improve and expand transportation facilities and services that link residents to important land use destinations such as workplaces, schools, community and recreation areas, and shopping opportunities.
- Policy C-2.2: Enhance connectivity by eliminating gaps and barriers in roadway, bikeway, and pedestrian networks.
- Policy C-2.4: Work with Caltrans, SANDAG, MTS, and other responsible agencies to identify, plan, and implement needed transportation improvements.
- Policy C-2.5: Encourage traffic circulation improvements that minimize land acquisition and major construction, such as, but not limited to, enhanced road markings, synchronized traffic signals, Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) network management and more left turn restrictions.
- Policy C-3.2: Work with Caltrans and adjacent jurisdictions to plan and implement future roadway connections and circulation improvements.

- Policy C-6.1: Work with responsible and affected agencies to enhance infrastructure to facilitate timely movement of goods and security of trade, including facilities for efficient intermodal transfer between truck, rail, and marine transport.
- Policy C-6.2: Enforce the use of designated truck routes for both local and regional goods transport.

### *Local Coastal Plans/Programs*

The project is located within the California Coastal Zone and is subject to requirements of the 1976 California Coastal Act (CCA) for preparation of Local Coastal Programs (LCPs), with the exception of areas within the Port and NBSD. As required by the CCA, the City of San Diego has developed an LCP for implementation of the CCA. The LCP for the City of San Diego has been divided into 12 segments; the project area is primarily located within the Barrio Logan segment of the LCP. The Barrio Logan Community Plan and associated zoning regulations comprise the Local Coastal Plan for Barrio Logan and are consistent with the LCP. The northernmost portion of the project (on Harbor Drive north of Sigsbee Street) is located within the Downtown Community Plan, which similarly functions as the Local Coastal Plan for that area in conjunction with zoning regulations. Additional information is provided in Section 2.2.3 – Coastal Zone.

### *San Diego Unified Port District Master Plan*

In compliance with Chapter 8, Article 3 of the CCA, the Port District has prepared an update to its existing long-range integrated Master Plan. The Master Plan provides the official goals and planning policies, and identifies permissible water and land uses, for development and conservation of the District lands, tidelands, and submerged lands. In the project area, Harbor Drive crosses through the Master Plan area and is influenced heavily by Port activities. The following plan policies are included in the Mobility Element of the Master Plan and address transportation improvements, bicycle and pedestrian improvements, and goods movement relevant to the project corridor.

- M Policy 1.1.8. The District shall coordinate with agencies that have transportation authority, and with adjacent jurisdictions and permittees, to plan shared mobility infrastructure in support of the safe movement of people and/or goods.
- M Policy 2.2.2. Through CDPs issued by the District, permittees shall advance as part of development the implementation of zero-emission, when feasible, and near-zero-emission goods movement mobility options and maritime equipment, and supportive infrastructure improvements, in alignment with District sustainability and maritime clean air strategies.
- M Policy 2.2.11. The District shall engage with adjacent jurisdictions and regional, State and federal agencies to create a connected and flexible

multimodal corridor that provides efficient freeway access by leveraging technology to support dedicated lanes, signal prioritization, and/or geofencing. Refer to Chapter 5.4 Planning District 4: Working Waterfront for applicable planned improvements related to this policy.

### *Portside Community Emissions Reduction Plan*

The Portside Community Emissions Reductions Program (CERP), adopted in 2021 by the SDAPCD and approved by the California Air Resources Board (CARB) under AB 617, is a community-driven strategy to lower air pollution and community exposure to air pollution. The CERP encompasses the project area, including the communities of Barrio Logan, West National City, Logan Heights, and Sherman Heights, and emphasizes lowering diesel pollution and advancing zero-emission truck fleets.

### *Habitat Conservation Plans*

The City of San Diego, in cooperation with wildlife agencies, property owners, developers, and environmental groups, developed a Multiple Species Conservation Program (Biodiverse SD) to protect a total of 85 species in the San Diego area. The plan does not encompass the project area and is not discussed further.

In addition, the Port and Department of the Navy have adopted the Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (INRMP) for the San Diego Bay. The INRMP covers an approximately 12,000-acre area in and adjacent to the San Diego Bay, including lands directly adjacent to NBSD in the project vicinity. The INRMP provides ecosystem management guidance for Port and Navy activities.

### ***Environmental Consequences***

The proposed project is included in the 2021 Regional Plan prepared by SANDAG. The proposed project is included in regional and local transportation planning documents and would address identified congestion and circulation issues along Harbor Drive, to and from the Port, and between the east (dry) and west (wet) sides of NBSD. The project would not facilitate unplanned growth and would not conflict with regional growth plans.

The proposed project is located within the Coastal Zone and is subject to the LCP requirements of the CCA, with the exception of areas within the Port and NBSD (see Section 2.2.3 for further discussion). The relevant community plans in the project area serve as the Local Coastal Plans adopted in compliance with the CCA. The project's consistency with these community plans (Downtown Community Plan and Barrio Logan Community Plan) is further described below.

The proposed project is located within the INRMP planning area. As the project would primarily occur in the built environment within existing developed lands, conflicts with the INRMP are not anticipated. The project would not interfere with ongoing implementation actions related to monitoring, restoration, or avoidance of natural resources in the San Diego Bay, as detailed in the INRMP.

The proposed project's consistency with applicable local plan policies is summarized below.

#### *City of San Diego General Plan*

The Build Alternative would implement planned transportation improvements along a corridor that has been historically impacted by congestion due to Port and NBSD activities. The Build Alternative would provide for greater connectivity between employment uses in the area, improve congestion along Harbor Drive and the surrounding area, and minimize cut-through traffic on local residential streets. The Build Alternative would integrate planned bicycle routes (Bayshore Bikeway) into its design and make improvements at first and last mile connections to support bicycle, pedestrian, and transit connectivity. For these reasons, the Build Alternative would **not conflict** with City of San Diego General Plan policies related to transportation planning.

The No Build Alternative would not implement transportation improvements in the area to address congestion issues facing local communities and industries. The No Build Alternative would **not be consistent** with the City of San Diego General Plan policies related to transportation planning.

#### *San Diego Downtown Community Plan*

The Build Alternative may result in temporary road closures along Harbor Drive in the southernmost portion of the downtown area. However, vehicular access would be retained throughout the surrounding areas with implementation of traffic control. Bicycle and pedestrian access would be retained throughout construction to the extent feasible, considering safety and roadway circulation. The Build Alternative would integrate planned bicycle routes (Bayshore Bikeway) into its design and make improvements at first and last mile connections to support bicycle, pedestrian, and transit connectivity to bike routes throughout downtown. For these reasons, the Build Alternative would **not conflict** with Downtown Community Plan policies related to transportation planning.

The No Build Alternative would not result in any temporary road closures in or adjacent to downtown. Pedestrian and bicycle connections would remain under the No Build Alternative. Therefore, the No Build Alternative is **consistent** with Downtown Community Plan policies related to transportation planning.

#### *Barrio Logan Community Plan*

The Build Alternative would implement planned transportation improvements along a corridor that has been historically impacted by congestion due to Port and NBSD activities and commuter traffic. The Build Alternative (including both the Vesta Street Bridge and Harbor Drive 2.0 Operational Improvements) is identified in the Barrio Logan Community Plan as a transportation improvement that would address historical congestion issues and reduce community impacts from cut-through truck traffic, idling vehicles, and associated safety and public health issues. ITS technologies would be implemented under the Build Alternative, in alignment with Barrio Logan Community Plan policies, which would provide for more efficient freight and passenger travel

through the corridor and minimize truck usage of residential streets in Barrio Logan. The Build Alternative would integrate planned bicycle routes (Bayshore Bikeway) into its design and make improvements at first and last mile connections to support bicycle, pedestrian, and transit connectivity. Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure would be improved throughout the project area and ADA-compliant curbs and crosswalks would be installed at intersections. Additionally, the Build Alternative includes installation of zero-emission vehicle charging stations along the Harbor Drive corridor to advance sustainable freight fleets from the Port, which aligns with Barrio Logan Community Plan sustainability policies. The Build Alternative would address community safety, mobility, health, equity, goods movement, and access needs within the Harbor Drive corridor in the Barrio Logan Community Plan area. For these reasons, the Build Alternative would **not conflict** with Barrio Logan Community Plan policies related to transportation planning.

The No Build Alternative would not address any of the roadway deficiencies or community impact issues identified in the Barrio Logan Community Plan. The No Build Alternative would not implement the transportation improvements called for in the Barrio Logan Community Plan. Therefore, the No Build Alternative is not consistent with Barrio Logan Community Plan policies related to transportation planning.

#### *City of National City General Plan*

The Build Alternative would implement planned transportation improvements described in SANDAG's 2021 RTP, consistent with policy direction in the National City General Plan. The Build Alternative would integrate planned bicycle routes (Bayshore Bikeway) into its design and make improvements at first and last mile connections to support bicycle, pedestrian, and transit connectivity in National City. The Build Alternative would implement ITS technologies to provide more efficient movement of goods to and from the Working Waterfront and designate enforceable truck delivery routes to minimize cut-through traffic on local streets. These improvements reflect policy guidance in the City of National City General Plan. For these reasons, the Build Alternative would **not conflict** with City of National City General Plan policies related to transportation planning.

The No Build Alternative would not implement planned transportation improvements from the RTP, as directed in the City of National City General Plan. Therefore, the No Build Alternative is **not consistent** with City of National City General Plan policies related to transportation planning.

#### *Port of San Diego Master Plan*

The Build Alternative would implement planned improvements described in the Master Plan (see page 78 and Figure 3.2.5 in the Master Plan) to improve congestion and goods delivery in the Working Waterfront area. The Build Alternative aligns with transportation policies described in the Mobility Element of the Master Plan by proposing to improve mobility infrastructure for safe movement of people and goods and install zero-emission charging infrastructure for fleet usage. Therefore, the Build

Alternative would **not conflict** with Port Master Plan policies related to transportation planning.

The No Build Alternative would not implement planned transportation improvements called for in the Port Master Plan. Therefore, the No Build Alternative is **not consistent** with Port Master Plan policies related to transportation planning.

#### *Portside Community Emissions Reduction Program*

The Build Alternative would implement improvements that would reduce congestion and truck traffic in Portside communities. The Build Alternative is identified in the CERP as a key action and strategy to reduce health impacts of trucks on the local community. Therefore, the Build Alternative would be **consistent** with the CERP.

The No Build Alternative would not implement planned transportation improvements called for in the CERP to reduce air pollution effects on Portside communities. Therefore, the No Build Alternative is **not consistent** with the purpose and intent of the CERP.

#### ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

No avoidance, minimization, or mitigation is required.

### **2.2.3 Coastal Zone**

#### ***Regulatory Setting***

The proposed project has the potential to affect resources protected by the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) of 1972. The CZMA is the primary federal law enacted to preserve and protect coastal resources. The CZMA sets up a program under which coastal states are encouraged to develop coastal management programs. States with an approved coastal management plan are able to review federal permits and activities to determine if they are consistent with the state's management plan.

California has developed a coastal zone management plan and has enacted its own law, the CCA of 1976, to protect the coastline. The policies established by the CCA are similar to those for the CZMA. They include the protection and expansion of public access and recreation; the protection, enhancement, and restoration of environmentally sensitive areas; the protection of agricultural lands; the protection of scenic beauty; and the protection of property and life from coastal hazards. The California Coastal Commission is responsible for implementation and oversight under the CCA.

Just as the federal CZMA delegates power to coastal states to develop their own coastal management plans, the CCA delegates power to local governments to enact their own LCPs. This project is subject to the City of San Diego and the City of National City's LCPs, with the exception of areas within the Port and NBSD. LCPs contain the ground rules for development and protection of coastal resources in their jurisdiction

consistent with the California Coastal Act goals. A Federal Consistency Certification will be needed as well. The Federal Consistency Certification process will be initiated prior to final environmental document (FED) and will be completed to the maximum extent possible during the NEPA process.

### ***Affected Environment***

The project is located within the California Coastal Zone and is subject to the LCP of the CCA, with the exception of areas within the Port and NBSD. The project area is located entirely within the built environment and does not contain any significant coastal resources such as lagoons, upland riparian habitats, or coastal vistas.

Pursuant to Chapter 8 of the CCA, the Port has prepared an updated Port Master Plan for adoption and certification by the California Coastal Commission. Once adopted, the Port Master Plan will serve as the guiding document allowing the Port to issue Coastal Development Permits (CDPs) or exclusions for projects within its jurisdiction.

Pursuant to Section 304 of the CZMA, the term “coastal zone” does not include “lands the use of which is by law subject solely to the discretion of or which is held in trust by the Federal Government”. NBSD is owned and operated by the Navy and, therefore, is excluded from the coastal zone. As mentioned above, a Federal Consistency Certification process will need to be followed given the proposed project’s federal nexus. The Federal Consistency Certification will determine whether the proposed action within federal jurisdiction will be consistent with the CCA.

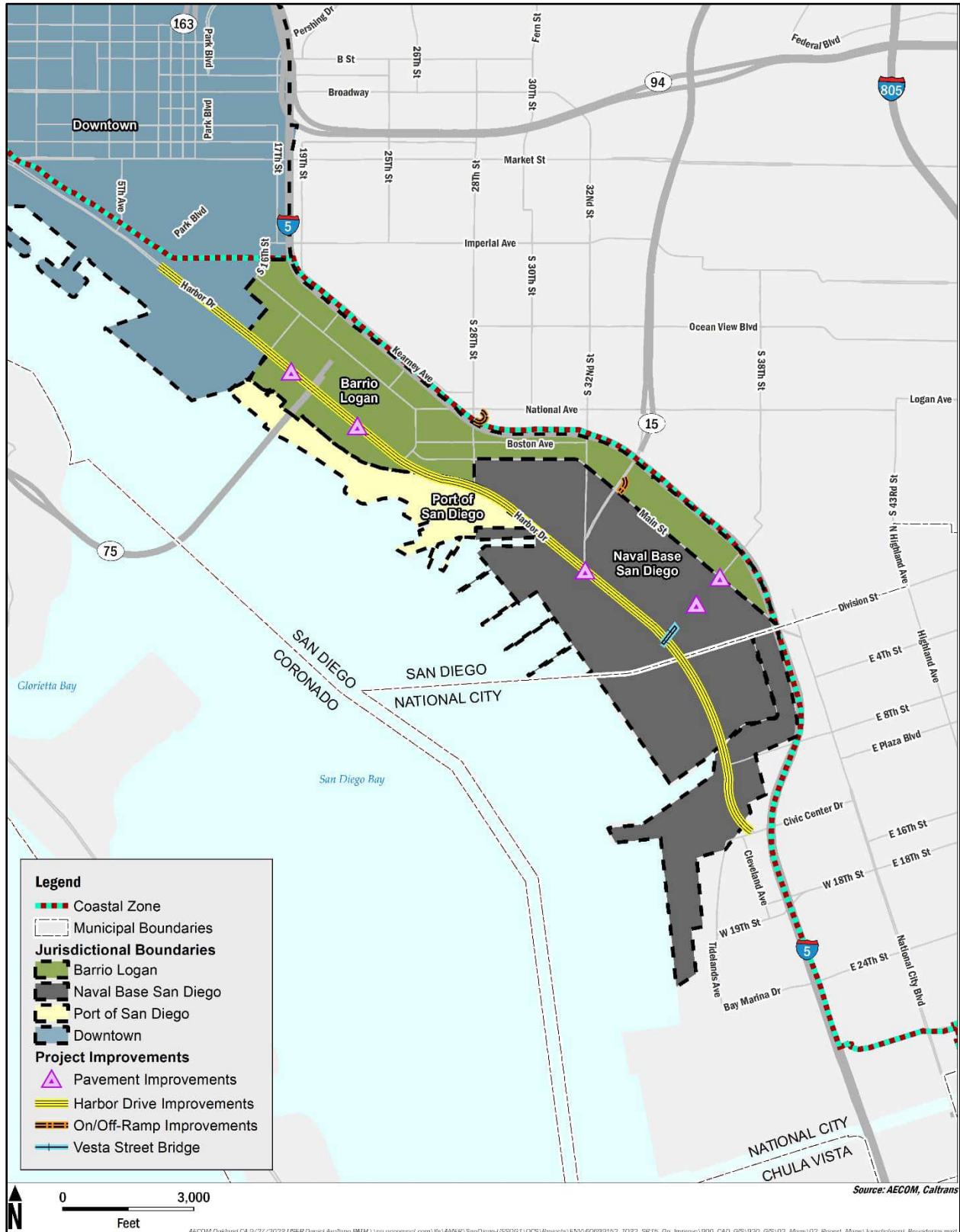
The City of San Diego has developed an LCP to implement the CCA. The LCP for the City of San Diego has been divided into 12 segments; the project area is primarily located within the Barrio Logan segment of the LCP. The Barrio Logan Community Plan and associated zoning regulations comprise the Local Coastal Plan for Barrio Logan and are consistent with the LCP. The northernmost portion of the project (on Harbor Drive north of Sigsbee Street) is located within the Downtown Community Plan, which similarly functions as the LCP for that area in conjunction with zoning regulations. The southernmost portion of the proposed project is located within the LCP for the City of National City.

The project location and coastal zone boundaries are shown in Figure 2-1.

### ***Environmental Consequences***

The Build Alternative includes construction of dedicated truck lanes and ITS technologies along Harbor Drive and arterial connections to I-5 and SR-15, on/off-ramp improvements at I-5 and SR-15 and supporting infrastructure such as wayfinding gantries and new traffic signals at intersections. The project also includes the construction of the Vesta Street Bridge connecting the wet and dry sides of NBSD. Ancillary project improvements include ADA ramps at crosswalks on Harbor Drive, pavement rehabilitation, zero-emission vehicle charging stations, and upgrades to bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the area.

Figure 2-1: Jurisdictional Boundaries



The Build Alternative would occur within the built environment along Harbor Drive. Although the project would occur in the coastal zone, coastal resources are unlikely to be significantly impacted due to the predominantly urban setting of the project site. Standard erosion-control BMPs would be implemented to ensure that construction activities do not result in adverse erosion or sedimentation effects in nearby watercourses, such as Chollas Creek, which drain to the San Diego Bay. High quality habitat is minimal throughout the project area and land disturbance would not result in adverse effects on sensitive biological resources in the coastal zone (see Section 2.4 – Biological Environment for further discussion).

The Build Alternative would not result in the removal or obstruction of access to the coastal zone or recreational uses in the area, such as the Bayshore Bikeway or Cesar E. Chavez Park, with implementation of traffic control. The main visual components of the project would be new wayfinding gantries along Harbor Drive, traffic signals at intersections, concrete and paving in the roadways, and the Vesta Street Bridge. Additionally, landscaped traffic medians would be removed to allow for construction of truck-only lanes along Harbor Drive. The visual impacts of the project were assessed in a Visual Impact Assessment (Estrada Land Planning 2023), which determined that the Build Alternative would have moderate-low visual impacts to users of the roadway and low visual impacts to neighboring land uses (see Section 2.2.11 – Visual/Aesthetics). The Vesta Street Bridge would be located outside of the coastal zone within NBSD lands but would span the public right-of-way along Harbor Drive. Public views of the Vesta Street Bridge from adjacent lands would be intermittent, given the restricted access to NBSD, and largely obstructed by surrounding development. No scenic vistas or resources in the coastal zone would be affected. Other visual elements of the Build Alternative would be consistent with the visual character of existing industrial, military, and urban land uses in the area. Therefore, the Build Alternative would not affect sensitive coastal views from public lands in the coastal zone, or otherwise adversely affect coastal resources.

As noted above, the project spans several coastal jurisdictional areas. The majority of the Build Alternative would occur within the City of San Diego and is subject to the certified LCP. It is anticipated that concurrence from the City will be required, and a CDP would need to be issued for the project. Similarly, the southernmost portions of the project within National City would require compliance with the city's certified LCP and issuance of a CDP. Portions of the project within Port jurisdiction would require issuance of a CDP for that specific area. Portions of the project within NBSD would require a Federal Consistency Certification pursuant to the federal CZMA.

The No Build Alternative would not result in any of the improvements discussed previously and would be consistent with all coastal zone regulations.

### ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

No avoidance, minimization, or mitigation is required.

## **2.2.4 Parks and Recreational Facilities**

### ***Regulatory Setting***

The Park Preservation Act (California Public Resources Code [PRC] Sections 5400-5409) prohibits local and state agencies from acquiring any property that is in use as a public park at the time of acquisition unless the acquiring agency pays sufficient compensation or land, or both, to enable the operator of the park to replace the park land and any park facilities on that land.

### ***Affected Environment***

A number of parks and recreation areas are in the vicinity of the proposed project. There are parks and public spaces adjacent to the project, and the project limits overlap with the unnamed pocket park at Vesta Street/McCandless Boulevard in NBSD. Public parks and recreation areas within 0.25-mile of the project footprint are shown below in Table 2-1.

### ***Environmental Consequences***

The Build Alternative would not permanently affect any recreation areas listed in Table 2-1, with the exception of the pocket park at Vesta Street/McCandless Boulevard. The Build Alternative would encroach slightly on the northern frontage of the park to accommodate the drive lanes adjacent to the proposed Vesta Street Bridge and new sidewalks. This park is considered a private park accessible only to NBSD personnel and would remain open in its current location following construction. Additionally, several other recreational facilities provide similar functions within the vicinity, such as those located adjacent to Admiral Prout Field just south on McCandless Boulevard. Therefore, adverse effects are not anticipated due to this encroachment.

Construction activities would take place along the Harbor Drive corridor adjacent to the Bayshore Bikeway and access points to local parks. However, traffic control would be implemented to ensure access for all transportation modes is maintained along the corridor throughout construction. Construction may result in temporary closure of the pocket park at Vesta Street/McCandless Boulevard; however, all public recreation areas would remain accessible. Construction would produce noise and dust typical of roadway construction; however, given that the project area is already close to busy roadways, freeways, and industrial areas, temporary construction is unlikely to affect users of these facilities.

All of the properties listed in Table 2-1 are subject to the provisions of Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act, with the exception of recreational facilities within NBSD, which are not publicly owned or accessible. The project proposes to make improvements in proximity to these properties but would not temporarily occupy or permanently alter any recreation facilities that meet the definition of a Section 4(f) resource. Therefore, no “use” of a Section 4(f) resource is anticipated as part of the proposed project.

**Table 2-1: Park and Recreation Facilities within 0.25-mile  
of the Project Limits**

Name	Jurisdiction	Description
Convention Center Park	City of San Diego	Landscaped grassy space with seating areas and an art sculpture at the Convention Center frontage
Gaslamp Diagonal	City of San Diego	Landscaped walking path at the entrance to the Gaslamp district of downtown San Diego. Parallels Harbor Drive.
Bayfront Park	City of San Diego	Waterfront park including a walking path and public art. Adjacent to the west of the San Diego Convention Center.
Cesar Chavez Park	City of San Diego	Community green space with a recreational pier, a soccer field, and picnic and playground areas. Located just west of Harbor Drive on Cesar E. Chavez Parkway.
Chicano Park	City of San Diego	Iconic park with green spaces, playgrounds, and murals commemorating Barrio Logan and Hispanic heritage. Located underneath the SR-75/I-5 interchange.
Bayshore Bikeway	SANDAG	Approximately 24-mile regional bikeway, extending around the San Diego Bay; the Barrio Logan segment extends 2.5 miles along the east side of Harbor Drive.
Dorothy Petway Park	City of San Diego	Neighborhood park with a playground, grassy areas, and walking trails. Located east of I-5 just prior to interchange with SR-15.
Southcrest Neighborhood Park	City of San Diego	Neighborhood park with landscaped walking trails paralleling Chollas Creek. Located east of I-5 just south of interchange with SR-15.
Southcrest Trails Skatepark	City of San Diego	Neighborhood skatepark. Located east of I-5 just south of interchange with SR-15.
Dolores Magdaleno Memorial Recreation Center	City of San Diego	Recreation center containing a pool, ball fields, and skatepark primarily serving the Logan Heights area.
Admiral Prout Field	U.S. Department of the Navy	Ball field and track serving NBSD.
Unnamed pocket park at corner of Vesta Street and McCandless Boulevard	U.S. Department of the Navy	Grassy area with covered picnic benches and a sand volleyball court

The No Build Alternative would not result in any of the project improvements described previously. No effects on parks or recreation facilities would occur.

### ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

Equipment and materials storage sites would be located as far away from residential and park uses as feasible, and construction areas would be kept clean and orderly.

## **2.2.5 Community Character and Cohesion**

### ***Regulatory Setting***

The NEPA of 1969, as amended, established that the federal government use all practicable means to ensure for all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings (42 United States Code [USC] 4331[b][2]). The FHWA in its implementation of NEPA (23 USC 109[h]) directs that final decisions on projects are to be made in the best overall public interest. This requires taking into account adverse environmental impacts, such as destruction or disruption of human-made resources, community cohesion, and the availability of public facilities and services.

Under CEQA, an economic or social change by itself is not to be considered a significant effect on the environment. However, if a social or economic change is related to a physical change, then social or economic change may be considered in determining whether the physical change is significant. Because this project would result in physical change to the environment, it is appropriate to consider changes to community character and cohesion in assessing the significance of the project's effects.

### ***Affected Environment***

The City of San Diego encompasses an approximately 372-square-mile geographic area and is bordered by the Cities of National City, Chula Vista, Lemon Grove, La Mesa, El Cajon, Santee, Poway, Solana Beach, Del Mar, and Coronado, and unincorporated County lands. In many ways, the City of San Diego functions as the hub of the San Diego region. Land use in the City of San Diego is composed primarily of parks, open space, and recreation uses (28%); residential uses (24%); institutional, public and semi-public facilities (17%); and roads, freeways, and transportation facilities (14%) (City of San Diego 2015). The City of San Diego develops community plans to define and plan individual districts within city limits. The proposed project intersects the Barrio Logan Community Plan area and abuts the Downtown Community Plan area to the north. Land uses in these areas were described previously in Section 2.2.1 – Existing and Future Land Use.

The City of National City is approximately 9 square miles in area and is bordered by the Cities of San Diego and Chula Vista, unincorporated County lands, and the San Diego Bay. National City is largely developed with a mix of residential (25%); transportation, communication, and utilities (23%); industrial (11%), and commercial (7%) uses (City of

National City 2021a). Additionally, a large portion of the City area comprises the San Diego Bay (18%). National City contains three main communities, identified by major parks: El Toyon, Kimball, and Las Palmas. The project is located partially within the Kimball community of National City. In the project area, land uses within National City are composed primarily of military lands owned by NBSD and industrial uses.

As described further in Section 2.2.7 – Environmental Justice, the Barrio Logan Community Planning area and the City of National City are predominantly Hispanic or Latino communities. Both areas are renowned and celebrated for this heritage and the contribution it makes to the character of the community. Barrio Logan in particular is one of the City of San Diego’s oldest and most diverse neighborhoods. The community emphasizes Mexican and Chicano heritage through numerous public works of art (notably nationally recognized murals at Chicano Park under I-5/SR-75), art shows, food festivals, and other community initiatives aimed at supporting local vendors. The California Coastal Plan designates the area as a “community with special qualities of greater than local significance”. This refers to not only the area’s heritage but its significant contribution to the region’s economy through bayfront industries and opportunities for affordable housing (City of San Diego 2021a). A sense of community in this area is evidenced through strong local activism and participation in local events throughout the year.

### ***Environmental Consequences***

The Build Alternative would not change any existing community boundaries or physically divide an established community. The Build Alternative is not anticipated to influence growth patterns in the project area since no new land would be open for development. The Build Alternative would not result in new zoning or land use classifications for any of the project area.

By reducing freight truck usage of local streets and improving access and circulation along the Harbor Drive corridor and connecting arterials to SR-15 and I-5, the Build Alternative is expected to result in beneficial effects on nearby communities. These effects may include reduced noise and emissions exposure from truck travel, improved access on residential streets, and improved traffic flows. Additionally, the Build Alternative would include new signalized intersections along Harbor Drive, ADA crosswalks, and integration of bicycle and pedestrian facilities (Bayshore Bikeway). These improvements would maintain connectivity for alternative transportation modes throughout the area and further improve mobility along the corridor.

Minor redistribution of traffic patterns is expected under the project (see Section 2.2.10 – Traffic and Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities); however, this would not restrict access, divide, or otherwise detract from nearby communities. The Vesta Street Bridge component of the project would create new access on Vesta Street to and from NBSD but this would not facilitate new residential growth or divide a nearby community. The Vesta Street Bridge would be located entirely within NBSD lands and would not be accessible by the public. Personnel at NBSD would utilize the bridge for direct access

between the wet and dry sides of the base instead of longer routes through the local community, which would subsequently improve traffic flows in nearby areas.

The Build Alternative would result in low to moderate changes to the aesthetic urban character of the area. The main visual components of the project would be new wayfinding gantries along Harbor Drive, traffic signals at intersections, concrete and paving in the roadways, and the Vesta Street Bridge. Additionally, landscaped traffic medians would be removed to allow for construction of truck-only lanes along Harbor Drive. The visual impacts of the project were assessed in a Visual Impact Assessment, which determined that the Build Alternative would have low visual impacts to users of the roadway and low visual impacts to neighboring land uses.

The No Build Alternative would not change the neighborhoods, communities, or community character of the project area since it would make no physical improvements in the area. Existing community impacts from cut-through truck traffic and congestion would remain.

### ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

No avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures are required.

## **2.2.6 Relocations and Real Property Acquisition**

### ***Regulatory Setting***

Caltrans' Relocation Assistance Program (RAP) is based on the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended (Uniform Act), and 49 CFR Part 24. The purpose of the RAP is to ensure that persons displaced as a result of a transportation project are treated fairly, consistently, and equitably so that such persons will not suffer disproportionate injuries as a result of projects designed for the benefit of the public as a whole.

All relocation services and benefits are administered without regard to race, color, national origin, persons with disabilities, religion, age, or sex. Appendix B provides a copy of Caltrans' Title VI Policy Statement.

### ***Affected Environment***

The project area contains a diverse mix of land uses, including industrial, military, maritime commercial, service commercial, retail, and residential uses. The Harbor Drive corridor in the project area divides the Port and the Working Waterfront on the west from smaller scale retail/commercial and residential neighborhoods on the east. Additionally, in the central and southern portion of the project area, Harbor Drive divides the east (dry) and west (wet) sides of NBSD, which occupies approximately 1,600 acres along the San Diego Bay. For further discussion on land uses in the project area, refer to Section 2.2.1 – Existing and Future Land Use.

## ***Environmental Consequences***

The Build Alternative may require utility relocations and property acquisition for various components. There would be no relocation of residential uses or private businesses in the area. Approximately 30 temporary construction easements may be required for the Build Alternative. Additionally, acquisition of property may be required due to permanent project features within the boundaries of public right-of-way, such as the proposed gantries on Harbor Drive. Utility conflicts exist throughout the project area and relocations would be needed to avoid service disruptions or damage during construction. If a temporary interruption in service is unavoidable, it would be scheduled during non-use or off-peak service periods, and notifications to any affected parties would be made in advance by the utility provider and/or Public Information Officer (see Section 2.2.9 – Utilities/Emergency Services for further discussion of utility impacts). Temporary construction easements would also be required for the proposed improvements; however, these would be restored upon completion of the project. Therefore, no adverse effects would occur due to relocations or property acquisitions.

The No Build Alternative would not require any relocations or property acquisitions.

## ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

No avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures are included.

## **2.2.7 Environmental Justice**

### ***Regulatory Setting***

This project has been developed in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, and Executive Order (EO) 12898, “Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations.” Title VI states that “No person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.” Executive Order 12898 requires each federal agency (or its designee) to take the appropriate and necessary steps to identify and address “disproportionately high and adverse” effects of federal or federally funded projects on minority and low-income populations.

### ***Affected Environment***

To assess whether the project could lead to disproportionately high and adverse effects on a minority and/or low-income population, demographic characteristics within and adjacent to the project area must be reviewed. The analysis of environmental justice impacts leverages data from the American Community Survey (ACS) (U.S. Census Bureau 2019, 2020). ACS 5-year estimates for race, ethnicity, and poverty levels were examined for census tracts containing the project area, as well as for San Diego County, which was used as a reference area. Because the proposed project

improvements encompass a large area in both the City of San Diego and City of National City, and the potential effects of the project extend to numerous adjoining residential streets and neighborhoods, an analysis at the census tract level was undertaken.

The Council on Environmental Quality has established the following definitions for environmental justice under NEPA:

- Minority populations should be identified where either (a) the minority population of the affected area exceeds 50 percent or (b) the minority population percentage of the affected area is meaningfully greater than the minority population percentage in the general population or other appropriate unity of geographic analysis.
- Low-income populations in an affected area should be identified with the statistical poverty thresholds from the Bureau of the Census’ Current Population Reports, Series P-60 on Income and Poverty. In identifying low-income populations, agencies may consider as a community either a group of individuals living in geographic proximity to one another, or a set of individuals (such as migrant workers or Native Americans) where either type of group experiences conditions of environmental exposure or effect.

For the purpose of this analysis, “meaningfully greater” is assumed to be 10 percentage points greater than the reference (San Diego County), and low-income populations are identified where more than 25 percent of the census tract falls below the poverty level. Six census tracts intersect the project study area. Table 2-2 below lists these census tracts along with their race and ethnicity and the percentage of their populations that are below the poverty level (U.S. Census Bureau 2019).

**Table 2-2: Environmental Justice Analysis for Census Tracts in Study Area**

Geography	Black	Native American	Asian	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	Minority*	Hispanic	Below Poverty Level
<i>San Diego County</i>	6.7%	2.9%	15.2%	0.9%	25.7%	34.8%	10.6%
Census Tract 50	5.0%	2.1%	1.2%	0.4%	8.7%	<b>82.9%</b>	<b>28.5%</b>
Census Tract 51.03	10.1%	2.4%	2.8%	0.5%	15.8%	42.1%	<b>32.8%</b>
Census Tract 38	<b>22.5%</b>	1.5%	8.2%	0.8%	33.0%	22.4%	N/A
Census Tract 39.02	6.3%	2.7%	1.8%	0.2%	11.0%	<b>84.5%</b>	22.0%
Census Tract 36.01	5.6%	1.8%	2.5%	0.4%	10.3%	<b>87.2%</b>	23.5%
Census Tract 219	4.9%	2.3%	5.6%	0.7%	13.5%	<b>73.3%</b>	22.8%

Notes: \*Minority is the sum of Black, Native American, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Bold – Meets at least one of the criteria of an environmental justice community of concern.

All six census tracts shown in Table 2-2 meet the above definitions. Within these census tracts, five have meaningfully greater minority populations than the reference population (San Diego County), and two include low-income populations. For this analysis, these census tracts will be referred to as “environmental justice communities”. See Figure 2-2.

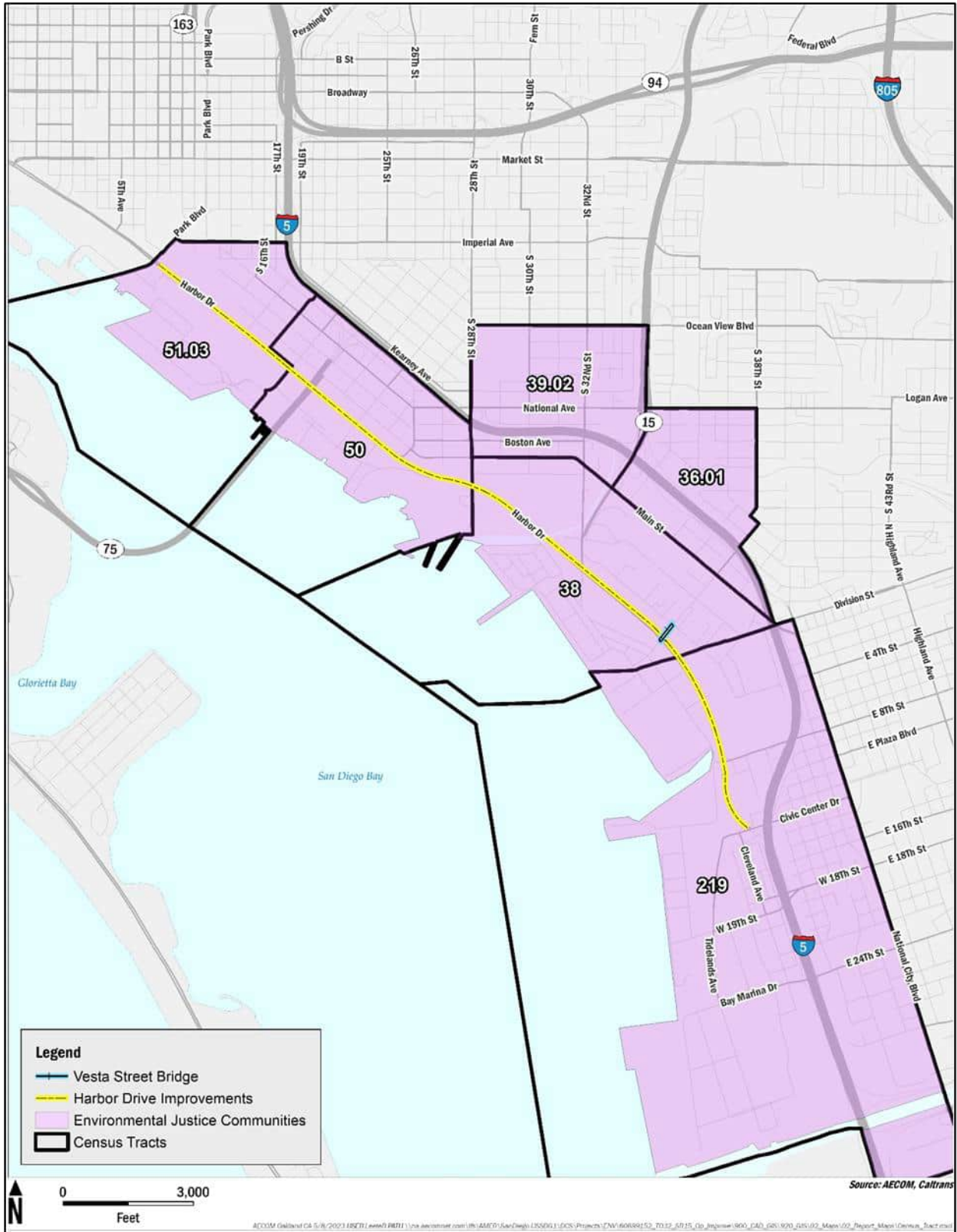
Further supporting the analysis above, the study area is located entirely within a Portside Environmental Justice Community identified pursuant to AB 617. Passed in 2017, AB 617 attempts to address air pollution impacts in environmental justice communities. This program requires local air districts and CARB to reduce air pollution in these most impacted communities and establishes a process for community participation. The neighborhoods of Barrio Logan, West National City, Logan Heights, and Sherman Heights make up the Portside Environmental Justice Community in the SDAPCD. The community is impacted by emissions from the local port, freight, rail, and industry contributing to high cumulative air pollution exposure burden (CARB 2022a). CARB selected this community to develop a community emissions reduction program to reduce the overall pollution burden experienced by the community; the program was approved by CARB in October 2021 and is ongoing.

### ***Environmental Consequences***

The Build Alternative would expose residents and businesses in environmental justice communities to project construction effects, such as noise, dust, and potential utility service disruptions. Construction would result in vehicle delays, which would increase travel times temporarily throughout the project area. The project area contains transit lines (bus and trolley) which are among the most highly utilized in the San Diego region, such as bus route 929 and the blue line trolley. Delays from construction could affect commuters in adjacent communities who rely on bus transit servicing the area. Minor delays in rail service may also occur during construction of the Vesta Street Bridge. When placing structures over railroad tracks, service would have to be temporarily paused. Coordination with MTS and BNSF would be required during the design, pre-construction, and construction phases to identify the most appropriate times to complete construction over the railway and minimize service disruptions to the maximum extent feasible.

The Build Alternative would also expose residents and businesses in environmental justice communities to visual changes due to the removal of landscaped medians along Harbor Drive, additional paving and concrete, installation of gantries over the roadway, construction of the Vesta Street Bridge, and installation of traffic signals at select intersections. Visual changes would primarily be experienced by users of the roadway and neighboring land uses that front Harbor Drive. As describe in the Visual Impact Assessment prepared for the proposed project, the Build Alternative would have moderate-low visual impacts to users of the roadway and low visual impacts to neighboring land uses, including environmental justice communities. Affected viewers would primarily be commuters on Harbor Drive. The project would not adversely affect the urban character of Harbor Drive.

**Figure 2-2: Census Tracts and Environmental Justice Communities in Study Area**



A primary purpose of the proposed project is to improve community mobility and address truck-related noise and emissions concerns of Portside environmental justice communities. The Build Alternative would accomplish this by designating freight truck routes and implementing ITS technologies to improve access and circulation to the Port and NBSD from SR-15, I-5, and connecting arterials. The proposed ITS technologies include a truck reservation system, gate operating system at marine terminal gates, and geofencing, which would incentivize freight deliveries to the Port to use designated routes avoiding local residential roads. Additionally, the proposed sustainability improvements, including electric vehicle charging infrastructure for freight trucks, would contribute to emissions reductions in the area. This would have a beneficial effect on adjacent environmental justice communities by reducing pollution exposure from diesel trucks. Further, reducing congestion would increase residential and local business access during peak hours. The Build Alternative also includes ancillary improvements to civil infrastructure in the area, such as ADA curbs and crosswalks on Harbor Drive, which would improve access for pedestrians.

A disproportionately high and adverse effect on an environmental justice community is defined by FHWA as an adverse effect that either is predominantly borne by a minority population and/or a low-income population; or will be suffered by the minority population and/or low-income population and is appreciably more severe or greater in magnitude than the adverse effect that will be suffered by the non-minority population and/or non-low-income population (Caltrans 2011a). As described previously, temporary effects would occur due to noise, dust, traffic delays, and potential service disruptions during construction, which would be predominantly borne by minority and low-income populations. However, these effects would be temporary and would not result in adverse effects with implementation of BMPs for noise and dust control, appropriate traffic management through a TMP, and coordination with utility providers ahead of construction to minimize disruptions. The Build Alternative would also result in the temporary and permanent loss of parking. This is not anticipated to adversely affect minority or low-income populations due to the temporary nature of the majority of removals on Harbor Drive, the limited permanent loss of parking spaces and the project's addition of replacement parking spaces to offset these losses on Harbor Drive, and implementation of minimization measures to reduce overflow parking in adjacent communities. As described in the Visual Impact Assessment, the visual changes resulting from the Build Alternative would not result in adverse effects. Affected viewers would primarily be commuters on Harbor Drive. The Build Alternative would have low visual impacts to users of the roadway and low impact to neighboring land uses, including environmental justice communities.

