

**DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
SAN DIEGO CLEAN FUELS FACILITY LLC PROJECT**

November 2024

Lead Agency:



**City of National City
1243 National City Boulevard
National City, California 91950**

Prepared for:

**USD Clean Fuels
811 Main Street, Suite 2800
Houston, Texas 77002**

Prepared by:



ECORP Consulting, Inc.
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS

**ECORP Consulting, Inc.
3838 Camino del Rio North, Suite 370
San Diego, California 92108**

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Term	Description
µg/m ³	micrograms per cubic meter
AB	Assembly Bill
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ADT	average daily trips
ANSI	American National Standards Institute
AT&SF	Atchison, Topeka, & Santa Fe
BMPs	Best Management Practices
BNSF	Burlington Northern Santa Fe
BSA	Biological Study Area
CAA	Clean Air Act
CAAQS	California Ambient Air Quality Standards
CalEEMod	California Emissions Estimator Model
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CAP	Climate Action Plan
CAPCOA	California Air Pollution Control Offices Association
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CACA	Corrective Action Consent Agreement
CAISO	California Independent System Operator
CALGreen	California Green Building Standards Code
CAP	Climate Action Plan
CBC	California Building Code
CCA	California Coastal Act
CCAA	California Clean Air Act
CCC	California Coastal Commission
CCR	California Code of Regulations
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CEC	California Energy Commission
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act
CERP	Community Emissions Reduction Plan
CH ₄	methane

Term	Description
CHRIS	California Historical Research Information System
City	City of National City
CNDDDB	California Natural Diversity Database
CNEL	Community Noise Equivalent Level
CNPS	California Native Plant Society
CNPSEI	California Native Plant Society's Electronic Inventory
CO	carbon monoxide
CO ₂	carbon dioxide
CO ₂ e	carbon dioxide equivalent
County	San Diego County
CPUC	California Public Utilities Commission
CRHR	California Register of Historic Places
CRPR	California Rare Plant Rank
CUP	Conditional Use Permit
CURA	CURA Environmental and Emergency Services
CWA	Clean Water Act
CZMA	Coastal Zone Management Act
CZMP	Coastal Zone Management Program
DA	Delineation Area
dB	decibel
dBA	A-weighted decibel
DEIR	Draft EIR
DGS	California Department of General Services
DOT	U.S. Department of Transportation
DPM	diesel particulate matter
DTSC	Department of Toxic Substances Control
EIR	Environmental Impact Report
EMFAC	Emission Factor
EO	Executive Order
ERP	Emergency Response Plan
ESA	Environmental Species Act
EV	electric vehicle
FGC	Fish and Game Code
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration

Term	Description
FICON	Federal Interagency Committee on Noise
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
FR	Federal Register
FRP	Facility Response Plan
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GHG	greenhouse gas
GNSS	Global Navigation Satellite System
GPS	Global Positioning System
HCP	Habitat Conservation Plan
HRA	Health Risk Assessment
HVAC	Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning
Hz	hertz
I	Interstate
ICCT	International Council on Clean Transportation
IC/QI	Emergency Coordinator
IEPR	Integrated Energy Policy Report
IMW	Interim Measures Workplan
IPaC	Information for Planning and Consultation
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
ISE	Imminent and Substantial Endangerment
ITE	Institute of Traffic Engineers
kg	kilogram
kv	kilovolts
kWh	kilowatt-hours
L _{dn}	Day-Night Average Noise Level
L _{eq}	Equivalent Noise Level
LCFS	Low Carbon Fuel Standard
LCP	Local Coastal Program
LOS	level of service
LTS	Less than Significant
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
MCAS	Maritime Clean Air Strategy
MEIR	Maximumly Exposed Individual Resident
MEIW	Maximumly Exposed Individual Worker

Term	Description
mg/kg	milligrams per kilograms
mph	miles per hour
MTS	Metropolitan Transit System
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission
NCFD	National City Fire Department
NI	No Impact
NIOSH	National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health
N ₂ O	nitrous oxide
NO _x	nitrogen oxides
NO ₂	nitrogen dioxide
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NOE	Notice of Exemption
NOP	Notice of Preparation
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NPPA	Native Plant Protection Act
NREL	National Renewable Energy Laboratory
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
O ₃	ozone
OEHHA	Office of Environment Health Hazard Assessment
OHV	off-highway vehicle
OHWM	ordinary high-water mark
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
PCBs	polychlorinated biphenyls
PEX	Plastic Express
PM _{2.5}	particulate matter less than 2.5 microns in diameter
PM ₁₀	particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter
ppm	parts per million
PPV	peak particle velocity
PRC	Public Resources Code
PS	Potentially Significant
PSI	Pacific Steel Incorporated
RAQS	Regional Air Quality Strategy
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act

Term	Description
REL	Reference Exposure Level
RES	Regional Energy Strategy
RHA	Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899
ROG	reactive organic gases
ROW	right-of-way
RTP	Regional Transportation Plan
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
SAA	Streambed Alteration Agreement
SAF	sustainable aviation fuel
SANDAG	San Diego Association of Governments
SB	Senate Bill
SCAQMD	South Coast Air Quality Management District
SCS	Sustainable Communities Strategy
SDAB	San Diego Air Basin
SDAPCD	San Diego Air Pollution Control District
SDG&E	San Diego Gas & Electric
SEMARNAT	Secretariat of Environmental and Natural Resources
SIP	State Implementation Plan
SO ₂	sulfur dioxide
SO _x	sulfur oxides
SPCC	Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasure
SR	State Route
SSC	Species of Special Concern
SSL	site screening level
STANTEC	San Diego Traffic Engineers' Council
STC	Sound Transmission Class
SU	Significant and Unavoidable
SWPPP	Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
TAC	toxic air contaminants
T-BACT	Toxics Best Available Control Technology
TCR	tribal cultural resource
THC	total hydrocarbons
TIF	Transportation Impact Fee

Term	Description
TNW	Traditional Navigable Waters
TSCA	Toxic Substances Control Act of 1976
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
USD-CF	USD Clean Fuels
USEPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey
UTM	Universal Transverse Mercator
VMT	vehicle miles traveled
VOC	volatile organic compounds
ZEV	zero emission vehicle

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This section will include a brief description of the need for action, alternatives, a summary table, which lists all the potential impacts identified in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) by topic, along with the corresponding mitigation measures and the level of significance after mitigation, and a description of the decision to be made.

1.1 Introduction

This summary provides a synopsis of the Draft EIR (DEIR) prepared for the San Diego Clean Fuels Facility LLC Project (Project) in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The City of National City (City) is the CEQA Lead Agency for the EIR and, as such, has the primary responsibility for evaluating the environmental effects for the Proposed Project and considering whether to approve the Proposed Project in light of these effects.

As required by CEQA, this DEIR:

- (1) describes the Proposed Project, including its location, objectives, and features;
- (2) describes the existing conditions at the Project Area and nearby environs;
- (3) analyzes the direct, indirect, and cumulative adverse physical effects that would occur on existing conditions should the Proposed Project be implemented;
- (4) identifies feasible means of avoiding or substantially lessening the significant adverse effects of the Proposed Project;
- (5) provides a determination of significance for each impact after mitigation is incorporated; and
- (6) evaluates a reasonable range of feasible alternatives to the Proposed Project that would meet the basic project objectives and reduce a project-related significant impact.

This Executive Summary covers the following topics:

- (1) Project Description;
- (2) Areas of Controversy/Issues Raised by Agencies and the Public; and
- (3) Issues to Be Resolved, including significant environmental effects and the consideration of alternatives to the Proposed Project.

This DEIR and its appendices are available for review on the City's website at <https://www.nationalcityca.gov/government/community-development/planning/current-projects>. In addition, a hardcopy is available for review by the public during City business hours at 1243 National City Boulevard, 1st Floor, National City, CA 91950.

1.2 Project Location and Setting

The Proposed Project is located in San Diego County (County) in the City of National City. The Project Area is located between the existing buildings along Cleveland Avenue and the existing Burlington Northern & Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway tracks and between Civic Center Drive and West 19th Street. The Project Area is approximately 7.5 acres and is primarily unimproved and undeveloped. The site address is 830 West 18th Street.

The Proposed Project is located within the Medium Manufacturing (MM) and Heavy Manufacturing Zones and has a land use designation of Industrial within the Coastal Zone overlay. Additionally, the Project consists of construction within the BNSF Railway right-of-way (ROW) on adjacent private property. The Proposed Project is a conditional use under the Medium/Heavy Manufacturing Zone; therefore, a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) is required for the Project. The Project Area is also located in the Coastal Zone, which requires a Coastal Development Permit. The Project Area is surrounded to the north, east, and south by Industrial land use designations and by Marine Related Industrial to the west, as described in Table ES-1.

Table ES-1. Surrounding Land Uses			
	Land Use Designation	Zoning Designation	Existing Land Use
Project Area	Industrial	MM – Medium Manufacturing; MH – Heavy Manufacturing	Vacant Lot, Pacific Steel, Railroad
North	Industrial	MH – Heavy Manufacturing	Warehouses
East	Industrial	MM – Medium Manufacturing	Industrial Businesses
South	Industrial	M – Military	Industrial Businesses
West	Military	Military	Naval Base San Diego

Source: City of National City 2008, 2024a

1.3 Project Background

In the current supply chain, fuel for the San Diego market is transported over 100 miles via trucks from the Los Angeles-Inland Empire region to serve the area. With this Project, the fuel will be delivered via truck to local retailers within a 35-mile radius.

The citizens of California, through the California Legislature and the Governor’s executive branch, have set the requirements for California air quality and the programs and tools for achieving those requirements. The California Low Carbon Fuel Standard (LCFS) is transforming the entire transportation sector in the state, including demand for biodiesel, renewable diesel, low carbon ethanol, electric vehicles (EVs), renewable natural gas, E85 higher ethanol blends, sustainable aviation fuels, among others. By maximizing contributions of all these renewable fuels, studies have concluded that greater carbon emission reductions are achievable.

The San Diego Clean Fuels Project contributes to carbon emissions reductions by:

- delivering lower emissions via fewer fuel transit truck miles and cleaner fuels sooner than the current supply chain;
- leveraging lower emissions rail transit to replace longer truck trips;
- replacing existing longer distance truck trips with shorter distance local deliveries;
- minimizing impacts from construction by locating the facility on existing BNSF railroad property;
- reducing the State's reliance on fossil-based diesel fuel;
- increasing the sustainability of the critical transportation sector by reducing its emissions footprint;
- expanding the availability of renewable fuels, offering lower emission fuels to California's construction, industrial, and agricultural industries and the public, and
- solving geographic imbalances in availability of cleaner, lower carbon fuels.

The method for transportation fuels that will most quickly and effectively achieve the State's goals is utilizing an *all of the above* strategy with a balance of technological and sustainable solutions, as opposed to an *either/or* approach that will delay the air quality benefits for the citizens of California. Using an *all of the above* approach to the LCFS allows advanced biofuels (renewable diesel, low carbon ethanol, biodiesel, etc.) to complement EV and zero emission vehicle (ZEV) adoption. Further, availability of advanced biofuels products will impact sectors that are difficult to electrify in the near/intermediate term. The proposed biofuels are not displacing EV's or delaying ZEV adoption, but delivering lower emission benefits that are available and proven.

The current LCFS policy is law and CARB continues to strengthen the standard (which increases demand for lower emission fuels). Projects like the one proposed are needed to meet the LCFS standards. BNSF Railway and San Diego Clean Fuels, LLC are committed to serving the San Diego market with strategic, safe, and sustainable solutions.

1.3.1 Site History

The Project Area is located in an area that consisted of portions of blocks 274 and 275 in National City and, west of Harrison (formerly 9th) Avenue, the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe (AT&SF) railroad grounds. The western boundary of the Project Area are the tracks of the Coronado Railroad, also called the *Belt Line*, built in 1888 by John D. Spreckels, a San Diego civic leader and builder of Hotel Coronado.

In 1951, the Samuel Vener Company of Los Angeles built a celery packing shed at 1840 Harrison Avenue, on the AT&SF grounds immediately north of 18th Street, between the Coronado Railroad tracks to the west and Harrison Avenue to the east. The packing shed received fresh celery trucked in from nearby farms.

Pacific Steel Incorporated (PSI), BNSF's former lessee, currently operates a metal recycling facility at a facility located adjacent and east of the Project Area. PSI has leased this property and the eastern adjacent

property (Assessor's Parcel Number [APN] 559-040-52) from BNSF since 1981. This property was used by PSI as an auto shredder waste storage area from 1981 to about 1992. The Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) issued a Cleanup and Abatement Order to PSI in 1987 in response to discharges of contaminant water into the storm drain system, leading to the installation of four groundwater monitoring wells. After auto shredding operations ceased in 1992, the waste pile was removed and disposed offsite and the soil beneath the pile was excavated and stored in stockpiles onsite. A portion of the stockpiles remained onsite until 2002 (Group Delta 2021).

In 2002, the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) issued PSI an Imminent and Substantial Endangerment (ISE) Order after finding heavy metals such as lead, zinc, copper, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and used oils in the soil (DTSC 2002). The ISE Order required immediate corrective action and submittal of a workplan to investigate the contamination releases. The RWQCB then transferred the regulatory lead for the investigation and remediation to DTSC, stating that it would consider rescinding the Order if DTSC became lead agency.

Following a Baseline Assessment Report prepared in 2004, PSI entered into a Corrective Action Consent Agreement (CACA) with DTSC for the aforementioned parcels. The CACA directed several phases of work to be completed on the property, including removal of large stockpiles of soil mixed with metal debris and remedial soil excavation. As of 2019, a portion of these activities had been completed, most notably the large stockpiles.

In 2010, SCS Engineers prepared a Stockpile Sampling Report, which, based on lead concentrations, identified soil stockpile PSI-1 as Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) hazardous waste for disposal purposes. Other stockpiles were considered non-RCRA hazardous waste.

By 2014, PSI successfully transported and recycled approximately 27,000 tons of non-RCRA excavated soil from the property to its steel mill located in Mexicali, Mexico. The remaining work to complete remediation was to prepare and implement a workplan to identify additional areas of excavation and to transport the last remaining soil pile (approximately 8,000 cubic yards) from the property (Group Delta 2021). PSI was unable to secure authorization from Mexico's Secretariat of Environmental and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT) to transport the remaining RCRA hazardous waste (PS-1) to Mexico and as a result, shipped the aforementioned waste to a Class I landfill in Buttonwillow, California in 2015 (*People v. Pacific Steel, Inc.* 2015).

On January 11, 2016, DTSC and PSI entered into a Stipulation for Entry of Final Judgement and Order for the adjoining PSI properties. The Stipulation and Final Judgement ordered PSI to conduct soil sampling for heavy metals around the perimeter of the location where the RCRA Hazardous Waste soil pile was located and to remove any residual contaminated soil in a manner consistent with their 2015 Draft Stockpile Removal Workplan (Group Delta 2021).

The Interim Measures Workplan – BNSF Railway Property (IMW) was approved by DTSC in 2021 for the remediation site pursuant to the CACA executed in 2004 between DTSC and PSI. The proposed cleanup goals of the IMW are to remove metals and PCB-impacted soils previously identified in the BNSF facility to eliminate the risk to human health and the environment posed by impacted surface soils. The extent of soil removal will be contingent on the results of confirmation samples. Soils will be removed until the

detection of metals and PCBs are below the proposed cleanup levels and commercial risk screening level, respectively. The implementation of the IMW will conclude the cleanup efforts on the BNSF property. The cleanup measures to be conducted will reduce or eliminate the potential risks to the environment and surrounding neighborhood posed by the impacted soils at the BNSF property.

On May 31, 2022, the DTSC filed a Notice of Exemption (NOE) to comply with the CEQA as part of the approval process for the IMW. The DTSC determined that the IMW is exempt from CEQA under California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 14, Section 15330 *Minor Actions Taken to Prevent, Minimize, Stabilize, Mitigate, or Eliminate the Release or Threat of Release of Hazardous Waste or Hazardous Substance*. Remediation of the BNSF property under the IMW consists of the removal of metals- and PCB-impacted soils resulting from past metals recycling operations by PSI at the northwestern portion of the site, which is leased from BNSF. Approximately 8,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil will be excavated and disposed of offsite at a permitted landfill (i.e., Copper Mountain Landfill, Arizona). Clean fill will be imported to return the site to level grade. A land use covenant restricting future land uses to commercial/industrial uses will be recorded with the County Recorder's Office after completion of soil excavation and disposal activities. Excavation activities will require approximately 600 truckloads (between seven and eight trucks per day) over an approximate 3-month period to export the contaminated soils to a landfill. To return the Site to level grade, approximately 20,370 cubic yards of fill will be required which will require approximately 2,037 truckloads (between 22 and 23 trucks per day) over the same 3-month period. Even though implementation of the project will require a large number of truck trips, the trucks will travel exclusively through an industrial area for a short distance (0.5-mile) to reach Interstate 5 (I-5), which is the major thoroughway for the Project Area.