For the reasons described above, no disproportionately high and adverse impacts would occur to low income and/or minority populations. The Build Alternative has been designed to serve the communities in the project area as a whole.

The No Build Alternative would not result in changes to environmental justice communities. Existing air pollution effects on environmental justice communities due to congestion, idling vehicles, and nearby industrial land uses would remain under the No Build Alternative.

## ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

Because the project would take place within minority communities and has the potential to have impacts to those communities, a robust public outreach campaign would be conducted both during the environmental review process and during construction. Outreach would occur in the language and medium preferred by the target population. Outreach would detail the effects of the project most likely to directly affect community members, such as travel delays and parking effects, and measures taken by the project to minimize these effects. Outreach should also include requests for the minority community to meaningfully provide input into project decisions such as recommendations for aesthetic treatments and environmental mitigation, should they be required.

### **2.2.8 Equity**

#### ***Regulatory Setting***

President Biden’s EO 13985 (January 20, 2021) “Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government” serves to “pursue a comprehensive approach to advancing equity for all, including people of color and others who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality.”

The following definitions are provided in EO 13985:

- a) The term “equity” means the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, such as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTBQ+) persons; persons with disabilities, persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality.
- b) The term “underserved communities” refers to populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life, as exemplified by the list in the preceding definition of “equity.”

The Caltrans Equity Statement (December 10, 2020) acknowledges that communities of color and underserved communities experienced fewer benefits and a greater share of negative impacts associated with our state’s transportation system. Some of these disparities reflect a history of transportation decision-making, policy, processes, planning, design, and construction that “quite literally put up barriers, divided communities, and amplified racial inequities, particularly in our Black and Brown neighborhoods.”

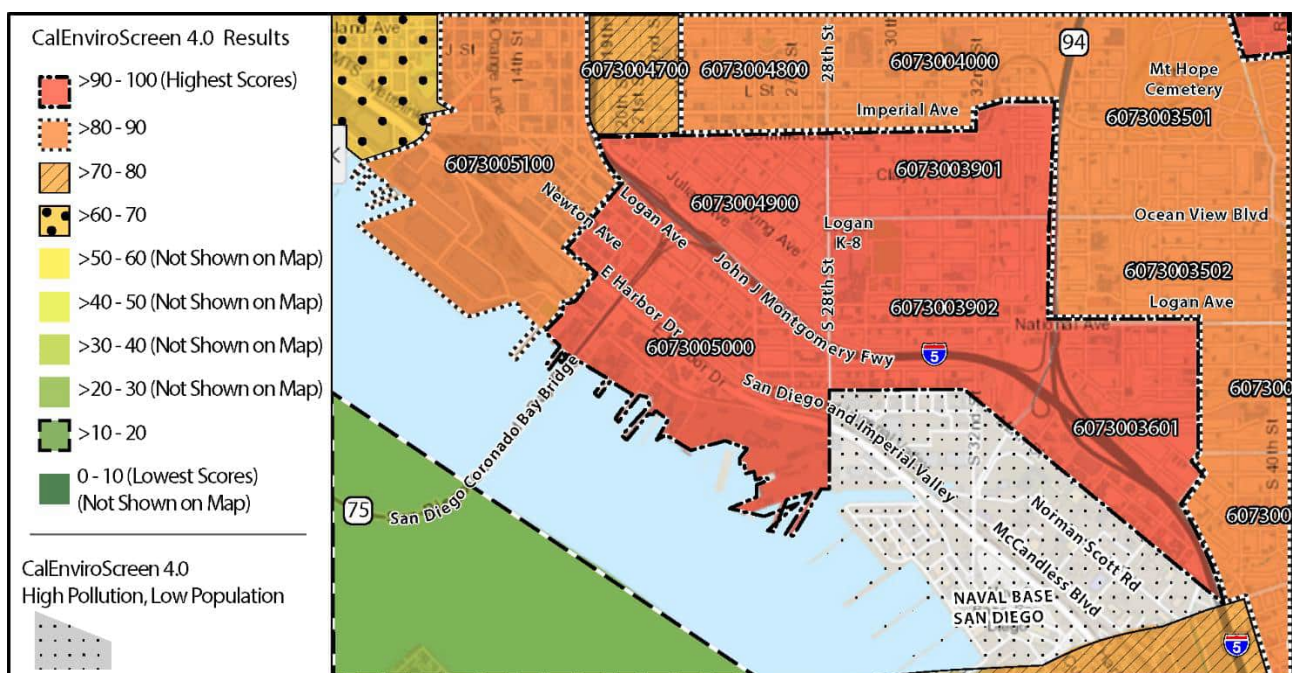
## Affected Environment

As described in Section 2.2.7 – Environmental Justice, all six of the census tracts in the study area were identified as environmental justice communities, based on the Council of Environmental Quality’s definitions. These are also considered disadvantaged communities, on the grounds that economically disadvantaged communities and communities of color are historically underserved.

In addition to the U.S. Census, the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment’s (OEHHA) CalEnviroScreen 4.0 tool was consulted for this equity analysis (OEHHA 2021). CalEnviroScreen identifies California communities that are disproportionately burdened by multiple sources of pollution. This tool combines pollution burden and population characteristics to derive a “score” (from 0 to 100) for census tracts that can then be compared across the state. More specifically, CalEnviroScreen 4.0 assesses 21 indicators statistically to characterize pollution burden and population (examples of pollution burden data include ozone, diesel particulate matter, hazardous waste, and traffic impacts; examples of population characteristics data include asthma, cardiovascular disease, poverty, and unemployment).

As shown in Figure 2-3 below, there are multiple census tracts in the study area with a CalEnviroScreen score of 80 or higher. Several census tracts in the central portion of the alignment in Barrio Logan have a score of 95 or higher, exemplifying the disproportionate pollution burden experienced in this community. Key indicators for the project area include exposure to diesel particulate matter (DPM) in the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile (i.e., greater exposure than 95 percent of census tracts statewide), and high asthma rates in the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile.

**Figure 2-3: CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Results for the Project Vicinity**



CalEnviroScreen also includes a map of official SB 535 disadvantaged communities (OEHHA 2022), as designated by the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA). CalEPA identifies disadvantaged communities for the allocation of Senate Bill (SB) 535 funding based on the following criteria:

- Census tracts receiving the highest 25 percent of overall scores in CalEnviroScreen 4.0 (1,984 tracts).
- Census tracts lacking overall scores in CalEnviroScreen 4.0 because of data gaps, but receiving the highest 5 percent of CalEnviroScreen 4.0 cumulative pollution burden scores (19 tracts).
- Census tracts identified in the 2017 Disadvantaged Communities designation as disadvantaged, regardless of their scores in CalEnviroScreen 4.0 (307 tracts).
- Lands under the control of federally recognized tribes.

As shown in Figure 2-4, there are multiple SB 535 disadvantaged communities in the project area. These official designations correlate with the high CalEnviroScreen scores discussed above and affirm the presence of underserved communities in the proposed project vicinity.

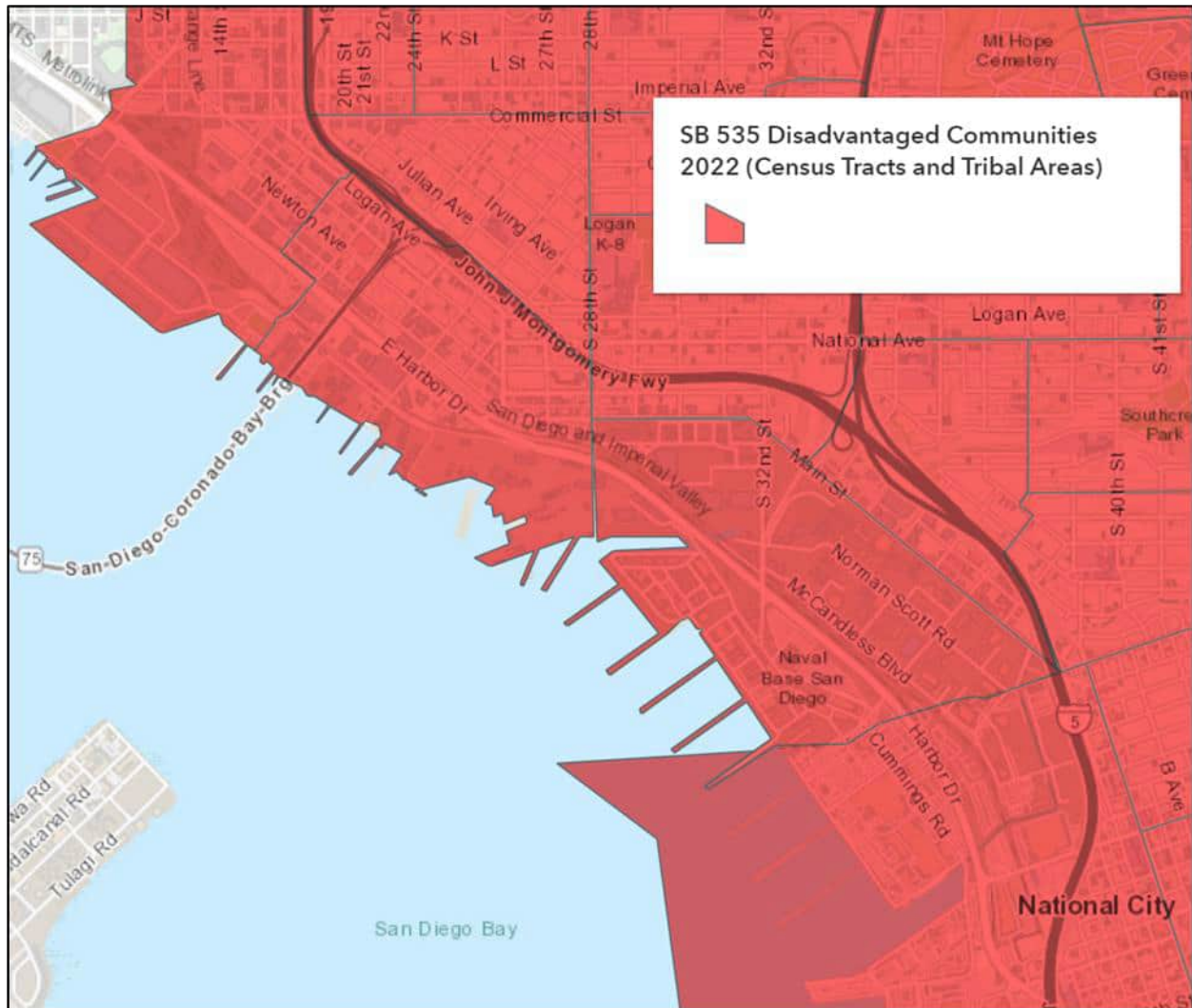
### ***Environmental Consequences***

The Build Alternative may affect equity through the temporary closure of portions of Harbor Drive to traffic during construction, which may increase travel times for commuters and residents in the area. Temporary effects on access and circulation in the study area would be primarily borne by those who regularly commute to and from the project area, such as residents in the area, employees in the Working Waterfront, and personnel at NBSD. Temporary parking removals would occur during construction along Harbor Drive, and permanent removals would occur within NBSD. Additionally, the Build Alternative would result in visual effects due to the loss of landscaped medians and construction of gantries on Harbor Drive. These effects would be concentrated in areas containing underserved populations; however, as described in the Visual Impact Assessment, the Build Alternative would have low visual impacts to users of the roadway and low visual impacts to neighboring land uses, including environmental justice communities. Affected viewers would primarily be commuters on Harbor Drive. As described previously in Section 2.2.7, outreach should also include requests for the minority community to meaningfully provide input into project decisions such as recommendations for aesthetic treatments should they be required, and measures taken to reduce travel delays and parking effects.

The Build Alternative would address some of the historic inequities experienced by disadvantaged communities in the area due to congestion from highly traveled roadways and pollution exposure from freight truck deliveries. Diesel truck travel residential areas of disadvantaged communities would be reduced by features of the Build Alternative, as described previously in Section 2.2.7. Diesel trucks would follow

designated truck routes on 28<sup>th</sup> Street, 32<sup>nd</sup> Street, and 8<sup>th</sup> Street to reach Harbor Drive from regional freeways, as opposed to cutting through various residential streets. This would be a beneficial effect of the project on equity as disadvantaged communities exposure to truck travel would be lessened.

**Figure 2-4: SB 535 Disadvantaged Communities in the Project Vicinity**



Historic inequities faced by disadvantaged communities in the area would continue to occur under the No Build Alternative, and may increase with population and intensification of land uses. Congestion would likely continue to increase along Harbor Drive and surrounding arterials and with it, the pollution burden experienced by adjacent communities. As presented in the CalEnviroScreen results, the project area is already exposed to disproportionate levels of DPM, which is correlated with higher asthma rates and other health effects. The No Build Alternative would not contribute to any reduction in these effects.

## ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

To minimize effects on underserved communities during construction, access and circulation throughout the study area will need to be maintained to the maximum extent feasible. A TMP would be in place during construction to ensure that all modes of transportation continue to have access through the project area. Additionally, robust public outreach would facilitate a dialogue between the project team and local communities prior to and during construction.

### **2.2.9 Utilities/Emergency Services**

#### ***Affected Environment***

##### *Utilities*

There are power, gas, sewer, water, television, and fiber optic utilities within the project area. San Diego Gas & Electric Company (SDG&E) provides gas and electricity services; Cox, MCI/Verizon and Lumen provide telecommunication service; the Cities of San Diego and National City provide sewer service; and water service is provided to the City of San Diego by the Public Utilities Department and to the City of National City by Sweetwater Authority (a publicly owned water agency). Individual water distribution, telecommunication, and steam lines owned by the Navy are also located in the project area. Overhead electrical transmission lines are prevalent along the Harbor Drive corridor, paralleling both sides of the roadway and the east side of the railway. Adjacent to the proposed Vesta Street Bridge on the west side of Harbor Drive is an SDG&E substation; several overhead transmission lines extend from the substation to serve surrounding uses. Across Harbor Drive and south of the substation is a City of San Diego sewer pump station. The catenary (a system of overhead wires supplying electricity to a light rail line or trolley) supporting the MTS trolley is located over the light rail line that parallels Harbor Drive. There are several other ancillary utility features in this area, including electrical boxes, transformer buildings, and telecommunications buildings associated with Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command (NAVFAC). In general, the proposed project is within a highly congested utility corridor given the density and variety of surrounding uses.

##### *Emergency Services*

Emergency services in the project area are provided by the City of San Diego, the City of National City, California Highway Patrol, and the U.S. Department of the Navy. Life-threatening emergencies in the area are typically responded to with both a fire engine and paramedic emergency ambulance services. Portions of the project area within NBSD are provided fire and emergency services by a federally operated fire station. Table 2-3 describes the emergency providers in the area.

**Table 2-3: Emergency Services in the Project Area**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Services</b>	<b>Jurisdiction</b>
San Diego Fire Station 7	Fire	City of San Diego
Federal Fire San Diego Station 17	Fire	U.S. Department of the Navy/Federal Fire Department
National City Fire Department Station 34	Fire	City of National City
San Diego Police Department – Central Division	Police	City of San Diego
National City Police Department	Police	City of National City
California Highway Patrol	Police	I-5, SR-15, and SR-75 corridors
Emergency Medical Services Program	Emergency Medical Services	City of San Diego

***Environmental Consequences***

*Utilities*

The Build Alternative would identify the location and extent of existing service lines within the project area during the design phase. Utility conflicts are anticipated, given the developed nature of the project area and project components such as trenching for electrical conduits and construction of the Vesta Street Bridge. Overhead electrical transmission lines and the MTS catenary at the Vesta Street Bridge crossing of the railway are key design considerations. The proposed Vesta Street Bridge would be required to meet mandatory clearances for overhead transmission and distribution lines (35 feet and 30 feet, respectively) during construction and operation. Any relocation of utilities could result in temporary interruption of service. If a temporary interruption in service is unavoidable, it would be scheduled during non-use or off-peak service periods, and notifications to any affected parties would be made in advance by the utility provider and/or Public Information Officer. This standard Caltrans practice ensures that service disruptions are understood by the public and do not pose a health or safety risk to individual customers. Therefore, the Build Alternative would not adversely affect utilities.

The No Build Alternative would have no effect on utilities in the project area.

*Emergency Services*

The Build Alternative would result in construction in a highly populated area within the service areas of fire, police, and emergency medical providers. Facilities providing these services are present in the project area; however, none would be removed or altered by project construction. Temporary traffic control and safety measures will be implemented in accordance with Caltrans procedures to ensure that emergency access is maintained throughout the Harbor Drive corridor during project activities. A TMP would be developed during the project design phase to avoid or minimize congestion due to

construction to the maximum extent feasible. Therefore, construction of the Build Alternative would not adversely affect emergency services.

Once constructed, the Build Alternative is anticipated to improve congestion in the project area, which would result in a beneficial effect on emergency response times.

The No Build Alternative would not affect emergency services. Existing delays and congestion in the project area would remain during peak hours, which would likely continue to affect emergency response times.

### ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

- Prior to construction activities, Caltrans would contact utilities, DigAlert services, and/or other applicable entities to mark underground facilities, as needed.
- Emergency service providers and first responders would be notified of construction sequencing and the potential for temporary lane closures and/or changes to traffic circulation, as identified in the TMP.

## **2.2.10 Traffic and Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities**

### ***Regulatory Setting***

Caltrans, as assigned by the FHWA, directs that full consideration should be given to the safe accommodation of pedestrians and bicyclists during the development of Federal-aid highway projects (see 23 CFR 652). It further directs that the special needs of the elderly and the disabled must be considered in all federal-aid projects that include pedestrian facilities. When current or anticipated pedestrian and/or bicycle traffic presents a potential conflict with motor vehicle traffic, every effort must be made to minimize the detrimental effects on all highway users who share the facility.

In July 1999, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) issued an Accessibility Policy Statement pledging a fully accessible multimodal transportation system. Accessibility in federally assisted programs is governed by the USDOT regulations (49 CFR 27) implementing Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 USC 794). The FHWA has enacted regulations for the implementation of the 1990 ADA, including a commitment to build transportation facilities that provide equal access for all persons. These regulations require application of the ADA requirements to federal-aid projects, including Transportation Enhancement Activities.

### ***Affected Environment***

The information in this section is based on Traffic Engineering Study and Analysis (TES&A) reports prepared for the Vesta Street Bridge and Harbor Drive 2.0 projects (Jacobs 2022, 2023).

### *Access and Circulation*

Access to the project area is provided from I-5, SR-15, SR-75, and connecting arterial roads. I-5 in the project area is an eight-lane facility traveling north-south, with four through-lanes in each direction. I-5 intersects SR-15 approximately halfway through the project area. SR-15 in the project area is also an eight-lane facility traveling north-south, with four through-lanes in each direction. SR-75 (Coronado Bridge) extends west from I-5 over Harbor Drive to the City of Coronado. SR-75 is a five-lane facility, with three lanes in the westbound direction and two lanes in the eastbound direction. Harbor Drive is a major four-lane roadway traveling north-south from its juncture with I-5 in National City to downtown San Diego. Connecting arterials from the nearby freeways to Harbor Drive include Main Street, National Avenue, Sampson Street, Cesar E. Chavez Parkway, and Wabash Boulevard. NBSD is accessed through secure gates from local roads including Harbor Drive, 32nd Street, Main Street, Vesta Street, Yama Street, 8th Street, Division Street, Roosevelt Avenue, and National City Boulevard.

The Bayshore Bikeway, a proposed 24-mile Class I bike path around the San Diego Bay, is the primary bicycle facility providing access to the project area. Approximately 18 miles of the Bayshore Bikeway have been constructed to-date, with the 2.5-mile Barrio Logan segment from 32nd Street to Park Boulevard currently under construction as of October 2023 (SANDAG 2023a). The majority of the roadways in the project area do not have designated bicycle facilities. Currently, Class II bike lanes are intermittently present in both directions on Harbor Drive. Vesta Street is designated as a bike route and 8<sup>th</sup> Street contains a bike lane in each direction of travel. The Chollas Creek to Bayshore Multi-Use Path is a future project that will provide additional bicycle connectivity from Dorothy Petway Neighborhood Park just east of I-5 to the Bayshore Bikeway.

### *Public Transportation*

Public transit lines are present along Harbor Drive. San Diego MTS operates trolley light rail service, which extends through the project area south to the Mexican border. Various trolley stops on the MTS blue line are located on the east side of Harbor Drive in the project area, including the Barrio Logan, Harborside, Pacific Fleet, and 8th Street stations. Daily transit ridership of the blue line is high, with SANDAG reporting 57,916 average daily passengers in 2019. Local bus routes 929 and 12 also service the project area with several stops in both directions on Main Street and National Avenue, respectively. Bus route 929 is one of the most used routes in San Diego with average daily passengers of 7,524 in 2019 (SANDAG 2020a).

### ***Environmental Consequences***

The Build Alternative would not add new capacity to SR-15 or I-5; however, operational improvements would be implemented that would result in both temporary and permanent effects on transportation facilities in the area. Construction of the Build Alternative would result in temporary lane closures on Harbor Drive as the existing median is removed, the pavement is re-striped, and new medians are constructed. Lane

closures are also anticipated for the proposed improvements to the SR-15/Main Street on/off-ramp and I-5/National Avenue on-ramp. Temporary lane closures would result in travel delays for all modes of transportation, with the greatest effects likely experienced by passenger vehicles traveling on Harbor Drive. However, as stated previously, a TMP would be established for the project to ensure all modes of transportation retain access through the project area during construction. If temporary detours are necessary, these would be identified in the TMP to provide alternate routes for both vehicles and active transportation users and minimize disruptions. Additionally, the project will coordinate closely with MTS and BNSF to avoid disruptions in rail service during construction of the Vesta Street Bridge. Therefore, the Build Alternative would not adversely affect access and circulation or public transportation during construction.

The Build Alternative would result in operational changes to traffic flow in the area. The Build Alternative would remove the existing median on Harbor Drive and introduce both all-day and off-peak truck-only lanes between Park Boulevard and Civic Center Drive. Wayfinding gantries with signage would be installed on Harbor Drive to redesignate lanes for passenger/transit or truck traffic during off-peak periods. ITS technology would be installed to facilitate efficient freight truck deliveries to and from the Port along designated routes avoiding residential streets. A new left-turn lane would be added at the SR-15/Main Street off-ramp, changing the configuration to left and left-right turns onto Main Street. The loop on-ramp at I-5/National Avenue would be closed at its existing access points from 28th Street and National Avenue, and a modified NB on-ramp would be provided on National Avenue. Additionally, the Vesta Street Bridge would be constructed to provide a direct connection between the east (dry) and west (wet) sides of NBSD. These proposed improvements would affect how freight trucks, passenger vehicles, and active transportation users access the Port, NBSD, and surrounding areas, as described further below.

The No Build Alternative would not result in any effects on access, circulation, parking, or public transportation. Access to the Port and NBSD would continue to be adversely affected by existing congestion, particularly during peak hours.

### *Access and Circulation*

Once operational, the Build Alternative would alter access, circulation, and parking in the project area. Truck access would be limited to arterial roads connecting Harbor Drive to SR-15 and I-5, including 28th Street, 32nd Street, and 8th Street. By discouraging truck usage of local collector streets through the use of ITS elements, the Build Alternative would improve access in adjacent residential and commercial areas.

Along Harbor Drive, access and circulation patterns would be modified by the addition of truck-only lanes between Park Boulevard and Civic Center Drive. The truck-only lanes would be augmented with the use of ITS technologies, including new traffic signals, freight signal priority, freight queue jumps, gate operating and truck reservation systems, and geofencing. Freight signal priority would allow freight trucks to move through this area with minimal stops at traffic signals. Freight queue jumps would allow trucks to bypass other vehicles at intersections and avoid queue formations. The gate

operating and truck reservation system would reduce wait times outside marine terminal gates and reduce queuing along designated freight routes.

The TES&A report completed for the Harbor Drive improvements studied a total of 27 intersections along the Harbor Drive corridor to determine the overall effects of the Build Alternative (Jacobs 2023). The TES&A report determined that overall vehicle delay on NB and SB Harbor Drive between Civic Center Drive and Park Boulevard would be reduced by the Build Alternative through 2030 and 2050, as compared to the No Build Alternative. Travel time and delays would be reduced at most intersections along Harbor Drive but would incrementally increase at specific intersections and turning movements along routes which have phasing for turning trucks, including 28<sup>th</sup> Street, 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Civic Center Drive, and 32<sup>nd</sup> Street. Based on the travel time analysis in the TES&A for the route from Tenth Avenue Marine Terminal to I-5, increases in delay are estimated to vary from less than 1 second to 6 seconds between the No Build and Build Alternatives. This is likely due to the reduction in lane capacity on Harbor Drive and additional coordination and optimization needed to improve traffic flow. The TES&A report is a planning-level study; options to refine operation of the proposed project to optimize access and circulation would continue to be explored during detailed design in collaboration with project stakeholders.

The Build Alternative includes construction of the Vesta Street Bridge. The Vesta Street Bridge would provide for a direct connection between the dry and wet sides of NBSD, which would displace traffic that currently accesses each side of the base along local roadways. A total of 16 intersections were studied in a TES&A report to determine the effects of Vesta Street Bridge, the addition of a lane at the SR-15/Main Street off-ramp, and signal prioritization at several intersections on the local roadway network (Jacobs 2022). The TES&A found that traffic volumes at all except one intersection either stayed the same or decreased with the proposed improvements under future cumulative conditions; an increase of approximately three percent is anticipated at the 32<sup>nd</sup> Street/Harbor Drive intersection due to the changes in travel patterns. The change in travel patterns would also result in minor increases in delay at one nearby intersection during AM and PM peak hours. An increase in delay of 1.5 percent in the AM peak hour and 0.2 percent during the PM peak hour at the Osborn Street/Division Street intersection is expected due to vehicles changing travel patterns to enter NBSD via Main Street instead of Harbor Drive. However, this increase in delay is minimal and is not expected to substantially affect circulation in the area. Vehicle delay at the 15 other study intersections would decrease with the Vesta Street Bridge component of the Build Alternative, which is a beneficial effect of the project. These results were considered and incorporated into the TES&A report assessing the effects of the overall Build Alternative (Jacobs 2023).

The Build Alternative would upgrade bicycle and pedestrian facilities at first and last mile connections to ensure safe access to the Bayshore Bikeway and the future Chollas Creek to Bayshore Multi-Use Path. No segments of the Bayshore Bikeway would be removed, and future construction of the Chollas Creek to Bayshore Multi-Use Path would not be inhibited by the proposed improvements. The Build Alternative would include bike lanes on the Vesta Street Bridge in both directions which would aid in

bicycle connectivity between wet and dry sides of NBSD. Additionally, by rerouting freight trucks from residential areas to highly traveled arterials, the Build Alternative would improve access for active transportation users in adjacent communities. Further, ADA ramps and crosswalks would be installed at intersections on Harbor Drive that currently have non-standard ADA ramps, which would improve access for people with mobility constraints. Thus, the Build Alternative would result in a beneficial effect on bicycle and pedestrian circulation in the project area.

### *Public Transportation*

As stated above, there are existing light rail and bus routes within and adjacent to the project area, including the MTS trolley blue line and routes 929 and 12. Several light rail stations are located on the east side of Harbor Drive. Construction-related effects of the Build Alternative on public transportation would be temporary and minimal. The improvements on Harbor Drive would primarily occur within the public right-of-way, which does not contain any designated bus routes. Light rail service would continue to be provided along Harbor Drive throughout construction, and accommodations would be made to ensure pedestrians can safely enter and exit light rail stations throughout construction; the details of such access accommodations will be defined in the TMP. Minor delays, however, may still occur due to movement of construction vehicles through the area, the proposed on- and off-ramp improvements, and pavement rehabilitation. As part of the TMP, project staff would coordinate with key stakeholders, including local transit agencies, to proactively inform them of the potential for project-related detours and delays and to define construction strategies to reduce these effects.

Once operational, the Build Alternative would improve access and circulation in the area, as described above, which would have a beneficial effect on delay times experienced by transit users. The Build Alternative would also improve access to transit stops in the area by making complete street improvements to improve pedestrian circulation. Therefore, the Build Alternative would not adversely affect public transportation.

### ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

- To the extent feasible, construction traffic would be scheduled and routed to reduce congestion and related air quality impacts caused by idling vehicles along local roads during peak travel times.
- ITS elements would be implemented to smooth traffic flow and increase efficiency.
- The contractor shall schedule truck trips outside of peak morning and evening commute hours and implement a TMP, to be developed during the design phase, to minimize the effects to traffic.
- Minimization measures to ensure traffic impacts resulting from construction activities would be implemented with the TMP including appropriate staging,

timing, and sequencing of activities; maintenance of traffic in both directions; and advanced notification to motorists, businesses, and nearby communities to inform the public of potential delays.

## **2.2.11 Visual/Aesthetics**

### ***Regulatory Setting***

NEPA, as amended, establishes that the federal government use all practicable means to ensure all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and *aesthetically* (emphasis added) and culturally pleasing surroundings (42 USC 4331[b][2]). To further emphasize this point, the FHWA, in its implementation of NEPA (23 USC 109[h]), directs that final decisions on projects are to be made in the best overall public interest taking into account adverse environmental impacts, including among others, the destruction or disruption of aesthetic values.

CEQA establishes that it is the policy of the state to take all action necessary to provide the people of the state “with...enjoyment of *aesthetic*, natural, scenic and historic environmental qualities” (PRC Section 21001[b]).

California Streets and Highways Code Section 92.3 directs Caltrans to use drought-resistant landscaping and recycled water when feasible, and incorporate native wildflowers and native and climate-appropriate vegetation into the planting design when appropriate.

### ***Affected Environment***

The proposed project is located in an urbanized area with a diverse mix of land uses, consisting of heavy/light industrial, service commercial, public facilities, retail, single-family residential, and recreation uses (see Section 2.2.1 – Existing and Future Land Use for further discussion). Heavy industrial uses are concentrated on the west side of Harbor Drive, with the railway separating the roadway from adjacent land uses to the east. Regional highway systems are prominent as well, including I-5 and interchanges with SR-15 and SR-75, with access provided from these highways to Harbor Drive via local arterial roads.

Harbor Drive is the primary public viewing space within the project limits. Views from Harbor Drive are urban and consist of parking lots, naval base gates, shipyards, rail/trolley lines, fuel tank farms, distribution and transmission overhead utilities, and various industrial buildings. On northbound Harbor Drive north of SR-75, there are intermittent views of the downtown San Diego skyline. Because many of the industrial uses on Harbor Drive are screened from the roadway, views to Harbor Drive are primarily from parking lots and adjacent rail and trolley lines, along with the Bayshore Bikeway, which parallels the road. Vegetation within the Harbor Drive corridor is sporadic and disconnected. Most medians are either paved or fallow and have a covering of weeds and volunteer shrubs. Vegetation at the SR-15 off-ramp consists of

scattered patches of ice plant and grasses. The open space at I-5 and the 28<sup>th</sup> Street and 8<sup>th</sup> Street access ramps are planted with mature trees and ice plant.

Scenic resources are not identified within the corridor. SR-75 is an officially designated State Scenic Highway as it crosses over the San Diego Bay to Coronado on the Coronado Bridge (PM 20.5 to PM 21.9) and is an eligible State Scenic Highway on either side of the Coronado Bridge (Caltrans 2019). The project area is intermittently visible when traveling east and west on SR-75. Scenic views provided from SR-75 include views of the San Diego Bay and the downtown San Diego skyline. The project area is developed with industrial, maritime, and commercial land uses, which do not contribute to the scenic views visible from SR-75.

### ***Environmental Consequences***

The following determinations are based on the Visual Impact Assessment prepared for the proposed project (Estrada Land Planning 2023). The Visual Impact Assessment followed the guidance outlined in by the FHWA in its publication titled *Visual Impact Assessment for Highway Projects* (FHWA 1981). The visual character and quality of resources in the project area were assessed before and after construction of the Build Alternative. Visual character includes attributes such as form, line, color, and texture, and is used to describe, not evaluate; that is, these attributes are neither considered good nor bad. Visual quality is evaluated by identifying the vividness, intactness, and unity of the project area. Viewer response of neighbors (people with views to the road) and users (people with views from the road) were considered as part of the impact analysis, based on exposure and sensitivity. A total of 5 key views, shown in Figure 2-5, were selected to demonstrate the change in visual resources resulting from the Build Alternative. Visual impacts were then determined by assessing changes to the visual resources and predicting viewer response to those changes using the following categories: low, moderate-low, moderate, moderate-high, and high. These categories represent the potential for visual impacts to occur with the Build Alternative.

Visual simulations were then prepared for each of the key views to document conditions before and after implementation of the Build Alternative. See Figures 2-6 through 2-16 for the visual conditions under the No Build and Build Alternatives.

Figure 2-5: Key View Map



**Figure 2-6: Key View 1 Existing Condition – No Build Alternative**



As seen in Figure 2-6, the Harbor Drive corridor is linear and hard in form and line, muted with dull gray, tan, and brown hues and fine textures. Vertical elements, distant buildings, utilities, and palms contrast with the otherwise horizontal plane. The green of the palms and artificial turf adds vibrancy. Viewer exposure is moderate due to average vehicle speeds and sensitivity is low due to the existing urban character of the area, with views of commercial buildings, pavement, and utility infrastructure commonly occurring. It is anticipated that the average response of all viewer groups is low.

**Figure 2-7: Key View 1 Proposed Condition – Build Alternative**



As seen in Figure 2-7, the proposed gantry and signage would add a strong overhead horizontal element over the street, creating a near distance focal point. The muted colors and open structure of the gantry would reduce its vividness. The proposed gantry is in line with other contextual features along the corridor. Landscaping in the median south of 8<sup>th</sup> Street would reduce the visual impact of the expanded pavement and increase vividness and unity, resulting in an overall moderate resource change. Viewer exposure would be moderate and sensitivity would be low. It is anticipated that the average response of all viewer groups would be low. The visual impact of the Build Alternative at this location would be moderate-low.

**Figure 2-8: Key View 2 Existing Condition – No Build Alternative**



As seen in Figure 2-8, the Harbor Drive corridor in this area is linear in form and line, and built structures are muted with dull gray, tan, and brown hues and fine textures. The fallow median and east parkway, while vibrant green in the winter months, are dull and brown with a medium texture for most of the year. Utilities and fences provide strong vertical elements and the horizontal wires strengthen the view to a central horizon point. Primary viewers are travelers on Harbor Drive. Secondary viewers are commuters on the adjacent rail and trolley lines, along with the Bayshore Bikeway. The viewer exposure and sensitivity of NBSD neighbors are not assessed by visual studies. Viewer exposure is moderate and sensitivity is low. It is anticipated that the average response of all viewer groups is low.

**Figure 2-9: Key View 2 Proposed Condition – Build Alternative  
(Vesta Street Bridge Option 1, Cast in Place Box Girder with Outrigger Bent)**



As seen in Figure 2-9, the project changes to the Harbor Drive streetscape would be somewhat compatible with the existing visual character. The wide vegetated median has been replaced by additional lanes and a raised center median. To reduce visual impacts, the median pavement would be colored and textured to increase unity, reduce the expanse of roadway pavement, and add warmth. The gently arching bridge would foreshorten the view and increase vividness. The muted gray bridge and retaining walls would unify the surrounding built environment, while the retaining walls would screen undesirable views to utility structures. All walls would include architectural surface features to reduce the apparent overall scale. Vesta Street Bridge Option 1 is a two-span bridge structure with an outrigger bent consisting of a 13-foot by 9-foot outrigger cap and two 9-foot diameter columns. Visual quality of the bridge aesthetics would be reduced due to the large scale and monolithic form of the outrigger bents. Visual resource change is predicted to be moderate. Viewer exposure is moderate and sensitivity is low. The anticipated viewer response would be low. The visual impact of the Build Alternative at this location would be moderate-low.



**Figure 2-10: Key View 2 Proposed Condition – Build Alternative (Vesta Street Bridge Option 2, Precast Wide-Flange Girder Structure with Columns)**

As seen in Figure 2-10, the changes to the Harbor Drive streetscape would be somewhat compatible with the existing visual character. Roadway widening would remove a vegetated median. To reduce visual impacts, the median pavement would be colored and textured to increase unity, reduce the expanse of roadway pavement, and add warmth. The gently arching bridge would foreshorten the view and increase vividness. The muted gray bridge and retaining walls would unify the surrounding built environment, while the retaining walls would screen undesirable views to utility structures. All walls would include architectural surface features to reduce the apparent overall scale. Vesta Street Bridge Option 2 is a four-span structure with a pair of 5 foot 6-inch-diameter columns located under the bridge. The smaller columns and location under the bridge would not affect the structure aesthetics and is visually preferable to Vesta Street Bridge Option 1. However, the existing urban visual character of the Harbor Drive corridor would remain the same for both options. Visual resource change is predicted to be moderate. Viewer exposure is moderate and sensitivity is low, resulting in an average response of low for all viewer groups. The visual impact of the Build Alternative at this location would be moderate-low.

**Figure 2-11: Key View 3 Existing Condition – No Build Alternative**



As seen in Figure 2-11, the Harbor Drive corridor in this area is linear in form and line. Utilities provide strong vertical elements and the horizontal wires strengthen the view to a central horizon point. Median landscaping reinforces the linearity of the view, provides a contrast in color and texture, reduces the visual mass of the roadway pavement, and screens oncoming traffic. Viewer exposure is moderate and sensitivity is low. It is anticipated that the average response of all viewer groups is low.

**Figure 2-12: Key View 3 Proposed Condition – Build Alternative**



As seen in Figure 2-12, the proposed gantry would foreshorten the view at this location. The muted color and open structure of the gantry would reduce its contrast with the surrounding built environment. The added traffic lanes and loss of landscaped medians would reveal oncoming traffic and increase the urban character of the area. The enhanced stamped concrete median paving would reduce visual impacts and increase unity by adding warmth to the pavement. Integrally colored and textured concrete in the median would add warmth to the pavement. Visual resource change is predicted to be moderate. Viewer exposure would be moderate and sensitivity to the visual change would be moderate-low, resulting in an average response of moderate-low for all viewer groups. The visual impact of the Build Alternative at this location would be moderate.

**Figure 2-13: Key View 4 Existing Condition – No Build Alternative**



As seen in Figure 2-13, the Harbor Drive corridor in this area is linear in form and line, but the lack of median and parkway curbs and pavement reduce the linearity in comparison to the southerly sections. The San Diego-Coronado Bay Bridge is bold and linear, perpendicular to the corridor, framing distant views. The gray portion of the bridge reduces vividness and the blue sections increase vividness. Built structures are muted with dull gray, tan, and brown hues and fine textures. A large building is located close to the street on the west side of Harbor Drive. Artificial ivy covers a portion of the building wall and reduces the visual mass of the structure. Mature trees help reduce the scale of the corridor and median landscaping reduces the mass of pavement. Viewer exposure is moderate and sensitivity is low. It is anticipated that the average response of all viewer groups is low.

**Figure 2-14: Key View 4 Proposed Condition – Build Alternative**



As seen in Figure 2-14, the proposed gantry would reinforce the horizontal lines of the San Diego-Coronado Bay Bridge; however, the truss work and signage would impact the visibility of the double bridge piers and lower the quality of views to the bridge. The muted color of the gantry would reduce the vividness of the structure. The Harbor Drive corridor would be strongly linear in form and line due to the new median and parkway curbs and pavements. The added traffic lanes and loss of landscaped medians would reveal oncoming traffic and increase the urban character of the area. The enhanced stamped concrete median paving would reduce visual impacts and increase unity by adding warmth to the pavement. Visual resource change would be moderate. Viewer exposure and sensitivity would be moderate due to impacted views of the bridge. It is anticipated that the average response of all viewer groups would be moderate. The visual impact of the Build Alternative at this location would be moderate.

**Figure 2-15: Key View 5 Existing Condition – No Build Alternative**



As seen in Figure 2-15, the Harbor Drive corridor in this area is linear and strongly horizontal in form and line. The broad, unpaved median and east parkway curbing reduces the linearity of the view in comparison to the southerly sections. The irregular skyline of downtown San Diego is seen in the distance providing texture and interest. However, the downtown view quality and unity is moderate-low due to billboards, utility poles and overhead wires in the viewshed. A blocky, large building to the east is colored in a bold earth tone and is finely textured. Also, to the east, a tall black ornamental security fence is a visual barrier to the roadway user but is semi-transparent to neighbors. The fallow median and east parkway are nearly bare and fine textured. Utilities provide a vertical presence but are less vivid than in areas to the south. Billboards in the east parkway vie for the attention of the user. Viewers are primarily roadway users with moderate exposure and low sensitivity. It is anticipated that the average response of all viewer groups will be low.

**Figure 2-16: Key View 5 Proposed Condition – Build Alternative**



As seen in Figure 2-16, the unpaved median has been paved and striped. New traffic lanes would increase the urban character of the view. Double post gantries and sign panels would briefly interrupt the skyline views of downtown San Diego in the distance. The black security fence and large earth-toned building to the east would remain as a visual barrier to the roadway user. The change to visual resources would be moderate-low for northbound travelers as they approach the gantry. However, the impact to skyline views would be brief due to the traveling speeds. Viewer exposure would be moderate and sensitivity would be low. It is anticipated that the average response of all viewer groups would be moderate-low. The visual impact of the Build Alternative at this location would be moderate-low.