To control soil erosion, areas of cleanup activities will be wetted down on an as-needed basis. In addition, a 25-foot-tall dust screen covers the entire eastern side of the property fronting Cleveland Avenue, which is downwind based on prevailing winds in the area. The screen is made of a fine wet mesh designed to collect fine particles and was originally State of California – California Environmental Protection Agency Department of Toxic Substances Control 2 installed during the period when the facility was still conducting auto shredding. The dust screen will reduce or eliminate windblown dust from leaving the Site. Soil excavation and stockpile management activities will also be required to be conducted in accordance with the County of San Diego Air Pollution Control District Fugitive Dust Control, which restricts the discharge of visible dust emissions.

A Remedial Action Completion Report (TRC 2023) dated September 13, 2023, was submitted to DTSC documenting BNSF's Voluntary Agreement and actions taken to remediate the property in accordance with the 2004 CACA. Conclusions presented in the report identified that impacted soils on the site were successfully removed and restoration of the site to the final grade was completed.

Figure 2 shows the portion of the Project Area that has undergone site remediation.

1.4 Description of Proposed Project

The new San Diego Clean Fuels Facility will reconfigure one existing rail spur and add truck loading spots to transload clean renewable and biofuels (renewable diesel, ethanol, and sustainable aviation fuel [SAF]) directly from rail cars into trucks. The delivered fuels will remain in the rail cars until they are transloaded.

No stationary above- or below-ground fuel storage tanks are included as part of the Project. Each truck loading spot will consist of a pump skid, controls, and an above ground manifold system with piping between the belly of the rail cars and the bottom loading port of the truck. Small amounts of lubricity, conductivity, and red dye will be added in-line to renewable diesel fuels during the transload process depending on customer specifications. The lubricity, conductivity, and red dye would be stored onsite in three 330-gallon totes. The rail car unloading and truck loading areas will be equipped with a 37,700-gallon concrete containment basin capable of containing the contents of 110 percent of an entire rail car volume. A Facility Response Plan (FRP) will be developed and implemented to address and/or manage potential spills or emergency events onsite. Additionally, an Aqueous Film Forming Foam Fluorine Free Firefighting platform with additional fire hydrants will be positioned onsite to use in case of fire. This firefighting platform will also be available for use by the City's fire department to address and respond to hazards and emergencies within this core industrial area.

Rail cars will be delivered to the facility by the adjacent BNSF Railway and placed directly on designated receiving tracks. Normal maximum capacity will be 21 rail cars that hold a total of approximately 630,000 gallons of product. Normal total daily throughput when the facility is operating will be approximately 579,600 gallons per day. Once the rail cars have been delivered by BNSF Railway, the cars will be switched and spotted for transloading by Plastic Express (PEX), the commercial operator of the facility. After completing the quality and quantity assurance requirements for the product in each rail car, facility operators will unload the fuel commodities directly from the rail cars into trucks via a short above ground manifold system. The transfer volume will be approximately 13,800 barrels of fuel per day or 402 gallons per minute. Once emptied, the railroad will remove and replace cars with full ones as needed.

The proposed transloading facility consists of the following improvements:

- Build tracks and turnouts/crossovers to facilitate car movement in/out and within the transload facility.
- Install concrete slab pump pads at each transload spot.
- Install truck load slabs sloped to a drain in the center at each transload spot.
- Install pumps and piping to move fuels from rail cars to truck loading spots.
- Provide containment enclosures for additive totes.
- Provide a concrete lined containment basin and pipe each load slab drain to the basin.
- Provide track pans for containment at the rail transloading cars.
- Provide an office trailer with control center, restrooms, and driver check-in area.
- Provide all weather paving for the facility and circulation.
- Provide lighting for the site as needed.

The Proposed Project would also provide infrastructure improvements at the Civic Center Drive rail crossing, which include improved rail crossing sign visibility, traffic direction control, and crosswalks. These

improvements enhance the area for the purposes of the Project by providing offsite adjacent improvements and improve safety at the BNSF crossing for vehicles and pedestrians.

The facility is expected to receive approximately 72 trucks per day entering on 18th Street and exiting the facility on West 19th Street and on to their retail client deliveries. A second rail line will be added at the existing grade crossing on Civic Center Drive to facilitate rail car movements. Approximately 70 percent of truck trips will occur between 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. to avoid peak traffic periods.

1.5 Areas of Controversy

Section 15123 of the State CEQA Guidelines requires the summary of an EIR to include areas of controversy known to the Lead Agency, including issues raised by agencies and the public. The City prepared and distributed an Initial Study (IS) and Notice of Preparation (NOP), in accordance with Section 15082 of the State CEQA Guidelines. The 30-day public review period for public agencies, organizations, and interested individuals to review and comment on the IS/NOP began on May 10, 2024, and ended on June 10, 2024. The City also held a public scoping meeting on May 23, 2024 at the National City Public Library. The IS/NOP is included as Appendix A of this DEIR.

During this scoping period, 27 comment cards and 11 comment letters were received. The primary issues raised were in regard to air quality; greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions; hazards and hazardous materials; noise; and transportation. A summary of all comments received is included in Table 1-1 of Chapter 1.0 Introduction, and all comment cards and comment letters are included in Appendix A of this DEIR.

1.6 Project Alternatives

To fully evaluate the environmental effects of projects, CEQA mandates that alternatives to the project be analyzed. Section 15126.6 of the CEQA Guidelines requires the discussion of “a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, which would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project” and the evaluation of the comparative merits of the alternatives. The alternatives discussion is intended to “focus on alternatives to the project or its location which are capable of avoiding or substantially lessening any significant effects of the project,” even if these alternatives would impede to some degree the attainment of the project objectives.

The following alternatives are analyzed in detail in Chapter 5.0 Alternatives. The primary purpose of the alternatives analysis is to consider and analyze a reasonable range of feasible alternatives in sufficient detail to foster informed decision-making and public participation in the environmental review process. The alternatives to the Proposed Project are summarized below.

1.6.1 Alternative 1 – No Project

The No Project Alternative is required by CEQA to discuss and analyze potential impacts that would occur if the project were not implemented. Under the No Project Alternative, the Project Area would maintain in its current state and remain largely vacant and undeveloped.

1.6.2 *Alternative 2 – Reduced Intensity*

With the intent of reducing the number of Project truck trips, the City has considered a Reduced Intensity Alternative. Under this alternative, the transloading facility would transfer approximately 25 percent fewer barrels of fuel per day as compared with the Proposed Project.

1.6.3 *Alternative 3 – Offsite Location Within National City*

A potential offsite location for the transloading facility would be south of the Proposed Project on a 6.07-acre parcel east of I-5 and the BNSF rail line at 3202 Hoover Avenue within National City.

1.7 Issues to be Resolved by the Lead Agency

This DEIR examines the potential environmental effects of the Proposed Project, including information related to existing site conditions, analyses of the types and magnitude of individual and cumulative environmental impacts, and feasible mitigation measures that could reduce or avoid environmental impacts. In accordance with Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, the potential environmental effects of the Proposed Project were analyzed for the following areas:

- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Energy
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources

1.8 Summary of Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15063, the City prepared an Initial Study Environmental Checklist that determined that effects related to aesthetics, agriculture and forestry resources, energy, geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, utilities and service systems, and wildfire would have a less than significant impact or no impact. Effects related to cultural resources, greenhouse gas emissions, and tribal cultural resources would have a less than significant impact with the implementation of the following mitigation measures:

CUL-1: *Archaeological Monitoring.* A qualified professional archaeologist, meeting or working under the direction of someone meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Professional

Qualifications Standards for prehistoric and historic archaeology should be retained to monitor all ground-disturbing activities associated with Project construction, including vegetation removal, clearing, grading, trenching, excavation, or other activities that will disturb original (pre-project) ground. The monitor must have the authority to temporarily pause activity at the location in the event of an unanticipated discovery, so that he or she can direct the procedures in Section 6.3.3.

CUL-2: Native American Monitoring. A Native American monitor from a tribe that is traditionally and culturally affiliated with the Project Area should be retained to monitor all ground-disturbing activities associated with Project construction, including vegetation removal, clearing, grading, trenching, excavation, or other activities that will disturb original (pre-Project) ground. The Native American monitor should have the authority to temporarily pause activity at the location in the event of an unanticipated discovery, so that he or she can coordinate with the Project archaeologist on the identification of a potential cultural resource and the Project archaeologist can direct the procedures in the following section.