#### *Project Visual Impact Summary*

The Visual Impact Assessment determined that the Build Alternative would have moderate low visual impacts to users of the roadway and low impacts to neighboring land uses, including environmental justice communities. Affected viewers would primarily be commuters on Harbor Drive. Because many of the industrial uses on Harbor Drive are screened from the roadway, neighboring views to Harbor Drive are

primarily from parking lots and adjacent rail and trolley lines, along with the Bayshore Bikeway which parallels the road. The project would not adversely affect the urban character of Harbor Drive. Expansion of roadway pavement would have a moderate-low visual impact for roadway users and low impact for neighbors. Where space allows, new raised medians with colored and stamped concrete would lower visual impacts. Loss of median planting and mature trees would be a moderate visual impact for roadway users and low impact for neighbors. To reduce visual impacts, the project would replace the existing asphalt median south of 8<sup>th</sup> Street with a landscaped median. The Vesta Street Bridge would have moderate-low impacts for Harbor Drive users and low impacts to neighboring viewers from the adjacent rail, trolley, and Bayshore Bikeway. Gantries, signage and signalization components of the Build Alternative would have a moderate-low visual impact for Harbor Drive and Bayshore Bikeway users and low impacts to neighboring viewers from the rail and trolley lines. Ancillary sidewalk and ADA curb ramp work would have a low visual impact. Visual impacts would be reduced with implementation of the avoidance and minimization measures described below.

### ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

The following measures will be designed and implemented with concurrence from the District Landscape Architect and the relevant local jurisdictions:

#### Within State Right-of-Way:

- Preserve existing trees.
- Seed, mulch, or plant disturbed soil as determined by the Landscape Architect.
- Repair or replace the existing irrigation equipment to an operational status where the project disturbs roadside areas.
- Protect vegetation outside of the grading limits.
- Guardrail vegetation control will be tan-colored concrete (not vegetation control mats). Vegetation control concrete within beyond gore point (BGP) areas shall be colored with the same color used for vegetation control.
- New concrete headwalls, channels, ditches, and aprons will be colored tan.
- Biofiltration swales, if proposed, shall appear as natural landscape features (streambeds) and be sodded with irrigated native grass sod.

#### Within City Right-of-Way:

- Mitigate loss of existing Harbor Drive landscaped and paved medians by enhancing new raised medians at Harbor Drive with colored and stamped concrete.
- Preserve existing trees where possible.

- Seed, mulch, or plant disturbed soil as determined by the Landscape Architect.
- Repair or replace the existing irrigation equipment to an operational status where the project disturbs roadside areas.
- Protect vegetation outside of the grading limits.

#### Bridge Aesthetics:

- Bridge lighting shall closely resemble the existing light poles and fixtures on the dry side of NBSD. Fixtures shall be “shoebox” type with LED lamps mounted on square poles. The fixture and poles shall have a dark bronze anodized finish.
- Bridge retaining walls shall be compatible with NBSD architectural themes. The concrete wall shall be enhanced with a surface texture to soften the monolithic appearance. The texture relief pattern shall be coordinated with NBSD.
- The bridge barrier shall be enhanced with a texture to match the retaining wall texture. The barrier aesthetics shall be coordination with NBSD.
- Bridge fencing shall extend over the bridge retaining walls.

## 2.2.12 Cultural Resources

### *Regulatory Setting*

The term “cultural resources,” as used in this document, refers to the “built environment” (e.g., structures, bridges, railroads, water conveyance systems, etc.), places of traditional or cultural importance, and archaeological sites (both prehistoric and historic), regardless of significance. Under federal and state laws, cultural resources that meet certain criteria of significance are referred to by various terms including “historic properties,” “historic sites,” “historical resources,” and “tribal cultural resources.” Laws and regulations dealing with cultural resources are discussed below.

The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended, sets forth national policy and procedures for historic properties, defined as districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects included in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Section 106 of the NHPA requires federal agencies to take into account the effects of their undertakings on historic properties and to allow the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) the opportunity to comment on those undertakings, following regulations issued by the ACHP (36 CFR 800). On January 1, 2014, the First Amended Section 106 Programmatic Agreement (PA) among the FHWA, the ACHP, the California State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), and Caltrans went into effect for Caltrans projects, both state and local, with FHWA involvement. The PA implements the ACHP’s regulations, 36 CFR 800, streamlining the Section 106 process and delegating certain responsibilities to Caltrans. The FHWA’s responsibilities under

the PA have been assigned to Caltrans as part of the Surface Transportation Project Delivery Program (23 USC 327).

The Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) applies when a project may involve archaeological resources located on federal or tribal land. The ARPA requires that a permit be obtained before excavation of an archaeological resource on such land can take place.

CEQA requires the consideration of cultural resources that are historical resources and tribal cultural resources, as well as “unique” archaeological resources. PRC Section 5024.1 established the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) and outlined the necessary criteria for a cultural resource to be considered eligible for listing in the CRHR and, therefore, a historical resource. Historical resources are defined in PRC Section 5020.1(j). In 2014, AB 52 added the term “tribal cultural resources” to CEQA, and AB 52 is commonly referenced instead of CEQA when discussing the process to identify tribal cultural resources (as well as identifying measures to avoid, preserve, or mitigate effects to them). Defined in PRC Section 21074(a), a tribal cultural resource is a CRHR or local register eligible site, feature, place, cultural landscape, or object which has a cultural value to a California Native American tribe. Tribal cultural resources must also meet the definition of a historical resource. Unique archaeological resources are referenced in PRC Section 21083.2.

PRC Section 5024 requires state agencies to identify and protect state-owned historical resources that meet the NRHP listing criteria. It further requires Caltrans to inventory state-owned structures in its rights-of-way. Sections 5024(f) and 5024.5 require state agencies to provide notice to and consult with the SHPO before altering, transferring, relocating, or demolishing state-owned historical resources that are listed in or are eligible for inclusion in the NRHP or are registered or eligible for registration as California Historical Landmarks (CHL). Procedures for compliance with PRC Section 5024 are outlined in a MOU between Caltrans and SHPO, effective January 1, 2015. For most federal-aid projects on the State Highway System, compliance with the Section 106 PA will satisfy the requirements of PRC Section 5024.

### ***Affected Environment***

This section is based on the studies performed to identify and evaluate potential project effects on cultural resources within the Area of Potential Effects (APE), including the Historic Properties Survey Report (HPSR), an Archaeological Survey Report (ASR), and a Historical Resource Evaluation Report (HRER) (AECOM 2023; PanGIS 2023). The APE, as defined in 36 CFR Part 800.16(d), is “the geographic area of areas within which an undertaking may directly or indirectly cause alterations in the character or use of historic properties, if any such properties exist.” The APE established for the Build Alternative encompasses the extent of the project footprint, all areas of ground disturbance, and known archaeological sites. The APE formed the basis of evaluation for all cultural studies.

Methods used to support the studies included records searches, field surveys, and Native American consultation pursuant to AB 52.

### *Historic Resources*

The proposed project would occur within existing and developed Caltrans facilities, city streets, and NBSD. As a result of background research and survey, seven previously recorded built environment resources and one new built environment resource (NBSD Building 3223, Admiral Robinson Recreation Center) were identified in the APE. Each resource was visited, assessed for historic integrity, evaluated for NRHP, CRHR, and CHL eligibility, and recorded or updated on Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) 523 forms. Based on this evaluation, it was determined that two historical resources within the APE are eligible for listing: the San Diego-Coronado Bay Bridge Historic District (P-37-016282) and the Coronado Beltline Railroad (CBL) (P-37-013073).

The San Diego-Coronado Bay Bridge, constructed in 1969, is a contributing resource to the NRHP/CRHR-eligible San Diego-Coronado Bay Bridge Historic District (P-37-016282). The bridge is also individually significant and eligible for the NRHP/CRHR under Criterion C for its Mid Century Modern design. The district boundary encompasses the bridge, the I-5 east approach connector and ramps, and the toll plaza elements on the Island of Coronado. The period of significance is 1967 to 1974 and is significant at the state level.

The CBL was constructed in 1888; however, much of the line was destroyed by flooding in 1916 with only portions of the original line rebuilt. The CBL has been previously determined not eligible for NRHP or CRHR listing, but it is eligible for listing in the San Diego Register of Historical Resources (assigned NRHP status code 5S1). The segment of the CBL that overlaps with the proposed project area consists of the resource footprint, and no character-defining features or elements are located within this area.

### *Archaeological Resources*

As part of the ASR, three additional archaeological resources were determined to be located within the APE; however, these sites have been documented as either destroyed or meeting exemption criteria as isolated refuse dumps and scatters over 50 years old that lack specific associations. Archaeological resources were identified in the APE based on records searches completed with the South Coastal Information Center (SCIC).

The presence or absence of archaeological resources could not be definitively determined at many of the sites due to access limitations, safety reasons, or existing development or paving that covered the area. The intense development of the area also means that many of the archaeological resources are likely to have already been significantly impacted or partially or entirely destroyed. However, there remains the possibility that partially intact resources are within the subsurface in the project area. Based on known sites in the area and previous archaeological investigations, these

resources could include buried human remains; hearth features; deposits of prehistoric materials such as debitage, shell middens, faunal remains, flaked stone, and stone tools; and historic trash deposits containing various artifacts.

### *Tribal Cultural Resources*

A Sacred Lands File (SLF) search request was submitted to the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) in 2023 and returned with positive results on June 15, 2023. Two lists were provided of Native American contacts who may be able to supply information pertinent to the project area. A letter was prepared and mailed on August 4, 2023 to the 20 representatives for which contact information was given. The letter briefly described the proposed project and its geographical location and requested any information the tribes could provide regarding tribal concerns and the sensitivity for unknown tribal cultural resources within the project area. A map and contact response form were appended to each letter.

Ray Teran, the Resource Management Director for Viejas Tribal Government responded via email on August 11, 2023. Teran indicated the project area may contain many sites sacred to the Kumeyaay people and requested that these sacred sites be avoided with adequate buffer zones. Natalia Galeana, Caltrans Archaeologist, left a voicemail with Viejas Tribal Government representative Ernest Pingleton on August 11, 2023 to follow up. Pingleton called on August 11, 2023 and wanted to confirm the project would have Kumeyaay monitors on site, Caltrans confirmed this request, and Pingleton also indicated he did not have specific or additional cultural resource concerns.

Lisa C. Haws, Tribal Administrator & Tribal Historic Preservation Officer for the Manzanita Band of the Kumeyaay Nation responded via email on August 11, 2023. The Manzanita Band requested formal consultation and stated that “the area is known to have Sacred Lands or cultural resources within the project vicinity. Although extensive ground-disturbing activities have previously occurred inadvertent discoveries are very possible.” The Manzanita Band also requested the participation of their Cultural Resource Monitors (aka Native American Monitors [NAMS]) during the initial cultural resources investigation and during all ground-disturbing activities. Natalia Galeana, Caltrans Archaeologist, called and emailed Haws on August 11, 2023.

Follow-up phone calls were placed on August 18, 2023. Coordination is ongoing and will continue throughout project development and implementation to ensure tribal input is incorporated.

### ***Environmental Consequences***

As described above, the Build Alternative would overlap with two eligible built historic resources, the San Diego-Coronado Bay Bridge and the CBL. The Build Alternative would not result in alterations to either of these resources, or substantially change the historic context that gives significance to these resources. Neither of these historic resources would be adversely affected by the Build Alternative.

The Build Alternative would also intersect areas of known archaeological sensitivity. There is potential for the Build Alternative to disturb undiscovered archaeological resources during construction activities such as grading, excavation, or other ground-disturbing activities. Construction disturbance could result in adverse effects on these resources if proper controls are not in place. It is standard Caltrans policy that work would be halted if unidentified cultural materials are unearthed during construction until a qualified archaeologist can assess the significance of the find. These requirements are reflected in the avoidance and minimization measures below.

The Build Alternative would also occur in an area identified by local tribal representatives as containing known sacred lands or sites. Any additional measures to reduce impacts to tribal cultural resources during construction would be identified during ongoing tribal consultation efforts.

The No Build Alternative would not result in any physical development and would have no effect on cultural resources.

### ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

The proposed project would implement the following measures to avoid or minimize impacts to cultural resources during project construction:

- If cultural materials are discovered during construction, all earth-moving activity within and around the immediate discovery area will be diverted until a qualified archaeologist can assess the nature and significance of the find.
- If human remains are discovered, California Health and Safety (H&SC) Section 7050.5 states that further disturbances and activities shall stop in any area or nearby area suspected to overlie remains, and the County Coroner shall be contacted, in conjunction with Caltrans District 11 Environmental Branch Manager or an equivalent designated environmental compliance lead. If the remains are thought by the Coroner to be Native American, the coroner will notify the NAHC, who, pursuant to PRC Section 5097.98, will then notify the Most Likely Descendant (MLD). At this time, Caltrans District 11 Environmental Branch Manager or an equivalent designated environmental compliance lead will initiate consultation and work with the MLD on the respectful treatment and disposition of the remains. Further provisions of PRC 5097.98 are to be followed as applicable.
- High visibility fencing shall be used to delineate an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) to protect any discovered cultural resource or potentially sensitive cultural resource site in its entirety. A qualified archaeologist shall be consulted for the appropriate dimensions and placement of the ESA.
- Recommendations for appropriate treatment of tribal cultural resources shall be identified through the consultation process with interested tribes, including the Manzanita Band of the Kumeyaay Nation and the Viejas Tribal Government.

Native American monitors shall be present during construction activities that involve ground disturbance. Coordination with tribal representatives shall be required in the event that potentially significant resources are discovered to determine the appropriate treatment methods. Buffer zones around significant tribal cultural resources would be delineated using ESA fencing to the satisfaction of tribal monitors.

## **2.3 PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

### **2.3.1 Hydrology and Floodplain**

#### ***Regulatory Setting***

##### *Federal*

EO 11988 (Floodplain Management) directs all federal agencies to refrain from conducting, supporting, or allowing actions in floodplains unless it is the only practicable alternative. FHWA requirements for compliance are outlined in 23 CFR 650 Subpart A.

To comply, the following must be analyzed:

- The practicability of alternatives to any longitudinal encroachments.
- Risks of the action.
- Impacts on natural and beneficial floodplain values.
- Support of incompatible floodplain development.
- Measures to minimize floodplain impacts and to preserve/restore any beneficial floodplain values affected by the project.

The base floodplain is defined as “the area subject to flooding by the flood or tide having a one percent chance of being exceeded in any given year.” An encroachment is defined as “an action within the limits of the base floodplain.”

##### *Local*

The City of San Diego is a participant in the National Flood Insurance Rate Program administered by FEMA. This program provides subsidized flood insurance for all property owners, providing that the local government institutes adequate land use and development control measures for preventing and reducing property damage from flooding. The City has enacted Ordinance O-21162 - Development Regulations for Special Flood Hazard Areas, which provide guidance for floodplain development in the City in compliance with FEMA’s National Flood Insurance Rate Program.

## ***Affected Environment***

### *Vesta Street*

The proposed improvements include widening of the Interstate 15 (I-15) southbound (SB) offramp to Main Street. This widening will be achieved by widening to the north-west and cutting into the existing fill between the offramp and the northbound (NB) lanes.

The improvements proposed for the SB offramp to Main Street are in a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) defined Floodplain for South Las Chollas Creek. South Las Chollas Creek also has a FEMA defined floodway, however there are no proposed feature in the FEMA defined floodway. Within the project area, South Las Chollas Creek is designated as a Zone AE with Floodway. The Las Chollas Creek floodplain and floodway are shown on Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) 06073C1903H (Figure 2-17).

### *Harbor Drive*

The proposed improvements include widening of Harbor Drive between Beardsley Street and the bridge that transverses over the BNSF Freight Yard (parallel to Switzer Street). This widening will be achieved by paving the existing dirt median to add an additional southbound truck only lane.

The improvements proposed for this section of Harbor Drive may encroach upon the FEMA defined Zone A floodplain. This floodplain is located between the San Diego Bay and the Switzer Creek Structure and is designated as a Zone A. This floodplain is shown on FIRM 06073C1884H (Figure 2-18).

## ***Environmental Consequences***

### *Vesta Street*

The Build Alternative proposes minor grading within the overbank area of the South Las Chollas Creek Zone AE floodplain just upstream of its confluence with Las Chollas Creek. The minor grading consists of cutting into the existing fill between the SB offramp to Main Street and the NB I-15 lanes to create an additional lane. The minor grading orientation is perpendicular to the water flow and occurs within an ineffective flow area. As the proposed improvement involves only removal of existing ground within the mapped floodplain, with most of the cut located in an ineffective, overbank area, these improvements will have an insignificant impact on the mapped floodplain and associated Base Flood Elevations. There are no proposed improvements within the South Las Chollas Creek Regulatory Floodway and therefore the proposed improvements will have no impact on the mapped Regulatory Floodway. A Location Hydraulics Study for this location is on file.

## *Harbor Drive*

The Build Alternative proposes to convert an existing dirt median to a paved SB truck only lane between Beardsley Street and the bridge that transverses over the BNSF Freight Yard. This may include slight grading to the existing ground consisting of sliver fills to align the future proposed pavement to the existing pavement on the existing NB and SB Harbor Drive lanes, while facilitating and perpetuating existing pavement drainage patterns. The slight grading may be longitudinal and contiguous to an existing Zone A floodplain located between San Diego Bay and the outlet of the Switzer Creek Structure.

The Zone A floodplain is upstream of the San Diego Bay Zone VE and downstream of the Switzer Creek structure that contains the 100-year flood and encompasses the BNSF Freight Yard, Port land, the majority of Cesar Chavez Park and privately owned property. The area encompassed by the Zone A is approximately at elevation 10. The San Diego Bay Zone AE has a listed Based Flood Elevation of 11. The FIRM mapping does denote seawalls and revetment along the boundary of the Zone AE area and Zone A area; however, these features are not continuous along the boundary. Since the Zone A area is one foot below the Base Flood Elevation for San Diego Bay, it is possible that the Zone A area is attributed to San Diego Bay flood area.

The Zone A floodplain is downstream of the Switzer Creek structure. It appears that the Switzer Creek structure outlets to a large open channel just north of the Harbor Drive Bridge, then traverses to the south, under the BNSF Freight Yard tracks. The open channel then appears to flow to another underground structure under the Tenth Ave Marine Terminal. It is possible that the large open channel does not contain the 100-year flood and the Zone A area is attributed Switzer Creek overflowing the banks of the channel. The FIRM maps do not identify the flooding source of the Zone A. Therefore, it is unknown if the Zone A is attributed to the San Diego Bay, Switzer Creek, or both.

Detailed cross section of this area will be developed in the next phase of the project. Once detailed cross sections are developed, a determination of floodplain encroachment will occur. If it is determined that the proposed project features encroach upon the Zone A floodplain, a floodplain study will be performed. As the proposed project features include slight sliver fills, if these proposed project features encroach upon the floodplain, it is assumed that these project features will have an insignificant impact.

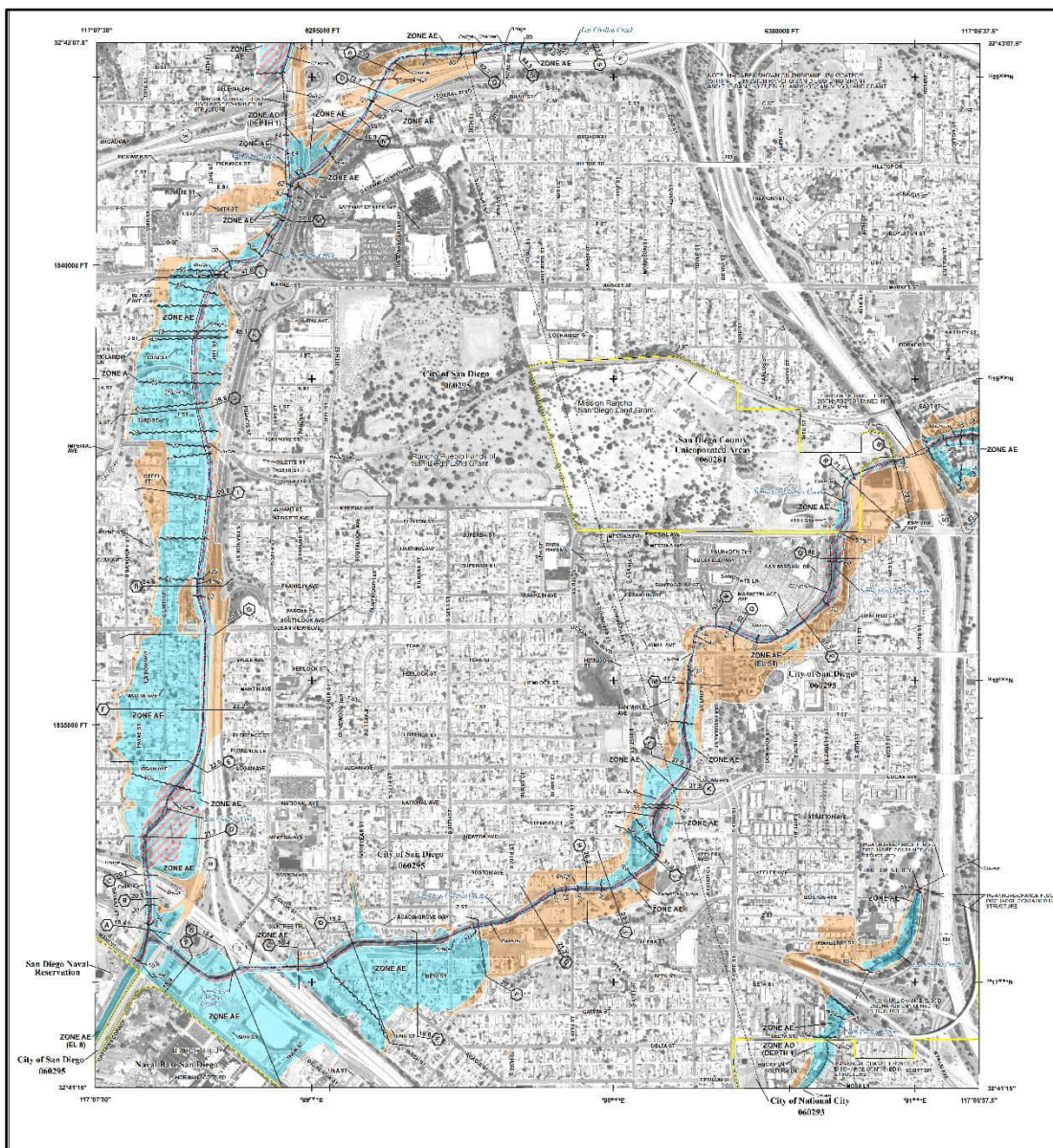
A Floodplain Study will be performed in the next phase of the project if it is determined that proposed project features encroach upon the Floodplain. As Harbor Drive is not known to be classified as a Highway, a Location Hydraulics Study will not be performed.

The No Build Alternative would have no effect on floodplains or hydraulic conditions in the area.

### ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

No avoidance, minimization, or mitigation is required.

Figure 2-17: FEMA Floodplain Map 06073C1903H



**FLOOD HAZARD INFORMATION**

SEE THE REPORT FOR DETAILED LISTINGS AND MAPS FOR FLOOD HAZARD INFORMATION. THE INFORMATION SHOWN ON THIS MAP IS SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION AND IS ALSO AVAILABLE IN DIGITAL FORMAT AT [HTTPS://MHC.FEMA.GOV](https://mhc.fema.gov)

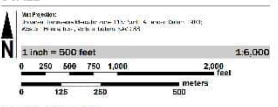
- SPECIAL FLOOD HAZARD AREAS**
  - Without Base Flood Elevation (BFE)
  - With BFE or Depth Zone AE, AO, A1, A2, A99
  - Regulatory Floodway
  - 0.2% Annual Chance Flood Hazard, Areas of 1% annual chance flood with average depth less than one foot or with drainage areas of less than one square mile Zone AE
  - Future Conditions 1% Annual Chance Flood Hazard Zone AE
  - Area with Reduced Flood Risk due to Levee See Notes, Zone AE
  - Area with Flood Risk due to Levee Zone AE
- OTHER AREAS OF FLOOD HAZARD**
  - Zone AE
  - Zone AO
  - Zone A
  - Zone X
  - Zone V
- OTHER AREAS**
  - Area of Undetermined Flood Hazard Zone AE
- GENERAL STRUCTURES**
  - Channel, Culvert, or Storm Sewer
  - Levee, Dike, or Floodwall
  - Cross Sections with 1% Annual Chance Water Surface Elevation
  - Coastal Insect
  - Coastal Insect Baseline
  - Profile Baseline
  - Hydrographic Feature
  - Base Flood Elevation Line (BFE)
  - Limit of Study
  - Jurisdiction Boundary

**NOTES TO USERS**

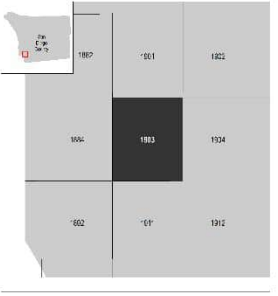
This information was prepared for the Harbor Drive 2.0/Vesta Street Bridge Port Access Improvements Project. It is not intended to be used for any other purpose. The information shown on this map is supporting documentation and is also available in digital format at [HTTPS://MHC.FEMA.GOV](https://mhc.fema.gov).

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**SCALE**



**PANEL LOCATOR**



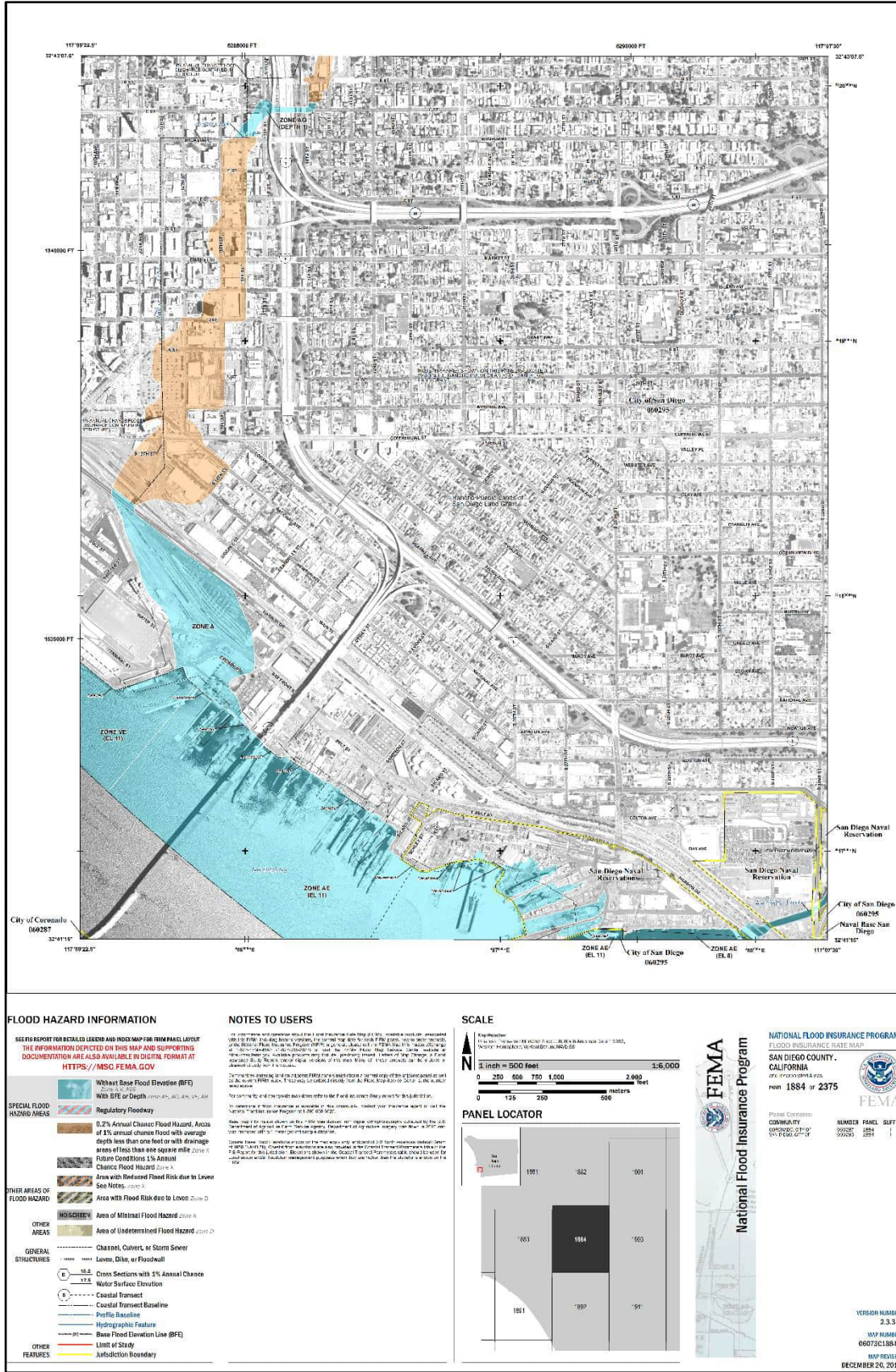
**NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM**  
**FLOOD INSURANCE RATE MAP**  
**SAN DIEGO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**  
 FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY  
 FORM 1803 OF 2375

**FEMA**  
 National Flood Insurance Program

Panel Coordinates:  
 COMMUNITY: 1903  
 NUMBER: 1903  
 PANEL: 1903  
 SUFFIX: 1903

VERSION NUMBER: 2.3.3-3  
 MAP NUMBER: 06073C1903H  
 MAP REVISED: DECEMBER 20, 2019

Figure 2-18: FEMA Floodplain Map 06073C1884H



## 2.3.2 Water Quality and Stormwater Runoff

### ***Regulatory Setting***

#### *Federal Requirements*

#### *Clean Water Act*

In 1972, Congress amended the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, making the addition of pollutants to the waters of the United States (WOTUS) from any point source unlawful unless the discharge is in compliance with a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. This act and its amendments are known today as the Clean Water Act (CWA). Congress has amended the act several times. In the 1987 amendments, Congress directed dischargers of stormwater from municipal and industrial/construction point sources to comply with the NPDES permit scheme. The following are relevant CWA sections:

- Sections 303 and 304 require states to issue water quality standards, criteria, and guidelines.
- Section 401 requires an applicant for a federal license or permit to conduct any activity that may result in a discharge to waters of the U.S. to obtain certification from the state that the discharge will comply with other provisions of the act. This is most frequently required in tandem with a Section 404 permit request (see below).
- Section 402 establishes the NPDES, a permitting system for the discharges (except for dredge or fill material) of any pollutant into waters of the U.S. Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCBs) administer this permitting program in California. Section 402(p) requires permits for discharges of stormwater from industrial/construction and municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s).
- Section 404 establishes a permit program for the discharge of dredge or fill material into waters of the U.S. This permit program is administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).

The goal of the CWA is “to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation’s waters.”

The USACE issues two types of 404 permits: General and Individual. There are two types of General permits: Regional and Nationwide. Regional permits are issued for a general category of activities when they are similar in nature and cause minimal environmental effect. Nationwide permits are issued to allow a variety of minor project activities with no more than minimal effects.

Ordinarily, projects that do not meet the criteria for a Regional or Nationwide Permit may be permitted under one of the USACE’s Individual permits. There are two types of

Individual permits: Standard permits and Letters of Permission. For Individual permits, the USACE decision to approve is based on compliance with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (U.S. EPA) Section 404 (b)(1) Guidelines (40 CFR Part 230), and whether the permit approval is in the public interest. The Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines (Guidelines) were developed by the U.S. EPA in conjunction with the USACE, and allow the discharge of dredged or fill material into the aquatic system (waters of the U.S.) only if there is no practicable alternative that would have less adverse effects. The Guidelines state that the USACE may not issue a permit if there is a least environmentally damaging practicable alternative (LEDPA) to the proposed discharge that would have lesser effects on waters of the U.S. and not have any other significant adverse environmental consequences. According to the Guidelines, documentation is needed that a sequence of avoidance, minimization, and compensation measures has been followed, in that order. The Guidelines also restrict permitting activities that violate water quality or toxic effluent standards, jeopardize the continued existence of listed species, violate marine sanctuary protections, or cause "significant degradation" to waters of the U.S. In addition, every permit from the USACE, even if not subject to the Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines, must meet general requirements. See 33 CFR 320.4.

### *State Requirements*

#### *Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act*

California's Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act (Porter-Cologne Act), enacted in 1969, provides the legal basis for water quality regulation within California. This act requires a "Report of Waste Discharge" for any discharge of waste (liquid, solid, or gaseous) to land or surface waters that may impair beneficial uses for surface and/or groundwater of the state. It predates the CWA and regulates discharges to waters of the state. Waters of the state include more than just waters of the U.S., like groundwater and surface waters not considered waters of the U.S. Additionally, it prohibits discharges of "waste" as defined, and this definition is broader than the CWA definition of "pollutant." Discharges under the Porter-Cologne Act are permitted by Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) and may be required even when the discharge is already permitted or exempt under the CWA.

The State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and RWQCBs are responsible for establishing the water quality standards (objectives and beneficial uses) required by the CWA and regulating discharges to ensure compliance with the water quality standards. Details about water quality standards in a project area are included in the applicable RWQCB Basin Plan. In California, RWQCBs designate beneficial uses for all water body segments in their jurisdictions and then set criteria necessary to protect those uses. As a result, the water quality standards developed for particular water segments are based on the designated use and vary depending on that use. In addition, the SWRCB identifies waters failing to meet standards for specific pollutants. These waters are then state-listed in accordance with CWA Section 303(d). If a state determines that waters are impaired for one or more constituents and the standards cannot be met through point source or non-point source controls (NPDES permits or WDRs), the CWA requires the establishment of Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs). TMDLs specify

allowable pollutant loads from all sources (point, non-point, and natural) for a given watershed.

### State Water Resources Control Board and Regional Water Quality Control Boards

The SWRCB administers water rights, sets water pollution control policy, and issues water board orders on matters of statewide application, and oversees water quality functions throughout the state by approving Basin Plans, TMDLs, and NPDES permits. RWCQB are responsible for protecting beneficial uses of water resources within their regional jurisdiction using planning, permitting, and enforcement authorities to meet this responsibility.

### National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Program

#### Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4)

Section 402(p) of the CWA requires the issuance of NPDES permits for five categories of stormwater discharges, including MS4s. An MS4 is defined as “any conveyance or system of conveyances (roads with drainage systems, municipal streets, catch basins, curbs, gutters, ditches, human-made channels, and storm drains) owned or operated by a state, city, town, county, or other public body having jurisdiction over stormwater, that is designed or used for collecting or conveying stormwater.” The SWRCB has identified Caltrans as an owner/operator of an MS4 under federal regulations. Caltrans’ MS4 permit covers all Caltrans rights-of-way, properties, facilities, and activities in the state. The SWRCB or the RWQCB issues NPDES permits for 5 years, and permit requirements remain active until a new permit has been adopted.

Caltrans’ MS4 Permit, Order No. 2012-0011-DWQ (adopted on September 19, 2012 and effective on July 1, 2013), as amended by Order No. 2014-0006-EXEC (effective January 17, 2014), Order No. 2014-0077-DWQ (effective May 20, 2014) and Order No. 2015-0036-EXEC (conformed and effective April 7, 2015) has three basic requirements:

1. Caltrans must comply with the requirements of the Construction General Permit (see below);
2. Caltrans must implement a year-round program in all parts of the State to effectively control stormwater and non-stormwater discharges; and
3. Caltrans’ stormwater discharges must meet water quality standards through implementation of permanent and temporary (construction) BMPs to the maximum extent practicable, and other measures as the SWRCB determines to be necessary to meet the water quality standards.

To comply with the permit, Caltrans developed the Statewide Storm Water Management Plan (SWMP) to address stormwater pollution controls related to highway planning, design, construction, and maintenance activities throughout California. The SWMP assigns responsibilities within Caltrans for implementing stormwater management procedures and practices as well as training, public education and participation,

monitoring and research, program evaluation, and reporting activities. The SWMP describes the minimum procedures and practices Caltrans uses to reduce pollutants in stormwater and non-stormwater discharges. It outlines procedures and responsibilities for protecting water quality, including the selection and implementation of BMPs. The proposed project will be programmed to follow the guidelines and procedures outlined in the latest SWMP to address stormwater runoff.

### Construction General Permit

Construction General Permit, Order No. 2022-0057-DWQ (adopted on September 8, 2022 and effective on September 1, 2023) regulates stormwater discharges from construction sites that result in a Disturbed Soil Area (DSA) of 1 acre or greater, and/or are smaller sites that are part of a larger common plan of development. By law, all stormwater discharges associated with construction activity where clearing, grading, and excavation result in soil disturbance of at least one acre must comply with the provisions of the General Construction Permit. Construction activity that results in soil disturbances of less than 1 acre is subject to this Construction General Permit if there is potential for significant water quality impairment resulting from the activity as determined by the RWQCB. Operators of regulated construction sites are required to develop Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plans (SWPPPs); to implement sediment, erosion, and pollution prevention control measures; and to obtain coverage under the Construction General Permit.

The Construction General Permit separates projects into Risk Levels 1, 2, or 3. Risk levels are determined during the planning and design phases, and are based on potential erosion and transport to receiving waters. Requirements apply according to the Risk Level determined. For example, a Risk Level 3 (highest risk) project would require compulsory stormwater runoff pH and turbidity monitoring, and before construction and after construction aquatic biological assessments during specified seasonal windows. For all projects subject to the permit, applicants are required to develop and implement an effective SWPPP. In accordance with Caltrans' SWMP and Standard Specifications, a Water Pollution Control Program (WPCP) is necessary for projects with DSA less than 1 acre.

### Section 401 Permitting

Under Section 401 of the CWA, any project requiring a federal license or permit that may result in a discharge to a water of the U.S. must obtain a 401 Certification, which certifies that the project will be in compliance with state water quality standards. The most common federal permits triggering 401 Certification are CWA Section 404 permits issued by the USACE. The 401 permit certifications are obtained from the appropriate RWQCB, dependent on the project location, and are required before the USACE issues a 404 permit.

In some cases, the RWQCB may have specific concerns with discharges associated with a project. As a result, the RWQCB may issue a set of requirements known as WDRs under the State Water Code (Porter-Cologne Act) that define activities, such as

the inclusion of specific features, effluent limitations, monitoring, and plan submittals that are to be implemented for protecting or benefiting water quality. WDRs can be issued to address both permanent and temporary discharges of a project.

### ***Affected Environment***

The information in this section is based, in part, on a Site Investigation Report prepared for the Vesta Street Bridge component of the Build Alternative (Kleinfelder 2023a) and Stormwater Data Reports prepared as part of project review (Caltrans 2023a, 2023b).

As described in Section 2.3.1 – Hydrology and Floodplain, the Build Alternative would occur within existing developed roadways and Caltrans facilities. Portions of the Build Alternative intersect or are located adjacent to Chollas Creek, which is channelized in the project area. Chollas Creek originates in the Cities of Lemon Grove and La Mesa and flows approximately 15 miles downstream to its outlet into the San Diego Bay. Chollas Creek is listed as an impaired waterbody on the Section 303(d) list for pesticides, metals, trash, and nutrients (State Water Resources Control Board 2021). Chollas Creek and the waters of the San Diego Bay would be the primary receiving waters in the project area.

The Build Alternative is located within the Coastal Plain Groundwater Basin of San Diego, which underlies the Cities of San Diego, National City, Chula Vista, Imperial Beach, and San Ysidro in southwestern San Diego County (California Department of Water Resources 2018). Historic groundwater levels in the project area have been near ground surface with groundwater flow moving west toward the ocean. Groundwater elevations were measured at a nearby well at 15.87 feet below ground surface (bgs) to 17.36 feet bgs; groundwater elevations typically fluctuate with changing precipitation patterns, runoff, and tidal influences.

The Build Alternative is located within the Chollas Hydrologic Subarea of the San Diego Mesa Hydrologic Area, and the El Toyon and Paradise Hydrologic Subareas of the National City Hydrologic Area, all within the Pueblo San Diego Hydrologic Unit (San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board 2021). Beneficial uses for these subareas include municipal and industrial groundwater; however, since the project area is located west of the I-5 in a highly urbanized area, these beneficial uses are not present.

Storm drainage through the project area occurs via a network of drain inlets, conveyance pipelines, retention basins, and outfalls into waterways or the San Diego Bay. The project area contains primarily impervious surfaces that generate runoff into the municipal storm drain systems. A limited amount of natural infiltration occurs in vegetated areas, such as landscaped medians and unpaved roadway shoulders.

### ***Environmental Consequences***

The Build Alternative is estimated to result in total soil disturbance of 8.12 acres and new impervious surface area of 4.89 acres (“new impervious surface area” is defined as both replaced and net new impervious surface area). Water quality effects during construction could result from stormwater runoff leaving construction sites and causing

erosion or sedimentation or conveying pollutants into nearby waterways. Construction of the Build Alternative would occur in compliance with Caltrans' Statewide NPDES Permit (Order No. 2012-0011-DWQ, NPDES Permit No. CAS000003) and the Statewide General NPDES Permit for Construction Activities (Order No. 2022-0057-DWQ, NPDES Permit No. CAS000002), which regulate stormwater and non-stormwater discharges. The construction contractor would be required to develop, implement, and maintain a SWPPP that (1) meets the requirements of the Construction General Permit and identifies potential pollutant sources associated with construction activities; (2) identifies non-stormwater discharges; and (3) identifies, implements, and maintains BMPs to reduce or eliminate pollutants associated with the construction sites. Implementation of BMPs would reduce long-term water quality impacts due to construction of the Build Alternative.

The project area has relatively shallow groundwater levels and groundwater is likely to be encountered during construction of the Vesta Street Bridge component of the Build Alternative, which requires deep excavation for the bridge foundations, along with excavation required to install the gantry structures on Harbor Drive. Groundwater sampling was completed in this area and compared to the California Toxics Rule threshold values for saltwater aquatic life, which found exceedances for several metal concentrations (Kleinfelder 2023a). As a result, the project would follow San Diego RWQCB Order No. R9-2015-0013, General Waste Discharge Requirements for Groundwater Extraction Discharges to Surface Waters Within the San Diego Region, which sets specific effluent limitations for discharges to the San Diego Bay. These requirements would be incorporated into the Construction General Permit. Adherence to these limitations would ensure groundwater with harmful concentrations of pollutants is not discharged to the San Diego Bay or other receiving waters without appropriate treatment.