CUL-3: Post-Review Discovery Procedures. If subsurface deposits believed to be cultural or human in origin are discovered during construction, all work must halt within a 100-foot radius of the discovery. A qualified professional archaeologist, meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards for pre-contact and historic archaeology, shall be retained to evaluate the significance of the find, and shall have the authority to modify the no-work radius as appropriate, using professional judgment. The following notifications shall apply, depending on the nature of the find:

- If the professional archaeologist determines that the find does not represent a cultural resource, work may resume immediately, and no agency notifications are required.
- If the professional archaeologist determines that the find does represent a cultural resource from any time period or cultural affiliation, they shall immediately notify the City, and applicable landowner. The agencies shall consult on a finding of eligibility and implement appropriate treatment measures if the find is determined to be a Historical Resource under CEQA, as defined in Section 15064.5(a) of the CEQA Guidelines, or a Historic Property, as defined in 36 CFR 60.4. Work may not resume within the no-work radius until the lead agencies, through consultation as appropriate, determine that the site either: 1) is not a Historical Resource under CEQA or Section 106; or 2) that the treatment measures have been completed to their satisfaction.
- If the find includes human remains, or remains that are potentially human, they shall ensure reasonable protection measures are taken to protect the discovery from disturbance (AB 2641). The archaeologist shall notify the San Diego County Medical Examiner (per Section 7050.5 of the Health and Safety Code). The provisions of Section 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code, Section 5097.98 of the California PRC, and AB 2641 will be implemented. If the Medical Examiner

determines the remains are Native American and not the result of a crime scene, the Medical Examiner will notify the NAHC, which then will designate a Native American Most Likely Descendent (MLD) for the Project (Section 5097.98 of the PRC). The designated MLD will have 48 hours from the time access to the property is granted to make recommendations concerning treatment of the remains. If the landowner does not agree with the recommendations of the MLD, the NAHC may mediate (Section 5097.94 of the PRC). If no agreement is reached, the landowner must rebury the remains where they will not be further disturbed (Section 5097.98 of the PRC). This will also include either recording the site with the NAHC or the appropriate Information Center; using an open space or conservation zoning designation or easement; or recording a reinternment document with the county in which the property is located (AB 2641). Work may not resume within the no-work radius until the lead agencies, through consultation as appropriate, determine that the treatment measures have been completed to their satisfaction.

GHG-1: Adhere to National City's Climate Action Planning Reduction Measures

The Project shall implement the following applicable greenhouse gas-reducing measures, consistent with National City Climate Action Plan Update:

- Prior to issuance of a building permit, the Applicant shall demonstrate that the employee parking lot is electric vehicle ready (i.e., charging stations, preferred parking, etc.).
- Limit idling times for all employee and tanker truck vehicles, as well as construction equipment, to less than 5 minutes.
- Prior to issuance of a building permit, the Applicant shall demonstrate implementation of all applicable Nonresidential Voluntary Measures of the California Green Building Standards Code – Part 11, Title 24, California Code of Regulations (CalGreen) from the Planning and Design, Energy Efficiency, Water Efficiency and Conservation, and Material Conservation and Resource Efficiency Divisions (Appendix A5 of the 2022 California Green Building Standards Code). These measures shall include, but are not limited to, energy efficiency enhancements, water use reduction, sustainable building materials, improved indoor environmental quality, and waste management strategies.

Timing/Implementation: Prior to the issuance of occupancy permits

Monitoring/Enforcement: The National City Planning Division

It was determined in the IS that effects related to air quality, biological resources, energy, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, land use and planning, noise, transportation, and tribal cultural resources will be further evaluated in this EIR. The Initial Study Environmental Checklist is included as Appendix A of this EIR.

Table ES-2, presented below, provides a summary of the aforementioned environmental impacts that could result from the Proposed Project and feasible mitigation measures that would reduce or avoid the significant impacts. For each impact, Table ES-2 identifies the significance of the impact before mitigation, applicable mitigation measures, and the level of significance of the impact after the implementation of mitigation measures.

Table ES-2. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures				
Issue	Impact	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Significance After Mitigation
3.1 Air Quality				
Conflict with an Applicable Air Quality Plan	The Project would not exceed the short-term construction standards or long-term operational standards and in so doing would not violate any air quality standards. The Project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the Regional Air Quality Strategy, Portside Community Emissions Reduction Plan, or any other applicable air quality plans.	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS
Result in a Cumulatively Considerable Net Increase of a Criteria Pollutant	Emissions generated during Project construction and operation would not exceed the San Diego Air Pollution Control District's thresholds of significance for any criteria air pollutants. Therefore, criteria pollutant emissions generated during Project construction and operation would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the Project region is nonattainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard.	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS
Expose Sensitive Receptors to Substantial Pollutant Concentrations	The Proposed Project's emissions would not exceed any San Diego Air Pollution Control District thresholds for any criteria air pollutants during construction or operations. Toxic Air Contaminant emissions are considered negligible. Neither Project operations nor construction would result in a significant contribution to cancer risk in the community. Project impacts related to non-cancer risk (chronic and acute hazard index) do not exceed the significance threshold. The Proposed Project would not generate traffic volumes at any intersection of more than 100,000 vehicles per day (or 44,000 vehicles per day) and there is no likelihood of the Project traffic exceeding CO values.	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS

Table ES-2. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures				
Issue	Impact	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Significance After Mitigation
Create Objectionable Odors	The IS analyzed this topic and determined that the Project would not have any impacts. The Project would result in the transloading of biodiesel, SAF, and ethanol utilizing various mechanical equipment to transfer from rail car to truck. Offensive odors associated with fuels and additives mostly come from combustion of these fuels and the Project would not result in combustion of these fuels. Additionally, the Project is subject to SDAPCD Rule 51 (Public Nuisance) which prohibits emissions that cause injury, detriment, nuisance, or annoyance to any considerable number of persons or to the public; or which endanger the comfort, repose, health, or safety of any such persons or the public; or which cause injury or damage to business or property. No impact would occur, and no mitigation is required.	NI	No mitigation is required.	NI
3.2 Biological Resources				
Substantial Adverse Effect on any Candidate, Sensitive, or Special-Status Species	Direct impacts to Nuttall's acmispon may occur as a result of the Proposed Project in the form of mortality or injury due to ground-disturbing and vegetation removal activities within the Project Area. Impacts to Nuttall's acmispon would be less than significant with the implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-1. There is a low likelihood of ospreys nesting within the Project Area itself, however there is potential for nesting within the buffer of the Project Area and the bay nearby provides suitable foraging habitat. Therefore, this species could be indirectly impacted by development of the Proposed Project. Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-2 would reduce impacts to osprey and other special-status bird species to a less than significant level.	PS	BIO-1: Rare Plant Salvage. Prior to the start of construction activities, a qualified biologist shall salvage seed from the Nuttall's acmispon during the appropriate time of year (June to October), store under appropriate conditions, and coordinate donation of the seeds with a refuge and/or plant nursery (e.g., Sweetwater Marsh National Wildlife Refuge and Native West Nursery) that would apply seed within the refuge boundaries. Appropriate seed storage conditions are in a paper bag, placed in a dry location out of direct sunlight, away from moisture, ideally at 72 degrees Fahrenheit. Seed shall be collected from June to October 2024 and the subsequent spring (2025), provided that the plant is present and ready to seed.	LTS