The majority of impervious surfaces proposed by the Build Alternative would replace existing impervious surfaces such as paved roadways. However, the Build Alternative would result in a net increase in impervious surface area (approximately 2.9 acres) and stormwater runoff due to the replacement of landscaped medians with paved truck-only lanes, construction of the Vesta Street Bridge, and the widening of the SR-15/Main Street off-ramp. The increase in stormwater runoff would be minimal in relation to the amount of impervious surfaces that currently exist in the highly-developed project area. Additionally, some of the increase in runoff would be offset by the addition of new landscaped areas (approximately 0.4-acre) in medians south of 8<sup>th</sup> Street and new pervious areas resulting from removal of the loop on-ramp at I-5/National Avenue (approximately 0.07-acre). Nonetheless, permanent treatment BMPs will be evaluated in compliance with the guidelines and procedures outlined in the latest SWMP and Appendix E of the Caltrans Project Planning and Design Guide to address stormwater runoff, or relevant local standards where applicable (e.g., City of San Diego Stormwater Standards Manual). The existing drainage system at the SR-15/Main Street off-ramp would be modified to accommodate the slight increase in surface runoff (estimated to be approximately 0.075 cubic feet per second) in accordance with these guidelines. Adhering to existing regulations and implementing standard BMPs would ensure that no adverse water quality effects occur due to increased runoff from the Build Alternative.

The No Build Alternative would have no effect on water quality and stormwater runoff conditions in the area.

### ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

With adherence to Caltrans' standard design and construction practices, which are required on all projects, adverse effects related to water quality and stormwater runoff would be avoided or minimized. No additional measures are required.

## **2.3.3 Geology/Soils/Seismic/Topography**

### ***Regulatory Setting***

For geologic and topographic features, the key federal law is the Historic Sites Act of 1935, which establishes a national registry of natural landmarks and protects "outstanding examples of major geological features." Topographic and geologic features are also protected under CEQA.

This section also discusses geology, soils, and seismic concerns as they relate to public safety and project design. Earthquakes are prime considerations in the design and retrofit of structures. Structures are designed using Caltrans' Seismic Design Criteria (SDC). The SDC provides the minimum seismic requirements for highway bridges designed in California. A bridge's category and classification will determine its seismic performance level and which methods are used for estimating the seismic demands and structural capabilities. For more information, please see Caltrans' Division of Engineering Services, Office of Earthquake Engineering, Seismic Design Criteria

### ***Affected Environment***

The information in this section is based, in part, on Preliminary Foundation Reports prepared for the proposed Vesta Street Bridge and a Preliminary Geotechnical Design Report prepared for the proposed Harbor Drive improvements (Fugro 2023a, 2023b, 2023c).

The project area is located in the Peninsular Ranges Geomorphic Province, which encompasses an area extending approximately 900 miles from the Transverse Ranges and the Los Angeles Basin south to the southern tip of Baja California. The project area is located on relatively flat topography adjacent to the San Diego Bay, ranging in elevation from sea level to approximately 15 feet above mean sea level (msl). This is a seismically active region of Southern California. The Whittier-Elsinor, San Jacinto, and San Andreas fault zones are major Holocene-active fault systems located northeast of the project site, and the Newport-Inglewood-Rose Canyon, Coronado Bank, and San Diego Trough fault zones are Holocene-active faults located to the west-northwest of the site (Fugro 2023a; U.S. Geological Survey 2023). An approximately 4,000-foot portion of the Build Alternative on Harbor Drive between Park Avenue and Cesar E. Chavez Parkway is within an earthquake fault zone for the Newport-Inglewood-Rose Canyon fault (U.S. Geological Survey 2023). These faults have potential to generate

strong ground-shaking within the project area. Additionally, Harbor Drive intersects areas mapped locally as having high liquefaction potential, and preliminary foundation reports for the Vesta Street Bridge also indicate potentially liquefiable soils (Fugro 2023a; SANDAG 2008). There are no other mapped geological hazards in the project area, such as landslide, lateral spreading, or subsidence hazard zones.

### ***Environmental Consequences***

The Build Alternative would occur within existing and developed Caltrans facilities and city streets. Construction of the Build Alternative would be temporary and once operational no change from current geological conditions would occur. Physical project improvements within the earthquake fault zone would be limited to modifications to the ground surface, traffic signals, and gantries. Additionally, the entire project would occur within a seismically active region. However, the Build Alternative would be constructed to meet Caltrans' Seismic Design Criteria, which would minimize potential risks related to fault rupture and seismic ground shaking. Site-specific soil conditions would be evaluated during the design phase in the project Geotechnical Report, which would provide recommendations to address any soil, liquefaction, or seismic issues. No landslide issues would occur given the flat topography and distance from any steep terrain. The proposed Vesta Street Bridge would be constructed in accordance with the bridge design specifications outlined in Caltrans' Bridge Design Practice Manual to ensure bridge safety when considering maximum demands or force effects due to various loads during its design life. The proposed overhead gantries along Harbor Drive would be constructed in alignment with Caltrans' Standard Plan for Overhead Signs and Electrical Systems, which set forth predetermined geotechnical parameters that must be met for construction to occur. By constructing the project in accordance with these regulations and recommendations, the Build Alternative would not result in adverse effects due to geologic, seismic, or topographical conditions.

During construction of the Build Alternative, excavated soil would be exposed, increasing the potential for soil erosion. Temporary effects due to soil erosion are discussed in Section 2.3.2 – Water Quality and Stormwater Runoff and would be addressed by compliance with the NPDES Construction General Permit. Erosion would be addressed through implementation of standard measures as part of the project, including erosion control BMPs that would be part of the SWPPP. With implementation of these standard measures, no short-term direct or indirect adverse effects due to soil erosion would occur during construction of the Build Alternative.

The No Build Alternative would not result in any physical changes and would have no effect on geology, soils, seismicity, or topography.

### ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

With adherence to Caltrans' standard design and construction practices, which are required on all projects, adverse effects related to geology, soils, seismicity, and topography would be avoided or minimized. No additional measures are required.

## 2.3.4 Paleontology

### *Regulatory Setting*

Paleontology is a natural science focused on the study of ancient animal and plant life as it is preserved in the geologic record as fossils.

A number of federal statutes specifically address paleontological resources, their treatment, and funding for mitigation as a part of federally authorized projects, including:

- 16 USC 431-433 (the “Antiquities Act”) prohibits appropriating, excavating, injuring, or destroying any object of antiquity situated on federal land without the permission of the Secretary of the Department of Government having jurisdiction over the land. Fossils are considered “objects of antiquity” by the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, the Forest Service, and other federal agencies.
- 16 USC 461-467 established the National Natural Landmarks (NNL) program. Under this program property owners agree to protect biological and geological resources such as paleontological features. Federal agencies and their agents must consider the existence and location of designated NNLs, and of areas found to meet the criteria for national significance, in assessing the effects of their activities on the environment under NEPA.
- 16 USC 470aaa (the Paleontological Resources Preservation Act) prohibits the excavation, removal, or damage of any paleontological resources located on federal land under the jurisdiction of the Secretaries of the Interior or Agriculture without first obtaining an appropriate permit. The statute establishes criminal and civil penalties for fossil theft and vandalism on federal lands.
- 23 USC 1.9(a) requires that the use of Federal-aid funds must be in conformity with all federal and state laws.
- 23 USC 305 authorizes the appropriation and use of federal highway funds for paleontological salvage as necessary by the highway department of any state, in compliance with 16 USC 431-433 above and state law.

### *Affected Environment*

The information in this section is from the Paleontological Resource Assessment completed for the proposed project (Caltrans 2021a).

Background research was completed for the proposed project, including literature reviews of Caltrans District 11’s paleontology library and a review of geologic maps. The results of the research indicated that the current project limits are entirely located within artificial fill and young alluvium, which have very low potential for buried paleontological resources.

## ***Environmental Consequences***

The Build Alternative would be located within areas with low potential for buried paleontological resources. As a result, project construction activities would be unlikely to result in adverse effects on buried paleontological resources. Compliance with Caltrans BMPs and standard measures during ground-disturbing activities, including those set forth in Section 14-7 – Paleontological Resources of the 2022 Standard Specifications, would ensure that construction contractors are informed of appropriate actions to take if unanticipated resources are encountered during construction.

The No Build Alternative would have no effect on paleontological resources.

## ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

With adherence to Caltrans' standard design and construction practices, which are required on all projects, adverse effects paleontological resources would be avoided or minimized. No additional measures are required.

## **2.3.5 Hazardous Waste/Materials**

### ***Regulatory Setting***

Hazardous materials, including hazardous substances and wastes, are regulated by many state and federal laws. Statutes govern the generation, treatment, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials, substances, and waste, and also the investigation and mitigation of waste releases, air and water quality, human health, and land use.

The primary federal laws regulating hazardous wastes/materials are the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) of 1980, and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) of 1976. The purpose of CERCLA, often referred to as "Superfund," is to identify and clean up abandoned contaminated sites so that public health and welfare are not compromised. The RCRA provides for "cradle to grave" regulation of hazardous waste generated by operating entities. Other federal laws include:

- Community Environmental Response Facilitation Act (CERFA) of 1992
- Clean Water Act
- Clean Air Act
- Safe Drinking Water
- Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA)
- Atomic Energy Act
- Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA)

- Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA)

In addition to the acts listed above, EO 12088, Federal Compliance with Pollution Control Standards, mandates that necessary actions be taken to prevent and control environmental pollution when federal activities or federal facilities are involved.

California regulates hazardous materials, waste, and substances under the authority of the California Health and Safety Code and is also authorized by the federal government to implement RCRA in the state. California law also addresses specific handling, storage, transportation, disposal, treatment, reduction, cleanup, and emergency planning of hazardous waste. The Porter-Cologne Act also restricts disposal of wastes and requires cleanup of wastes that are below hazardous waste concentrations but could impact ground and surface water quality. California regulations that address waste management and prevention and cleanup of contamination include Title 22 Division 4.5 Environmental Health Standards for the Management of Hazardous Waste, Title 23 Waters, and Title 27 Environmental Protection.

Worker and public health and safety are key issues when addressing hazardous materials that may affect human health and the environment. Proper management and disposal of hazardous material is vital if it is found, disturbed, or generated during project construction.

### ***Affected Environment***

The information in this section is based on Site Investigation Reports, Aerially Deposited Lead (ADL) Study Reports, and hazardous materials review memorandums prepared for the proposed Vesta Street Bridge and Harbor Drive 2.0 projects (Caltrans 2023c, 2023d; Kleinfelder 2023a, 2023b, 2023c).

Due to the significant excavation required to construct the proposed Vesta Street Bridge, excavation and soil disturbance required for the Harbor Drive improvements, and the need to evaluate soil disposition and dewatering options prior to construction, sampling and analytical testing for hazardous substances was performed in 2022 and 2023. Samples of soil and/or groundwater were collected within the project limits of the proposed Vesta Street Bridge, SR-15/Main Street off-ramp, I-5/National Avenue on-ramp, and along Harbor Drive. These samples were analyzed for volatile organic compounds (VOCs), semi-volatile organic compounds (SVOCs), metals, total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPH) (includes gasoline range organics [GRO], diesel range organics [DRO], and oil range organics [ORO]), and/or pesticides. In addition, some soil samples were evaluated for ADL and were analyzed for total lead, pH, and soluble lead methods. Detected concentrations in soil and grab groundwater samples were evaluated for worker safety, discharge of extracted groundwater, and/or waste characterization considerations, which included comparing to applicable screening levels.

Soil analytical results were compared to the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) commercial/industrial soil screening levels, United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) regional screening levels (RSLs) for

industrial soil, San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board (SFBRWQCB) soil environmental screening levels (ESLs) for construction workers, and Southern California regional background arsenic concentration in soil, where applicable. For ADL soil results, the total lead and subsequent soluble lead concentrations were evaluated to classify potential ADL-contaminated soil in accordance with the 2016 Soil Management Agreement between Caltrans and DTSC for ADL-contaminated soils within Caltrans' right-of-way (DTSC 2016). Groundwater results were compared to California Toxics Rule (CTR) threshold values for saltwater aquatic life or SFBRWQCB groundwater Tier 1 ESLs.

Soil and grab groundwater samples collected within the proposed Vesta Street Bridge footprint were analyzed for VOCs, SVOCs, metals, and TPH (includes GRO, DRO, and ORO). However, due to access issues within the railroad right-of-way, soil and grab groundwater samples were not collected and analyzed for pesticides and herbicides. Soil samples were collected at depths ranging from 5 to 40 feet bgs from hollow-stem auger borings in the areas of the proposed bridge footings on Vesta Street, located to the east and west of Harbor Drive. VOCs and SVOCs were not detected in soil and grab groundwater samples. Only TPH as ORO was detected in one soil sample and only TPH as DRO was detected in three grab groundwater samples and all results were below the applicable screening levels. Several metals were detected in soil samples and results were below the U.S. EPA RSLs for industrial soil, except for arsenic. However, all arsenic concentrations were below established naturally-occurring levels for Southern California. Several metals (arsenic, cadmium, copper, lead, mercury, nickel, and zinc) were detected in grab groundwater samples at concentrations that exceeded the California Toxics Rule (CTR) threshold values for saltwater aquatic life.

Soil and grab groundwater samples were collected along Harbor Drive and analyzed for VOCs, SVOCs, metals, TPH (includes GRO, DRO, and ORO), and/or pesticides. Some proposed sample locations were not accessible due to active construction occurring within the project area along Harbor Drive. Soil samples were collected at depths ranging from 0.5 to 20 feet bgs. VOCs, SVOCs, and pesticides were not detected in soil and grab groundwater samples. Only TPH as ORO was detected in several soil samples and in one grab groundwater sample and all results were below the applicable screening levels. Several metals were detected in soil samples and results were below the DTSC commercial/industrial soil screening levels or U.S. EPA RSLs for industrial soil, except for arsenic. However, only one arsenic concentration exceeded the established naturally-occurring levels for Southern California at a depth of 0.5 foot bgs at the northbound I-5/Harbor Drive off-ramp. Several metals (arsenic, beryllium, chromium, cobalt, copper, nickel, vanadium, and zinc) were detected in grab groundwater samples at concentrations exceeding the most stringent screening levels (SFBRWQCB Tier 1 ESLs).

Soil samples evaluated for ADL were also collected within the SR-15/Main Street off-ramp, along Harbor Drive, and the I-5/National Avenue on-ramp and were analyzed for lead concentrations. Within the SR-15/Main Street off-ramp, soil samples were collected from 0 to 0.5-foot bgs and from 1.5 to 2.0 feet bgs. Based on the statistical analysis of ADL results, the soil within the proposed excavation area for the SR-15/Main Street off-

ramp is classified as regulated, hazardous Type Z2, cannot be re-used onsite, and must be disposed of offsite at a Class 1 disposal facility. Within the project limits along Harbor Drive and the I-5/National Avenue on-ramp, soil samples were collected from 0.5 foot and 1.5 feet bgs. Based on the statistical analysis of the ADL results, all soil along Harbor Drive, from 0 to 1.0 feet bgs is classified as regulated, hazardous Type Z2, cannot be re-used onsite, and must be disposed of offsite at a Class 1 disposal facility. Soil located along the I-5/National Avenue on-ramp from 0 to 1.0 feet bgs is classified as regulated, commercial (non-hazardous) Type COM, and soil deeper than 1.0 feet bgs is classified as unrestricted.

In addition to ADL-impacted soil and metal exceedances detected in soil and grab groundwater samples, soil and/or groundwater in the vicinity of the Build Alternative may be impacted by VOCs (including chlorinated solvents), petroleum hydrocarbons, and/or per- and polyfluoralkyl substances (PFAS). These are described below, along with other hazardous materials potentially present in the project area.

### VOCs

VOCs (including chlorinated solvents) were detected in shallow groundwater located adjacent to and northwest of the Vesta Street/McCandless Boulevard intersections, near the proposed Vesta Street Bridge, based on the Final Action Memorandum Non-Time Critical Removal Action for Installation Restoration Program (IRP) Site 22, Building 3280 Wing A (CH2M 2023). However, groundwater samples completed for the Site Investigation Report within the proposed Vesta Street Bridge limits did not detect any VOCs (including chlorinated solvents) (Kleinfelder 2023a).

In addition, based on a review of available documents, VOCs (including chlorinated solvents) were detected in soil and/or groundwater adjacent to or in proximity to Harbor Drive at the following locations:

- BNSF Railyard – adjacent to and northwest of Harbor Drive/Cesar E. Chavez Parkway intersection.
- SDG&E Silvergate Substation – adjacent to and northwest of Harbor Drive/Sampson Street intersection.
- Pacific Treatment – approximately 325 feet northeast of Harbor Drive/Sampson Street intersection.
- ARCO San Diego Terminal – adjacent to and southwest of Harbor Drive between Sampson Street and Sicard Street.
- Chevron San Diego Terminal – adjacent to and southwest of Harbor Drive between Sicard Street and Schley Street.
- NASSCO - adjacent to and northwest of Harbor Drive/Belt Street intersection.

- NBSD IRP Site 17 – NEX Service Station – approximately 175 feet northeast of Harbor Drive between Chollas Creek and 32nd Street.
- NBSD IRP Site 4 – Defense Property Disposal Office (DPDO) Storage Yard – adjacent to and east of Harbor Drive between approximately Woden Street and 7<sup>th</sup> Street Channel.
- NBSD IRP Site 22 – Building 3280 Wing A – approximately 200 feet northeast of Harbor Drive near the intersection of 32<sup>nd</sup> Street extending to Vesta Street.

### *Petroleum Hydrocarbons*

Based on a review of available documents, petroleum hydrocarbons (including free product) were detected in soil and/or groundwater either adjacent to or in proximity to Harbor Drive at the following locations:

- Former SDG&E Station A – approximately 250 feet northeast of Harbor Drive near the intersection with Park Boulevard.
- BNSF Railyard – adjacent to and northwest of Harbor Drive/Cesar E. Chavez Parkway intersection.
- Former Unocal Pipeline – approximately 425 feet southwest of the Harbor Drive/Cesar E. Chavez Parkway intersection.
- SDG&E Silvergate Substation – adjacent to and northwest of Harbor Drive/Sampson Street intersection.
- ARCO San Diego Terminal – adjacent to and southwest of Harbor Drive between Sampson Street and Sicard Street.
- Chevron San Diego Terminal – adjacent to and southwest of Harbor Drive between Sicard Street and Schley Street.
- NASSCO – adjacent to and northwest of Harbor Drive/Belt Street intersection.
- NBSD IRP Site 17 – NEX Service Station – approximately 175 feet northeast of Harbor Drive between Chollas Creek and 32<sup>nd</sup> Street.

### *PFAS*

Based on the Revised Final Basewide PFAS Site Inspection Report for NBSD (Tetra Tech 2022), PFAS was detected in groundwater at various sites within NBSD that are located to the east and west of Harbor Drive and south of Chollas Creek to approximately Civic Center Drive. PFAS is an emerging contaminate and currently not regulated as a hazardous substance. However, the U.S. EPA is working towards establishing enforceable regulatory levels (i.e., maximum contaminant levels) and potentially designating some PFAS compounds as hazardous substances. PFAS was

detected at the active Firefighting Training Facility (referred to as Area of Interest [AOI] 1) located on the dry side of NBSD, south of the Vesta Street/Norman Scott Road intersection. PFAS was also detected in groundwater at IRP Site 4, located adjacent to and north of the 7<sup>th</sup> Street Channel, east of Harbor Drive. PFAS concentrations exceeded current U.S. EPA RSLs in groundwater at the active Firefighting Training Facility (AOI 1) and IRP Site 4. PFAS was also detected in groundwater adjacent to and east of Harbor Drive at IRP Site 4 in exceedance of U.S. EPA regional screening levels.

### *Asbestos*

Based on the findings of the Site Investigation Report for the proposed Vesta Street Bridge, there is potential to encounter asbestos materials, specifically asbestos-containing concrete pipe, within the proposed Vesta Street Bridge construction limits. SDAPCD records indicate that asbestos was present in pipes removed near the Vesta Street/McCandless Boulevard intersection. It is unknown whether structures that would be removed or altered for the proposed Vesta Street Bridge contain asbestos; however, based on past records, asbestos may be present during demolition activities.

### ***Environmental Consequences***

The Build Alternative would involve construction activities, such as grading, excavation, pile driving, and utility trenching, which have the potential to disturb hazardous materials located within or adjacent to the project limits. Areas within or adjacent to the project limits could contain soil and/or groundwater impacted by various hazardous substances or materials, including metals, petroleum hydrocarbons, VOCs, PFAS, ADL, and asbestos. Without proper controls, disturbed hazardous substances or materials could adversely affect the health of construction workers, nearby uses, and the environment.

All construction activities would occur in accordance with Caltrans Standard Specifications for the management and disposal of hazardous substances and materials, or equivalent provisions set forth at the local level. Excavation for the proposed Vesta Street Bridge would occur in proximity to areas of known contamination, including VOCs in groundwater northwest of the Vesta Street/McCandless Boulevard intersection, and PFAS in groundwater near the intersection of Vesta Street/Norman Scott Road and at IRP Site 4 south of the 7<sup>th</sup> Street Channel. Excavation and soil disturbance for the proposed Harbor Drive improvements would occur in proximity to areas of known contamination, including petroleum hydrocarbons, VOCs, and PFAS in groundwater adjacent to Harbor Drive at the sites mentioned previously. Although analytical testing of the project limits did not indicate contaminated groundwater was present, there is still potential for contaminated groundwater to migrate within the disturbance area or otherwise be encountered during construction due to its proximity to known sites. All dewatered groundwater would be required to be tested and treated in accordance with Caltrans Standard Specification 14-11.03 (or equivalent local provisions), in addition to meeting San Diego RWQCB requirements (San Diego RWQCB Order No. R9-2015-0013, General Waste Discharge Requirements for Groundwater Extraction Discharges to Surface Waters Within the San Diego Region), prior to discharge.

Soil sampling within the project limits found areas with soil contamination requiring special treatment (hazardous Type Z2 classified soils). Additionally, construction activities would have potential to encounter unanticipated soil contamination within the project limits, given the presence of various impacted sites nearby. If unanticipated asbestos or other hazardous substances were to be discovered onsite, work would stop immediately in the area and Caltrans Environmental Engineering or the project engineer would be contacted in accordance with Standard Specification 14-11.02 (or an equivalent local provision). Any contaminated soil encountered during construction activities would be managed per Standard Specification 14-11.03 (or an equivalent local provision), which sets forth storage, handling, containment, and disposal procedures for hazardous materials. Additionally, areas with ADL requiring disposal would be subject to a Lead Compliance Plan and an Excavation and Transportation Plan per Caltrans SSP 14-11.08, and would be disposed of in accordance with recommendations provided in the Site Investigation and ADL Study Reports. These requirements would include procedures for managing the material, dust control measures, preventing spills and tracked material onto public roads, and a spill contingency plan. Adherence to these standard practices would minimize hazardous materials effects during construction of the Build Alternative.

As noted previously, pesticides and herbicides were not evaluated in soil and groundwater near the railroad due to access restrictions but would need to be evaluated via subsequent analytical testing to determine the risk level in these areas prior to construction. One elevated arsenic concentration was encountered at the I-5/Harbor Drive off-ramp during the Site Investigation which exceeds Southern California background arsenic concentrations. Additionally, some sample locations were not accessible due to active construction along Harbor Drive; therefore, supplemental soil and groundwater data along Harbor Drive is needed to evaluate potentially impacted areas. If hazardous concentrations are identified during subsequent testing, appropriate handling and disposal requirements would be implemented through Caltrans SSPs or equivalent local provisions in accordance with state requirements.

The No Build Alternative would have no effect related to hazardous waste or materials.

### ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

- Additional soil and groundwater sampling shall be completed in discrete locations within the project limits in coordination with Caltrans District 11 Environmental Engineering. Sampling shall be completed prior to construction to further define the limits of any contaminants to protect human health and the environment during construction activities. All testing, treatment, and disposal shall occur in accordance with Caltrans Standard Specifications and/or Standard Special Provisions, or equivalent local provisions. All testing results shall be made part of the project record and provided to the construction contractor as early as feasible.

Additionally, the following standardized measures would be implemented by the project to avoid or minimize effects from hazardous waste/materials:

- A Lead Compliance Plan under Caltrans Standard Specification 7-1.02K(6)(j)(ii) would be required during construction when handling lead contaminated soils, as well as removal of lead-based paint, thermoplastic, painted traffic stripe, and/or pavement marking.
- As project lead for the Vesta Street Bridge (EA 11-43105) component of the proposed project, Caltrans is designated as the generator of hazardous waste produced from work activities per Caltrans' Standard Specification 14-11.07.
- As project lead for the Harbor Drive 2.0 (EA 11-43131) component of the proposed project, SANDAG is designated as the generator of hazardous waste produced from work activities.
- An Excavation and Transportation Plan (ETP) is required, for the Vesta Street Bridge (EA 11-43105) component of the proposed project, under Caltrans' Standard Special Provision (SSP) 14-11.08 for all regulated ADL soils.
- The ADL Agreement between Caltrans and Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) is applicable only to the Vesta Street Bridge component of the proposed project (EA 11-43105) where Caltrans is designated as the generator of hazardous waste and will be required to follow all SSP 14-11.08 requirements including notification to DTSC. Regulated, hazardous ADL material on the Harbor Drive 2.0 Project (EA 11-43131) will be excavated and disposed of as hazardous waste at a Class 1 disposal facility (not including DTSC notifications specified per 14-11.08)
- For hazardous waste generated on the job site, the Water Pollution Control (WPC) manager must be knowledgeable of proper handling and emergency procedures for hazardous waste as demonstrated by submitting a training certificate which indicates completion of training required under 22 CA Code of Regulations § 66265.16, as per Caltrans' Standard Specification 14-11.01.
- The construction contractor, upon discovery of unanticipated asbestos and/or hazardous substance, is required to immediately stop working in the area of discovery and notify Caltrans' Environmental Engineering per Caltrans' Standard Specification 14-11.02. Environmental Engineering will use on-call Construction Emergency Response Contract to perform any required work.
- The construction contractor is required, per Caltrans' Standard Specification 14-11.03, to handle, store, and dispose of hazardous waste under 22 CA Code of Regs Div. 4.5.
- Excavation, transportation, and handling of material containing hazardous waste or contamination must result in no visible dust migration. When clearing, grubbing, and performing earthwork operations in areas containing hazardous waste or contamination, at water truck or water tank must be provided on the job site per Caltrans' Standard Specification 14-11.04.

- The construction contractor is not permitted to stockpile material containing hazardous waste or contamination unless ordered. Stockpiles containing hazardous waste or contamination must not be placed where affected by surface run-on or run-off. Stockpiles are not permitted in environmentally sensitive areas (ESAs). Stockpiled material must not enter storm drains, inlets, or waters of the State. These requirements are provided in Caltrans' Standard Specification 14-11.05.
- The construction contractor is designated the generator of hazardous waste produced from materials the construction contractor has brought to the job site per Caltrans' Standard Specification 14-11.06.
- Removal of any treated wood waste (TWW) (e.g., wooden posts for guardrails, signs, barriers, or piles) would require proper handling and disposal per Caltrans' Standard Special Provision 14-11.14. TWW products contain hazardous chemical preservatives, therefore, TWW is considered a California Hazardous Waste.
- Imported local materials from either a (1) noncommercial source, or (2) source not regulated under California jurisdiction, must be evaluated and approved for use by Environmental Engineering Branch per Caltrans Standard Specification 6-1.03B.

### **2.3.6 Air Quality**

#### ***Regulatory Setting***

The Federal Clean Air Act (FCAA), as amended, is the primary federal law that governs air quality while the California Clean Air Act is its companion state law. These laws, and related regulations by the U.S. EPA and CARB set standards for the concentration of pollutants in the air. At the federal level, these standards are called National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). NAAQS and state ambient air quality standards have been established for six criteria pollutants that have been linked to potential health concerns: carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), ozone (O<sub>3</sub>), particulate matter (PM) — which is broken down for regulatory purposes into particles of 10 micrometers or smaller (PM<sub>10</sub>) and particles of 2.5 micrometers and smaller (PM<sub>2.5</sub>), lead (Pb), and sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>). In addition, state standards exist for visibility reducing particles, sulfates, hydrogen sulfide (H<sub>2</sub>S), and vinyl chloride. The NAAQS and state standards are set at levels that protect public health with a margin of safety, and are subject to periodic review and revision. Both state and federal regulatory schemes also cover toxic air contaminants (air toxics); some criteria pollutants are also air toxics or may include certain air toxics in their general definition.

Federal air quality standards and regulations provide the basic scheme for project-level air quality analysis under NEPA. In addition to this environmental analysis, a parallel "Conformity" requirement under the FCAA also applies.

## *Conformity*

The conformity requirement is based on FCAA Section 176(c), which prohibits the USDOT and other federal agencies from funding, authorizing, or approving plans, programs, or projects that do not conform to State Implementation Plan (SIP) for attaining the NAAQS. “Transportation Conformity” applies to highway and transit projects and takes place on two levels: the regional (or planning and programming) level and the project level. The proposed project must conform at both levels to be approved.

Conformity requirements apply only in nonattainment and “maintenance” (former nonattainment) areas for the NAAQS, and only for the specific NAAQS that are or were violated. U.S. EPA regulations at 40 CFR 93 govern the conformity process. Conformity requirements do not apply in unclassifiable/attainment areas for NAAQS and do not apply at all for state standards regardless of the status of the area.

Regional conformity is concerned with how well the regional transportation system supports plans for attaining the NAAQS for CO, NO<sub>2</sub>, O<sub>3</sub>, PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>, and in some areas (although not in California), SO<sub>2</sub>. California has nonattainment or maintenance areas for all of these transportation-related “criteria pollutants” except SO<sub>2</sub>, and also has a nonattainment area for lead (Pb); however, lead is not currently required by the FCAA to be covered in transportation conformity analysis. Regional conformity is based on emission analysis of RTPs and Federal Transportation Improvement Programs (FTIPs) that include all transportation projects planned for a region over a period of at least 20 years (for the RTP) and 4 years (for the FTIP). RTP and FTIP conformity uses travel demand and emission models to determine whether the implementation of those projects would conform to emission budgets or other tests at various analysis years showing that requirements of the FCAA and the SIP are met. If the conformity analysis is successful, the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), FHWA, and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) make the determinations that the RTP and FTIP are in conformity with the SIP for achieving the goals of the FCAA. Otherwise, the projects in the RTP and/or FTIP must be modified until conformity is attained. If the design concept and scope and the “open-to-traffic” schedule of a proposed transportation project are the same as described in the RTP and FTIP, then the proposed project meets regional conformity requirements for purposes of project-level analysis.

Project-level conformity is achieved by demonstrating that the project comes from a conforming RTP and FTIP; the project has a design concept and scope that have not changed significantly from those in the RTP and FTIP; project analyses have used the latest planning assumptions and U.S. EPA-approved emissions models; and in PM areas, the project complies with any control measures in the SIP. Furthermore, additional analyses (known as hot-spot analyses) may be required for projects located in CO and PM nonattainment or maintenance areas to examine localized air quality impacts.

## ***Affected Environment***

The information in this section is based, in part, on air pollutant modeling prepared for the proposed project by Caltrans.

The proposed project is located within the San Diego Air Basin (SDAB). The SDAB is a coastal plain with connecting broad valleys and low hills, bounded by the Pacific Ocean to the west and high mountain ranges to the east. The topography in the SDAB region varies greatly, from beaches on the west, to mountains and then desert to the east.

The SDAB currently meets the NAAQS for all criteria air pollutants except ozone and meets the CAAQS for all criteria air pollutants except ozone, PM10, and PM2.5. The SDAPCD is responsible for enforcing the rules and regulations protecting air quality in the SDAB.

## ***Environmental Consequences***

### *Regional Air Quality Conformity*

The proposed project is included in SANDAG's 2021 Regional Transportation Improvement Program, Amendment No. 06 (SANDAG 2022). SANDAG found that regionally significant projects in the San Diego area will conform to the purpose of the SIP and not cause new air quality violations, worsen existing violations, or delay timely attainment of the relevant NAAQS as provided in Section 176(c) of the FCAA. The TIP gives priority to eligible Transportation Control Measures identified in the SIP and provides sufficient funds to provide for their implementation. The 2021 RTIP and 2021 Regional Plan were determined to conform by FHWA and FTA on January 28, 2022.

The design concept and scope of the proposed project is consistent with the project description of Project ID GM06 (Harbor Drive 2.0) and GM09 (Vesta Bridge) in the 2021 RTP, 2021 RTIP, and the "open to traffic" assumptions of SANDAG's regional emissions analysis. Therefore, the project will not interfere with the timely implementation of any Transportation Control Measures identified in the SIP.

### *Project-Level Conformity*

The proposed project is located in an unclassified and attainment area for the PM10 and PM2.5 standards, respectively, and in an attainment area for CO; thus, a project-level hot-spot analysis for PM10, PM2.5, and CO are not required under 40 CFR 93.109. As described in more detail below, criteria air pollutant emissions are anticipated to improve with implementation of the proposed project. Thus, the proposed project would not cause or contribute to any new localized CO, PM2.5, and/or PM10 violations, or delay timely attainment of any NAAQS.

### *Criteria Pollutants*

Proposed project operations would generate emissions of criteria air pollutants and precursors that could potentially affect regional air quality. Operational emissions consider long-term changes in emissions due to implementation of the proposed project. Criteria air pollutant emissions from project operations were estimated for the

existing conditions (2020) and the No Build and Build Alternatives in 2030 and 2050 to support NEPA and CEQA review of the project.

A quantitative analysis of daily emissions was performed for reactive organic gases (ROG), nitrogen oxides (NOx), CO, PM10 and PM2.5 using the Caltrans CT-EMFAC model to compare the potential effects of the project Build and No Build Alternatives. Estimated emissions for existing (2020), 2030, and 2050 conditions are summarized in Table 2-4.

**Table 2-4: Operational Criteria Air Pollutant Emissions (tons per day)**

Pollutant	2020 Existing	2030 No Build	2030 Build	2050 No Build	2050 Build
ROG	0.1531	0.1017	0.1015	0.0662	0.0622
NOx	0.2440	0.1062	0.1053	0.0872	0.0925
CO	1.2690	0.7817	0.7816	0.6623	0.6388
PM10	0.2467	0.2393	0.2385	0.2384	0.2350
PM2.5	0.0543	0.0511	0.0510	0.0504	0.0499

As shown in Table 2-4, daily criteria air pollutant emissions estimated for both the Build and No Build Alternatives would be lower in 2030 and 2050 compared to the existing year (2020), because federal and state vehicle emissions standards are expected to reduce pollutant emissions over time. Except for NOx in 2050, the estimated daily criteria air pollutant emissions for the Build Alternative in 2030 and 2050 would be lower than the emissions for the No Build Alternative because the Build Alternative would improve traffic flow and increase multimodal access and connectivity in the project area. Daily emissions of NOx for the Build Alternative in 2050 would be approximately 6 percent higher than for the No Build Alternative; however, the emissions would remain well below the existing levels. Therefore, emissions of criteria air pollutants from project-related traffic are not anticipated to cause, contribute to, or worsen any air quality violations.

#### *Mobile Source Air Toxics*

The U.S. EPA has identified nine compounds with significant contributions from mobile sources that are among the national and regional-scale cancer risk drivers or contributors and non-hazard contributors from the 2011 National Air Toxics Assessment. These are 1,3-butadiene, acetaldehyde, acrolein, benzene, diesel particulate matter (diesel PM), ethylbenzene, formaldehyde, naphthalene, and polycyclic organic matter.

The proposed project’s potential air quality impacts related to long-term operations emissions of mobile source air toxics (MSATs) were evaluated in accordance with the FHWA’s (2023) Updated Interim Guidance on Mobile Source Air Toxic Analysis in NEPA Documents. According to the FHWA guidance, the proposed project is classified as a category 2 project (Projects with Low Potential MSAT Effects).

According to FHWA guidance, the proposed project has a low potential for MSAT effects because the project serves to improve operations without adding substantial new capacity or without creating a facility that is likely to meaningfully increase MSAT emissions. In addition, a quantitative analysis of daily emissions was performed for the nine priority MSATs using the Caltrans CT-EMFAC model to compare the potential effects of the project Build and No Build Alternatives. Estimated MSAT emissions for existing (2020), 2030, and 2050 conditions in the project area are summarized in Table 2-5.

**Table 2-5: MSAT Emissions (grams per day)**

<b>Pollutant</b>	<b>2020 Existing</b>	<b>2030 No Build</b>	<b>2030 Build</b>	<b>2050 No Build</b>	<b>2050 Build</b>
1,3- butadiene	364	212	212	172	163
Acetaldehyde	800	315	314	271	272
Acrolein	81	48	48	38	36
Benzene	2,527	1,569	1,568	1,123	1,061
Diesel PM	2,262	480	477	411	475
Ethylbenzene	2,098	1,439	1,436	928	869
Formaldehyde	2,168	958	954	800	787
Naphthalene	173	123	123	83	78
Polycyclic Organic Matter	68	33	33	24	23

Source: Modeled by Caltrans in 2023

As shown in Table 2-5, daily MSAT emissions estimated for both the Build and No Build Alternatives would be lower in 2030 and 2050 compared to the existing year (2020), because federal and state vehicle emissions standards are expected to reduce pollutant emissions over time.

Except for diesel PM in 2050, the estimated daily MSAT emissions for the Build Alternative in 2030 and 2050 conditions would be approximately equal to or lower than the emissions for the No Build Alternative because the Build Alternative would improve local traffic flow and increase multimodal access and connectivity in the project area. Daily emissions of diesel PM for the Build Alternative in 2050 would be slightly higher than for the No Build Alternative; however, the levels would remain well below the existing level. In conclusion, the modeling results show that the Build Alternative would not result in a substantial increase in MSAT emissions compared to the existing year conditions or the future No Build Alternative.

#### *Construction Emissions for Project-Level Conformity*

Proposed project construction activities would generate emissions of criteria air pollutants and precursors that could potentially affect regional air quality. Construction is anticipated to commence in 2028 and would take approximately 24 months. Construction is not expected to substantially impact traffic due to detours, road closures,

or temporary terminations to be set forth in the TMP. Since construction activities will not last for more than 5 years at one general location, temporary emissions of CO, PM10, and PM2.5 are not expected to cause, contribute to, or worsen any federal air quality violations and an evaluation of these emissions is not required for a project-level conformity determination (40 CFR 93.123(c)(5)).

*Construction-Related Criteria Air Pollutant Emissions*

Construction emissions are described as “short-term” or temporary; however, they have the potential to represent a significant impact with respect to regional and localized air quality. Project demolition and construction activities would temporarily generate emissions of ROG, NOX, CO, PM10, and PM2.5. ROGs, NOX, CO, PM10, and PM2.5 emissions are associated primarily with mobile equipment exhaust, including off-road construction equipment and on-road motor vehicles. PM10 and PM2.5 emissions are also associated with fugitive dust emissions from site preparation and grading activities. Fugitive PM emissions vary as a function of parameters such as soil silt content, soil moisture, wind speed, acreage of disturbance area, and the miles traveled by construction vehicles on- and off-site.

Although the proposed project’s construction-related emissions do not need to be evaluated for conformity purposes, construction-related emissions are considered for both the NEPA and CEQA evaluation. Construction emissions were quantified using the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod), version 2022.1. At the time of this analysis, construction details, such as a detailed construction schedule, list of construction equipment, and material import and export quantities, were not available. Thus, model defaults available within CalEEMod’s linear project type were used to inform the project’s potential level of emissions and present emissions for informational purposes. Table 2-6 presents the potential daily emissions associated with construction for a project of this scale.

**Table 2-6: Construction-Related Daily Emissions (pounds per day)**

Description	ROG	NOx	CO	PM10	PM2.5
Potential Daily Emissions	9	66	90	10	13
SDAPCD AQIA Trigger Levels	N/A	250	550	100	67

Source: Modeled by AECOM in 2023; SDAPCD 2019

Since Caltrans has not established significance thresholds for criteria air pollutant emissions for CEQA purposes, emissions were compared to SDAPCD’s Air Quality Impact Analysis Trigger Levels (Rule 20.2) for informational purposes. Although these trigger levels do not generally apply to general development or transportation projects, these levels may be used to evaluate the increased emissions from projects and to demonstrate that a project’s emissions would not result in a significant impact to regional air quality and impede attainment of air quality standards for the region. Because regional air quality standards have been established for these criteria pollutants to protect the public with a margin of safety from adverse health impacts due to exposure to air pollution, these trigger levels can also be used to assess project

emissions and inform the project's impacts to regional air quality and health risks. As shown in Table 2-6, construction-related emissions would not exceed the SDAPCD screening levels. Furthermore, since the proposed project is located within a designated AB 617 Air Protection Program community, the construction contractor will be required to use equipment that is equipped with engines rated Tier 4 Interim or Tier 4 Final for off-road, diesel-fueled equipment, which is currently the strictest standard for limiting emissions from off-road diesel vehicles. This requirement would reduce construction-related emissions and minimize diesel PM impacts to the surrounding community during construction.

### ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

- The construction contractor must comply with the SDAPCD Rule 55 and Caltrans' Standard Specifications (14-9). Section 14-9 includes specifications requiring compliance with applicable laws and regulations related to air quality, including air pollution control district, and air quality management district regulations and local ordinances. Per Section 14-9, waste or material generated from construction activities would not be disposed of by burning.
- Water or dust palliative would be applied to the site and equipment as often as necessary to control fugitive dust emissions. Fugitive emissions generally must meet a "no visible dust" criterion either at the point of emissions or at the right-of-way line, depending on local regulations.
- Construction equipment and vehicles would be properly tuned and maintained, and would use low sulfur fuel as required by California Code of Regulations Title 17, Section 93114.
- To the extent feasible, construction traffic would be scheduled and routed to reduce congestion and related air quality impacts caused by idling vehicles along local roads during peak travel times.
- The construction contractor shall utilize alternative fuels such as renewable diesel for construction equipment when feasible.
- The contractor shall implement an idling limit of 5 minutes for delivery trucks and other diesel-powered equipment (with some exceptions).
- The contractor shall encourage improved fuel efficiency from construction equipment through ensuring that construction equipment is maintained and properly tuned and equipment has been correctly sized for the job.
- The contractor shall utilize construction equipment equipped with engines rated Tier 4 Interim or Tier 4 Final for off-road diesel-fueled vehicles.

## ***Climate Change***

FHWA emphasizes concepts of resilience and sustainability in highway planning, project development, design, operations, and maintenance. Because there have been requirements set forth in California legislation and EOs on climate change, the issue is addressed in the CEQA analysis in Chapter 3 of this document. The CEQA analysis may be used to inform the NEPA determination for the project.

### **2.3.7 Noise and Vibration**

#### ***Regulatory Setting***

NEPA and CEQA provide the broad basis for analyzing and abating highway traffic noise effects. The intent of these laws is to promote the general welfare and to foster a healthy environment. The requirements for noise analysis and consideration of noise abatement and/or mitigation, however, differ between NEPA and CEQA.

#### ***California Environmental Quality Act***

CEQA requires a strictly baseline versus build analysis to assess whether a proposed project will have a noise impact. If a proposed project is determined to have a significant noise impact under CEQA, then CEQA dictates that mitigation measures must be incorporated into the project unless those measures are not feasible. The rest of this section will focus on NEPA/Title 23 Part 772 of the Code of Federal Regulations (23 CFR 772) noise analysis; see Chapter 3 of this document for further information on noise analysis under CEQA.

#### ***National Environmental Policy Act and 23 CFR 772***

For highway transportation projects with FHWA involvement (and Caltrans, as assigned), the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1970 and its implementing regulations (23 CFR 772) govern the analysis and abatement of traffic noise impacts. The regulations require that potential noise impacts in areas of frequent human use be identified during the planning and design of a highway project. The regulations include noise abatement criteria (NAC) that are used to determine when a noise impact would occur. The NAC differ depending on the type of land use under analysis. For example, the NAC for residences (67 dBA) is lower than the NAC for commercial areas (72 dBA). Table 2-7 on the following page lists the noise abatement criteria for use in the NEPA/23 CFR 772 analysis.

According to the Caltrans' Traffic Noise Analysis Protocol for New Highway Construction and Reconstruction Projects (Caltrans 2011b), a noise impact occurs when the predicted future noise level with the project substantially exceeds the existing noise level (defined as a 12 dBA or more) or when the future noise level with the project approaches or exceeds the NAC. A noise level is considered to approach the NAC if it is within 1 dBA of the NAC.

If it is determined that the project will have noise impacts, then potential abatement measures must be considered. Noise abatement measures that are determined to be reasonable and feasible at the time of final design are incorporated into the project plans and specifications. This document discusses noise abatement measures that would likely be incorporated in the project.

**Table 2-7: Noise Abatement Criteria**

Activity Category	NAC, Hourly A-Weighted Noise Level, Leq(h)	Description of Activity Category
A	57 (Exterior)	Lands on which serenity and quiet are of extraordinary significance and serve an important public need and where the preservation of those qualities is essential if the area is to continue to serve its intended purpose.
B <sup>1</sup>	67 (Exterior)	Residential.
C <sup>1</sup>	67 (Exterior)	Active sport areas, amphitheatres, auditoriums, campgrounds, cemeteries, day care centers, hospitals, libraries, medical facilities, parks, picnic areas, places of worship, playgrounds, public meeting rooms, public or nonprofit institutional structures, radio studios, recording studios, recreation areas, Section 4(f) sites, schools, television studios, trails, and trail crossings.
D	52 (Interior)	Auditoriums, day care centers, hospitals, libraries, medical facilities, places of worship, public meeting rooms, public or nonprofit institutional structures, radio studios, recording studios, schools, and television studios.
E	72 (Exterior)	Hotels, motels, offices, restaurants/bars, and other developed lands, properties, or activities not included in A–D or F.
F	No NAC—reporting only	Agriculture, airports, bus yards, emergency services, industrial, logging, maintenance facilities, manufacturing, mining, rail yards, retail facilities, shipyards, utilities (water resources, water treatment, electrical, etc.), and warehousing.
G	No NAC—reporting only	Undeveloped lands that are not permitted.

<sup>1</sup> Includes undeveloped lands permitted for this activity category.

Figure 2-19 lists the noise levels of common activities to enable readers to compare the actual and predicted highway noise levels discussed in this section with common activities.

Caltrans' Traffic Noise Analysis Protocol sets forth the criteria for determining when an abatement measure is reasonable and feasible. Feasibility of noise abatement is basically an engineering concern. Noise abatement must be predicted to reduce noise by at least 5 decibels (dB) at an impacted receptor to be considered feasible from an acoustical perspective. It must also be possible to design and construct the noise abatement measure for it to be considered feasible. Factors that affect the design and constructability of noise abatement include, but are not limited to, safety, barrier height, topography, drainage, access requirements for driveways, presence of local cross streets, underground utilities, other noise sources in the area, and maintenance of the abatement measure. The overall reasonableness of noise abatement is determined by the following three factors: 1) the noise reduction design goal of 7 dB at one or more

impacted receptors; 2) the cost of noise abatement; and 3) the viewpoints of benefited receptors (including property owners and residents of the benefited receptors).

**Figure 2-19: Noise Levels of Common Activities**

Common Outdoor Activities	Noise Level (dBA)	Common Indoor Activities
Jet Fly-over at 300m (1000 ft)	110	Rock Band
Gas Lawn Mower at 1 m (3 ft)	100	
Diesel Truck at 15 m (50 ft), at 80 km (50 mph)	90	Food Blender at 1 m (3 ft)
Noisy Urban Area, Daytime	80	Garbage Disposal at 1 m (3 ft)
Gas Lawn Mower, 30 m (100 ft) Commercial Area	70	Vacuum Cleaner at 3 m (10 ft)
Heavy Traffic at 90 m (300 ft)	60	Normal Speech at 1 m (3 ft)
Quiet Urban Daytime	50	Large Business Office
Quiet Urban Nighttime	40	Dishwasher Next Room
Quiet Suburban Nighttime	30	Theater, Large Conference Room (Background)
Quiet Rural Nighttime	20	Library
	10	Bedroom at Night, Concert Hall (Background)
	0	Broadcast/Recording Studio
Lowest Threshold of Human Hearing	0	Lowest Threshold of Human Hearing

*Jurisdictional Noise Standards*

The proposed project would occur within portions of NBSD and the Cities of San Diego and National City, in addition to the state highway system. Relevant noise standards for these jurisdictions are provided below.

*Naval Facilities Planning in the Noise Environment (Publication P-970)*

This publication provides allowable noise levels and guidance for selecting a site for new facilities within the noise environment of military installations. The document also discusses noise reduction techniques to render marginally acceptable locations suitable for use (Naval Facilities Engineering Command 1978). Noise level exposure for residential uses is considered acceptable at levels up to 65 dB day-night average sound

level/equivalent continuous sound level ( $L_{dn}/L_{eq}$ ). For offices and administrative facilities, noise levels are considered acceptable up to 70 dB  $L_{dn}/L_{eq}$ .

#### Federal Interagency Committee on Urban Noise

The federal government suggests land use compatibility for different noise zones; however, land use compatibility is regulated at the local level. Based on the guidelines established by the Federal Interagency Committee on Urban Noise (1980), residential areas and schools are considered compatible where the day-night average sound level (DNL) is less than or equal to 65 dBA.

#### City of San Diego General Plan – Noise Element

The City of San Diego General Plan Noise Element establishes goals and policies to guide compatible land uses and the incorporation of noise attenuation measures for new uses to protect people living and working in the City of San Diego from an excessive noise environment. The noise compatibility guidelines consider new uses generating noise in excess of 65 dBA to be unacceptable near community and neighborhood parks, single-family residential uses, and hospitals and other institutional uses.

#### City of San Diego Noise Control Ordinance

The City of San Diego Noise Control Ordinance (Chapter 5, Article 9.5, Division 4 of the City of San Diego Municipal Code) establishes prohibitions for disturbing, excessive, or offensive noise and contains provisions (e.g., sound level limits) for the purpose of securing and promoting public health, comfort, safety, peace, and quiet. The ordinance establishes the following noise limits within the City of San Diego for various land uses, which are unlawful for any one person to exceed for 1 hour on average:

- Single-Family Residential: 50 dB from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., 45 dB from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., and 40 dB from 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.
- Multi-Family Residential: 55 dB from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., 50 dB from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., and 45 dB from 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.
- Commercial: 65 dB from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., 60 dB from 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m., and 60 dB from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.
- Industrial: 75 dB anytime

The noise subject to these limits is that part of the total noise at the specified location that is due solely to the action of an individual person.

Construction noise is also regulated under the Noise Control Ordinance, and not permitted as follows:

- Between the hours of 7:00 p.m. of any day and 7:00 a.m. of the following day.

- On legal holidays as specified in Section 21.0104 of the City of San Diego Municipal Code, with exception of Columbus Day and Washington’s Birthday, or on Sundays.
- Construction activity shall not cause, at or beyond the property lines of any property zoned residential, an average sound level greater than 75 dB during the 12-hour period from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

*National City Municipal Code Title 12 Noise Control Ordinance*

The City of National City Noise Control Ordinance is intended to prevent noise and vibration that may jeopardize the health or welfare of its citizens or degrade quality of life. Chapter 12.06 presents exterior noise limits that are the maximum permissible sound levels for various categories of land uses. Maximum external environmental noise limits (in dBA  $L_{eq}$ ) are as follows:

- All residential (less than 9 dwelling units): 45 dBA between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m., and 55 dBA between 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m.
- Multi-unit residential (9 dwelling units or more and public space): 50 dBA between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m., and 60 dBA between 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m.
- Commercial: 60 dBA between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m., and 65 dBA between 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m.
- Light Industry (east of I-5): 70 dBA
- Heavy Industry (west of I-5): 80 dBA

Maximum construction noise levels are established in Chapter 12.10. Noise limits for mobile construction equipment of 75 dBA for residential areas and 85 dBA for semi-residential/commercial areas are established. Noise limits for stationary construction equipment of 60 dBA for residential and 70 dBA for semi-residential/commercial areas are also included.

***Affected Environment***

The information in this section is from a Noise Study Report (NSR) completed for the Vesta Street Bridge (Parsons 2022) and a noise technical memorandum prepared for the Build Alternative (Caltrans 2023e). The Build Alternative is considered a Type I project according to 23 CFR 772.

Land uses within the noise study area include single and multi-family residences identified as NAC Activity Category B land uses; a preschool, parks, and a golf course identified as NAC Activity Category C land uses; and several commercial establishments without frequent outdoor use areas. Traffic on the regional highway system and local roadways is the dominant noise source in the study area, aside from

the MTS trolley and BNSF railroad lines; however, only traffic noise was considered in the NSR. Short-term noise measurements were conducted in 2022 at five sites in the vicinity of the proposed Vesta Street Bridge to characterize existing noise levels in this area and validate noise model results for future traffic noise. Noise measurements were also completed in 2023 along the Harbor Drive corridor in the vicinity of areas of frequent human use. These noise measurements were used to calibrate the noise model and estimate existing and future traffic noise levels at sensitive land uses nearby using project-specific traffic data. Existing traffic noise levels were found to range between 44 to 63 dBA  $L_{eq(h)}$  ( $L_{eq}$  sound level over 1 hour) at receptors in the vicinity of the Vesta Street Bridge and the SR-15/Main Street off-ramp improvements. Noise levels along the Harbor Drive corridor are projected to be similar given the comparable land uses and industrial character of the area.

## ***Environmental Consequences***

### *Construction Noise and Vibration*

Construction of the Build Alternative would occur in the vicinity of noise-sensitive land uses, including residential buildings and outdoor recreation areas. Construction noise would be controlled by Caltrans Standard Specification Section 14-8.02, which states the following:

- Do not exceed an  $L_{max}$  (maximum sound level) of 86 dBA at 50 feet from the job site activities from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m.
- Equip an internal combustion engine with the manufacturer-recommended muffler. Do not operate an internal combustion engine on the job site without the appropriate muffler.

Additionally, the Cities of San Diego and National City have established construction noise limits, as described above. These noise control standards would be adhered to during work occurring within the respective jurisdictions; in the event of any conflicts, the more stringent standards would apply. Construction equipment used by the Build Alternative is anticipated to produce noise levels between 70 to 90 dB at a distance of 50 feet. Noise produced by construction equipment would be reduced over distance at a rate of about 6 dB per doubling of distance. Construction would be conducted in accordance with Caltrans Standard Specifications 14.8-02, local standards including the City of San Diego and National City Noise Control Ordinances, and the minimization measures listed below. Construction noise would be short-term, intermittent, and overshadowed by local traffic noise. Thus, adverse construction noise effects would not occur.

The Build Alternative would also generate intermittent, localized vibration in the project area. Processes such as earth moving with bulldozers, the use of vibratory compaction rollers, demolitions, or pavement braking may cause construction-related vibration impacts such as human annoyance or building damage. Vibration impacts would be temporary and localized and would cease upon completion of construction. Additionally,

the Build Alternative would implement the avoidance and minimization measures described below, including appropriate scheduling of vibration-intensive activities and vibration monitoring, to reduce project impacts due to vibration. Thus, adverse construction vibration effects would not occur.

### *Operational Noise*

Traffic noise levels under the Build Alternative through 2050 were calculated using project-specific traffic data input into the Traffic Noise Model (TNM) version 2.5 computer noise model (FHWA 2004). Traffic inputs included traffic volumes, vehicle types, and speeds to determine the noise levels generated by traffic. Noise levels were then compared to existing conditions to identify any substantial traffic noise impacts under Title 23 CFR 772 and to indicate the direct effects of noise resulting from the Build Alternative. Traffic noise impacts would occur when the predicted traffic noise levels are at least 12 dB greater than existing noise levels at receiver locations, or when predicted traffic noise levels approach (i.e., reach within 1 dB) or exceed the NAC for the applicable activity category. The traffic noise analysis for the Vesta Street Bridge component of the Build Alternative determined that future traffic noise levels would range from 44 to 64 dBA  $L_{eq(h)}$  at receiver locations, amounting to an increase between 0 and 1 dB (or a slight decrease due to shielding of the roadway provided by the Vesta Street Bridge) at the various receptor locations. The predicted noise levels in the design year would not approach or exceed the NAC of 67 dBA  $L_{eq(h)}$  or result in a substantial increase in noise for the receptor locations assessed for the Vesta Street Bridge component. The Harbor Drive 2.0 component of the Build Alternative would not change overall traffic volumes and would result in similar noise effects once operational. Project-related traffic noise increases between 0 and 1 dB would not be perceptible and would not conflict with any local noise standards or ordinances. Therefore, the Build Alternative would not result in an adverse noise effect. Noise abatement measures are not required.

The No Build Alternative would have no noise or vibration effects.

### ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Abatement Measures***

The Build Alternative would implement the following noise minimization measures to reduce construction noise and vibration effects:

- All equipment shall have sound-control devices no less effective than those provided on the original equipment. Each internal combustion engine used for any purpose on the job or related to the job shall be equipped with a muffler of a type recommended by the manufacturer. No internal combustion engine shall be operated on the job site without an appropriate muffler.
- Construction methods or equipment that will provide the lowest level of noise impact (e.g., avoid impact pile driving near residences and consider alternative methods that are also suitable for the soil condition) shall be used.

- Idling equipment shall be turned off.
- Newer equipment with improved noise muffling shall be used, and all equipment items shall have the manufacturers' recommended noise-abatement measures (e.g., mufflers, engine covers, and engine vibration isolators) intact and operational. Newer equipment will generally be quieter in operation than older equipment. All construction equipment shall be inspected at periodic intervals to ensure proper maintenance and presence of noise-control devices (e.g., mufflers and shrouding).
- Restrict the hours of vibration-intensive equipment or activities such as vibratory rollers so that impacts to residents are minimal (e.g., weekdays during daytime hours only when as many residents as possible are away from home).
- The owner of a building close enough to a construction vibration source that damage to that structure due to vibration is possible would be entitled to a preconstruction building inspection to document the preconstruction condition of that structure.
- Conduct vibration monitoring during vibration-intensive activities. Cease construction activities in the event that potential structural damage is observed and evaluate remedial measures prior to commencement of vibration-intensive activities.

### **2.3.8 Energy**

#### ***Regulatory Setting***

NEPA requires the identification of all potentially significant impacts to the environment, including energy impacts.

The CEQA Guidelines section 15126.2(b) and Appendix F, Energy Conservation, require an analysis of a project's energy use to determine if the project may result in significant environmental effects due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary use of energy, or wasteful use of energy resources.

#### ***Affected Environment***

The proposed project is located in an area with high traffic volumes and congested peak-hour conditions resulting from freight and commuter traffic to the Port, Working Waterfront, NBSD, and other industrial and residential uses nearby. Access to the project area is provided from I-5, SR-15, SR-75, and connecting arterial roads. Average daily traffic volumes along arterials in the area range from 10,000 to over 20,000 average daily trips (ADT). Areas of congestion are typically co-located with designated freight truck routes from regional highways to the Port, including 28<sup>th</sup> Street, 32<sup>nd</sup> Street, 8<sup>th</sup> Street, and Harbor Drive. Fuel consumption associated with these roadways is high, given the regional-serving nature of the Port and proximity to other major land use areas

such as downtown San Diego. Freight traffic accessing the Port frequently uses travel routes through residential areas to avoid congestion, which increases fuel consumption. Additionally, there are numerous areas with pavement in poor condition along Harbor Drive, which can result in increased fuel consumption due to inefficient vehicle travel.

### ***Environmental Consequences***

The Build Alternative is not a capacity-increasing project; therefore, a qualitative analysis was performed for this section. Construction of the Build Alternative would result in short-term direct energy consumption due to the manufacture of construction materials, the use of heavy-duty construction equipment requiring petroleum fuels, and construction workers' motor vehicles as they travel to and from the site. Construction-related energy consumption under the proposed project would be temporary and would not result in excessive energy consumption by adhering to Caltrans' Construction Standard Specifications, which include requirements to consider environmentally friendly treatments and use materials with recycled content to the extent feasible. Additionally, idling of construction equipment would be limited to 5 minutes or less, which would reduce wasteful use of fuel. The proposed project would be constructed in an urbanized area with close access to roadways, construction supplies, and workers, making the project more efficient than construction occurring in outlying, more isolated areas. Therefore, construction energy consumption by the Build Alternative would not result in an adverse energy effect.

Once operational, the Build Alternative would improve access and circulation for freight truck traffic and commuter vehicles in the area. By reducing idling of freight trucks as they access the Port and NBSD, the Build Alternative would minimize unnecessary consumption of energy resources. The Build Alternative would not increase automobile capacity and no induced travel and associated increase in fuel consumption would occur. Pavement rehabilitation of areas in poor condition on Harbor Drive would increase the efficiency of vehicle travel through the area and minimize fuel consumption compared to existing conditions. Further, the installation of zero-emission commercial vehicle infrastructure would reduce fuel consumption by freight fleets at the Port. Other sources of operational energy use under the Build Alternative, such as new traffic signals, changeable message signs, LED lights, and geofencing, would result in negligible increases in energy demand. Therefore, operational energy consumption by the Build Alternative would not result in an adverse energy effect.

The No Build Alternative would not result in any energy consumption from construction. Existing energy inefficiencies from vehicle idling and poor pavement conditions would remain. Freight trucks would continue to use longer routes through residential areas to avoid congested areas and reach their destinations, thus unnecessarily consuming energy resources.

### ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

- The construction contractor shall utilize alternative fuels such as renewable diesel for construction equipment when feasible.

- The construction contractor shall reduce construction waste.
- The contractor shall encourage improved fuel efficiency from construction equipment through ensuring that construction equipment is maintained and properly tuned and equipment has been correctly sized for the job.

## **2.4 BIOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT**

### **2.4.1 Natural Communities**

This section of the document discusses natural communities of concern. The focus of this section is on biological communities, not individual plant or animal species. This section also includes information on wildlife corridors and habitat fragmentation. Wildlife corridors are areas of habitat used by wildlife for seasonal or daily migration. Habitat fragmentation involves the potential for dividing sensitive habitat and thereby lessening its biological value.

Habitat areas that have been designated as critical habitat under the Federal Endangered Species Act are discussed below in the Section 2.4.5 – Threatened and Endangered Species. Wetlands and other waters are also discussed below in Section 2.4.2.

#### ***Affected Environment***

The information in this section is from the Natural Environment Study prepared for the proposed project (Caltrans 2023f).

A biological study area (BSA) was established to assist in defining natural resources potentially present within the project limits. The BSA was defined as the area permanently and temporarily affected by the proposed project plus a 500-foot buffer and proposed staging areas. Literature reviews were completed for the BSA, including the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB), United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Information, Planning, and Consultation (IPaC) system, and the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) Online Rare Plant Inventory. General biological surveys were also completed to observe and record the plant and wildlife species in the area.

The results of the database reviews and surveys indicate that the BSA contains mostly urban and developed habitat, ranging from a moderate to high level of disturbance. Two primary vegetation communities occur within the BSA: freshwater and developed habitat. Freshwater habitat in the area consists of generally persistent wetlands dominated by low-growing, perennial wetland species along Chollas Creek and the 7<sup>th</sup> Street Channel. Dominant vegetation in these areas usually consist of spike rushes (*Eleocharis* spp.) and docks (*Rumex* spp.). Approximately 43 acres of freshwater habitat exists within the BSA.

Developed habitat includes areas that have been constructed upon or otherwise physically altered to an extent that native vegetation is no longer supported. Developed

habitat is characterized by permanent or semi-permanent structures mostly from NBSD and surrounding residential and industrial development, pavement or hardscape of SR-15 and adjacent roads, and landscaped areas that often require irrigation. Approximately 1,687 acres of developed habitat exists within the BSA.

The BSA is largely urbanized and does not contain wildlife corridors providing regional connectivity. SR-15 acts as an impediment to east-west wildlife movement and the surrounding urban development has resulted in little to no natural habitat near the area. The freshwater drainages of Chollas Creek and the 7<sup>th</sup> Street Channel within the urban areas provide limited opportunities for localized movement.

The results of the database searches yielded a total of 116 sensitive wildlife and plant species with some potential to occur in the BSA in the Point Loma and National City 7.5-minute USGS quadrangles (59 plant species, 11 invertebrates, one amphibian, eight reptiles, 19 birds, 15 mammals, and three sensitive habitats). Based on the previous species occurrences, 10 species were historically identified in the BSA. There is no designated critical habitat for listed species in the BSA.

### ***Environmental Consequences***

The Build Alternative would occur primarily in developed areas along Harbor Drive, connecting arterials to SR-15 and I-5, and local roads in NBSD. The off-ramp widening at SR-15/Main Street would occur across the roadway from Chollas Creek, and the Harbor Drive improvements would pass over the 7<sup>th</sup> Street Channel in the roadway. Although freshwater habitat is located in Chollas Creek and the 7<sup>th</sup> Street Channel in the vicinity of the Build Alternative footprint, these areas are not anticipated to be temporarily or permanently impacted by project activities with implementation of the avoidance and minimization measures described below. No wildlife corridors are present in the area; thus, none would be divided, and no habitat fragmentation would occur due to the Build Alternative.

The No Build Alternative would not result in any impacts to natural communities.

### ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

With adherence to the following Caltrans' standard design and construction practices, the Build Alternative would avoid and minimize effects on freshwater habitat:

- Freshwater habitat outside of the construction area will be designated as an ESA on the project plans and protected by installing temporary ESA fencing.
- All equipment maintenance, staging, and dispensing of fuel oil, coolant, or any other such activities will be outside of areas with freshwater habitat. Any debris or runoff from construction will be directed away from freshwater habitat.
- Appropriate erosion and siltation controls will be installed prior to construction and maintained until construction completion.

- Impacts from fugitive dust will be avoided and minimized through watering, monitoring, and other appropriate measures.
- The project site will be kept as clean of debris as possible.

Since there are no anticipated permanent or temporary impacts to freshwater habitat, compensatory mitigation would not be required.

## **2.4.2 Wetlands and Other Waters**

### ***Regulatory Setting***

Wetlands and other waters are protected under a number of laws and regulations. At the federal level, the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, more commonly referred to as the CWA (33 USC 1344), is the primary law regulating wetlands and surface waters. One purpose of the CWA is to regulate the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the U.S., including wetlands. Waters of the U.S. include navigable waters, interstate waters, territorial seas, and other waters that may be used in interstate or foreign commerce. The lateral limits of jurisdiction over non-tidal water bodies extend to the ordinary high water mark (OHWM), in the absence of adjacent wetlands. When adjacent wetlands are present, CWA jurisdiction extends beyond the OHWM to the limits of the adjacent wetlands. To classify wetlands for the purposes of the CWA, a three-parameter approach is used that includes the presence of hydrophytic (water-loving) vegetation, wetland hydrology, and hydric soils (soils formed during saturation/inundation). All three parameters must be present, under normal circumstances, for an area to be designated as a jurisdictional wetland under the CWA.

Section 404 of the CWA establishes a regulatory program that provides that discharge of dredged or fill material cannot be permitted if a practicable alternative exists that is less damaging to the aquatic environment or if the nation's waters would be significantly degraded. The Section 404 permit program is run by the USACE with oversight by the U.S. EPA.

The USACE issues two types of 404 permits: General and Individual. There are two types of General permits: Regional and Nationwide. Regional permits are issued for a general category of activities when they are similar in nature and cause minimal environmental effect. Nationwide permits are issued to allow a variety of minor project activities with no more than minimal effects.

Ordinarily, projects that do not meet the criteria for a Regional or Nationwide Permit may be permitted under one of the USACE's Individual permits. There are two types of Individual permits: Standard permits and Letters of Permission. For Individual permits, the USACE decision to approve is based on compliance with the U.S. EPA's Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines (40 CFR 230), and whether permit approval is in the public interest. The Section 404 (b)(1) Guidelines were developed by the U.S. EPA in conjunction with the USACE, and allow the discharge of dredged or fill material into the aquatic system (waters of the U.S.) only if there is no practicable alternative that would

have less adverse effects. The Guidelines state that the USACE may not issue a permit if there is a LEDPA to the proposed discharge that would have lesser effects on waters of the U.S., and not have any other significant adverse environmental consequences.

The Executive Order for the Protection of Wetlands (EO 11990) also regulates the activities of federal agencies with regard to wetlands. Essentially, EO 11990 states that a federal agency, such as FHWA and/or Caltrans, as assigned, cannot undertake or provide assistance for new construction located in wetlands unless the head of the agency finds: (1) that there is no practicable alternative to the construction and (2) the proposed project includes all practicable measures to minimize harm. A Wetlands Only Practicable Alternative Finding must be made.

At the state level, wetlands and waters are regulated primarily by the SWRCB, the RWQCBs, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). In certain circumstances, the Coastal Commission (or Bay Conservation and Development Commission or the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency) may also be involved. Sections 1600-1607 of the California Fish and Game Code require any agency that proposes a project that will substantially divert or obstruct the natural flow of or substantially change the bed or bank of a river, stream, or lake to notify CDFW before beginning construction. If CDFW determines that the project may substantially and adversely affect fish or wildlife resources, a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement will be required. CDFW jurisdictional limits are usually defined by the tops of the stream or lake banks, or the outer edge of riparian vegetation, whichever is wider. Wetlands under jurisdiction of the USACE may or may not be included in the area covered by a Streambed Alteration Agreement obtained from CDFW.

The RWQCBs were established under the Porter-Cologne Act to oversee water quality. Discharges under the Porter-Cologne Act are permitted by WDRs and may be required even when the discharge is already permitted or exempt under the CWA. In compliance with Section 401 of the CWA, the RWQCBs also issue water quality certifications for activities that may result in a discharge to waters of the U.S. This is most frequently required in tandem with a Section 404 permit request. Please see Section 2.3.2 - Water Quality for more details.

### ***Affected Environment***

Within the BSA, there is approximately 19 acres of freshwater habitat in Chollas Creek and 24 acres of freshwater habitat in the 7<sup>th</sup> Street Channel. The banks are vegetated with mainly nonnative and ornamental vegetation including giant reed (*Arundo donax*), castor bean (*Ricinus communis*), Peruvian pepper (*Schinus mole*), and ice plant (*Carpobrotus edulis*), although there are a few areas where native mule fat (*Baccharis salicifolia*) occur.

### ***Environmental Consequences***

There is no freshwater habitat present within the footprint of the Build Alternative. The Build Alternative would not result in permanent or temporary impacts to freshwater

habitat with implementation of the avoidance and minimization measures described above in Section 2.4.1 and below.

The No Build Alternative would not result in any impacts to wetlands and other waters.

### ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

The following avoidance measures will be implemented to avoid permanent and temporary impacts to waters of the U.S./waters of the State under the jurisdiction of the USACE, CDFW, and RWQCB.

- The temporary construction staging areas, access roads, and equipment storage shall be strategically placed at a minimum of 100 feet from jurisdictional waters to avoid impacts.
- The jurisdictional water features outside of the work areas shall be designated as an ESA on the project plans.
- The Project Biologist will determine if the ESA needs to be temporarily fenced using ESA fencing or lathe with flagging tape to exclude construction activities from the area. The Project Biologist will be onsite during the staking to identify the boundaries of the jurisdictional waters and shall supervise the placement of ESA exclusion fencing. The temporary fences around the ESAs, if needed, shall be installed as the first order of work. The locations of the ESA exclusion fence will be documented on construction maps.

Since there are no anticipated permanent or temporary impacts to wetlands and other waters with implementation of these measures, no permits or compensatory mitigation would be required.

## **2.4.3 Plant Species**

### ***Regulatory Setting***

USFWS and CDFW have regulatory responsibility for the protection of special-status plant species. “Special-status” species are selected for protection because they are rare and/or subject to population and habitat declines. Special status is a general term for species that are provided varying levels of regulatory protection. The highest level of protection is given to threatened and endangered species; these are species that are formally listed or proposed for listing as endangered or threatened under the Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA) and/or the California Endangered Species Act (CESA). Please see Section 2.4.5 – Threatened and Endangered Species in this document for detailed information about these species.

This section of the document discusses all other special-status plant species, including CDFW species of special concern, USFWS candidate species, and CNPS rare and endangered plants.

The regulatory requirements for FESA can be found at 16 USC Section 1531, et seq. See also 50 CFR Part 402. The regulatory requirements for CESA can be found at California Fish and Game Code, Section 2050, et seq. Caltrans projects are also subject to the Native Plant Protection Act, found at California Fish and Game Code, Section 1900-1913, and CEQA, found at California PRC Sections 21000-21177.

### ***Affected Environment***

No listed plant species were identified in the USFWS species list that may occur within the BSA. There were four sensitive plant species that historically occurred within the BSA: decumbent goldenbush (*Isocoma menziesii* var. *decumbens*), Coulter's goldfields (*Lasthenia glabrata* spp. *coulteri*), prostrate vernal pool navarretia (*Navarretia prostrata*), and oil neststraw (*Stylocline citroleum*). However, suitable habitat supporting these species (coastal scrub, chaparral, marsh and swamp, vernal pool, wetland, and valley and foothill grassland) does not occur within the project footprint.

No special-status plant species were observed during surveys conducted on April 29, 2022. The majority of the project area consists of developed habitat, with landscaped areas of ornamental trees and shrubs, including eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus* spp.), American sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), and Peruvian pepper. There are also disturbed areas within the project footprint with nonnative vegetation, including oat (*Avena* spp.), ripgut brome (*Bromus diandrus*), ice plant, stork's bill (*Erodium* spp.), crown daisy (*Glebionis coronaria*), fountaingrass (*Pennisetum setaceum*), and castor bean.

### ***Environmental Consequences***

The Build Alternative would occur outside of any areas containing special-status plant species. Thus, the Build Alternative would not result in impacts to special-status plant species.

The No Build Alternative would not result in impacts to special-status plant species.

### ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

No avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures are required.

## **2.4.4 Animal Species**

### ***Regulatory Setting***

Many state and federal laws regulate impacts to wildlife. The USFWS, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries), and the CDFW are responsible for implementing these laws. This section discusses potential impacts and permit requirements associated with animals not listed or proposed for listing under the FESA or CESA. Species listed or proposed for listing as threatened or endangered are discussed in Section 2.4.5 – Threatened and Endangered Species. All other special-status animal species are discussed here,

including CDFW fully protected species and species of special concern, and USFWS or NOAA Fisheries candidate species.

Federal laws and regulations relevant to wildlife include the following:

- National Environmental Policy Act
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act
- Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act

State laws and regulations relevant to wildlife include the following:

- California Environmental Quality Act
- Sections 1600 – 1603 of the California Fish and Game Code
- Sections 4150 and 4152 of the California Fish and Game Code

### ***Affected Environment***

Five sensitive animal species have historically occurred within the BSA: western tidal flat tiger beetle (*Habroscelimorpha gabbi*), western spadefoot (*Spea hammondi*), southern California legless lizard (*Anniela stebbinsi*), orange-throated whiptail (*Aspidoscelis hyperythra*), and burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*). However, suitable habitat supporting these species (coastal scrub, coastal dunes, chaparral, marsh and swamp, vernal pool, wetland, estuary and mudflats, and valley and foothill grassland) does not occur within the project footprint.

No special-status animal species were observed during the surveys conducted on April 29, 2022. Birds typically found in disturbed and urbanized areas, like house finch (*Haemorhous mexicanus*) and American crows (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) were observed.

### ***Environmental Consequences***

Due to the absence of suitable habitat and lack of special-status species observed during surveys of the project area, the Build Alternative is anticipated to have no impacts to special-status animal species. Construction of the Build Alternative may impact nesting birds protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act if it occurs during the nesting season of February 15 to September 1. Impacts may occur due to vegetation removal or nest abandonment due to adjacent construction disturbances. These impacts would be avoided or minimized with implementation of the measures described below.

The No Build Alternative would have no effect on special-status animal species or nesting birds.

## ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

Migratory birds were detected during surveys of the BSA. Therefore, measures will be implemented to avoid impacts to birds during the nesting season, which typically occurs between February 15 and September 1.

- If shrub or tree removal is to take place during the nesting season, a pre-construction nesting bird survey shall be conducted within 7 days of these activities.
- A no-disturbance buffer shall be established around any active nest or nesting pair territory to limit the impacts of construction activities. The buffer shall not be removed until after the nesting season or until after a qualified wildlife biologist determines that the young have fledged (usually late June to mid-July). The extent of these buffers shall be determined by the biologist (in coordination with USFWS and CDFW) and will depend on the level of noise or construction disturbance, line-of-sight between the nest and the disturbance, ambient levels of noise and other disturbances, and other topographical or artificial barriers. Suitable buffer distances may vary between species but is typically 100 feet.

With implementation of the above measures, adverse effects to migratory birds would be avoided or minimized.

### **2.4.5 Threatened and Endangered Species**

#### ***Regulatory Setting***

The primary federal law protecting threatened and endangered species is the FESA: 16 USC Section 1531, et seq. See also 50 CFR Part 402. This act and later amendments provide for the conservation of endangered and threatened species and the ecosystems upon which they depend. Under Section 7 of this act, federal agencies, such as the FHWA (and Caltrans, as assigned), are required to consult with the USFWS and the NOAA Fisheries to ensure that they are not undertaking, funding, permitting, or authorizing actions likely to jeopardize the continued existence of listed species or destroy or adversely modify designated critical habitat. Critical habitat is defined as geographic locations critical to the existence of a threatened or endangered species. The outcome of consultation under Section 7 may include a Biological Opinion with an Incidental Take Statement or a Letter of Concurrence. Section 3 of FESA defines take as "harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture or collect or any attempt at such conduct."

California has enacted a similar law at the state level, the CESA, California Fish and Game Code Section 2050, et seq. CESA emphasizes early consultation to avoid potential impacts to rare, endangered, and threatened species and to develop appropriate planning to offset project-caused losses of listed species populations and their essential habitats. The CDFW is the agency responsible for implementing CESA. Section 2080 of the California Fish and Game Code prohibits "take" of any species

determined to be an endangered species or a threatened species. Take is defined in Section 86 of the California Fish and Game Code as "hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill, or attempt to hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill." CESA allows for take incidental to otherwise lawful development projects; for these actions an incidental take permit is issued by CDFW. For species listed under both FESA and CESA requiring a Biological Opinion under Section 7 of FESA, the CDFW may also authorize impacts to CESA species by issuing a Consistency Determination under Section 2080.1 of the California Fish and Game Code.

Another federal law, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976, was established to conserve and manage fishery resources found off the coast, as well as anadromous species and Continental Shelf fishery resources of the United States, by exercising (A) sovereign rights for the purposes of exploring, exploiting, conserving, and managing all fish within the exclusive economic zone established by Presidential Proclamation 5030, dated March 10, 1983, and (B) exclusive fishery management authority beyond the exclusive economic zone over such anadromous species, Continental Shelf fishery resources, and fishery resources in special areas.

### ***Affected Environment***

The federally endangered Quino checkerspot butterfly (*Euphydryas editha quino*) historically occurred in the BSA. However, the last known occurrence of Quino checkerspot butterfly in this area was in 1946 (USFWS 2022) and suitable habitat for this species (coastal scrub and chaparral) does not occur in the BSA.

No USFWS-listed threatened or endangered plant species were identified within the BSA.

### ***Environmental Consequences***

Due to the lack of suitable habitat and absence of threatened or endangered plant or wildlife species during surveys of the project area, the Build Alternative is anticipated to have no impact on threatened or endangered species. If project plans change in a manner that may result in potential effects to federally-listed or state-listed species; if federally-listed or state-listed species are detected before or during project construction; or if additional information on the distribution of listed or proposed species becomes available that results in potential effects as a result of project construction, Caltrans will initiate the appropriate consultation process with relevant federal or state agencies (e.g., Section 7 consultation with USFWS or Section 2081 Incidental Take Permit consultation with CDFW).

### ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

No avoidance, minimization or mitigation measures are required.

## 2.4.6 Invasive Species

### ***Regulatory Setting***

On February 3, 1999, President William J. Clinton signed EO 13112 requiring federal agencies to combat the introduction or spread of invasive species in the United States. The order defines invasive species as “any species, including its seeds, eggs, spores, or other biological material capable of propagating that species, that is not native to that ecosystem whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health.” FHWA guidance issued August 10, 1999, directs the use of the State’s invasive species list, maintained by the California Invasive Species Council to define the invasive species that must be considered as part of the NEPA analysis for a proposed project.

Under EO 13112., federal agencies cannot authorize, fund, or carry out actions that it believes are likely to cause or promote the introduction or spread of invasive species in the United States or elsewhere unless all reasonable measures to minimize risk of harm have been analyzed and considered.

In 2001, National Invasive Species Council (NISC) of the U.S, Department of Interior, developed the NISC Management Plan as part of EO 13112. The most recent update to the NISC Management Plan was completed in 2016. The NISC Management Plan aims to help guide the actions to prevent and mitigate the impact of invasive species.

### ***Affected Environment***

Invasive species were identified during surveys of the BSA, including species found on the NISC Management Plan, the State of California Noxious Weed List, and the California Invasive Plant Council (Cal-IPC) Invasive Plant Inventory Database. All invasive species identified were plants. Giant reed (*Arundo donax*), iceplant (*Carpobrotus edulis*), and foxtail chess (*Bromus madritensis ssp. rubens*) have a high rating on the Cal-IPC database, which is given to species with high propensity for severe ecological impacts on physical processes, plant and animal communities, and vegetation structure. Wild oat (*Avena barbata* and *Avena fatua*), ripgut brome (*Bromus diandrus*), summer mustard (*Hirschfeldia incana*), Mediterranean barley (*Hordeum marinum*), ryegrass (*Lolium multiflorum*), and crimson fountain grass (*Pennisetum setaceum*), have a moderate rating on the Cal-IPC database, which indicates a substantial and apparent — but generally not severe — ecological impact.

### ***Environmental Consequences***

Construction of the Build Alternative has the potential to contribute to the spread of invasive species, including those with high and moderate potential for ecological impact, if appropriate measures are not implemented. Therefore, the avoidance and minimization measures below will be implemented by the proposed project to reduce potential for adverse effects.

The No Build Alternative would have no impact related to invasive species.

## ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

The following avoidance and minimization measures will be implemented to reduce potential adverse effects from the spread of invasive species:

- Special care will be taken during transport, use, and disposal of soils containing invasive weed seeds. Seed heads will be bagged, and all invasive species will be either sprayed or removed and properly disposed of to prevent spread into areas outside of the construction area.
- Erosion control measures for the project shall be designed to prevent the spread of invasive plant species.
- Landscaping designs for the project shall not contain invasive species in the plant selections or seed mixtures.

With implementation of the above measures, adverse effects to due to invasive species would be avoided or minimized.

## **2.5 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS**

### ***Regulatory Setting***

Cumulative impacts are those that result from past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, combined with the potential impacts of the proposed project. A cumulative effect assessment looks at the collective impacts posed by individual land use plans and projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively substantial impacts taking place over a period of time.

Cumulative impacts to resources in the project area may result from residential, commercial, industrial, and highway development. These land use activities can degrade habitat and species diversity through consequences such as displacement and fragmentation of habitats and populations, alteration of hydrology, contamination, erosion, sedimentation, disruption of migration corridors, changes in water quality, and introduction or promotion of predators. They can also contribute to potential community impacts identified for the project, such as changes in community character, traffic patterns, housing availability, and employment.

The CEQA Guidelines Section 15130 describes when a cumulative impact analysis is necessary and what elements are necessary for an adequate discussion of cumulative impacts. The definition of cumulative impacts under CEQA can be found in Section 15355 of the CEQA Guidelines. A definition of cumulative impacts under the NEPA can be found in 40 CFR Section 1508.7.

### ***Affected Environment***

The proposed project is located in a densely developed urban area in San Diego and National City. As listed in Section 2.2.1 – Existing and Future Land Use, there are

several projects within approximately one mile of the project limits that would have potential to overlap with the proposed project's construction timeline or permanently affect land uses nearby. Given its location immediately adjacent to the proposed improvements along Harbor Drive, the Bayshore Bikeway project is a primary consideration. Additionally, the Chollas Creek to Bayshore Bikeway Multi-Use Path project would intersect the Bayshore Bikeway at Harbor Drive and travel north-south on Main Street adjacent to the proposed SR-15/Main Street off-ramp widening. This project has potential to overlap with construction of the proposed project and would affect similar areas and resources. Other cumulative projects which may intersect with the project include water and sewer main replacements in the City of San Diego.