Table ES-2. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Issue	Impact	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Significance After Mitigation
	The palm trees located within the Project Area and buffer may provide roosting habitats for bat species, particularly western yellow bat, an SSC species. These trees could function as maternity roost sites for this species. Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-3 would reduce impacts to bat species and maternity roosts to a less than significant level. If present, direct impacts to rare or special-status wildlife species may occur as a result of the Proposed Project in the form of mortality or injury due to ground-disturbing and vegetation removal activities within the Project Area. Indirect impacts to rare or special-status wildlife species may occur due to habitat degradation, edge effects, construction noise, and other associated construction activities if present in the areas adjacent to the Project Area. Impacts to special-status wildlife species would be less than significant with the implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-2 and BIO-3. The vegetation within the Proposed Project and infrastructure adjacent to the Project Area could provide nesting habitat for nesting birds and raptors and also provide foraging habitat for songbird and raptor species. Ground-disturbing construction activities could directly affect protected birds and their nests through the removal of habitat on the Proposed Project, and indirectly through increased noise, ground vibrations, and increased human activity. Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-2 would reduce impacts to a less than significant level.		BIO-2: Pre-Construction Survey for Nesting Birds and Special-Status Avian Species. Where feasible, ground-disturbing activities, including vegetation removal, shall be conducted during the non-breeding season (approximately September 1 through January 14) to avoid violations of the MBTA and California Fish and Game Code §§ 3503, 3503.5 and 3513. Several species identified as having potential to nest year-round; therefore, regardless of time of year, a pre-construction survey for nesting birds and special-status avian species shall be conducted by a qualified biologist (experienced in the identification of avian species and conducting nesting bird surveys) if activities with the potential to disrupt nesting birds or special-status avian species are scheduled to occur. The survey shall include the Proposed Project and adjacent areas where Project activities have the potential to cause nest failure. The pre-construction survey shall be conducted no more than three days prior to the start of ground-disturbing activities (including vegetation removal) within the bird breeding season. Site preparation and construction activities may begin if no nesting birds or special-status avian species are observed during the survey. If nesting birds or raptors or special-status avian species are found to be present, avoidance or minimization measures shall be implemented to avoid potential Proposed Project-related impacts to the species. Avoidance and minimization measures shall be developed by the qualified biologist and may include seasonal work restrictions, additional survey and monitoring requirements, or non-disturbance buffers established around active nests until the biologist has determined that the nesting cycle is completed. The width of non-disturbance buffers	

Table ES-2. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Issue	Impact	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Significance After Mitigation
			established around active nests will be determined by the qualified biologist (300 feet is typically recommended for songbirds and 500 feet is typically recommended for raptors). Once nesting is deemed complete by the qualified biologist as determined through periodic nest monitoring, the non-disturbance buffer will be removed by the qualified biologist and Proposed Project work may resume in the area. BIO-3: Compliance with Section 4150 of California Fish and Game Code. If tree trimming and removal activities are required, these activities should take place outside of the bat maternity season (April 1 to August 31) to the greatest extent feasible. If tree removal must take place during the maternity season, a pre-removal bat survey shall take place to determine if bats are roosting in the trees. If bats are determined to be present in the trees during surveys, tree removal shall be postponed until after the maternity season (September 1 through March 31). All tree-trimming and removal activities shall be conducted under the direct supervision of a qualified bat biologist. To minimize direct mortality to any roosting bats, including western yellow bat, each palm tree requiring removal shall be trimmed using a two-step process conducted over two consecutive days. On the first day only the outermost fronds of each individual tree shall be removed, including the uppermost live fronds (the top of the tree) entirely on the first day along with the upper 25 percent of the frond skirt. The innermost fronds shall not be trimmed. No more than 50 percent of the palm fronds shall be removed from each tree during Day 1. This method would allow for sufficient disturbance of the tree that would encourage any	

Table ES-2. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Issue	Impact	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Significance After Mitigation
			roosting bats within the frond skirt to abandon the tree during evening emergence without directly impacting roosting bats within the skirt. The remainder of the tree should be removed on the second day. This procedure need not be implemented if the tree does not have fronds. All fronds must be removed/trimmed using chainsaws or other hand-tools. No use of heavy equipment shall be used to remove fronds. If bats emerge at any time during the tree trimming, trimming activities shall cease at that individual tree for the remainder of the day to allow for any additional bats roosting in the tree to emerge during evening hours when it is safe and appropriate for them to do so. Trimming of the tree may resume the following morning. Tree trimming activities in the fall should be conducted on days when weather conditions are such that roosting bats are unlikely to be in torpor (predicted overnight lows on evenings before and after the tree trimming activities are above 45°F) to the extent practicable.	
Substantial Adverse Effect on Riparian Habitat or Other Sensitive Natural Community	The vegetation communities and land covers within the Project Area are not riparian habitat nor considered sensitive to local, state, or federal agencies.	NI	No mitigation is required.	NI
Substantial Adverse Effect on State or Federally Protected Wetlands	No resources, i.e., Waters of the U.S./State, have been mapped within the Project Area. However, a single depressional feature that is likely jurisdictional under the California Coastal Act (CCA) has been mapped. This acreage and extent represent a calculated estimation of the jurisdictional area within the Proposed Project and is subject to modification during the agency verification process. Fill within	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS

Table ES-2. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures				
Issue	Impact	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Significance After Mitigation
	jurisdictional features to the CCA would require City concurrence pursuant to the LCP. The Proposed Project does not include any dredging or spoils disposal activities. The Project Area is not located within an identified priority area of the South San Diego Bay as identified in the report entitled <i>Acquisition Priorities for the Coastal Wetlands of California</i>. Additionally, the Project does not include erosion control and flood control facilities constructed on watercourses. The groundwater table within the Project Area does not appear to be influenced by tidal fluctuations in San Diego Bay. For these reasons, the depression feature and the Project Area are not considered to be subject to frequent and drastic fluctuations of surface water levels, wave action, water flow, turbidity, or high concentrations of salts or other substances in the substrate. The soils of the feature are fill soils that are also considered to be non-hydric, showing no hydric indicators based on the field survey. The Proposed Project would eliminate this puddle; however, it would also improve site drainage and water quality within surrounding areas by providing storm drains and filtering of pollutants, which is not occurring at the present time. For these reasons, because the Project would result in an overall improvement in water quality for the region, impacts would be less than significant.			

Table ES-2. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Issue	Impact	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Significance After Mitigation
Substantial Interference with the Movement of any Native Resident or Migratory Fish or Wildlife Species or Established Native Resident or Migratory Wildlife Corridors or Impede Use of Native Wildlife Nursery Sites	The Project Area is surrounded by urban development with major roads that block wildlife movement through the area. The Proposed Project does not connect valuable blocks of habitat and lacks valuable habitat itself. The disturbed habitats within the Project Area provide an island of foraging and nesting habitat for wildlife species but they are not considered sensitive ecological areas.	NI	No mitigation is required.	NI
Conflict with Applicable Policies, Ordinances, or Habitat Conservation Plans	The Proposed Project is not located within an HCP or natural community conservation plan area.	NI	No mitigation is required.	NI
3.3 Energy				
Result in Significant Environmental Impacts from Wasteful, Inefficient, or Unnecessary Consumption of Energy Resources	The Project's construction-related fuel consumption is estimated to be 27,783 gallons, increasing the annual construction-related fuel use in the County by 0.00179 percent. This would have a nominal effect on local and regional energy supplies. The annual electricity consumption due to Project operations would be 2,180 kWh resulting in a negligible increase (0.00002 percent) in the typical annual electricity consumption attributable to all non-residential uses in San Diego County. The Project would result in the consumption of approximately 119,306 gallons of automotive fuel per year, increasing the annual countywide automotive fuel consumption by 0.0077 percent. Fuel consumption associated with vehicle trips generated by the Project would not be considered inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary in comparison to other similar developments in the region.	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS

Table ES-2. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Issue	Impact	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Significance After Mitigation
Conflict with State or Local Plans for Renewable Energy or Energy Efficiency	The Project is consistent with Senate Bill 1389, 24 CCR Section 6 Energy Efficiency Standards, 24 CCR Section 11 California Green Building Standards Code, San Diego Association of Governments Regional Energy Strategy, and the City of National City General Plan.	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS
3.4 Greenhouse Gas Emissions				
Generate Greenhouse Gas Emissions that may have a Significant Impact on the Environment	Project construction would generate approximately 282 metric tons of CO ₂ e, which would not exceed the numeric bright-line threshold of 3,000 metric tons of CO ₂ e annually. Operational emissions would total approximately 1,525 metric tons of CO ₂ e, which would not exceed the numeric bright-line threshold of 3,000 metric tons of CO ₂ e annually.	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS
Conflict with an Applicable Plan, Policy, or Regulation for Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions	The Project is consistent with the types, intensity, and patterns of land use envisioned for the site vicinity in the General Plan. The Project would need to incorporate all applicable CAP Update actions to demonstrate consistency with the City's climate action planning efforts. The Project proponent has noted that there will be no natural gas used as a part of the Project's operations, consistent with Action RE-1.2. Additionally, the Project does not propose a new commercial or industrial building. Mitigation Measure GHG-1 ensures compatibility and consistency with the rest of the applicable GHG reduction plans, policies, and regulations. Implementation of Mitigation Measure GHG-1 ensures compatibility and consistency with the City's climate action planning goals.	PS	GHG-1: Adhere to National City's Climate Action Planning Reduction Measures. The Project shall implement the following applicable greenhouse gas-reducing measures, consistent with National City Climate Action Plan Update: - Prior to issuance of a building permit, the Applicant shall demonstrate that the employee parking lot is electric vehicle ready (i.e., charging stations, preferred parking, etc.). - Limit idling times for all employee and tanker truck vehicles, as well as construction equipment, to less than 5 minutes. - Prior to issuance of a building permit, the Applicant shall demonstrate implementation of all applicable	LTS