## ***Environmental Consequences***

### *Existing and Future Land Use*

The proposed project would not alter existing or planned land uses in the area as set forth in the Barrio Logan Community Plan, National City General Plan, Port Master Plan, SANDAG Regional Plan, or other regional and local plans. Therefore, no cumulative impact would result.

### *Consistency with State, Regional, and Local Plans and Programs*

The proposed project is consistent with the policies and programs of relevant regional and local plans related to transportation facilities. The proposed improvements have been identified at a regional planning level and incorporated into local planning documents as needed improvements to the existing transportation system. Therefore, no cumulative impact would result.

### *Coastal Zone*

The proposed project would have minimal effects on coastal resources within the Coastal Zone, such as scenic views, public recreation areas, and sensitive natural resources. The proposed project, in combination with other cumulative projects such as the Bayshore Bikeway and Chollas Creek to Bayshore Bikeway Multi-Use Path, would improve access and circulation throughout the area for all transportation modes, thus increasing accessibility to coastal access points and parks. This would be a beneficial cumulative effect of the project when considered together with other nearby developments. Therefore, no cumulative impact would result.

### *Parks and Recreational Facilities*

The proposed project would not remove or permanently inhibit access to public parks or recreational facilities. Temporary construction delays are anticipated along Harbor Drive, which could affect nearby parks such as Cesar Chavez Park, Chicano Park, and Dorothy Petway Neighborhood Park; however, with appropriate traffic management these effects would be minimal. Construction of other nearby projects could result in similar delays, and coordination between lead agencies would ensure parks and recreational facilities are not adversely affected by any concurrent construction. Once

operational, the proposed project would benefit nearby recreational facilities by making Complete Streets improvements to increase connectivity with the Bayshore Bikeway and improving access and circulation throughout the area. Therefore, no cumulative impact would result.

### *Community Character and Cohesion*

The proposed project would not divide an existing community or make improvements that would detract from community character and cohesion. Low to moderate visual impacts would result from the proposed project, which would be further reduced through avoidance and minimization measures. These effects would not combine with any other nearby projects to result in an adverse effect. Therefore, no cumulative impact would result.

### *Relocations and Real Property Acquisition*

The proposed project would require utility relocations and property acquisition for various components. Permanent aerial easements would be required for construction of the Vesta Street Bridge over the railway, and temporary construction easements would be required with property owners where construction activities or staging would occur. Coordination with relevant agencies would be completed to ensure adverse effects do not occur, and other cumulative projects in the area would be required to follow similar processes. No residential or commercial displacement is anticipated under the proposed project or cumulative projects. Therefore, no cumulative impact would result.

### *Environmental Justice*

The proposed project is located in an area containing several environmental justice communities. The proposed project would not result in an adverse effect on environmental justice communities during construction with implementation of appropriate avoidance and minimization measures. Construction effects may compound the effects of other cumulative projects nearby, such as the Chollas to Bayshore Multi-Use Path; however, these effects would only be concentrated in a few discrete areas where construction could overlap or occur in the immediate vicinity (e.g., SR-15/Main Street off-ramp and South 32<sup>nd</sup> Street). Other cumulative projects would also be required to undergo environmental review in compliance with CEQA and/or NEPA and mitigate significant impacts at a project level, including impacts on noise, transportation, and aesthetics. Any combined construction effects would be temporary. Thus, cumulative construction effects on environmental justice communities are not anticipated. Once operational, the proposed project would have beneficial effects on nearby environmental justice communities by reducing congestion, improving access, and reducing pollution from idling trucks and vehicles. Therefore, no cumulative impact would result.

### *Equity*

Similar to the above, the proposed project would result in temporary construction effects related to traffic delays, road closures, noise, dust, and parking removals that would

primarily be borne by disadvantaged communities. With appropriate avoidance and minimization measures, no adverse effects on disadvantaged communities would result from project construction. None of the cumulative projects in the area would combine with the proposed project during construction to substantially increase these effects, and impacts would be mitigated at a project level as statutorily required. Any combined construction effects would be temporary. Once operational, the proposed project would have a beneficial effect by addressing some of the historic inequities that have faced residents of the area, including exposure to substantial truck traffic from nearby industrial uses. Therefore, no cumulative impact would result.

#### *Utilities and Emergency Services*

The proposed project is located in a highly congested utility corridor and utility conflicts are anticipated. Utility avoidance and relocation is a critical component of the design process. Extensive coordination with utility providers will be completed to ensure impacts are minimized during construction. Cumulative projects would not overlap directly with the proposed project, aside from potentially the Chollas Creek to Bayshore Bikeway Multi-Use Path project or water/sewer main replacements in City of San Diego right-of-way; coordination between the projects, as needed, would be completed to avoid any construction conflicts.

During construction, lane closures may be required. Any required temporary lane closure would be coordinated with emergency service providers so as not to hinder emergency response. Cumulative projects would also be required to maintain sufficient emergency vehicle access during construction. Once operational, access and circulation through the area would be improved, which would have a beneficial effect on emergency vehicle access. Therefore, no cumulative impact would result.

#### *Traffic and Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities*

If work on multiple projects were to overlap with the proposed project during construction, impacts related to traffic delays and detours for travel in the project area could occur. While some level of disruption in traffic would occur, cumulative construction impacts would be temporary and individual projects would contain measures to avoid major traffic delays. The proposed project would include Complete Streets enhancements to improve sidewalks and crosswalks in the area and facilitate improved access to other active transportation projects, such as the Bayshore Bikeway. These project elements would have a beneficial effect on pedestrian and bicycle facilities in the area. Therefore, no cumulative impact would result.

#### *Visual/Aesthetics*

The visual construction impacts associated with the proposed project would not result in cumulative visual impacts because they would be temporary. The project would result in low to moderate visual effects due to the addition of new features along Harbor Drive, including wayfinding gantries, traffic signals, increased paving, and the Vesta Street Bridge, along with the removal of landscaped medians. These effects would be reduced

with implementation of avoidance and minimization measures. Overall, the proposed project would not substantially alter the visual landscape or degrade visual quality, nor combine with other cumulative projects to result in an adverse visual effect.

#### *Cultural Resources*

The proposed project would not result in adverse effects on cultural resources with implementation of avoidance and minimization measures. Cumulative projects in the area would be required to implement similar measures through existing regulatory mechanisms. Therefore, no cumulative impact would result.

#### *Hydrology and Floodplain*

The proposed project would result in an incremental amount of development in existing FEMA floodplains, limited to minor grading, repaving, and restriping. Insignificant impacts are anticipated to occur as a result. All other cumulative projects would be required to undergo review for floodplain encroachment and the potential for increased flood hazards if development is proposed in a floodplain. Any potential for flood rise and increased flood risk would require coordination with FEMA to determine the need for flood insurance rate map amendments or revisions. These regulatory processes would ensure that no cumulative impacts on hydrology and floodplains occur. Therefore, no cumulative impact would occur.

#### *Water Quality and Stormwater Runoff*

Cumulative impacts to water quality can result from development over time within the same watershed that affects the same receiving waters, in this case the waters of Chollas Creek and the San Diego Bay. All projects in the area would be required to comply with the NPDES Construction General Permit and prepare SWPPPs identifying construction BMPs to reduce construction water quality impacts. These regulatory processes are intended to address water quality impacts at the watershed level and would ensure cumulative impacts do not occur.

The proposed project would result in a small increase in stormwater runoff, which would not result in adverse water quality effects. Therefore, no cumulative impact would occur.

#### *Geology/Soils/Seismic/Topography*

The proposed project would not result in adverse effects due to geology, soils, seismicity, or topography by meeting Caltrans Seismic Design Criteria and adhering to the recommendations of a site-specific geotechnical investigation. Cumulative projects in the area would similarly be required to complete geotechnical investigations and implement measures to address any hazards in compliance with the California Building Code and local building ordinances. Therefore, no cumulative impact would occur.

### *Paleontology*

The proposed project would have no effect on paleontological resources. Therefore, no cumulative impact would occur.

### *Hazardous Waste/Materials*

The proposed project would not result in hazardous waste or materials effects with implementation of Caltrans Standard Specifications and SSPs (or equivalent local provisions that implement federal and state regulations). Nearby projects, such as sewer and water main replacements identified in the City of San Diego CIP, would also be required to assess for potential hazardous materials effects prior to ground disturbance. If any are found, relevant federal, state, regional, and local regulations would be adhered to for proper treatment and disposal. Therefore, no cumulative impact would occur.

### *Air Quality*

Air quality impacts are considered cumulatively in the project-level analysis and compared to regionally adopted standards set by SDAPCD. As described in the applicable sections, cumulative air quality effects would be less than significant.

### *Noise and Vibration*

The proposed project would result in construction noise, which would be temporary, short-term, and occur in compliance with Caltrans Standard Specifications for noise control and relevant local noise standards in the Cities of San Diego and National City, where applicable. Construction of other cumulative projects may overlap with the proposed project but would be subject to similar noise controls, including limitations on the time of day for construction and maximum noise levels established for specific land uses. Permanent traffic noise increases would range from 0 to 1 dB at noise-sensitive receptors, which would not be perceptible. Operational noise of other cumulative projects was considered in the growth projections used for proposed project noise modeling, which did not result in any impacts. Therefore, no cumulative impact would occur.

### *Energy*

The proposed project would use energy resources during construction that would place a minor new demand on resources relative to regional and statewide demand forecasts. Once operational, energy efficiencies would result from improved congestion and less vehicle idling, the use of zero-emission vehicle charging stations, and improved bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure that would encourage alternative modes of transport in the area. The proposed project would integrate with nearby transportation projects, such as the Bayshore Bikeway and the Chollas Creek to Bayshore Bikeway Multi-Use Path Project, which is anticipated to increase alternative mode share and reduce fuel spent from vehicle travel. Therefore, no cumulative impact would occur.

### *Natural Communities*

The project area is largely built out and contains few sensitive natural communities. The proposed project would not directly affect any sensitive natural communities, and avoidance and minimization measures would be implemented to ensure sensitive communities nearby are avoided during construction. Cumulative projects in the area would be required to avoid, minimize, or compensate for any impacts to sensitive natural communities through regulatory permitting with agencies such as USFWS and CDFW. Therefore, no cumulative impact would occur.

### *Plant Species*

The proposed project would occur outside of areas containing special-status plant species and would have no effect on this resource. Therefore, no cumulative impact would occur.

### *Animal Species*

The proposed project would not directly impact any special-status animal species. Avoidance and minimization measures would be implemented to protect nesting birds. Cumulative projects in the area that involve vegetation removal would be required, pursuant to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, to implement similar measures. Therefore, no cumulative impact would occur.

### *Threatened and Endangered Species*

The proposed project would have no effect on threatened and endangered species. Therefore, no cumulative impact would occur.

### *Invasive Species*

The proposed project would have no effect related to invasive species with implementation of avoidance and minimization measures. Therefore, no cumulative impact would occur.

### ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

Avoidance and minimization measures have been identified for project-specific resource effects. No additional measures would be required to address cumulative impacts.

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# **Chapter 3 California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Evaluation**

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## **3.1 DETERMINING SIGNIFICANCE UNDER CEQA**

The proposed project is being implemented by Caltrans and is located partially within lands under federal ownership (NBSD) that require federal review and approval; thus, the project is subject to state and federal environmental review requirements. Project documentation, therefore, has been prepared in compliance with both CEQA and NEPA. Caltrans is the lead agency under CEQA and NEPA.

One of the primary differences between NEPA and CEQA is the way significance is determined. Under NEPA, significance is used to determine whether an environmental impact statement (EIS), or a lower level of documentation, will be required. NEPA requires that an EIS be prepared when the proposed federal action (project) as a whole has the potential to “significantly affect the quality of the human environment.” The determination of significance is based on context and intensity. Some impacts determined to be significant under CEQA may not be of sufficient magnitude to be determined significant under NEPA. Under NEPA, once a decision is made regarding the need for an EIS, it is the magnitude of the impact that is evaluated and no judgment of its individual significance is deemed important for the text. NEPA does not require that a determination of significant impacts be stated in the environmental documents.

CEQA, on the other hand, does require Caltrans to identify each “significant effect on the environment” resulting from the project and ways to mitigate each significant effect. If the project may have a significant effect on any environmental resource that is not mitigable to the level of less than significant, then an environmental impact report (EIR) must be prepared. Each and every significant effect on the environment must be disclosed in the EIR and mitigated if feasible. In addition, the CEQA Guidelines list a number of “mandatory findings of significance,” which also require the preparation of an EIR. There are no types of actions under NEPA that parallel the findings of mandatory significance of CEQA. This chapter discusses the effects of this project and CEQA significance.

## **3.2 CEQA ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST**

This checklist identifies physical, biological, social, and economic factors that might be affected by the proposed project. In many cases, background studies performed in connection with the projects will indicate that there are no impacts to a particular resource. A NO IMPACT answer in the last column reflects this determination. The words "significant" and "significance" used throughout the following checklist are related to CEQA, not NEPA, impacts. The questions in this form are intended to encourage the thoughtful assessment of impacts and do not represent thresholds of significance.

Project features, which can include both design elements of the project, and standardized measures that are applied to all or most Caltrans projects such as BMPs and measures included in the Standard Plans and Specifications or as SSPs, are considered an integral part of the project and have been considered prior to any significance determinations documented below. See Chapters 1 and 2 for a detailed discussion of these features. The annotations to this checklist are summaries of information contained in Chapter 2 and provide the reader with the rationale for significance determinations; for a more detailed discussion of the nature and extent of impacts, please see Chapter 2. This checklist incorporates by reference the information contained in Chapters 1 and 2.

### 3.2.1 Aesthetics

Except as provided in PRC Section 21099, would the project:

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	No Impact
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	No Impact
c) In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from a publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?	No Impact
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	Less Than Significant Impact

#### CEQA Significance Determinations for Aesthetics

**a), b) No Impact.** There are no scenic vistas or scenic resources in the project area. The nearest designated State Scenic Highway is SR-75 (Coronado Bridge), which extends over Harbor Drive after the I-5 interchange. Scenic views provided from SR-75 include views of the San Diego Bay and the downtown San Diego skyline. The project area is developed with industrial, maritime, and military land uses, which do not contribute to the scenic views visible from SR-75. The project area is intermittently visible when traveling east and west on SR-75; however, the proposed project would not damage scenic resources visible from SR-75, as there are none in the project area. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on scenic vistas, scenic resources, and scenic highways.

**c) No Impact.** As concluded in Section 2.2.11 – Visual/Aesthetics, the proposed project would result in low to moderate visual impacts in the project area. Avoidance and minimization measures would be implemented to ensure the project does not degrade

the visual character of the site and its surroundings. The proposed project would be visually compatible with the existing land uses in the area and would not conflict with zoning or other regulations governing scenic quality. Therefore, there would be no impact.

**d) Less Than Significant Impact.** The proposed project would include minor new sources of light, including traffic signals, wayfinding gantries, and low-level lighting along the Vesta Street Bridge. These new light sources would generate light levels similar to existing levels in the developed project area and would not adversely affect day or nighttime views. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

### 3.2.2 Agriculture and Forestry Resources

Would the project:

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	No Impact
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	No Impact
c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?	No Impact
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	No Impact
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	No Impact

#### CEQA Significance Determinations for Agriculture and Forestry Resources

**a) – e) No Impact.** As detailed in Sections 2.1.2 – Farmlands and 2.1.3 – Timberlands, there are no agriculture or forestry resources located in the project area. Therefore, no impacts would occur.

### 3.2.3 Air Quality

Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	Less Than Significant Impact
b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?	Less Than Significant Impact
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	Less Than Significant Impact
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	Less Than Significant Impact

**CEQA Significance Determinations for Air Quality**

**a), b) Less Than Significant Impact.** As described in Section 2.3.6 – Air Quality, the proposed project is included in SANDAG’s 2021 Regional Transportation Improvement Program, Amendment No. 06 and would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan. In addition, implementation of the Build Alternative would result in criteria air pollutant emissions that would be lower than existing conditions (Table 2-4). Construction of the proposed project is also not anticipated to result in any exceedances of the SDAPCD screening level thresholds (Table 2-6). The proposed project would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

**c) Less Than Significant Impact.** As detailed in Section 2.3.6, the Build Alternative would not increase criteria pollutants or MSATs over existing conditions. One of the objectives of the proposed project is to improve community mobility and health by reducing truck idling and congestion. Standard measures to minimize construction-related air quality effects are included in Section 2.3.6. In addition, since the proposed project is located within a designated AB 617 Air Protection Program community, the construction contractor would be required to use equipment that is equipped with engines rated Tier 4 Interim or Tier 4 Final for off-road, diesel-fueled equipment, which would minimize diesel PM impacts to the surrounding community during construction. Therefore, the proposed project would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations and this impact would be less than significant.

**d) Less Than Significant Impact.** Construction activities associated with the proposed project could result in short-term odor emissions from diesel exhaust associated with construction equipment. Due to the highly diffusive properties of diesel exhaust, nearby receptors would not be affected by diesel exhaust odors associated with project construction and implementation of the standard measures in Section 2.3.6 would also reduce project-related odors. New odor sources would not be added once the project is operational. Therefore, the proposed project would not create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people. This impact would be less than significant.

### 3.2.4 Biological Resources

Would the project:

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or NOAA Fisheries?	No Impact
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	No Impact
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	No Impact
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	No Impact
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	Less Than Significant Impact
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	No Impact

#### CEQA Significance Determinations for Biological Resources

**a) – d) No Impact.** As discussed in Section 2.4 – Biological Environment, the only sensitive natural communities in the project vicinity are the freshwater habitat and wetlands within Chollas Creek and the 7<sup>th</sup> Street Channel. Although there is freshwater habitat in Chollas Creek and the 7<sup>th</sup> Street Channel in the vicinity of the project footprint, these areas are not anticipated to be temporarily or permanently impacted by project activities, and would be further protected with implementation of the avoidance and minimization measures described in Section 2.4. These measures would ensure that sensitive areas are identified on all construction plans and protected from disturbance and off-site erosion. Therefore, no impact would occur.

In the project area, SR-15 acts as an impediment to east-west wildlife movement and there is limited opportunity for movement through freshwater drainages in Chollas Creek and the 7<sup>th</sup> Street Channel. The proposed project would make improvements to the built

environment and would not affect any wildlife corridors or interfere with wildlife movement. Therefore, no impact would occur.

**e) Less Than Significant Impact.** Minor vegetation removal would occur under the proposed project due to the removal of landscaped medians, construction of the Vesta Street Bridge, and on/off-ramp improvements. Tree removal along Harbor Drive within the limits of the City of San Diego would be subject to City Council Policy 900-19, which provides protection of street trees, except as required due to tree health or public safety (City of San Diego 2005). Trees with a caliper of at least 8 inches measured at 4 feet above the ground surface would qualify for protection. Obtaining a tree removal permit for areas within City of San Diego would ensure that removed trees are accurately appraised by a licensed arborist and replacement trees are funded and/or planted to compensate for removals. Tree removals within Caltrans and NBSD right-of-way, such as may be required for the on/off-ramp improvements or construction of the Vesta Street Bridge, would not be subject to any existing tree preservation policy or ordinance. Therefore, compliance with the City of San Diego’s tree protection policy would ensure the proposed project would not conflict with any tree preservation policy or ordinance. This impact would be less than significant.

**f) No Impact.** There have been two conservation/management plans enacted for areas near the project site. The County of San Diego, in cooperation with wildlife agencies, property owners, developers, and environmental groups, developed a Multiple Species Conservation Program (Biodiverse SD) to protect a total of 85 species in the San Diego area (San Diego County 1998). The plan does not encompass the project area; thus, no impact due to conflict with this plan would occur.

In addition, the Port and Department of the Navy have adopted the Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (INRMP) for the San Diego Bay. The INRMP covers an approximately 12,000-acre area in and adjacent to the San Diego Bay, including lands directly adjacent to NBSD in the project vicinity. The INRMP provides ecosystem management guidance for Port and Navy activities (Port, U.S. Department of the Navy 2013). The proposed project would occur entirely within the built environment and would not impact sensitive resources under the purview of the INRMP. The Build Alternative would not conflict with either plan; therefore, no impact would occur.

### 3.2.5 Cultural Resources

Would the project:

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to in §15064.5?	No Impact
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?	Less Than Significant Impact
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?	Less Than Significant Impact

## CEQA Significance Determinations for Cultural Resources

**a) No Impact.** There are two historical resources subject to CEQA within the proposed project area: the San Diego-Coronado Bay Bridge Historic District (P-37-016282) and the CBL (P-37-013073). As described in Section 2.2.12 – Cultural Resources, the proposed project would not adversely affect the San Diego-Coronado Bay Bridge or any other contributing resources to the San Diego-Coronado Bay Bridge Historic District, nor would the proposed project adversely affect the CBL. Therefore, the project would have no impact on historical resources.

**b), c) Less Than Significant Impact.** Based on the presence of known archaeological sites within the project area, and the inability to conclusively determine whether archaeological resources are present due to the highly developed nature of the area, there is potential for inadvertent discovery of archaeological resources and/or human remains that may be determined to be significant under CEQA. The proposed project would implement the avoidance and minimization measures detailed in Section 2.2.12 – Cultural Resources to avoid or minimize potential impacts on these resources. Therefore, the impact would be less than significant.

### 3.2.6 Energy

Would the project:

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?	No Impact
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	No Impact

### CEQA Significance Determinations for Energy

**a), b) No Impact.** The proposed project would result in short-term energy consumption due to the manufacture of construction materials, the use of construction equipment requiring petroleum fuels, and construction workers' motor vehicles as they travel to and from the site. However, construction-related energy consumption under the proposed project would be temporary and would not result in excessive energy consumption by adhering to Caltrans' Construction Standard Specifications, which include requirements to consider environmentally friendly treatments and use materials with recycled content to the extent feasible. Additionally, idling of construction equipment would be limited to 5 minutes or less, which would reduce wasteful use of fuel. Once operational, the proposed project would not increase capacity or add traffic and would result in a negligible increase in energy consumption. Therefore, the proposed project would have no energy impact.

### 3.2.7 Geology and Soils

Would the project:

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.</li> </ul>	No Impact
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	No Impact
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	No Impact
iv) Landslides?	No Impact
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	Less Than Significant Impact
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	No Impact
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?	No Impact
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	No Impact
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	No Impact

#### CEQA Significance Determinations for Geology and Soils

**a), c), d) No Impact.** The proposed project would occur within existing and developed Caltrans facilities and city streets. Project construction activities would be temporary and after implementation there would be no change from current geological conditions. No landslide issues would occur given the flat topography and distance from any steep terrain. The proposed Vesta Street Bridge would be constructed in accordance with the bridge design specifications outlined in Caltrans' Bridge Design Practice Manual to ensure bridge safety when considering maximum demands or force effects due to various loads during its design life. Therefore, by adhering to these recommendations and standards, the Build Alternative would not increase the risk of loss, injury, or death due to seismicity, landslides, erosion, and soils. Impacts would be less than significant.

**b) Less Than Significant Impact.** As noted in Section 2.3.3 – Geology/Soils/Seismic/Topography, the proposed project would be constructed to meet Caltrans Seismic Design Criteria and implement the recommendations of site-specific Geotechnical Reports to address any soil, seismic, or geological issues. Erosion effects would be managed during construction in compliance with the Construction General Permit. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

**e) No Impact.** The proposed project would not require disposal of any wastewater once constructed. Therefore, the capability of soils to support septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems is not a concern. There would be no impact.

**f) No Impact.** As noted previously in Section 2.3.4 – Paleontology, the proposed project would occur in the built environment in an area with low potential for buried paleontological resources, and adherence to Caltrans Standard Specifications would ensure adverse effects are avoided if any unanticipated resources are encountered. Therefore, no impact would occur.

### 3.2.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Would the project:

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	Less Than Significant Impact
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	No Impact

#### CEQA Significance Determinations for Greenhouse Gas Emissions

**a) Less Than Significant Impact.** As described in Section 3.3 – Climate Change, the Build Alternative would result in reduced congestion and increased multimodal access and connectivity in the project area, which would reduce daily GHG emissions. As shown in Table 3-2, daily GHG emissions estimated for the Build Alternative in 2030 and 2050 would be lower than the emissions under existing conditions (2020), as well as the No Build Alternative in 2030 and 2050. The proposed project would also implement measures to reduce construction emissions, such as maintenance of construction equipment and vehicles, limiting of construction vehicle idling time, and scheduling and routing of construction traffic, as outlined in Section 3.3. As noted in Section 3.2.8, a TMP will be implemented throughout construction to minimize traffic delays during construction, which will help reduce GHG emissions from idling vehicles. Therefore, the proposed project would not generate GHG emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment. Therefore, the proposed project would not generate GHG emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment. This impact would be less than significant.

**b) No Impact.** Table 3-1 summarizes the applicable regional and local GHG reduction plans. The proposed improvements are designed to improve access and circulation between Harbor Drive and the regional highway system, along with increasing pedestrian and bicycle connectivity in the area. The proposed project would reduce daily GHG emissions and support the implementation of local GHG reduction plans. Therefore, there would be no impact.

### 3.2.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Would the project:

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	Less Than Significant Impact
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	Less Than Significant Impact
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	Less Than Significant Impact
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	Less Than Significant Impact
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two nautical miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?	No Impact
f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	Less Than Significant Impact
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?	No Impact

#### CEQA Significance Determinations for Hazards and Hazardous Materials

**a) – c) Less Than Significant Impact.** As detailed in Section 2.3.5 – Hazardous Waste/Materials, the proposed project would occur in the vicinity of known areas containing hazardous materials. Sampling of soil and groundwater within the project footprint did not find any significantly impacted soil or groundwater. However, unanticipated hazardous materials may be encountered during construction. All potentially hazardous materials would be tested, handled, and disposed of in

accordance with Caltrans Standard Specifications and SSPs (or equivalent local provisions), as applicable. During operation, routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials is not anticipated, nor are upset and accident conditions involving release of hazardous materials. Although the project would occur within 0.25-mile of various schools in the area, hazardous materials would be managed as noted above to minimize potential release of hazardous materials in the vicinity of schools. Therefore, these impacts would be less than significant.

**d) Less Than Significant Impact.** The project site would be located partially within IRP Site 22, which is listed on the Cortese List (CalEPA 2023). VOCs (including chlorinated solvents) were detected in groundwater located adjacent to and northwest of the Vesta Street/McCandless Boulevard intersections as part of site investigations for IRP Site 22. Additionally, there are several other Cortese-listed sites within NBSD and along Harbor Drive in the project vicinity (see Section 2.3.5). Although groundwater samples completed for the Site Investigation Reports for the proposed Vesta Street Bridge and Harbor Drive improvements did not detect any VOCs (including chlorinated solvents), there is potential for encountering contaminated groundwater during excavations for the Vesta Street Bridge foundation or the Harbor Drive improvements. Any contaminated groundwater encountered during construction would be managed in accordance with Caltrans Standard Specifications and SSPs (or equivalent local provisions) and disposed of per San Diego RWQCB requirements. These requirements would ensure that contaminated materials are characterized, managed, and disposed of properly. Therefore, the proposed project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment due to its partial location within a Cortese List site or the presence of listed sites nearby. Impacts would be less than significant.

**e) No Impact.** The proposed project is located within the Airport Influence Area for San Diego International Airport but outside any noise contours that require special planning consideration. The project also does not include residences or occupied land uses that could be affected by airport activities. There would be no impact.

**f) Less Than Significant Impact.** With implementation of a TMP, as described previously, the proposed project would not impair or interfere with an adopted emergency response or evacuation plan. Therefore, the impact would be less than significant.

**g) No Impact.** The proposed project is located within a highly urbanized area outside of mapped fire hazard zones (see Section 3.2.20 – Wildfire). Therefore, no impact would occur.

### 3.2.10 Hydrology and Water Quality

Would the project:

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?	Less Than Significant Impact
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	Less Than Significant Impact
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:	Less Than Significant Impact
(i) result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site;	Less Than Significant Impact
(ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite;	Less Than Significant Impact
(iii) create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or	Less Than Significant Impact
(iv) impede or redirect flood flows?	Less Than Significant Impact
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	Less Than Significant Impact
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	Less Than Significant Impact

#### CEQA Significance Determinations for Hydrology and Water Quality

**a) – e) Less Than Significant Impact.** As discussed in Section 2.3.2 – Water Quality and Stormwater Runoff, the proposed project would result in total soil disturbance of 8.12 acres and new impervious surface area of 4.89 acres. Water quality impacts during construction could result from stormwater runoff leaving construction sites and causing erosion or sedimentation or conveying pollutants into nearby waterways. Construction of the Build Alternative would occur in compliance with Caltrans’ Statewide NPDES Permit (Order No. 2012-0011-DWQ, NPDES Permit No. CAS000003) and the Statewide General NPDES Permit for Construction Activities (Order No. 2009-009-DWQ, NPDES Permit No. CAS000002), which regulate stormwater and non-stormwater discharges. Adherence to these regulations would require a SWPPP to be prepared, which would include BMPs to reduce water quality and erosion impacts during construction.

The proposed project is anticipated to encounter groundwater during construction of the Vesta Street Bridge and installation of gantries. Disposal of groundwater would occur in accordance with RWQCB Order No. R9-2015-0013, General Waste Discharge Requirements for Groundwater Extraction Discharges to Surface Waters Within the San Diego Region, which sets specific effluent limitations for discharges to the San Diego Bay and would minimize water quality impacts from groundwater disposal.

The amount of groundwater disposed of during construction would not have a significant impact on the sustainability of the Coastal Plain Groundwater Basin in which the project is located. If it meets effluent limitations, groundwater would be disposed of in nearby surface waters, where it would likely continue to contribute to recharge. Further, once the proposed project is operational, the loss of pervious surfaces and associated precipitation recharge would be minor and would not substantially interfere with recharge or sustainability of the basin. The Coastal Plain Groundwater Basin is not a medium- or high-priority basin subject to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) (San Diego County 2023). As such, the proposed project would not conflict with a sustainable groundwater management plan pursuant to SGMA.

As discussed in Section 2.3.1 – Hydrology and Floodplain, the proposed project would make limited improvements within FEMA-defined floodplains, consisting of minor grading, restriping, and repaving (see Figures 2-17 and 2-18). The proposed improvements are located within or surrounded by developed lands and would have no effect on flows within any watercourse or a regulatory floodway. Existing drainage patterns would be retained throughout the project area. Storm drain utilities would generally be avoided or replaced in their current location following construction, with small modifications to storm drain infrastructure anticipated from the proposed widening of the SR-15/Main Street off-ramp. No erosion, siltation, or flooding is expected to result due to the proposed project.

Portions of the project area along Harbor Drive are located within tsunami hazard zones (California Department of Conservation 2022). However, the proposed project would manage storage of equipment, materials, and supplies during construction in compliance with the SWPPP to reduce potential for pollutant release in the event of a tsunami. Once operational, the proposed project would not include storage or use of hazardous materials that could increase the risk of pollutant release from flooding. Effects from sea level rise due to climate change are discussed in Chapter 3.3 – Climate Change.

For these reasons, the proposed project would result in a less than significant impact on hydrology and water quality.

### 3.2.11 Land Use and Planning

Would the project:

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Physically divide an established community?	No Impact
b) Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	No Impact

#### CEQA Significance Determinations for Land Use and Planning

**a), b) No Impact.** The proposed project would not change any existing community boundaries or physically divide an established community. The proposed project would not result in new zoning or land use classifications that could open new areas for development or otherwise divide an existing community. The Vesta Street Bridge component of the project would create new access on Vesta Street within NBSD, which would be used by personnel at NBSD instead of longer routes through the community. This would subsequently improve traffic flows in nearby communities.

There are several land use plans pertinent to the project area, as described in Section 2.2.2 – Consistency with State, Regional, and Local Plans and Programs. The proposed project would advance the intent and purpose of the goals and policies of these plans and would not result in an environmental impact due to conflict with any land use plans, policies, or regulations. Therefore, no impacts would occur to land use and planning.

### 3.2.12 Mineral Resources

Would the project:

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be a value to the region and the residents of the state?	No Impact
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	No Impact

#### CEQA Significance Determinations for Mineral Resources

**a), b) No Impact.** There are no known mineral resources or mineral resource recovery sites in the project area (California Department of Conservation 2023). The proposed project would not impede the extraction of any known mineral resources. Therefore, no impacts would occur.

### 3.2.13 Noise

Would the project result in:

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	Less Than Significant Impact
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	Less Than Significant Impact
c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two nautical miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	No Impact

#### CEQA Significance Determinations for Noise

**a) Less Than Significant Impact.** Noise impacts of the proposed project were assessed in alignment with Caltrans Traffic Noise Analysis Protocol (Caltrans 2011b). As described in Section 2.3.7 – Noise and Vibration, construction noise would not adversely affect nearby noise-sensitive receptors with implementation of standard avoidance and minimization measures. Traffic noise for the project was modeled using site-specific noise measurements, projected traffic volumes from TES&A reports, and the TNM version 2.5 computer noise model (FHWA 2004). The results of traffic noise modeling found that the proposed project would not result in a substantial noise increase above ambient levels. Therefore, noise impacts would be less than significant.

**b) Less Than Significant Impact.** The proposed project would generate intermittent, localized vibration in the project area. Processes such as earth moving with bulldozers, the use of vibratory compaction rollers, demolitions, or pavement braking may cause construction-related vibration impacts such as human annoyance or building damage. Vibration impacts would be temporary and localized and would cease upon completion of construction. Additionally, the proposed project would implement avoidance and minimization measures, including appropriate scheduling of vibration-intensive activities and vibration monitoring, to reduce project impacts due to vibration. Therefore, vibration impacts would be less than significant.

**c) No Impact.** The project does not propose any housing or permanently occupied structures that could be exposed to airport noise from San Diego International Airport. Therefore, there would be no impact.

### 3.2.14 Population and Housing

Would the project:

Question	CEQA Determination
a) 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)?	No Impact
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	No Impact

#### CEQA Significance Determinations for Population and Housing

**a), b) No Impact.** The proposed project does not propose any residential uses, nor will it displace any people or housing within the project area. The proposed project is intended to address existing and projected traffic conditions and improve access and circulation throughout the area. The proposed project would not affect growth or development patterns in the area and no additional or replacement housing would need to be constructed. Therefore, no impact to population and housing would occur.

### 3.2.15 Public Services

Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the following public services:

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Fire protection?	Less Than Significant Impact
b) Police protection?	Less Than Significant Impact
c) Schools?	Less Than Significant Impact
d) Parks?	Less Than Significant Impact
e) Other public facilities?	Less Than Significant Impact

#### CEQA Significance Determinations for Public Services

**a) – e) Less Than Significant Impact.** As described in Sections 2.2.4 – Parks and Recreational Facilities and 2.2.9 – Utilities/Emergency Services, there are various fire and police protection facilities, schools, and parks throughout the project area. The majority of these facilities would not be directly altered by the proposed project, which

would occur within Caltrans facilities, in the public right-of-way on Harbor Drive, and within NBSD. An NBSD pocket park at Vesta Street/McCandless Boulevard in NBSD would be temporarily closed by construction of the Vesta Street Bridge; however, this park is not publicly accessible and there are several similar recreation facilities nearby (e.g., open spaces within and adjacent to Admiral Prout Field) that are anticipated to adequately substitute for the loss of recreation area within this park. Minor construction delays are anticipated, which would be addressed in a TMP to ensure ongoing emergency access is retained throughout the area. The proposed project would not include new residential uses that would create a new demand for public services, and no construction or alteration of governmental facilities would occur. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

### 3.2.16 Recreation

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	Less Than Significant Impact
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	Less Than Significant Impact

#### CEQA Significance Determinations for Recreation

**a), b) Less than Significant Impact.** As detailed in Section 2.2.4 – Parks and Recreational Facilities, there are a number of parks and recreation areas in the vicinity of the proposed project, as well as adjacent to the proposed project area. Public parks and recreation areas within 0.25-mile of the project footprint are shown in Table 2-1. The proposed project footprint does not contain or overlap with any parks or recreation facilities, with the exception of the NBSD pocket park at Vesta Street/McCandless Boulevard. As discussed previously, this park is not publicly accessible and nearby recreation facilities in NBSD are anticipated to adequately substitute for temporary and permanent loss of recreation area in this park. This park would remain in its current location and modifications to the park to repair it or restore access following construction are considered part of the proposed project.

The proposed project would not induce additional demand on neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities, either through providing new access or introducing new users of these facilities, such that substantial physical deterioration would occur or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

### 3.2.17 Transportation

Would the project:

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?	Less Than Significant Impact
b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	No Impact
c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	Less Than Significant Impact
d) Result in inadequate emergency access?	Less Than Significant Impact

#### CEQA Significance Determinations for Transportation

**a) Less Than Significant Impact.** As discussed in Section 2.2.10 – Traffic and Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities, the proposed project would upgrade bicycle and pedestrian facilities by making ADA improvements at crosswalks along Harbor Drive, incorporating existing and planned bikeways into the project design (Bayshore Bikeway and Chollas Creek to Bayshore Bikeway Multi-Use Path), and including new pedestrian and bicycle connections on the proposed Vesta Street Bridge. Vehicle delays may occur during construction, which could affect transit routes; however, the proposed project would implement a TMP throughout construction to notify relevant agencies of potential delays and minimize the effects on ongoing transit service. Therefore, the impact would be less than significant.

**b) No Impact.** This impact question references the passage of SB 743, codified at PRC Section 21099, which mandated that transportation analysis under CEQA utilize VMT instead of vehicle delay, or level of service, as the metric for assessing transportation impacts. The proposed project would remove portions of the existing median on Harbor Drive to introduce dedicated lanes for use by freight trucks only. The resulting enhancements would make the currently designated truck route a connected, flexible corridor for enhancing freight connectivity between the National City Marine Terminal, Tenth Avenue Marine Terminal, and regional freeways. The addition of the truck-only lane within the median of Harbor Drive is strictly for freight truck usage; therefore, induced travel of automobiles would not occur because there is no increase in capacity for automobiles.

Specific to the Vesta Street Bridge component of the proposed project, Caltrans 2020 Transportation Analysis Under CEQA (TAC) guidelines (Caltrans 2020a) identify specific project types that are not likely to lead to a measurable and substantial increase in vehicle travel and can effectively be screened from further VMT analysis. The

proposed Vesta Street Bridge would be eligible for screening under the following criteria:

- Grade separation to separate vehicles from rail, transit, pedestrians or bicycles, or to replace a lane in order to separate preferential vehicles (e.g., HOV, HOT, or trucks) from general vehicles.
- Addition of roadway capacity on local or collector streets provided the project also substantially improves conditions for pedestrians, cyclists, and, if applicable, transit.

Therefore, the proposed project would result in no impact on VMT.

**c) Less Than Significant Impact.** The proposed project would not introduce or increase any hazards through geometric design features. The addition of truck-only lanes on Harbor Drive would not create new hazards, and the project overall would contribute to a reduction in freight cut-through traffic in residential areas, which would improve neighborhood access and circulation and minimize conflicts. Therefore, the impact would be less than significant.

**d) Less Than Significant Impact.** As discussed in Section 2.2.9 – Utilities/Emergency Services, emergency access could be affected by construction delays. However, these effects would be temporary and further addressed in a TMP to identify any alternate access routes or other measures to ensure adequate emergency access is retained. Once operational, the proposed project would improve access and circulation in the project area, which would improve emergency vehicle response times. Therefore, the impact would be less than significant.

### 3.2.18 Tribal Cultural Resources

Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in PRC Section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or	Less Than Significant Impact
b) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.	Less Than Significant Impact

#### CEQA Significance Determinations for Tribal Cultural Resources

**a), b) Less Than Significant Impact.** As discussed in Section 2.2.12 – Cultural Resources, potentially significant tribal cultural resources may be present in the project area. The proposed project would be required to implement avoidance and minimization measures in alignment with the recommendations of Native American tribes, which are defined through formal AB 52 consultation with the Manzanita Band of the Kumeyaay Nation and the Resource Management Director for Viejas Tribal Government. These measures would include tribal monitoring and evaluation, avoidance, or treatment of potentially significant resources if encountered. Implementation of these measures would ensure that tribal cultural resources are not significantly impacted during project construction. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

### 3.2.19 Utilities and Service Systems

Would the project:

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	Less Than Significant Impact
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	No Impact
c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	No Impact
d) Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?	No Impact
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	No Impact

#### CEQA Significance Determinations for Utilities and Service Systems

**a) Less Than Significant Impact.** As discussed in Section 2.2.9 – Utilities/Emergency Systems, utility conflicts are anticipated, given the highly developed nature of the project area and proposed project components such as trenching for electrical conduits and construction of the Vesta Street Bridge. Overhead electrical transmission lines at the Vesta Street Bridge crossing of the railway are a key design consideration. Any relocation of utilities would result in localized construction impacts and could result in temporary interruption of service. If a temporary interruption in service is unavoidable, it would be scheduled during non-use or off-peak service periods, and notifications to any affected parties would be made in advance by the utility provider and/or Public Information Officer. This standard Caltrans practice ensures that service disruptions are understood by the public and do not pose a health or safety risk to individual customers. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

**b) – e) No Impact.** The proposed project would not result in any population growth or subsequent increase in water demand, wastewater generation, or solid waste disposal needs. Demands on these utility services during construction would be negligible. The project would not require the construction of any new or expanded water, wastewater treatment, or stormwater drainage facilities. Relocated or replaced utilities due to the

conflicts mentioned above would occur in the same general location. Therefore, no impact would occur.

### 3.2.20 Wildfire

If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	No Impact
b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?	No Impact
c) Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?	No Impact
d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?	No Impact

#### CEQA Significance Determinations for Wildfire

**a) – d) No Impact.** The proposed project is not located within or adjacent to lands classified by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) as a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ) (CAL FIRE 2022). The nearest VHFHSZ is northeast of downtown San Diego, buffered by I-5 and State Route 94, approximately 1.5 miles from the project site. The proposed project would implement a TMP to ensure emergency vehicle access for fire responders is maintained throughout construction. Therefore, no impact would occur.

### 3.2.21 Mandatory Findings of Significance

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Does the project have the potential to substantially 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, substantially 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?	Less Than Significant Impact
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?	No Impact
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	No Impact

#### CEQA Significance Determinations for Mandatory Findings of Significance

**a) Less Than Significant Impact.** The proposed project site is located within an urbanized setting and does not involve significant changes to the existing use of the infrastructure or surrounding land uses. It would not substantially degrade the environment, significantly impact fish or wildlife species, or eliminate important examples of California history. The proposed project involves construction activity within existing developed Caltrans facilities and local right-of-way. The level of construction required by the proposed project would result in minor temporary and short-term activities, and the proposed project would not affect current operations and maintenance activities.

**b), c) No Impact.** Future projects in the vicinity of the proposed project, described in Section 2.2.2 – Existing and Future Land Use, are not cumulatively considerable. Section 2.5 – Cumulative Impacts, discusses the potential for cumulative impacts of each resource area in more detail. The proposed project would not result in cumulative impacts. The following discussion details the resources evaluated with a Less Than Significant Impact under CEQA for cumulative impacts.

#### *Aesthetics*

When analyzing cumulative visual impacts, it is important to consider those projects that could alter the existing visual environment with the same viewshed as the proposed project. Other cumulative projects could contribute to short-term visual effects by adding more construction equipment in the general area but this would not be a significant

visual intrusion within the overall viewshed and would not be out of place within the urbanized areas along the proposed project limits. The visual effects from various construction projects could be considered noticeable but not out of context with an urban roadway feature and surrounding urban development; the effects would be temporary during the implementation phase and not substantial.

The visual construction impacts associated with the proposed project would not result in cumulative visual impacts because they would be temporary. The project would result in low to moderate visual effects due to the addition of new features along Harbor Drive, including wayfinding gantries, traffic signals, increased paving, and the Vesta Street Bridge, along with the removal of landscaped medians. Avoidance and minimization measures would be implemented to ensure the project does not degrade the visual character of the site and its surroundings. Overall, the proposed project would not substantially alter the visual landscape or degrade visual quality, nor combine with other cumulative projects to result in a cumulative adverse visual impact.

### *Air Quality*

The proposed project could generate fugitive dust associated with construction equipment from temporary construction activities. These potential impacts contribute to overall impacts to the SDAB. The proposed project would comply with construction standards adopted by the SDAPCD as well as Caltrans standardized procedures for minimizing air pollutants during construction.

The analysis of air quality provided in Section 3.2.3 – Air Quality, considers the emissions of traffic generated by existing and future planned land uses and the effects of other future planned transportation improvements. Temporary air quality impacts would be minimized through implementation of dust control and equipment management measures. The proposed project would not contribute to cumulative air quality effects because it would not violate air quality standards, would not contribute substantially to an existing air quality violation, and would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations.

### *Biological Resources*

The proposed project would occur outside of areas containing special-status plant species and would have no impact on this resource. The proposed project would not directly impact any special-status animal species or threatened and endangered species. Avoidance and minimization measures would be implemented to protect nesting birds. Therefore, no cumulative impacts would occur.

### *Cultural Resources*

Cumulative impacts to archaeological resources would be expected to be fully avoided, minimized, or mitigated, and critical information regarding regional prehistory preserved and/or documented. Thus, the proposed project would not make a cumulatively considerable contribution to a significant cumulative impact related to cultural resources.

### *Energy*

The proposed project would use energy resources during construction which would place a minor new demand on resources relative to regional and statewide demand forecasts. Once operational, energy efficiencies would result from improved congestion and less vehicle idling; the installation of zero-emission vehicle infrastructure; and improved bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure which would encourage alternative modes of transport in the area. The proposed project would integrate with nearby transportation projects, such as the Bayshore Bikeway and the Chollas Creek to Bayshore Bikeway Multi-Use Path Project, which is anticipated to increase alternative mode share and reduce fuel spent from vehicle travel. Therefore, no cumulative impact would occur.

### *Geology and Soils*

The proposed project would have less than significant impacts to geology, soils, seismicity, or topography by meeting Caltrans' Seismic Design Criteria and adhering to the recommendations of a site-specific geotechnical investigation. Cumulative projects in the area would similarly be required to complete geotechnical investigations and implement measures to address any hazards in compliance with the California Building Code and local building ordinances. Therefore, no cumulative impact would occur.

### *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*

Although potential exposure of hazardous materials may occur during project construction, implementation of standardized and non-standardized measures would minimize and avoid these impacts. Typical hazardous materials used during construction (e.g., solvents, paints, and fuels) would be managed in accordance with Caltrans' standard provisions and other regulatory requirements and are not anticipated to compromise worker's health and safety. Applicable state and federal regulations, permit conditions, and Caltrans standard and nonstandard special provisions for the use, handling, disposal, waste, storage, and transport of potentially hazardous materials during construction of the proposed project would minimize potential for accidental exposure of people or the environment to hazardous materials. As such, the proposed project contribution related to hazardous waste and materials would not be cumulatively considerable.

### *Hydrology and Water Quality*

The proposed project would result in an incremental amount of development in an existing FEMA floodplains. Insignificant impacts are anticipated to occur as a result. All other cumulative projects would be required to undergo review for floodplain encroachment and the potential for increased flood hazards if development is proposed in a floodplain. Similarly, cumulative projects would be required to adhere to the same federal and state-mandated water quality regulations as the proposed project. Therefore, no cumulative impact would occur.

### *Noise*

The proposed project would generate construction noise in proximity to other planned or ongoing construction projects. However, nearby projects would be subject to compliance with the same noise control standards as applied to the proposed project, or more stringent measures identified through project-specific environmental review, which would reduce cumulative construction noise impacts.

### *Public Services*

The proposed project would not include new residential uses that would create a new demand for public services, and no construction or alteration of governmental facilities would occur. Therefore, no cumulative impact would occur.

### *Recreation*

The proposed project would not substantially increase the use recreational facilities or require construction of new facilities. Once operational, the proposed project would benefit nearby recreational facilities by making Complete Streets improvements to increase connectivity with the Bayshore Bikeway and improving access and circulation throughout the area. Therefore, no cumulative impact would result from the proposed project.

### *Transportation*

Impacts on vehicular traffic associated with the proposed project would intermittently and temporarily generate increases in vehicle trips by construction workers, construction vehicles, and traffic congestion during construction within the proposed project site roadways. However, the implementation of a TMP would minimize short-term impacts to vehicular transportation and to non-motorized users in the surrounding areas during construction and impacts would be less than significant. Once operational, the proposed project would improve access and circulation in the project area and would have no VMT impacts. Therefore, no cumulative impact would result from the proposed project.

### *Tribal Cultural Resources*

Cumulative impacts to tribal cultural resources would be expected to be fully avoided, minimized, or mitigated, and critical information regarding regional prehistory preserved and/or documented. Thus, the proposed project would not make a cumulatively considerable contribution to a significant cumulative impact related to tribal cultural resources.

### *Utilities and Service Systems*

Utility avoidance and relocation is a critical component of the design process. Extensive coordination with utility providers will be completed to ensure impacts are minimized during construction. Cumulative projects would not overlap directly with the proposed

project, aside from potentially the Chollas Creek to Bayshore Bikeway Multi-Use Path project or water/sewer main replacements in City of San Diego right-of-way; coordination between the projects, as needed, would be completed to avoid any construction conflicts. The proposed project would not add new residents or workers in the area, which could create new utility demand or combine with other projects to cumulatively increase demand for utilities. Therefore, the proposed project would not make a cumulatively considerable contribution to a significant cumulative impact related to utilities and service systems.

### 3.3 CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change refers to long-term changes in temperature, precipitation, wind patterns, and other elements of Earth's climate system. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, established by the United Nations and World Meteorological Organization in 1988, is devoted to GHG emissions reduction and climate change research and policy. Climate change in the past has generally occurred gradually over millennia, or more suddenly in response to cataclysmic natural disruptions. The research of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and other scientists over recent decades, however, has unequivocally attributed an accelerated rate of climatological changes over the past 150 years to GHG emissions generated from the production and use of fossil fuels.

Human activities generate GHGs consisting primarily of CO<sub>2</sub>, CH<sub>4</sub>, N<sub>2</sub>O, tetrafluoromethane, hexafluoroethane, SF<sub>6</sub>, and various hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs). CO<sub>2</sub> is the most abundant GHG; while it is a naturally occurring and necessary component of Earth's atmosphere, fossil-fuel combustion is the main source of additional, human-generated CO<sub>2</sub> that is the main driver of climate change. In the United States and in California, transportation is the largest source of GHG emissions, mostly CO<sub>2</sub>.

The impacts of climate change are already being observed in the form of sea level rise, drought, more intense heat, extended and severe fire seasons, and historic flooding from changing storm patterns. Both mitigation and adaptation strategies are necessary to address these impacts. The most important mitigation strategy is to reduce GHG emissions. In the context of climate change (as distinct from CEQA and NEPA), "mitigation" involves actions to reduce GHG emissions or to enhance the "sinks" that store them (such as forests and soils) to lessen adverse impacts. "Adaptation" is planning for and responding to impacts to reduce vulnerability to harm, such as by adjusting transportation design standards to withstand more intense storms, heat, and higher sea levels. This analysis will include a discussion of both in the context of this transportation project.

#### ***Regulatory Setting***

This section outlines federal and state efforts to comprehensively reduce GHG emissions from transportation sources.

#### ***Federal***

To date, no national standards have been established for nationwide mobile-source GHG reduction targets, nor have any regulations or legislation been enacted specifically to address climate change and GHG emissions reduction at the project level.

NEPA requires federal agencies to assess the environmental effects of their proposed actions prior to making a decision on the action or project.

FHWA recognizes the threats that extreme weather, sea level change, and other changes in environmental conditions pose to valuable transportation infrastructure and those who depend on it. FHWA therefore supports a sustainability approach that assesses vulnerability to climate risks and incorporates resilience into planning, asset management, project development and design, and operations and maintenance practices (FHWA 2022). This approach encourages planning for sustainable highways by addressing climate risks while balancing environmental, economic, and social values— “the triple bottom line of sustainability” (FHWA n.d.). Program and project elements that foster sustainability and resilience also support economic vitality and global efficiency, increase safety and mobility, enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, and improve the quality of life.

The federal government has taken steps to improve fuel economy and energy efficiency to address climate change and its associated effects. The most important of these was the Energy Policy and Conservation Act of 1975 (42 USC Section 6201) as amended by the Energy Independence and Security Act (EISA) of 2007; and Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) Standards. This act established fuel economy standards for on-road motor vehicles sold in the United States. The USDOT National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration (NHTSA) sets and enforces the CAFE standards based on each manufacturer’s average fuel economy for the portion of its vehicles produced for sale in the United States. The U.S. EPA calculates average fuel economy levels for manufacturers and sets related GHG emissions standards under the Clean Air Act. Raising CAFE standards leads automakers to create a more fuel-efficient fleet, which improves U.S. energy security, saves consumers money at the pump, and reduces GHG emissions (USDOT 2014).

U.S. EPA published a final rulemaking on December 30, 2021, that raised federal GHG emissions standards for passenger cars and light trucks for model years 2023 through 2026, increasing in stringency each year. The updated GHG emissions standards will avoid more than 3 billion tons of GHG emissions through 2050. In April 2022, NHTSA announced corresponding new fuel economy standards for model years 2024 through 2026, which will reduce fuel use by more than 200 billion gallons through 2050 compared to the old standards and reduce fuel costs for drivers (U.S. EPA 2022a; NHTSA 2022).

### *State*

California has been innovative and proactive in addressing GHG emissions and climate change by passing multiple Senate and Assembly bills and executive orders (EOs) including, but not limited to, the following:

EO S-3-05 (June 1, 2005): The goal of this EO is to reduce California’s GHG emissions to: (1) year 2000 levels by 2010, (2) year 1990 levels by 2020, and (3) 80 percent below year 1990 levels by 2050. This goal was further reinforced with the passage of AB 32 in 2006 and SB 32 in 2016.

AB 32, Chapter 488, 2006, Núñez and Pavley, The Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006: AB 32 codified the 2020 GHG emissions reduction goals outlined in EO S-3-05, while further mandating that the CARB create a scoping plan and implement rules to achieve “real, quantifiable, cost-effective reductions of greenhouse gases.” The Legislature also intended that the statewide GHG emissions limit continue in existence and be used to maintain and continue reductions in emissions of GHGs beyond 2020 (Health and Safety Code [H&SC] Section 38551(b)). The law requires CARB to adopt rules and regulations in an open public process to achieve the maximum technologically feasible and cost-effective GHG reductions.

EO S-01-07 (January 18, 2007): This order sets forth the low carbon fuel standard (LCFS) for California. Under this EO, the carbon intensity of California’s transportation fuels is to be reduced by at least 10 percent by the year 2020. CARB re-adopted the LCFS regulation in September 2015, and the changes went into effect on January 1, 2016. The program establishes a strong framework to promote the low-carbon fuel adoption necessary to achieve the Governor's 2030 and 2050 GHG reduction goals.

SB 375, Chapter 728, 2008, Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection: This bill requires that CARB set regional emissions reduction targets for passenger vehicles. The MPO for each region must then develop a "Sustainable Communities Strategy" (SCS) that integrates transportation, land-use, and housing policies to plan how it will achieve the emissions target for its region.

SB 391, Chapter 585, 2009, California Transportation Plan: This bill requires the State’s long-range transportation plan to identify strategies to address California’s climate change goals under AB 32.

EO B-16-12 (March 2012) orders State entities under the direction of the Governor, including CARB, the California Energy Commission, and the Public Utilities Commission, to support the rapid commercialization of zero-emission vehicles. It directs these entities to achieve various benchmarks related to zero-emission vehicles.

EO B-30-15 (April 2015) establishes an interim statewide GHG emission reduction target of 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 to ensure California meets its target of reducing GHG emissions to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. It further orders all state agencies with jurisdiction over sources of GHG emissions to implement measures, pursuant to statutory authority, to achieve reductions of GHG emissions to meet the 2030 and 2050 GHG emissions reductions targets. It also directs CARB to update the Climate Change Scoping Plan to express the 2030 target in terms of million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MMTCO<sub>2e</sub>). (GHGs differ in how much heat each traps in the atmosphere, called global warming potential, or GWP. CO<sub>2</sub> is the most important GHG, so amounts of other gases are expressed relative to CO<sub>2</sub>, using a metric called “carbon dioxide equivalent,” or CO<sub>2e</sub>. The global warming potential of CO<sub>2</sub> is assigned a value of 1, and the GWP of other gases is assessed as multiples of CO<sub>2</sub>.) Finally, it requires the Natural Resources Agency to update the state’s climate adaptation strategy, *Safeguarding California*, every 3 years, and to ensure that its provisions are fully implemented.

SB 32, Chapter 249, 2016, codifies the GHG reduction targets established in EO B-30-15 to achieve a mid-range goal of 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030.

SB 1386, Chapter 545, 2016, declared “it to be the policy of the state that the protection and management of natural and working lands ... is an important strategy in meeting the state’s greenhouse gas reduction goals, and would require all state agencies, departments, boards, and commissions to consider this policy when revising, adopting, or establishing policies, regulations, expenditures, or grant criteria relating to the protection and management of natural and working lands.”

SB 743, Chapter 386 (September 2013): This bill changes the metric of consideration for transportation impacts pursuant to CEQA from a focus on automobile delay to alternative methods focused on VMT, to promote the state’s goals of reducing GHG emissions and traffic related air pollution and promoting multimodal transportation while balancing the needs of congestion management and safety.

SB 150, Chapter 150, 2017, Regional Transportation Plans: This bill requires ARB to prepare a report that assesses progress made by each metropolitan planning organization in meeting their established regional GHG emission reduction targets.

EO B-55-18 (September 2018) sets a new statewide goal to achieve and maintain carbon neutrality no later than 2045. This goal is in addition to existing statewide targets of reducing GHG emissions.

AB 1279, Chapter 337, 2022, The California Climate Crisis Act: This bill mandates carbon neutrality by 2045 and establishes an emissions reduction target of 85 percent below 1990 level as part of that goal. This bill solidifies a goal included in EO B-55-18. It requires CARB to work with relevant state agencies to ensure that updates to the scoping plan identify and recommend measures to achieve these policy goals and to identify and implement a variety of policies and strategies that enable carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) removal solutions and carbon capture, utilization, and storage technologies in California, as specified.

## ***Environmental Setting***

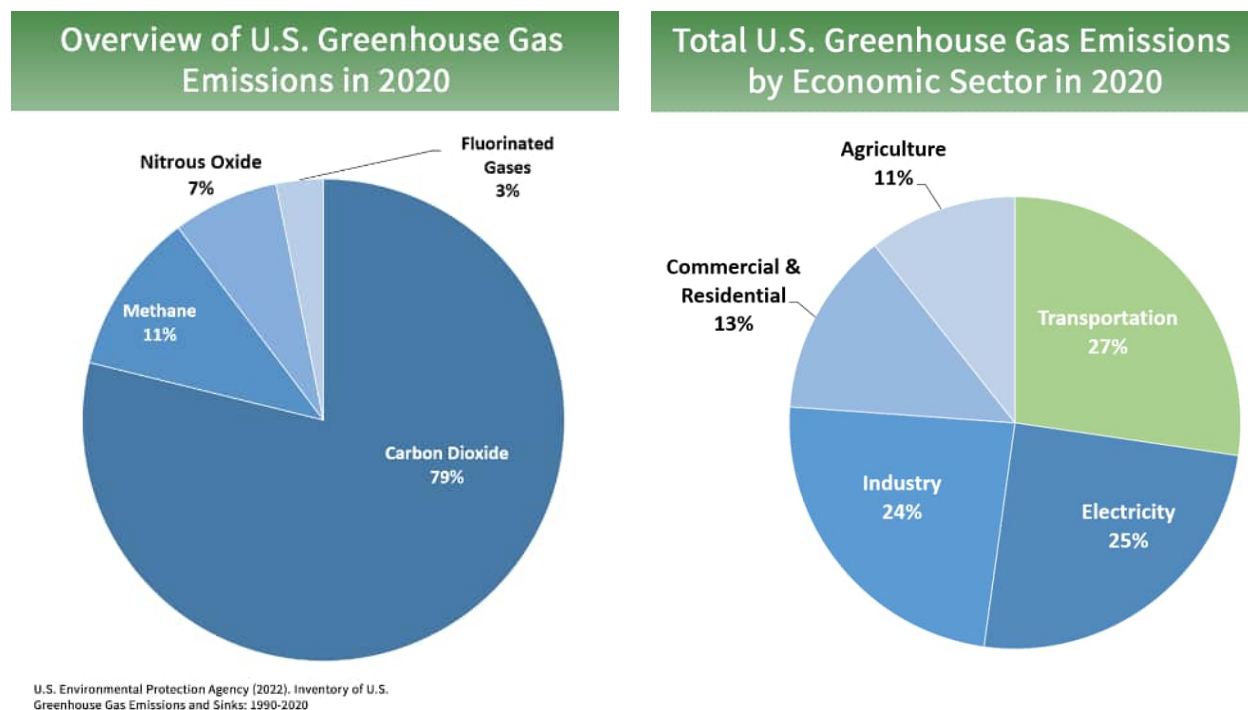
### ***GHG Inventories***

A GHG emissions inventory estimates the amount of GHGs discharged into the atmosphere by specific sources over a period of time, such as a calendar year. Tracking annual GHG emissions allows countries, states, and smaller jurisdictions to understand how emissions are changing and what actions may be needed to attain emission reduction goals. U.S. EPA is responsible for documenting GHG emissions nationwide, and the CARB does so for the state, as required by H&SC Section 39607.4. Cities and other local jurisdictions may also conduct local GHG inventories to inform their GHG reduction or climate action plans (CAPs).

## National GHG Inventory

The annual GHG inventory submitted by the U.S. EPA provides a comprehensive accounting of all human-produced sources of GHGs in the United States. Total GHG emissions from all sectors in 2020 were 5,222 million metric tons (MMT), factoring in deductions for carbon sequestration in the land sector. Of these, 79 percent were CO<sub>2</sub>, 11 percent were CH<sub>4</sub>, and 7 percent were N<sub>2</sub>O; the balance consisted of fluorinated gases. Total GHGs in 2020 decreased by 21 percent from 2005 levels and 11 percent from 2019. The change from 2019 resulted primarily from less demand in the transportation sector during the COVID-19 pandemic. The transportation sector was responsible for 27 percent of total U.S. GHG emissions in 2020, more than any other sector, and for 36 percent of all CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from fossil fuel combustion. Transportation CO<sub>2</sub> emissions for 2020 decreased 13 percent from 2019 to 2020, but were 7 percent higher than transportation CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in 1990 (Figure 3-1) (U.S. EPA 2022b).

**Figure 3-1: U.S. 2020 Greenhouse Gas Emissions (Source: U.S. EPA 2022b)**

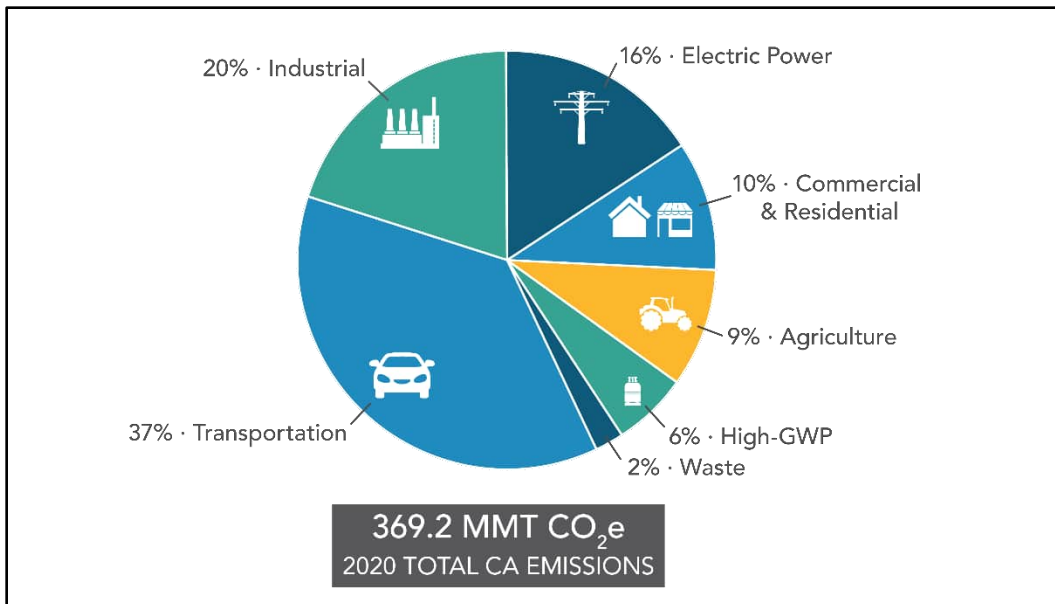


## State GHG Inventory

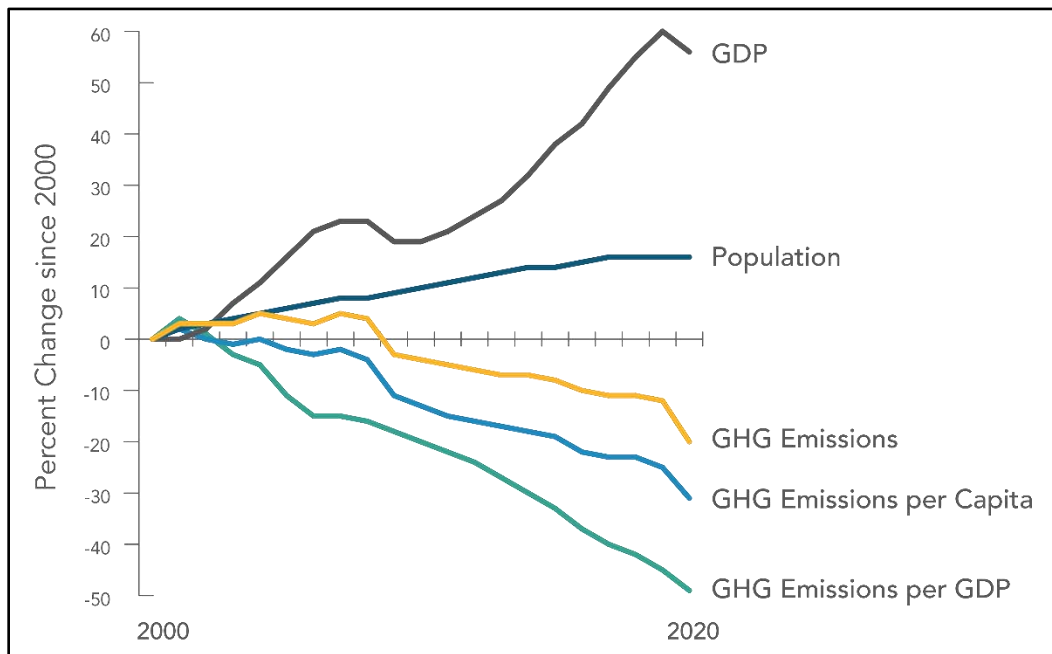
CARB collects GHG emissions data for transportation, electricity, commercial/residential, industrial, agricultural, and waste management sectors each year. It then summarizes and highlights major annual changes and trends to demonstrate the state's progress in meeting its GHG reduction goals. The 2022 edition of the GHG emissions inventory reported emissions trends from 2000 to 2020. Total California GHG emissions in 2020 were 369.2 MMTCO<sub>2</sub>e, a reduction of 35.3 MMTCO<sub>2</sub>e from 2019 and 61.8 MMTCO<sub>2</sub>e below the 2020 statewide limit of 431

MMTCO<sub>2</sub>e. Much of the decrease from 2019 to 2020, however, is likely due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the transportation sector, during which VMT declined under stay-at-home orders and reductions in goods movement. Nevertheless, transportation remained the largest source of GHG emissions, accounting for 37 percent of statewide emissions (CARB 2022b) (Figure 3-2). (Including upstream emissions from oil extraction, petroleum refining, and oil pipelines in California, transportation was responsible for about 47 percent of statewide emissions in 2020; however, those emissions are accounted for in the industrial sector.) California’s gross domestic product (GDP) and GHG intensity (GHG emissions per unit of GDP) both declined from 2019 to 2020 (Figure 3-3). It is expected that total GHG emissions will increase as the economy recovers over the next few years (CARB 2022b).

**Figure 3-2: California 2020 Greenhouse Gas Emissions by Scoping Plan Category (Source: CARB 2022b)**



**Figure 3-3: Change in California GDP, Population, and GHG Emissions since 2000  
(Source: CARB 2022a)**



AB 32 required CARB to develop a Scoping Plan that describes the approach California will take to achieve the goal of reducing GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, and to update it every 5 years. CARB adopted the first scoping plan in 2008. The second updated plan, California’s 2017 Climate Change Scoping Plan, adopted on December 14, 2017, reflects the 2030 target established in EO B-30-15 and SB 32. The draft 2022 Scoping Plan Update additionally lays out a path to achieving carbon neutrality by 2045 (CARB 2022b).

### *Regional Plans*

CARB sets regional GHG reduction targets for California’s 18 MPOs to achieve through planning future projects that will cumulatively achieve those goals, and reporting how they will be met in the RTP/SCS. Targets are set at a percent reduction of passenger vehicle GHG emissions per person from 2005 levels. As described in Section 2.3.6 – Air Quality, the proposed project is included in SANDAG’s 2021 Regional Transportation Improvement Program, Amendment No. 06. The regional reduction target for SANDAG is 19 percent by 2035 (CARB 2022c). SANDAG’s RTP/SCS maps out a system designed to maximize transit enhancements, integrate biking and walking elements, and promote programs to reduce demand and increase efficiency.

The City of San Diego, Port of San Diego and National City CAPs recommend various strategies to minimize or reduce GHG emissions in the project area. The City of San Diego’s CAP establishes a community-wide goal of net zero by 2035 and has strategies that focus on mobility in prioritizing and protecting the walking and biking, and enhancing public transit for improved efficiency and performance (City of San Diego

2022). The National City 2011 CAP focuses on major sources of GHG emissions that include transportation related energy-efficiency goals such as smart growth, traffic calming, and alternative fuel infrastructure (National City 2011). In 2013, the Port of San Diego adopted a CAP with a GHG emission reduction of 10 percent by 2020 by decreasing emissions through transportation and land use, energy conservation and efficiency, alternative energy generation, clean transportation, water conservation, and waste reduction (Port of San Diego 2013). Table 3-1 includes a summary of the GHG reduction policies or strategies included in these regional and local GHG reduction plans.

**Table 3-1: Regional and Local Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plans**

GHG Reduction Plan	GHG Reduction Policies or Strategies
<i>SANDAG 2021 Regional Plan</i> (adopted December 2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop comprehensive multimodal corridor plans</li> <li>• Evaluate the transition to free public transit</li> <li>• Expand the public transit network through mobility hubs and transit leap</li> <li>• Strategic capacity and technology enhancements for dynamic management of roadways and transit services</li> <li>• Enhance walking and biking facilities through flex fleet</li> </ul>
<i>City of San Diego Climate Action Plan</i> (adopted 2022)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategy 1: Decarbonization of the Built Environment</li> <li>• Strategy 2: Access to Clean and Renewable Energy</li> <li>• Strategy 3: Mobility and Land Use</li> <li>• Strategy 4: Circular Economy and Clean Communities</li> <li>• Strategy 5: Resilient Infrastructure and Healthy Ecosystems</li> <li>• Strategy 6: Emerging Climate Actions</li> </ul>
<i>City of San Diego General Plan</i> (adopted March 2008)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy CE-A1. Influence state and federal efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions</li> <li>• Policy CE-A2. Reduce the City's overall carbon dioxide footprint</li> <li>• Policy CE-A13a. Inventory greenhouse gas emissions</li> <li>• Policy CE-F.8. Increase fuel efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions</li> </ul>
<i>City of National City Climate Action Plan</i> (adopted May 2011)	<p>Community-Wide Measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smart Growth</li> <li>• Low Carbon Transportation</li> <li>• Traffic Congestion</li> <li>• Traffic Calming</li> <li>• Alternative Fuel Vehicles</li> </ul>
<i>National City General Plan</i> (adopted June 2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goal LU-1. Smart Growth</li> <li>• Goal C-4. Alternative Modes of Travel</li> <li>• Goal CS-1. Reduced Carbon Footprint</li> </ul>
<i>Port of San Diego Climate Action Plan</i> (adopted 2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TA+TE. Alternative Powered Vehicles and Vessels, and Advanced Technologies</li> <li>• TR. Roadway System Management</li> <li>• TL+TT. Land Use/Community Design and Transit</li> <li>• TP+TV. Parking Policy/Pricing and Trip and Vehicle Miles Reduction</li> </ul>

GHG Reduction Plan	GHG Reduction Policies or Strategies
<i>Port Master Plan San Diego Unified Port District (updated November 2021)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3.4.2(C)-I. Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions</li> <li>• SR Objective 3.1. Reduce GHG emissions and support pathways toward carbon neutrality throughout Tidelands</li> </ul>

***Project Analysis***

GHG emissions from transportation projects can be divided into those produced during operation (operational emissions) and those produced during construction. The primary GHGs produced by the transportation sector are CO<sub>2</sub>, CH<sub>4</sub>, N<sub>2</sub>O, and HFCs. CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are a product of burning gasoline or diesel fuel in internal combustion engines, along with relatively small amounts of CH<sub>4</sub> and N<sub>2</sub>O. A small amount of HFC emissions related to refrigeration is also included in the transportation sector.

The CEQA Guidelines generally address GHG emissions as a cumulative impact due to the global nature of climate change (PRC Section 21083(b)(2)). As the California Supreme Court explained, "because of the global scale of climate change, any one project's contribution is unlikely to be significant by itself" (Cleveland National Forest Foundation v. San Diego Assn. of Governments (2017) 3 Cal.5th 497, 512). In assessing cumulative impacts, it must be determined if a project's incremental effect is "cumulatively considerable" (CEQA Guidelines Sections 15064(h)(1) and 15130).

To make this determination, the incremental impacts of the project must be compared with the effects of past, current, and probable future projects. Although climate change is ultimately a cumulative impact, not every individual project that emits GHGs must necessarily be found to contribute to a significant cumulative impact on the environment.

*Operational GHG Emissions*

The project will not increase the vehicle capacity of the roadway. As detailed in Chapter 1, the purpose of the proposed project includes but is not limited to, improve vehicular and multimodal connectivity; enhance traffic and freight operations; and improve community access, mobility, and health by reducing truck idling and encouraging the use of a dedicated truck route.

Therefore, because the proposed project would not result in an increase in roadway capacity or increase VMT, and the proposed project includes improvements designed to improve congestion along the Harbor Drive corridor and connecting arterials to the state highway and interstate freeway systems, the proposed project would not increase GHG emissions during operation. Estimated emissions for existing (2020), 2030, and 2050 conditions are summarized in Table 3-2.

**Table 3-2: Operational GHG Emissions (tons per day)**

<b>Pollutant</b>	<b>2020 Existing</b>	<b>2030 No Build</b>	<b>2030 Build</b>	<b>2050 No Build</b>	<b>2050 Build</b>
CO2	427.70	327.40	327.00	287.60	284.40
N2O	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
CH4	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.02	0.02
BC	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01
HFC	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01

Source: Modeled by Caltrans in 2023

As shown in Table 3-2, GHG emissions estimated for both the Build and No Build Alternatives would be lower in 2030 and 2050 compared to the existing year (2020) because federal and state vehicle emissions standards are expected to reduce pollutant emissions over time. Due to the Build Alternative’s proposed improvements, which would result in reduced congestion and increased multimodal access and connectivity in the project area, daily GHG emissions compared to the No Build Alternative would be reduced with implementation of the proposed project.

*Construction GHG Emissions*

Construction GHG emissions would result from material processing and transportation, on-site construction equipment, and traffic delays due to construction. These emissions will be produced at different levels throughout the construction phase; their frequency and occurrence can be reduced through innovations in plans and specifications and by implementing better traffic management during construction phases.

In addition, while the construction-related GHG emissions would be unavoidable, the proposed project improvements include improving the pavement service life at specific locations, which can also help offset emissions produced during construction by allowing longer intervals between maintenance and rehabilitation activities.

Furthermore, all construction contracts include Caltrans Standard Specifications related to air quality. Section 7-1.02A and 7 1.02C, Emissions Reduction, requires contractors to comply with all laws applicable to the project and to certify they are aware of and will comply with all CARB emission reduction regulations. Section 14-9.02, Air Pollution Control, requires contractors to comply with all air pollution control rules, regulations, ordinances, and statutes. Certain common regulations, such as equipment idling restrictions, that reduce construction vehicle emissions also help reduce GHG emissions.

*Statewide GHG Reduction Strategies*

Statewide Efforts

In response to AB 32, California is implementing measures to achieve emission reductions of GHGs that cause climate change. Climate change programs in California are effectively reducing GHG emissions from all sectors of the economy. These

programs include regulations, market programs, and incentives that will transform transportation, industry, fuels, and other sectors, to take California into a sustainable, low-carbon and cleaner future, while maintaining a robust economy (CARB 2022d).

Major sectors of the California economy, including transportation, will need to reduce emissions to meet 2030 and 2050 GHG emissions targets. The Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) identified five sustainability pillars in a 2015 report: (1) increasing the share of renewable energy in the State's energy mix to at least 50 percent by 2030; (2) reducing petroleum use by up to 50 percent by 2030; (3) increasing the energy efficiency of existing buildings by 50 percent by 2030; (4) reducing emissions of short-lived climate pollutants; and (5) stewarding natural resources, including forests, working lands, and wetlands, to ensure that they store carbon, are resilient, and enhance other environmental benefits (OPR 2015). OPR later added strategies related to achieving statewide carbon neutrality by 2045 in accordance with EO B-55-18 and AB 1279 (OPR 2022).

The transportation sector is integral to the people and economy of California. To achieve GHG emission reduction goals, it is vital that the state build on past successes in reducing criteria and toxic air pollutants from transportation and goods movement. GHG emission reductions will come from cleaner vehicle technologies, lower-carbon fuels, and reduction of VMT. Reducing today's petroleum use in cars and trucks by 50 percent is a key state goal for reducing GHG emissions by 2030 (California Environmental Protection Agency 2015).

In addition, SB 1386 established as state policy the protection and management of natural and working lands and requires state agencies to consider that policy in their own decision making. Trees and vegetation on forests, rangelands, farms, and wetlands remove CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere through biological processes and sequester the carbon in above- and below-ground matter.

Subsequently, Governor Gavin Newsom issued EO N-82-20 to combat the crises in climate change and biodiversity. It instructs state agencies to use existing authorities and resources to identify and implement near- and long-term actions to accelerate natural removal of carbon and build climate resilience in our forests, wetlands, urban greenspaces, agricultural soils, and land conservation activities in ways that serve all communities and particularly low-income, disadvantaged, and vulnerable communities. To support this order, the California Natural Resources Agency (2022) released Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy, with a focus on nature-based solutions.

### *Caltrans Activities*

Caltrans continues to be involved on the Governor's Climate Action Team as CARB works to implement EOs S-3-05 and S-01-07 and help achieve the targets set forth in AB 32. EO B-30-15, issued in April 2015, and SB 32 (2016), set an interim target to cut GHG emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. The following major initiatives are underway at Caltrans to help meet these targets.

### *Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure*

The California Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure (CAPTI) builds on EOs signed by Governor Newsom in 2019 and 2020 targeted at reducing GHG emissions in transportation, which account for more than 40 percent of all polluting emissions, to reach the state's climate goals. Under CAPTI, where feasible and within existing funding program structures, the state will invest discretionary transportation funds in sustainable infrastructure projects that align with its climate, health, and social equity goals (California State Transportation Agency 2021).

### *California Transportation Plan*

The California Transportation Plan (CTP) is a statewide, long-range transportation plan to meet our future mobility needs and reduce GHG emissions. It serves as an umbrella document for all the other statewide transportation planning documents. The CTP 2050 presents a vision of a safe, resilient, and universally accessible transportation system that supports vibrant communities, advances racial and economic justice, and improves public and environmental health. The plan's climate goal is to achieve statewide GHG emissions reduction targets and increase resilience to climate change. It demonstrates how GHG emissions from the transportation sector can be reduced through advancements in clean fuel technologies; continued shifts toward active travel, transit, and shared mobility; more efficient land use and development practices; and continued shifts to telework (Caltrans 2021b).

### *Caltrans Strategic Plan*

The Caltrans 2020–2024 Strategic Plan includes goals of stewardship, climate action, and equity. Climate action strategies include developing and implementing a Caltrans CAP; a robust program of climate action education, training, and outreach; partnership and collaboration; a VMT monitoring and reduction program; and engagement with the most vulnerable communities in developing and implementing Caltrans climate action activities (Caltrans 2021c).

### *Caltrans Policy Directives and Other Initiatives*

Caltrans Director's Policy 30 (DP-30) Climate Change (June 22, 2012) established a Caltrans policy to ensure coordinated efforts to incorporate climate change into Caltrans decisions and activities. Caltrans Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Mitigation Report (Caltrans 2020b) provides a comprehensive overview of Caltrans' emissions. The report documents and evaluates current Caltrans procedures and activities that track and reduce GHG emissions and identifies additional opportunities for further reducing GHG emissions from Caltrans-controlled emission sources, in support of Caltrans and State goals.

### ***Project-Level GHG Reduction Strategies***

The following measures will also be implemented in the project to reduce GHG emissions and potential climate change impacts from the project.

- Limit idling to 5 minutes for delivery and dump trucks and other diesel-powered equipment (with some exceptions).
- Schedule truck trips outside of peak morning and evening commute hours.
- For improved fuel efficiency from construction equipment:
  - Maintain equipment in proper tune and working condition.
  - Use right-sized equipment for the job.
  - Use equipment with new technologies.
- Use alternative fuels such as renewable diesel for construction equipment.
- Earthwork Balance: Reduce the need for transport of earthen materials by balancing cut and fill quantities.
- Supplement existing construction environmental training with information on methods to reduce GHG emissions related to construction.
- Use accelerated bridge construction (ABC) method. (Reduces construction windows, uses more precast elements that in turn reduce need for additional falsework, forms, bracing, etc.).
- Salvage rebar from demolished concrete and process waste to create usable fill.
- Maximize use of recycled materials (tire rubber for example).
- Recycle existing project features onsite. (For example, MBGR, light standards, Sub-base Granular Material or native material that meets Caltrans specifications for incorporation into new work.)
- Reduce construction waste. For example, reuse or recycle construction and demolition waste (reduces consumption of raw materials, reducing waste and transportation to landfill; saves costs).
- Use recycled water or reduce consumption of potable water for construction.
- Specify Long-Life Pavement. Minimize life-cycle costs by designing long-lasting pavement structures.
- Use permeable pavements to reduce “urban heat islands.”
- Replace lighting with ultra-reflective sign materials that are illuminated by headlights to reduce energy used by electric lighting.

## **Adaptation**

### *Federal Efforts*

Reducing GHG emissions is only one part of an approach to addressing climate change. Caltrans must plan for the effects of climate change on the state's transportation infrastructure and strengthen or protect the facilities from damage. Climate change is expected to produce increased variability in precipitation, rising temperatures, rising sea levels, variability in storm surges and their intensity, and in the frequency and intensity of wildfires. Flooding and erosion can damage or wash out roads; longer periods of intense heat can buckle pavement and railroad tracks; storm surges combined with a rising sea level can inundate highways. Wildfire can directly burn facilities and indirectly cause damage when rain falls on denuded slopes that landslide after a fire. Effects will vary by location and may, in the most extreme cases, require that a facility be relocated or redesigned. Accordingly, Caltrans must consider these types of climate stressors in how highways are planned, designed, built, operated, and maintained.

Climate change adaptation for transportation infrastructure involves long-term planning and risk management to address vulnerabilities in the transportation system. The following briefly summarizes the state and federal efforts implemented to identify the risks of climate change and extreme weather events and actions on climate adaptation and resilience.

Under NEPA Assignment, Caltrans is obligated to comply with all applicable federal environmental laws and FHWA NEPA regulations, policies, and guidance.

The Fourth National Climate Assessment, published in 2018, presents the foundational science and the “human welfare, societal, and environmental elements of climate change and variability for 10 regions and 18 national topics, with particular attention paid to observed and projected risks, impacts, consideration of risk reduction, and implications under different mitigation pathways.”