Table ES-2. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures				
Issue	Impact	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Significance After Mitigation
			Nonresidential Voluntary Measures of the California Green Building Standards Code – Part 11, Title 24, California Code of Regulations (CalGreen) from the Planning and Design, Energy Efficiency, Water Efficiency and Conservation, and Material Conservation and Resource Efficiency Divisions (Appendix A5 of the 2022 California Green Building Standards Code). These measures shall include, but are not limited to, energy efficiency enhancements, water use reduction, sustainable building materials, improved indoor environmental quality, and waste management strategies. <i>Timing/Implementation:</i> Prior to the issuance of occupancy permits <i>Monitoring/Enforcement:</i> The National City Planning Division	
3.5 Hazards and Hazardous Materials				
Create a Significant Hazard Through the Routine Transport, Use, or Disposal of Hazardous Materials	The use of diesel fuel during construction would not create a significant hazard to the public as the release of any construction-related spills would be prevented through the implementation of best management practices (BMPs) listed in the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). The rail car and truck unloading area will be equipped with a containment system capable of containing the contents of 110 percent of an entire rail car volume. A Facility Response Plan (FRP) has been developed and will be implemented, to address and/or manage potential spills or emergency events onsite to minimize hazards to human health and the	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS

Table ES-2. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures				
Issue	Impact	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Significance After Mitigation
	environment. A Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure (SPCC) would be used to minimize the potential for a petroleum spill, prevent any spill from reaching navigable waterways, and ensure that the spill's causes are corrected.			
Create a Significant Hazard Through Reasonably Foreseeable Upset or Accident Conditions	The biodiesel fuel and renewable diesel fuel would be transloaded directly from rail cars to tanker trucks. Each truck loading spot will consist of a pump skid, controls and above ground piping between the belly of the rail cars and the bottom loading port of the truck. Each spot also provides a concrete pad and drain for the containment of potential spills that will be piped to a containment basin onsite. In addition, the FRP, SPCC Plan, and SWPPP, would be implemented, to address and/or manage any potential spills or emergency events onsite to reduce hazard to the public or environment.	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS
Emit Hazardous Emissions or Handle Hazardous or Acutely Hazardous Materials, Substances, or Waste Within One-Quarter Mile of an Existing or Proposed School	The IS analyzed this topic and determined that the Project would not have any impacts. The Proposed Project is located approximately 0.3 mile west of Kimball Elementary. The school is located more than 0.25 mile from an existing or proposed school. No impact would occur and no mitigation is required.	NI	No mitigation is required.	NI
Create a Significant Hazard to the Public or Environment from being Located on a Site that is Included on a List of Hazardous Materials Sites Compiled Pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5	This topic was adequately analyzed in the Initial Study and was determined to have a less than significant impact. The only clean-up site located in the Project Area is the Pacific Steel, Inc. site, located at 1700 Cleveland Avenue. The site status is still open as of the year 2000 and the company still has an active tiered permit, as described above. As part of a separate project, DTSC will complete the remediation of the area behind 1700 Cleveland Avenue before construction of the transloading facility	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS

Table ES-2. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Issue	Impact	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Significance After Mitigation
	for this Project begins; therefore, impacts would be less than significant.			
Result in a Safety Hazard for People Residing or Working in the Project Area if Located Within an Airport Land Use Plan or Within Two Miles of a Public Airport or Public Use Airport	The IS analyzed this topic and determined that the Project would not have any impacts. The Proposed Project is not located within an airport land use plan and would not include the construction of habitable structures. As such, the Proposed Project would not result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the Project area.	NI	No mitigation is required.	NI
Impair Implementation of or Physically Interfere with an Adopted Emergency Response Plan or Emergency Evacuation Plan	The IS analyzed this topic and determined that the Project would not have any impacts. Primary evacuation routes for the County of San Diego include major interstates, highways, and prime arterials, such as I-5, which is located to the east of the Project Area. The I-5 N ramp on Civic Center Drive, located approximately 0.4 miles away from the Project Area can be accessed via Cleveland Avenue. The I-5 S ramp on Bay Marina Drive, located approximately 0.36 miles from the Project Area can be accessed via Cleveland Avenue. Implementation of the Proposed Project would require construction to occur between the existing buildings along Cleveland Avenue and the existing BNSF Railway tracks and between Civic Center Drive and West 19th Street. Impacts to emergency access would be less than significant.	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS
Expose People or Structures to a Significant Risk of Loss, Injury, or Death Involving Wildland Fires	The IS analyzed this topic and determined that the Project would not have any impacts. The Proposed Project is located in a developed, industrial area of the City of National City; there are no wildlands in the vicinity. Additionally, the Proposed Project is not located on land designated as a state or local fire	NI	No mitigation is required.	NI

Table ES-2. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures				
Issue	Impact	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Significance After Mitigation
	hazard severity zone (California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection [CAL FIRE] 2022). No impact would occur and no mitigation is required.			
3.6 Land Use and Planning				
Physically Divide an Established Community	The IS analyzed this topic and determined that the Project would not have any impacts. The Proposed Project consists of construction of a transloading facility within adjacent property in the BNSF Railway ROW. Due to the nature of the Proposed Project, it would not physically divide an established community and no impact would occur.	NI	No mitigation is required.	NI
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	The Proposed Project is located within the Medium Manufacturing (MM) and Heavy Manufacturing Zones and has a land use designation of Industrial within the Coastal Zone overlay. The Proposed Project is a conditional use under the Medium/Heavy Manufacturing zone; therefore, a CUP is required for the Project. Issuance of the CUP would align the Proposed Project with the City's land use regulations and would not constitute a significant environmental impact. The Project Area is also located in the Coastal Zone of National City and under the CCA is subject to the City's Local Coastal Program (LCP). Additionally, the Project would apply for a Coastal Development Permit. The Project's distribution of renewable diesel in the San Diego Area would result in reductions in local air pollutants from the replacement and combustion of regular diesel with renewable diesel. More specifically, calculations showed meaningful local	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS

Table ES-2. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures				
Issue	Impact	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Significance After Mitigation
	reductions in NO _x , CO, and PM air pollutants from the introduction of renewable diesel from the Project. The Project would not conflict with applicable environmental policies of the City's General Plan (see Table 3.6-2) and with the CERP.			
3.7 Noise				
Result in 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	No individual or cumulative pieces of mobile construction equipment used during Project construction would exceed the City's threshold of 75 dBA at the nearest noise-sensitive land use. Construction will comply with Municipal Code Section 12.10.160 which prohibits construction on weekdays between the hours of 7:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m., or at any time on weekends or holidays. The Project proposes to replace one existing rail turnout and install a new receiving and departure track for the facility. Two or more trains would not be running simultaneously and therefore the level of noise in the Project Area would not increase when compared to existing conditions. Offsite construction- and operation-related traffic would not result in a doubling of traffic on adjacent roadways, thus the contribution to existing traffic noise would not be perceptible	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS
Result in generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels	Vibration as a result of onsite construction activities in the Project Area would not exceed 0.2 PPV at the nearest structure. Thus, onsite Project construction would not exceed the recommended threshold. While the Project would accommodate heavy-duty trucks, these vehicles can only generate groundborne vibration velocity levels of 0.006 PPV at 50 feet under typical circumstances. The additional rail line would not increase the vibration levels from the existing rail	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS

Table ES-2. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures				
Issue	Impact	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Significance After Mitigation
	line as no simultaneous train trips would occur. Therefore, the Project would result in negligible groundborne vibration impacts during operations.			
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 miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the Proposed Area to excessive noise levels	The IS analyzed this topic and determined that the Project would not have any impacts. The Project Area is located approximately 5.8 miles northwest of the San Diego International Airport and is located outside of the Airport Noise Impact Area.	NI	No mitigation is required.	NI
3.8 Transportation				
Conflict with a Program, Plan, Ordinance, or Policy Addressing the Circulation System, Including Transit, Roadway, Bicycle, and Pedestrian Facilities	Traffic generated during Project construction would be temporary and would not conflict with the City's Transportation Element or Circulation Element. The Project's AM and PM peak hour trips do not reach the 50-trip threshold during any hour of operation including the AM and PM peak period. The traffic impact to intersection operation can be considered to be minimal. The second rail line would be added to an existing crossing and would not introduce a new rail crossing at Civic Center Drive. Implementation of the Project would not impede the implementation of City or County programs supporting walking, bicycling, and use of public transportation.	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS
Conflict or be Inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3(b)	The Proposed Project is expected to generate 385 passenger car equivalent daily trips, including 13 weekday AM peak hour trips (7 inbound trips and 6 outbound trips) and 23 weekday PM peak hour trips	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS

Table ES-2. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures				
Issue	Impact	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Significance After Mitigation
	(11 inbound trips and 12 outbound trips). There would be less than 50 passenger car equivalent trips during the AM and PM peak hours. It does not exceed the lower 500 average daily trips (ADT) for projects inconsistent with the general plan or the 1000 ADT threshold for projects consistent with the general plan. The Project is consistent with the City's General Plan and does not exceed the ADT threshold, thus the Project is screened out.			
Substantially Increase Hazards due to a Geometric Design Feature (e.g., Sharp Curves or Dangerous Intersections) or Incompatible Uses (e.g., Farm Equipment)	The IS analyzed this topic and determined that the Project would not have any impacts. The Project does not include any component that would introduce new hazards since the Project does not propose any new roadways. Furthermore, the Project is not proposing a use that could introduce incompatible elements to area roadways. The second rail line would be added to an existing crossing and would not introduce a new rail crossing at Civic Center Drive.	NI	No mitigation is required.	NI
Result in Inadequate Emergency Access	The IS analyzed this topic and determined that the Project would not have a less than significant impacts. Construction of the Proposed Project would result in temporary construction truck traffic; however, this would not interfere with current emergency access. Truck access will follow a circulation route involving trucks entering the Project Area on West 18 th Street from Cleveland Avenue and exiting on West 19 th Street and Harrison Avenue. This route would not impede access for emergency services to the Project Area.	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS

Table ES-2. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Issue	Impact	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Significance After Mitigation
3.9 Tribal Cultural Resources				
Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resources, defined in Public Resources Code 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 (i) Listed 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 (ii) 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	Two cultural resources have been previously identified within the Project Area: P-37-013073, the Coronado Railroad; and P-37-024739, the BNSF (formerly AT&SF) Railway. These resources do not have tribal cultural significance. The search of the Sacred Lands File as conducted by the NAHC was negative, indicating the absence of previously recorded Native American resources in the Project Area. The majority of the Project Area has been geologically mapped as artificial fill that was deposited from historic-period and modern activities. A small area located in the very southeastern portion of the Project Area is mapped as young alluvial flood-plain deposits dating from the Late Pleistocene to the Holocene (0.126 – 0 Ma). The Holocene surface sediments in the southeastern portion of the Project Area are consistent with strata that precontact archaeological deposits have been previously identified and documented in the region. Due to the presence of sediments contemporaneous with human occupation of the region and the presence of previously recorded precontact resources in the surrounding area and within the Project Area, the potential for subsurface resources in previously undisturbed soils is considered moderate. Therefore, ground-disturbing activities have the potential to result in the discovery of, or inadvertent damage to, archaeological contexts, and this possibility cannot be eliminated.	PS	CUL-1: Archaeological Monitoring. A qualified professional archaeologist, meeting or working under the direction of someone meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards for prehistoric and historic archaeology should be retained to monitor all ground-disturbing activities associated with Project construction, including vegetation removal, clearing, grading, trenching, excavation, or other activities that will disturb original (pre-project) ground. The monitor must have the authority to temporarily pause activity at the location in the event of an unanticipated discovery, so that he or she can direct the procedures in section 6.3.3. CUL-2: Native American Monitoring. A Native American monitor from a tribe that is traditionally and culturally affiliated with the Project Area should be retained to monitor all ground-disturbing activities associated with Project construction, including vegetation removal, clearing, grading, trenching, excavation, or other activities that will disturb original (pre-project) ground. The Native American monitor should have the authority to temporarily pause activity at the location in the event of an unanticipated discovery, so that he or she can coordinate with the Project archaeologist on the identification of a potential cultural resource and the Project archaeologist can direct the procedures in the following section. CUL-3: Post-Review Discovery Procedures. If subsurface deposits believed to be cultural or human in origin are discovered during construction, all work must halt within a 100-foot radius of the discovery. A	LTS

Table ES-2. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Issue	Impact	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Significance After Mitigation
significance of the resources to a California Native American Tribe.			qualified professional archaeologist, meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards for pre-contact and historic archaeology, shall be retained to evaluate the significance of the find, and shall have the authority to modify the no-work radius as appropriate, using professional judgment. The following notifications shall apply, depending on the nature of the find: ■ If the professional archaeologist determines that the find does not represent a cultural resource, work may resume immediately, and no agency notifications are required. ■ If the professional archaeologist determines that the find does represent a cultural resource from any time period or cultural affiliation, he or she shall immediately notify the City, and applicable landowner. The agencies shall consult on a finding of eligibility and implement appropriate treatment measures if the find is determined to be a Historical Resource under CEQA, as defined in Section 15064.5(a) of the CEQA Guidelines, or a Historic Property, as defined in 36 CFR 60.4. Work may not resume within the no-work radius until the lead agencies, through consultation as appropriate, determine that the site either: 1) is not a Historical Resource under CEQA or Section 106; or 2) that the treatment measures have been completed to their satisfaction. ■ If the find includes human remains, or remains that are potentially human, he or she shall ensure reasonable protection measures are taken to protect the discovery from disturbance (AB 2641). The archaeologist	

Table ES-2. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Issue	Impact	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Significance After Mitigation
			shall notify the San Diego County Medical Examiner (per § 7050.5 of the Health and Safety Code). The provisions of § 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code, § 5097.98 of the California PRC, and AB 2641 will be implemented. If the Medical Examiner determines the remains are Native American and not the result of a crime scene, the Medical Examiner will notify the NAHC, which then will designate a Native American Most Likely Descendent (MLD) for the Project (§ 5097.98 of the PRC). The designated MLD will have 48 hours from the time access to the property is granted to make recommendations concerning treatment of the remains. If the landowner does not agree with the recommendations of the MLD, the NAHC may mediate (§ 5097.94 of the PRC). If no agreement is reached, the landowner must rebury the remains where they will not be further disturbed (§ 5097.98 of the PRC). This will also include either recording the site with the NAHC or the appropriate Information Center; using an open space or conservation zoning designation or easement; or recording a reinternment document with the county in which the property is located (AB 2641). Work may not resume within the no-work radius until the lead agencies, through consultation as appropriate, determine that the treatment measures have been completed to their satisfaction.	

Notes: NI = No Impact; LTS = Less than Significant; PS = Potentially Significant; SU = Significant and Unavoidable

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and Use of the EIR

This DEIR, which evaluates the environmental effects of the Proposed Project, has been prepared by the City of National City in compliance with CEQA (Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 21000 et seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR Section 15000 et seq.). This DEIR has also been prepared in compliance with the City's *Local Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act*.

CEQA was enacted by the California legislature in 1970. As noted under State CEQA Guidelines Section 15002, CEQA has four basic purposes:

1. Inform governmental decision-makers and the public about the potential significant environmental effects of proposed activities.
2. Identify the ways in which environmental damage can be avoided or significantly reduced.
3. Prevent significant, avoidable damage to the environment by requiring changes in projects through the use of alternatives or mitigation measures when the governmental agency finds the changes to be feasible.
4. Disclose to the public the reasons why a governmental agency approved the project in the manner the agency chose if significant environmental effects are involved.

An EIR is an informational document intended to inform members of the public and agency decision-makers of the significant environmental effects of a proposed project, identify feasible ways to reduce the significant effects of a proposed project, and describe a reasonable range of feasible alternatives to a project that would reduce one or more significant effects and still meet a proposed project's objectives. In instances where significant impacts cannot be avoided or mitigated, a proposed project may nonetheless be carried out or approved if the approving agency finds that economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits outweigh the unavoidable significant environmental impacts.

1.2 Lead Agency

CEQA defines a *lead agency* as the public agency which has the principal responsibility of carrying out or approving a project that may have a significant effect upon the environment. This EIR has been prepared by the City of National City as Lead Agency in accordance with CEQA (PRC Sections 21000 et seq), the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15000 et seq), and the City's Local Guidelines for the Implementation of CEQA (2005).