The USDOT Policy Statement on Climate Adaptation in June 2011 committed the federal Department of Transportation to “integrate consideration of climate change impacts and adaptation into the planning, operations, policies, and programs of DOT in order to ensure that taxpayer resources are invested wisely, and that transportation infrastructure, services and operations remain effective in current and future climate conditions” (USDOT 2011). The U.S. DOT Climate Action Plan of August 2021 followed up with a statement of policy to “accelerate reductions in greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector and make our transportation infrastructure more climate change resilient now and in the future,” following this set of guiding principles (USDOT 2021):

- Use best-available science
- Prioritize the most vulnerable

- Preserve ecosystems
- Build community relationships
- Engage globally

USDOT developed its climate action plan pursuant to the federal EO 14008, Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad (January 27, 2021). EO 14008 recognized the threats of climate change to national security and ordered federal government agencies to prioritize actions on climate adaptation and resilience in their programs and investments (White House 2021).

FHWA order 5520 (Transportation System Preparedness and Resilience to Climate Change and Extreme Weather Events, December 15, 2014) established FHWA policy to strive to identify the risks of climate change and extreme weather events to current and planned transportation systems. FHWA has developed guidance and tools for transportation planning that foster resilience to climate effects and sustainability at the federal, state, and local levels.

### *State Efforts*

Climate change adaptation for transportation infrastructure involves long-term planning and risk management to address vulnerabilities in the transportation system. A number of state policies and tools have been developed to guide adaptation efforts.

California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment (Fourth Assessment) (2018) is the state's effort to "translate the state of climate science into useful information for action." It provides information that will help decision makers across sectors and at state, regional, and local scales protect and build the resilience of the state's people, infrastructure, natural systems, working lands, and waters. The State's approach recognizes that the consequences of climate change occur at the intersections of people, nature, and infrastructure. The Fourth Assessment reports that if no measures are taken to reduce GHG emissions by 2021 or sooner, the state is projected to experience a 2.7 to 8.8 degrees Fahrenheit increase in average annual maximum daily temperatures, with impacts on agriculture, energy demand, natural systems, and public health; a two-thirds decline in water supply from snowpack and water shortages that will impact agricultural production; a 77% increase in average area burned by wildfire, with consequences for forest health and communities; and large-scale erosion of up to 67% of Southern California beaches and inundation of billions of dollars' worth of residential and commercial buildings due to sea level rise (State of California 2018).

Sea level rise is a particular concern for transportation infrastructure in the coastal zone. Major urban airports will be at risk of flooding from sea level rise combined with storm surge as early as 2040; San Francisco airport is already at risk. Miles of coastal highways vulnerable to flooding in a 100-year storm event will triple to 370 by 2100, and 3,750 miles will be exposed to temporary flooding. The Fourth Assessment's findings

highlight the need for proactive action to address these current and future impacts of climate change.

In 2008, then-Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger recognized the need when he issued EO S-13-08, focused on sea level rise. Technical reports on the latest sea level rise science were first published in 2010 and updated in 2013 and 2017. The 2017 projections of sea level rise and new understanding of processes and potential impacts in California were incorporated into the State of California Sea-Level Rise Guidance Update in 2018. This EO also gave rise to the California Climate Adaptation Strategy (2009), updated in 2014 as Safeguarding California: Reducing Climate Risk (Safeguarding California Plan), which addressed the full range of climate change impacts and recommended adaptation strategies. The Safeguarding California Plan was updated in 2018 and again in 2021 as the California Climate Adaptation Strategy, incorporating key elements of the latest sector-specific plans such as the Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy, Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan, Water Resilience Portfolio, and the CAPTI (described above). Priorities in the 2021 California Climate Adaptation Strategy include acting in partnership with California Native American Tribes, strengthening protections for climate-vulnerable communities that lack capacity and resources, nature-based climate solutions, use of best available climate science, and partnering and collaboration to best leverage resources (California Natural Resources Agency 2022).

EO B-30-15, signed in April 2015, requires state agencies to factor climate change into all planning and investment decisions. This EO recognizes that effects of climate change in addition to sea level rise also threaten California's infrastructure. At the direction of EO B-30-15, the OPR published Planning and Investing for a Resilient California: A Guidebook for State Agencies in 2017, to encourage a uniform and systematic approach.

AB 2800 (Quirk 2016) created the multidisciplinary Climate-Safe Infrastructure Working Group to help actors throughout the state address the findings of California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment. It released its report, Paying it Forward: The Path Toward Climate-Safe Infrastructure in California, in 2018. The report provides guidance to agencies on how to address the challenges of assessing risk in the face of inherent uncertainties still posed by the best available science on climate change. It also examines how state agencies can use infrastructure planning, design, and implementation processes to address the observed and anticipated climate change impacts (Climate Change Infrastructure Working Group 2018).

### *Caltrans Adaptation Efforts*

#### *Caltrans Vulnerability Assessments*

Caltrans completed climate change vulnerability assessments to identify segments of the State Highway System vulnerable to climate change effects of precipitation, temperature, wildfire, storm surge, and sea level rise.

The climate change data in the assessments were developed in coordination with climate change scientists and experts at federal, state, and regional organizations at the forefront of climate science. The findings of the vulnerability assessments guide analysis of at-risk assets and development of Adaptation Priority Reports as a method to make capital programming decisions to address identified risks.

Caltrans District 11

In 2019, Caltrans District 11 prepared a Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment to describe the potential climate impacts in District 11. In California and the western United States, these general climate trends are expected (Caltrans 2019):

- More severe droughts, less snowpack, and changes in water availability
- Rising sea levels, more severe storm impacts, and coastal erosion
- Increased temperatures and more frequent, longer heat waves
- Longer and more severe wildfire seasons

Given the diverse climatic conditions currently experienced in District 11, the range of extreme weather impacts in the district is very broad, making District 11 one of most potentially impacted districts to changes in climate. The following climate stressors have been identified in District 11: temperature, precipitation, wildfire, sea level rise, storm surge, and cliff retreat.

**Project Adaptation Analysis**

*Sea Level Rise*

The project's location near or at sea level along the San Diego Bay accentuates the significance of assessing its vulnerability to sea level rise. Being situated in a coastal area, the project is at heightened risk of experiencing the impacts of rising sea levels. Table 3-3 presents the ranges of potential sea level rise as identified in the State’s Sea-Level Rise Guidance for the San Diego tide gage location (State of California 2018).

**Table 3-3: Probabilistic Sea Level Rise Projections**

Year	Low Risk Aversion (feet)	Medium-High Risk Aversion (feet)	Extreme Risk Aversion (feet)
2030	0.6	0.9	1.1
2050	1.2	2.0	2.8
2100	3.6	7.0	10.2

Pursuant to Caltrans guidance for sea level rise analyses, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration sea level rise viewer (NOAA 2023) was selected to view the

projections shown in Table 3-3 in relation to the proposed project area. Figures 3-4, 3-5, and 3-6 show the projected sea level rise under the extreme risk aversion scenarios for 2030, 2050, and 2100, respectively.

**Figure 3-4: 2030 Extreme Risk Aversion Sea Level Rise Projection**

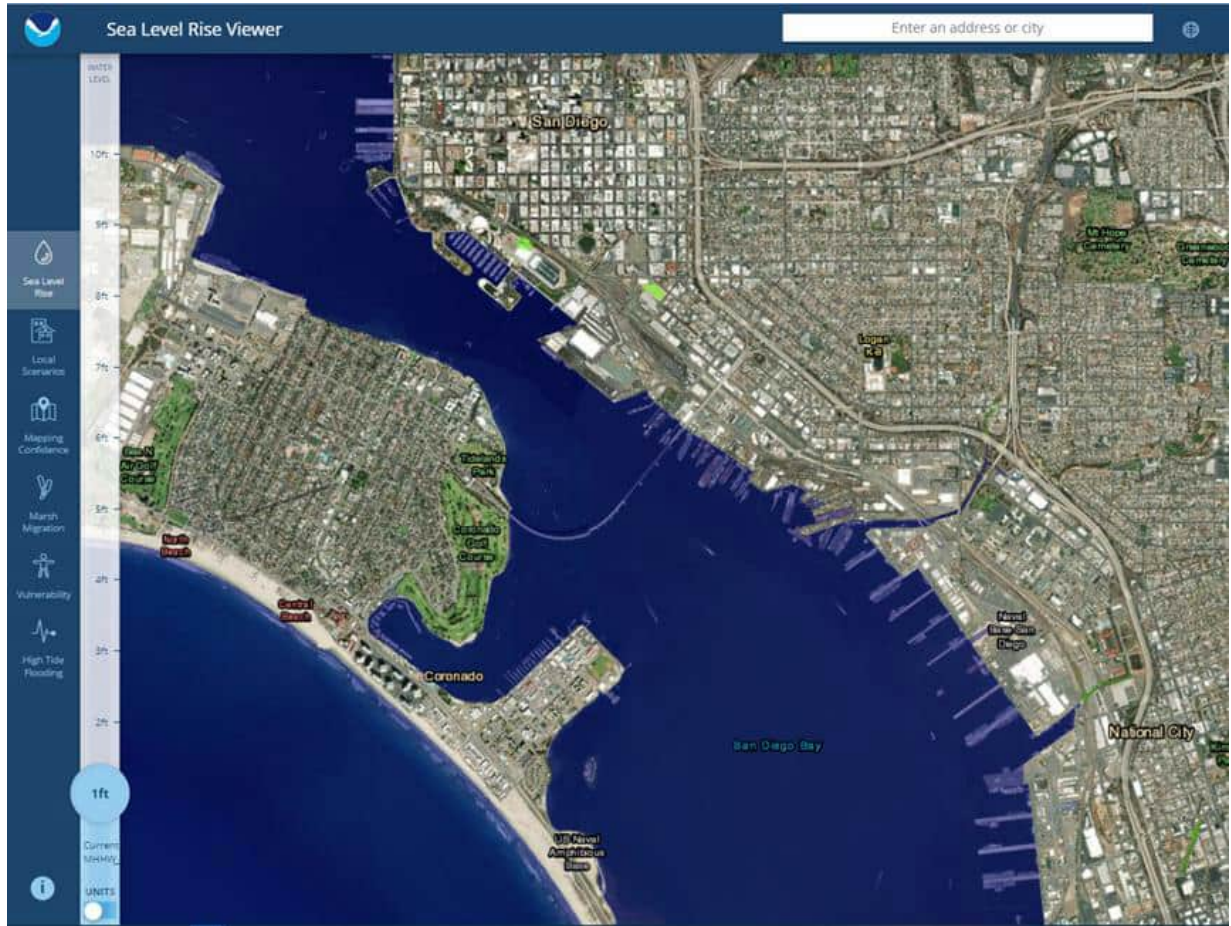
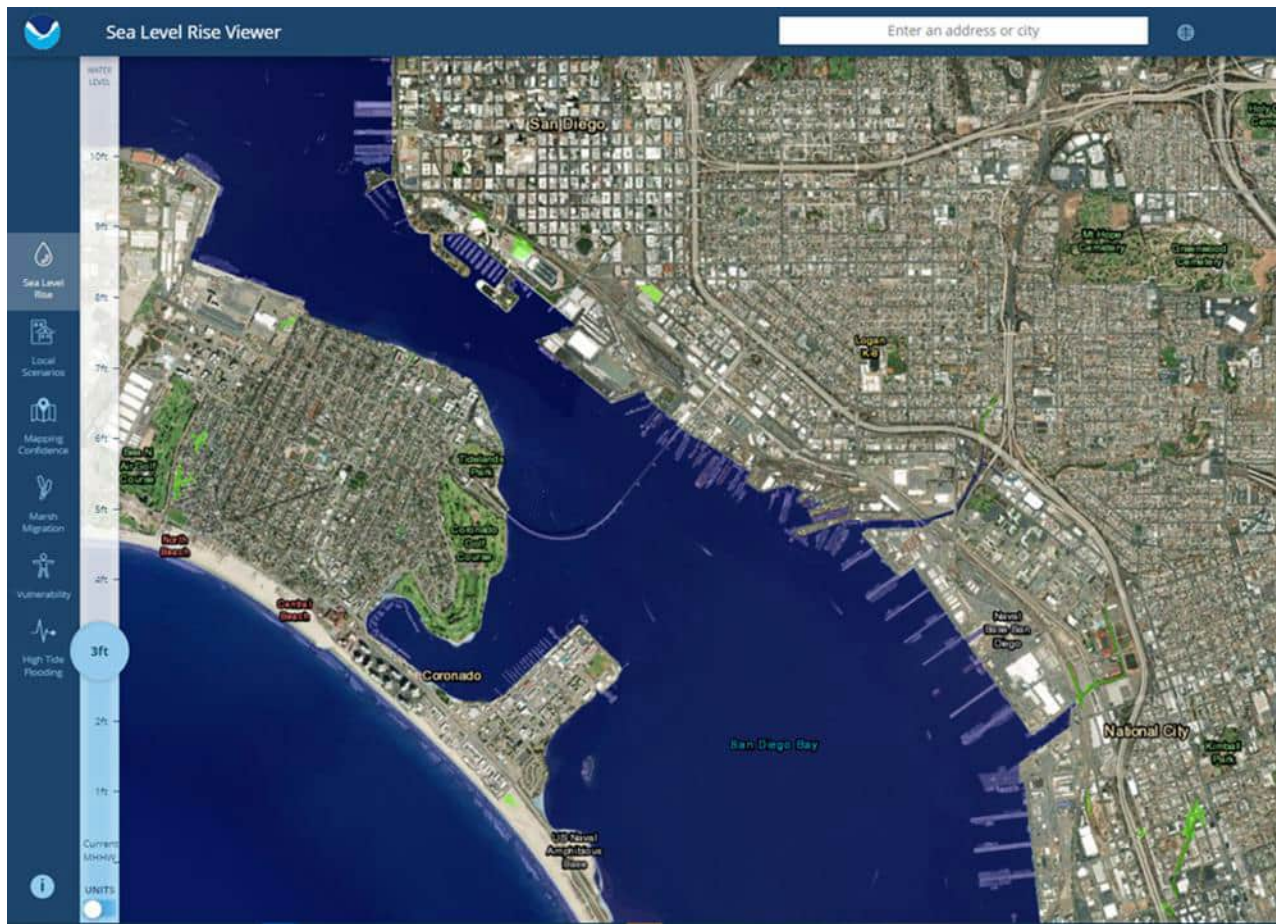
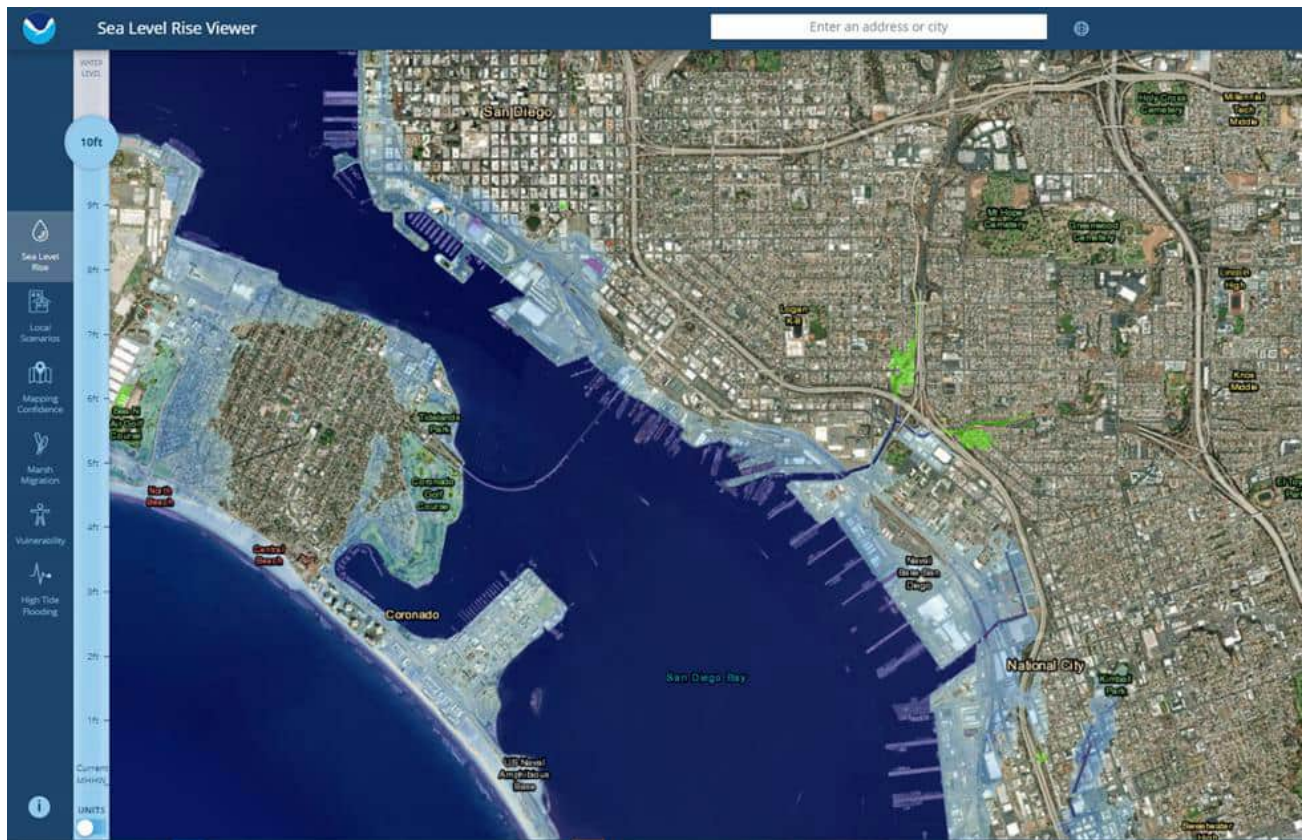


Figure 3-5: 2050 Extreme Risk Aversion Sea Level Rise Projection



**Figure 3-6: 2100 Extreme Risk Aversion Sea Level Rise Projection**



As shown in Figures 3-4 and 3-5, under the high-emissions scenario for the 2030 and 2050 years, sea level rise impacts are not anticipated to affect the proposed project facilities. However, in 2100, as shown in Figure 3-6, the project area is anticipated to experience water level rise and result in an inundation footprint. The changes to historical conditions brought on by sea level rise could make the proposed transportation facilities more vulnerable to damage. For example, a rising groundwater table could inundate supports on land that were not built to accommodate saturated soil conditions, leading to erosion of soils and loss of stability (Caltrans 2019). Additionally, higher sea levels could increase the risk of adverse scour effects on structural elements. However, the proposed project is limited to an improvements project; the project proposes functional improvements along Caltrans right-of-way, Harbor Drive, and adjacent roadways to address congestion in this critical urban freight corridor. Thus, the proposed project would not exacerbate the risk of sea level rise or impacts of climate change. Nonetheless, the project area is included in the region's sea level rise assessment and adaptation guidance. As identified in SANDAG's Regional Transportation Infrastructure Sea Level Rise Assessment and Adaptation Guidance, improvements in this project area would be coordinated with other proposed adaptation projects for transportation facilities surrounding the San Diego Bay. The SANDAG Guidance also recognizes that these improvements would likely require a coordinated effort between the appropriate bayfront cities, the Port, MTS, Caltrans, and SANDAG (SANDAG 2020b).

### *Precipitation and Floodplains*

The proposed project is partially located in a floodplain outside the coastal zone; however, only minor grading and repaving are proposed in this area and effects on flooding are expected to be insignificant. The 2019 Caltrans District 11 Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment (Caltrans 2019) estimated changes in 100-year storm precipitation depth, a variable commonly considered in the design of transportation assets such as bridges and culverts. Mapping shows that storm precipitation depth in the proposed project area could increase by up to 4.9 percent through 2085. As mentioned above, sea level rise has the potential to increase the frequency of flooding, damage from flooding, and the size of the floodplain area of risk. Although the proposed project would result in a net increase in impervious surface areas, as detailed in Section 2.3.2, the proposed project would adhere to existing regulations and implement standard BMPs to address stormwater runoff.

### *Wildfire*

The proposed project is not located within or adjacent to lands classified by CAL FIRE as a VHFHSZ (Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone) (CAL FIRE 2022). The lands surrounding the project area are highly urbanized and not exposed to fire risk. Thus, the proposed project will not exacerbate existing wildlife risks or contribute to new risks that could occur under climate change.

### *Temperature*

Pavement design includes an assessment of temperature in determining recommendations for the types of material used. With increasing temperatures, more durable materials might be necessary. Mapping shows that future change in the absolute minimum air temperature could be between 8.0 and 9.9 degrees Fahrenheit in 2085. The 2019 Caltrans District 11 Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment analyzed the effect of temperature on the choice of pavement binders. Pavement rehabilitation is included in the proposed project. As such, the selection of the pavement binder grade will consider the pavement temperatures a roadway may experience over time in order to maintain pavement integrity.

## **Chapter 4      Comments and Coordination**

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Early and continuing coordination with the general public and public agencies is an essential part of the environmental process. It helps planners determine the necessary scope of environmental documentation and the level of analysis required, and to identify potential impacts and avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures and related environmental requirements. Agency and tribal consultation and public participation for this project have been accomplished through a variety of formal and informal methods, including interagency coordination meetings, public meetings, public notices, Project Development Team (PDT) meetings, and participation in community events. This chapter summarizes the results of Caltrans' efforts to fully identify, address, and resolve project-related issues through early and continuing coordination.

A summary of outreach efforts and coordination is provided in Section 1.1.1 – Project Background. As noted, the project has completed extensive coordination with affected public agencies, planning groups, and other stakeholders including NBSD, the City of San Diego, City of National City, SANDAG, Port, MTS, BNSF Railway, CPUC, and Barrio Logan Community Planning Group.

The proposed project concept for dedicated truck lanes was identified and developed from stakeholder input as part of the Harbor Drive Multimodal Corridor Study. A technical working group (TWG) was formed from 2017 through 2020 with the City of San Diego, City of National City, Port, Caltrans, SANDAG, MTS, California Coastal Commission, and Barrio Logan Community Planning Group. A stakeholder PDT was formed as a continuation of the TWG with stakeholders including the City of San Diego, City of National City, MTS, Port, SANDAG, and NBSD. The stakeholder PDT met on three occasions with ad-hoc coordination as needed to further define the project.

The project has been showcased in community events such as the Clean California Community Day held on March 25, 2023, and the 53rd Annual Chicano Park Day Celebration held on April 22, 2023. Additionally, the project was presented at the Barrio Logan Community Planning Group meeting on May 31, 2023, and to the San Diego Regional Military Working Group on September 11, 2023. Interactive open house public workshops and pop-up outreach events were also held in the Cities of San Diego and National City in 2018 and 2019 during development of the Harbor Drive 2.0 concept, which is incorporated into the proposed project. Engagement efforts have emphasized and will continue to emphasize bilingual outreach and hybrid virtual and traditional methods. Coordination and outreach with cooperating and partner agencies and other key stakeholders will continue throughout project development and final design.

Various public comments have been received through the outreach efforts completed to-date. Nine comments were received at the Clean California event and 21 comments were received at Chicano Park Day. Further, an additional nine comments were received on the project during the presentation to the Barrio Logan Community Planning Group. During public workshops and pop-up outreach events for the Harbor Drive Multimodal Corridor Study, a total of 36 public comments were received. In order of

frequency, top priorities include (1) accessibility, parking, and traffic calming, (2) concerns of trucks on residential streets, and (3) active transportation bike improvements.

## **Chapter 5 List of Preparers**

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The following Caltrans staff and consultants contributed to the preparation of this IS/EA.

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# Chapter 6 Distribution List

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The Notice of Availability (NOA) for this Draft IS/EA was distributed to federal, state, regional, and local agencies and elected officials, as well as interested groups, organizations, and individuals. The distribution list for the following parties is provided below:

- Federal Agencies
- State Agencies
- Local Agencies and Elected Officials

The NOA was also sent to approximately 500 property owners and residents in the project area. A full distribution list of property owners and residents in the area is available upon request at the Caltrans District 11 office.

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Mercado Apartments  
2001 Newton Avenue  
San Diego, CA 92113

Barrio Station  
2175 Newton Avenue  
San Diego, CA 92113

Our Lady of Guadalupe Church  
1770 Kearney Avenue  
San Diego, CA 92113

CP Kelco  
2025 E Harbor Drive  
San Diego, CA 92113

Continental Maritime of San Diego  
1995 Bay Front Street  
San Diego, CA 92113

BAE Systems  
2205 E Belt Street  
San Diego, CA 92113

General Dynamics/NASSCO  
2798 Harbor Drive  
San Diego, CA 92113

San Diego Central Library  
330 Park Blvd.  
San Diego, CA 92101

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# Appendix A Title VI/Non-Discrimination Policy Statement

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STATE OF CALIFORNIA—CALIFORNIA STATE TRANSPORTATION AGENCY

Govin Newsom, Governor

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR  
P.O. BOX 942873, MS-49  
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Making Conservation  
a California Way of Life.

September 2021

### NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY STATEMENT

The California Department of Transportation, under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, ensures *"No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."*

Caltrans will make every effort to ensure nondiscrimination in all of its services, programs and activities, whether they are federally funded or not, and that services and benefits are fairly distributed to all people, regardless of race, color, or national origin. In addition, Caltrans will facilitate meaningful participation in the transportation planning process in a nondiscriminatory manner.

Related federal statutes, remedies, and state law further those protections to include sex, disability, religion, sexual orientation, and age.

For information or guidance on how to file a complaint, or obtain more information regarding Title VI, please contact the Title VI Branch Manager at (916) 324-8379 or visit the following web page:  
<https://dot.ca.gov/programs/civil-rights/title-vi>.

To obtain this information in an alternate format such as Braille or in a language other than English, please contact the California Department of Transportation, Office of Civil Rights, at 1823 14<sup>th</sup> Street, MS-79, Sacramento, CA 95811; PO Box 942874, MS-79, Sacramento, CA 94274-0001; (916) 324-8379 (TTY 711); or at [Title.VI@dot.ca.gov](mailto:Title.VI@dot.ca.gov).

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Toks Omishakin'.

Toks Omishakin  
Director

*"Provide a safe and reliable transportation network that serves all people and respects the environment."*

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# **Appendix B Avoidance, Minimization and/or Mitigation Summary**

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## ***Parks and Recreational Facilities***

- Equipment and materials storage sites would be located as far away from residential and park uses as feasible, and construction areas would be kept clean and orderly.

## ***Environmental Justice***

- Because the project would take place within minority communities and has the potential to have impacts to those communities, a robust public outreach campaign would be conducted both during the environmental review process and during construction. Outreach would occur in the language and medium preferred by the target population. Outreach would detail the effects of the project most likely to directly affect community members, such as travel delays and parking effects, and measures taken by the project to minimize these effects. Outreach should also include requests for the minority community to meaningfully provide input into project decisions such as recommendations for aesthetic treatments and environmental mitigation, should they be required.

## ***Utilities and Emergency Services***

- To minimize effects on underserved communities during construction, access and circulation throughout the study area will need to be maintained to the maximum extent feasible. A TMP will be in place during construction to ensure that all modes of transportation continue to have access through the project area. Additionally, robust public outreach will facilitate a dialogue between the project team and local communities prior to and during construction.

## ***Traffic and Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities***

- To the extent feasible, construction traffic would be scheduled and routed to reduce congestion and related air quality impacts caused by idling vehicles along local roads during peak travel times.
- ITS elements would be implemented to smooth traffic flow and increase efficiency.
- The contractor shall schedule truck trips outside of peak morning and evening commute hours and implement a TMP, to be developed during the design phase, to minimize the effects to traffic.
- Minimization measures to ensure traffic impacts resulting from construction activities would be implemented with the TMP including appropriate staging,

timing, and sequencing of activities; maintenance of traffic in both directions; and advanced notification to motorists, businesses, and nearby communities to inform the public of potential delays.

### ***Aesthetics***

#### Within State Right-of-Way:

- Preserve existing trees.
- Seed, mulch, or plant disturbed soil as determined by the Landscape Architect.
- Repair or replace the existing irrigation equipment to an operational status where the project disturbs roadside areas.
- Protect vegetation outside of the grading limits.
- Guardrail vegetation control will be tan colored concrete (not vegetation control mats). Vegetation control concrete within beyond gore point (BGP) areas shall be colored with the same color used for vegetation control.
- New concrete headwalls, channels, ditches, and aprons will be colored tan.
- Biofiltration swales, if proposed, shall appear as natural landscape features (streambeds) and be sodded with irrigated native grass sod.

#### Within City Right-of-Way:

- Mitigate loss of existing Harbor Drive landscaped and paved medians by enhancing new raised medians at Harbor Drive with colored and stamped concrete.
- Preserve existing trees where possible.
- Seed, mulch, or plant disturbed soil as determined by the Landscape Architect.
- Repair or replace the existing irrigation equipment to an operational status where the project disturbs roadside areas.
- Protect vegetation outside of the grading limits.

#### Bridge Aesthetics:

- Bridge lighting shall closely resemble the existing light poles and fixtures on the dry side of NBSD. Fixtures shall be “shoebox” type with LED lamps mounted on square poles. The fixture and poles shall have a dark bronze anodized finish.

- Bridge retaining walls shall be compatible with NBSD architectural themes. The concrete wall shall be enhanced with a surface texture to soften the monolithic appearance. The texture relief pattern shall be coordinated with NBSD.
- The bridge barrier shall be enhanced with a texture to match the retaining wall texture. The barrier aesthetics shall be coordination with NBSD.
- Bridge fencing shall extend over the bridge retaining walls.

### ***Cultural Resources***

- If cultural materials are discovered during construction, all earth-moving activity within and around the immediate discovery area will be diverted until a qualified archaeologist can assess the nature and significance of the find.
- If human remains are discovered, California Health and Safety (H&SC) Section 7050.5 states that further disturbances and activities shall stop in any area or nearby area suspected to overlie remains, and the County Coroner shall be contacted, in conjunction with Caltrans District 11 Environmental Branch Manager or an equivalent designated environmental compliance lead. If the remains are thought by the Coroner to be Native American, the coroner will notify the NAHC, who, pursuant to PRC Section 5097.98, will then notify the Most Likely Descendant (MLD). At this time, Caltrans District 11 Environmental Branch Manager or an equivalent designated environmental compliance lead will initiate consultation and work with the MLD on the respectful treatment and disposition of the remains. Further provisions of PRC 5097.98 are to be followed as applicable.
- High visibility fencing shall be used to delineate an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) to protect any discovered cultural resource or potentially sensitive cultural resource site in its entirety. A qualified archaeologist shall be consulted for the appropriate dimensions and placement of the ESA.
- Recommendations for appropriate treatment of tribal cultural resources shall be identified through the consultation process with interested tribes, including the Manzanita Band of the Kumeyaay Nation and the Viejas Tribal Government. Native American monitors shall be present during construction activities that involve ground disturbance. Coordination with tribal representatives shall be required in the event that potentially significant resources are discovered to determine the appropriate treatment methods. Buffer zones around significant tribal cultural resources would be delineated using ESA fencing to the satisfaction of tribal monitors.

### ***Hazardous Materials***

- Additional soil and groundwater sampling shall be completed in discrete locations within the project limits in coordination with Caltrans District 11 Environmental

Engineering. Sampling shall be completed prior to construction to further define the limits of any contaminants to protect human health and the environment during construction activities. All testing, treatment, and disposal shall occur in accordance with Caltrans Standard Specifications and/or SSPs. All testing results shall be made part of the project record and provided to the construction contractor as early as feasible.

Additionally, the following standardized measures would be implemented by the project to avoid or minimize effects from hazardous waste/materials:

- A Lead Compliance Plan under Caltrans Standard Specification 7-1.02K(6)(j)(ii) would be required during construction when handling lead contaminated soils, as well as removal of lead-based paint, thermoplastic, painted traffic stripe, and/or pavement marking.
- As project lead for the Vesta Street Bridge (EA 11-43105) component of the proposed project, Caltrans is designated as the generator of hazardous waste produced from work activities per Caltrans' Standard Specification 14-11.07.
- As project lead for the Harbor Drive 2.0 (EA 11-43131) component of the proposed project, SANDAG is designated as the generator of hazardous waste produced from work activities.
- An Excavation and Transportation Plan (ETP) is required, for the Vesta Street Bridge (EA 11-43105) component of the proposed project, under Caltrans' Standard Special Provision (SSP) 14-11.08 for all regulated ADL soils.
- The ADL Agreement between Caltrans and Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) is applicable only to Vesta Street Bridge component of the proposed project (EA 11-43105) where Caltrans is designated as the generator of hazardous waste and will be required to follow all SSP 14-11.08 requirements including notification to DTSC. Regulated, hazardous ADL material on Harbor Drive 2.0 Project (EA 11-43131) will be excavated and disposed of as hazardous waste at a Class 1 disposal facility (not including DTSC notifications specified per 14-11.08)
- For hazardous waste generated on the job site, the Water Pollution Control (WPC) manager must be knowledgeable of proper handling and emergency procedures for hazardous waste as demonstrated by submitting a training certificate which indicates completion of training required under 22 CA Code of Regulations § 66265.16, as per Caltrans' Standard Specification 14-11.01.
- The construction contractor, upon discovery of unanticipated asbestos and/or hazardous substance, is required to immediately stop working in the area of discovery and notify Caltrans' Environmental Engineering per Caltrans' Standard Specification 14-11.02. Environmental Engineering will use on-call Construction Emergency Response Contract to perform any required work.

- The construction contractor is required, per Caltrans' Standard Specification 14-11.03, to handle, store, and dispose of hazardous waste under 22 CA Code of Regs Div. 4.5.
- Excavation, transportation, and handling of material containing hazardous waste or contamination must result in no visible dust migration. When clearing, grubbing, and performing earthwork operations in areas containing hazardous waste or contamination, at water truck or water tank must be provided on the job site per Caltrans' Standard Specification 14-11.04.
- The construction contractor is not permitted to stockpile material containing hazardous waste or contamination unless ordered. Stockpiles containing hazardous waste or contamination must not be placed where affected by surface run-on or run-off. Stockpiles are not permitted in environmentally sensitive areas (ESAs). Stockpiled material must not enter storm drains, inlets, or waters of the State. These requirements are provided in Caltrans' Standard Specification 14-11.05.
- The construction contractor is designated the generator of hazardous waste produced from materials the construction contractor has brought to the job site per Caltrans' Standard Specification 14-11.06.
- Removal of any treated wood waste (TWW) (e.g., wooden posts for guardrails, signs, barriers, or piles) would require proper handling and disposal per Caltrans' Standard Special Provision 14-11.14. TWW products contain hazardous chemical preservatives, therefore, TWW is considered a California Hazardous Waste.
- Imported local materials from either a (1) noncommercial source, or (2) source not regulated under California jurisdiction, must be evaluated and approved for use by Environmental Engineering Branch per Caltrans Standard Specification 6-1.03B.

### ***Air Quality***

- The construction contractor must comply with the San Diego Air Pollution Control District (SDAPCD) Rule 55 and Caltrans' Standard Specifications (14-9). Section 14-9 includes specifications requiring compliance with applicable laws and regulations related to air quality, including air pollution control district, and air quality management district regulations and local ordinances. Per Section 14-9, waste or material generated from construction activities would not be disposed of by burning.
- Water or dust palliative would be applied to the site and equipment as often as necessary to control fugitive dust emissions. Fugitive emissions generally must meet a "no visible dust" criterion either at the point of emissions or at the right-of-way line, depending on local regulations.

- Construction equipment and vehicles would be properly tuned and maintained, and would use low sulfur fuel as required by California Code of Regulations Title 17, Section 93114.
- To the extent feasible, construction traffic would be scheduled and routed to reduce congestion and related air quality impacts caused by idling vehicles along local roads during peak travel times.
- The construction contractor shall utilize alternative fuels such as renewable diesel for construction equipment when feasible.
- The contractor shall implement an idling limit of 5 minutes for delivery trucks and other diesel-powered equipment (with some exceptions).
- The contractor shall encourage improved fuel efficiency from construction equipment through ensuring that construction equipment is maintained and properly tuned and equipment has been correctly sized for the job.
- The contractor shall utilize construction equipment equipped with engines rated Tier 4 Interim or Tier 4 Final for off-road diesel-fueled vehicles.

### ***Noise and Vibration***

- All equipment shall have sound-control devices no less effective than those provided on the original equipment. Each internal combustion engine used for any purpose on the job or related to the job shall be equipped with a muffler of a type recommended by the manufacturer. No internal combustion engine shall be operated on the job site without an appropriate muffler.
- Construction methods or equipment that will provide the lowest level of noise impact (e.g., avoid impact pile driving near residences and consider alternative methods that are also suitable for the soil condition) shall be used.
- Idling equipment shall be turned off.
- Newer equipment with improved noise muffling shall be used, and all equipment items shall have the manufacturers' recommended noise-abatement measures (e.g., mufflers, engine covers, and engine vibration isolators) intact and operational. Newer equipment will generally be quieter in operation than older equipment. All construction equipment shall be inspected at periodic intervals to ensure proper maintenance and presence of noise-control devices (e.g., mufflers and shrouding).
- Restrict the hours of vibration-intensive equipment or activities such as vibratory rollers so that impacts to residents are minimal (e.g., weekdays during daytime hours only when as many residents as possible are away from home).

- The owner of a building close enough to a construction vibration source that damage to that structure due to vibration is possible would be entitled to a preconstruction building inspection to document the preconstruction condition of that structure.
- Conduct vibration monitoring during vibration-intensive activities. Cease construction activities in the event that potential structural damage is observed and evaluate remedial measures prior to commencement of vibration-intensive activities.

### ***Natural Communities***

- Freshwater habitat outside of the construction area will be designated as an environmentally sensitive area (ESA) on the project plans and protected by installing temporary ESA fencing.
- All equipment maintenance, staging, and dispensing of fuel oil, coolant, or any other such activities will be outside of areas with freshwater habitat. Any debris or runoff from construction will be directed away from freshwater habitat.
- Appropriate erosion and siltation controls will be installed prior to construction and maintained until construction completion.
- Impacts from fugitive dust will be avoided and minimized through watering, monitoring, and other appropriate measures.
- The project site will be kept as clean of debris as possible.

### ***Wetlands and Other Waters***

- The temporary construction staging areas, access roads, and equipment storage shall be strategically placed at a minimum of 100 feet from jurisdictional waters to avoid impacts.
- The jurisdictional water features outside of the work areas shall be designated as an environmentally sensitive area (ESA) on the project plans.
- The Project Biologist will determine if the ESA needs to be temporarily fenced using ESA fencing or lath with flagging tape to exclude construction activities from the area. The Project Biologist will be onsite during the staking to identify the boundaries of the jurisdictional waters and shall supervise the placement of ESA exclusion fencing. The temporary fences around the ESAs, if needed, shall be installed as the first order of work. The locations of the ESA exclusion fence will be documented on construction maps.

### ***Animal Species***

- If shrub or tree removal is to take place during the nesting season, a pre-construction nesting bird survey shall be conducted within 7 days of these activities.
- A no-disturbance buffer shall be established around any active nest or nesting pair territory to limit the impacts of construction activities. The buffer shall not be removed until after the nesting season or until after a qualified wildlife biologist determines that the young have fledged (usually late June to mid-July). The extent of these buffers shall be determined by the biologist (in coordination with USFWS and CDFW) and will depend on the level of noise or construction disturbance, line-of-sight between the nest and the disturbance, ambient levels of noise and other disturbances, and other topographical or artificial barriers. Suitable buffer distances may vary between species but is typically 100 feet.

### ***Invasive Species***

- Special care will be taken during transport, use, and disposal of soils containing invasive weed seeds. Seed heads will be bagged, and all invasive species will be either sprayed or removed and properly disposed of to prevent spread into areas outside of the construction area.
- Erosion control measures for the project shall be designed to prevent the spread of invasive plant species.
- Landscaping designs for the project shall not contain invasive species in the plant selections or seed mixtures.

## **Appendix C List of Technical Studies**

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The following studies and/or technical analyses have been prepared and are incorporated by reference into this Initial Study/Environmental Assessment and can be located at:

Caltrans District 11 Office at 4050 Taylor Street, MS 242, San Diego, CA 92110

AECOM. 2023. Historic Resources Evaluation Report – State Route-15, Vesta Street, and Harbor Drive Improvements Project. City of San Diego, San Diego County, California.

Please note, many state and federal laws limit the disclosure of sensitive cultural and tribal resource information to the public. Additional information regarding confidentiality of these resources can be found in the Standard Environmental Reference Volume 2 in Section 3.4.13 and Section 5.3.6.

Caltrans. 2021. Paleontological Resource Assessment for the Vesta Street Drive/Harbor Drive Operational Improvement Project in San Diego County.

Caltrans. 2023c. Memorandum – Hazardous Materials Review of 32nd Street and Vesta Street Improvements Project.

Caltrans. 2023d. Memorandum – Hazardous Materials Review of Harbor Drive 2.0 Project.

Caltrans. 2023e. Memorandum – Noise Review of Project 11-43131, Harbor Drive 2.0.

Caltrans. 2023f. Natural Environment Study (Minimal Impacts) – San Diego Interstate 5 and State Route 15 – Harbor Drive 2.0 and Vesta Street Bridge.

Estrada Land Planning. 2023. Visual Impact Assessment: Harbor Drive 2.0/Vesta Street Bridge Port Access Improvements Project.

Fugro. 2023a. Preliminary Foundation Report for Vesta Street Bridge.

Fugro. 2023b. Preliminary Foundation Report for Vesta Street Retaining Walls.

Fugro. 2023c. Preliminary Geotechnical Design Report for Harbor Drive 2.0.

Jacobs. 2022. SR 15 Operational Improvements / Vesta Street / Harbor Drive – Traffic Engineering Study and Analysis.

Jacobs. 2023. I-5 Freeway Access Project – Draft Traffic Engineering Study and Analysis.

Kleinfelder. 2023a. Site Investigation Report – State Route 15/Vesta Street Operational Improvements.

Kleinfelder. 2023b. Aerially Deposited Lead Study Report for Interstate 5/Harbor Drive Connected Corridor.

Kleinfelder. 2023c. Draft Site Investigation Report – Harbor Drive 2.0 Connected Corridor.

PANGIS. 2023. Archaeological Survey Report for the State Route-15, Vesta Street, and Harbor Drive Improvements Project, City of San Diego, San Diego County, California.

Parsons 2022. Final Noise Study Report – State Route 15 Operational Improvements/Vesta Street Bridge Project.