As the Lead Agency, the City has discretionary approval of the Proposed Project. The intent of this EIR is to enable the City's key decision-makers, responsible agencies, and interested parties to understand the potential environmental effects of the Proposed Project.

Lead Agency Contact: City of National City
1243 National City Boulevard
National City, CA 91950
Contact: David Welch, Associate Planner
Phone: (619) 336-4224

1.3 Responsible Agencies

CEQA defines a *responsible agency* as a public agency, other than the lead agency, that is responsible for carrying out or approving a project (PRC Section 21069). The discretionary approval of the Proposed Project rests solely with the City. Other agencies that also have some authority or responsibility to issue discretionary permits for the Proposed Project are designated as responsible agencies. Potential responsible agencies for the Proposed Project may include the following:

- The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) would be a Responsible Agency for any facility that entails construction within Waters of the State for which a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement is required pursuant to California Fish and Game Code Section 1602.
- The San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) would be a Responsible Agency for any facility that entails construction within Waters of the U.S. for which a Water Quality Certification is required pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act.
- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) would be a Responsible Agency for any facility that entails construction within Waters of the U.S. pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.
- The California Coastal Commission (CCC) would be a Responsible Agency for any facility that may require a Coastal Development Permit (CDP).
- The San Diego Air Pollution Control District (SDAPCD) would be a Responsible Agency for any facility that may require a fugitive dust control plan, permit to construct, or permit to operate.

1.4 CEQA Overview

1.4.1 Environmental Review Process

During the preparation of an EIR, the CEQA review process consists of the following components in chronological order:

- 1) Public circulation of the Notice of Preparation (NOP) and a 30-day public scoping period
- 2) Preparation of the Draft EIR
- 3) Public circulation of the Notice of Completion/Notice of Availability and Draft EIR for a 45-day public review period
- 4) Preparation of the Final EIR and Response to Comments received on the Draft EIR
- 5) City Council public hearing of the Final EIR materials

- 6) Filing of a Notice of Determination once the EIR is approved

1.4.1.1 Initial Study and Notice of Preparation

In accordance with the CEQA Guidelines (Section 15082), the City, as Lead Agency, prepared an IS/NOP for the EIR of the Proposed Project (Appendix A) The City distributed the IS/NOP for review and comment to the State Clearinghouse and interested parties for a 30-day comment period (May 10, 2024 to June 10, 2024).

During the scoping period and pursuant to the requirements of Section 15082(c)(1) of the State CEQA Guidelines, the City held a public scoping meeting on May 23, 2024 at the National City Public Library, which is located at 1401 National City Boulevard in National City. Table 1-1 below summarizes the comments regarding the NOP. Twenty-seven comment cards were received at the public scoping meeting and 11 comment letters were received by mail and email. Appendix A includes copies of the comment cards and letters received.

Table 1-1. Summary of Comments Received in Response to the Notice of Preparation		
Commenter/Agency	Area of Controversy/Summary of Comment	Response
Comment Cards		
West National City Resident	The commenter asks where the fuel that the Project would transload would come from and where it would go.	The Executive Summary, 1.3 Project Background and Chapter 2.0 Project Description, 2.2 Project Background provide relevant supply chain information.
West National City Resident	The commenter asks if the trucks will be zero emission vehicles.	Truck fleets servicing the Project would be operated by third party operators, some of which may include zero emission fleets. Project components and details are addressed in the Executive Summary and Chapter 2.0 Project Description. Advanced biofuels (renewable diesel, low carbon ethanol, biodiesel) complement electric vehicle and zero emission vehicles in achieving reduction in carbon emissions.
Janice, West National City Resident	The commenter asks if the number of truck trips would be limited to what was presented during the scoping meeting, what the plan is for flame hazards, and how truck traffic impacts are measured.	The number of trucks trips used for the purpose of this analysis and shared at the scoping meeting is consistent and is estimated based upon the volume of fuels that would be transloaded at this facility. Please refer to Sections 3.1 Air Quality and 3.8 Transportation for additional information on the Project's truck trips. Please refer to Section 3.5 Hazards and Hazardous Materials for additional information related to fire hazards.

Table 1-1. Summary of Comments Received in Response to the Notice of Preparation		
Commenter/Agency	Area of Controversy/Summary of Comment	Response
		Section 15064.3 of the State CEQA Guidelines describes specific considerations for evaluating a project's transportation impacts on transportation and identifies VMT as the most appropriate metric for determining the significance of impacts. Please refer to Section 3.8 Transportation for the methods employed to analyze traffic impacts.
West National City Resident	The commenter asks how many gallons of fuel will be stored at the facility and what is the impact radius.	The Proposed Project does not include any fuel storage.
Laura Benavidez, West National City Resident	This comment expresses concern with noise generated by the Project and its effect on health and quality of life. The comment states that the duration and consistency of noise would cause an increase in noise. The comment also expresses concern with the hours of operation.	Noise impacts are determined based on whether or not the Project would result in 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. Please refer to Section 3.7 Noise for the results of this analysis. The Proposed Project would operate 24 hours per day, 7 days per week and is located within an industrial area of the City.
Claire Groebner, National City Resident	This comment states that a cumulative impacts analysis, including an assessment of existing pollution, is critical. This comment expresses concern for the Project's proximity to Kimball Elementary, Paradise Creek Family Garden, and Paradise Creek Educational Park. This comment states that the Project is not aligned with the City's General Plan Health and Environmental Justice Element. The commenter recommends improving communication with the community. The commenter states there is misinformation regarding "clean fuels."	The Cumulative Impacts discussion within Chapter 4.0 provides a cumulative impact analysis and is included within the EIR. The analysis within the EIR identifies nearby sensitive receptors which include Kimball Elementary School and McKinley Apartments. An analysis of Project-related effects to these closest sensitive receptors is provided within Section 3.1 Air Quality of the EIR. Please refer to Section 3.6 Land Use and Planning for a Project consistency analysis to applicable land use plans, including the City's General Plan Health and Environmental Justice Element. During the scoping period and pursuant to the requirements of Section 15082(c)(1) of the State CEQA Guidelines, the City held a public scoping meeting on May 23, 2024 at the National City Public Library, which is located at 1401 National City Boulevard in National City. Spanish translation services were provided. Clean fuels is the term used for fuels that are produced from renewable sources and have

Table 1-1. Summary of Comments Received in Response to the Notice of Preparation

Commenter/Agency	Area of Controversy/Summary of Comment	Response
		lower emissions than fossil fuels. The description and use of clean fuels is provided in Chapter 2.0 Project Description and further addressed in Section 3.4 Greenhouse Gas Emissions.
Maggie Morales, National City Resident	This comment states that an EIR should be completed. The commenter is concerned that the Project will add to existing air quality pollution that will impact families. The commenter notes the Project is too close to Kimball Elementary School. The commenter suggests setting the Project in an area with no population.	The City is preparing this EIR to evaluate the environmental effects of the Project. The analysis within the EIR identifies nearby sensitive receptors which include Kimball Elementary School and McKinley Apartments. An analysis of Project-related effects to these closest sensitive receptors is provided within the EIR. Please refer to Sections 3.1 Air Quality and 3.4 Greenhouse Gas Emissions for information on Project-related emissions. The Project is located within an appropriately zoned area of the City for the proposed use and is a rail-dependent use.
Eddie Perez	This comment expresses concern with trucks carrying fuel throughout the City. This comment is concerned with the proposed land use and states that residents are opposed to it.	The transport of hazardous materials by truck is regulated by federal safety standards under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of Transportation. As described in Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations and implemented by Title 13 of the CCR, the United States Department of Transportation Office of Hazardous Materials Safety has established strict regulations for the safe transportation of hazardous materials. Please refer to Section 3.5 Hazards and Hazardous Materials for further information regarding fuel hazards. The Project is located within an appropriately zoned area of the City for the proposed use and is a rail-dependent use. Please refer to Section 3.6 Land Use and Planning for a discussion on land use compatibility.
Silvia Calzada, National City Resident & AB 617 Portside Community Steering Committee	This comment recommends contacting the SDAPCD for recent emission data showing that railroads and heavy-duty trucks cause the highest emissions. The commenter states they do not support the Project due to the high risk to the health and safety of residents.	Railroad and truck emissions are addressed in Sections 3.1 Air Quality and 3.4 Greenhouse Gas Emissions. The analysis within the EIR identifies nearby sensitive receptors which include Kimball Elementary School and McKinley Apartments. An analysis of Project-related effects to these closest sensitive receptors is provided within the EIR. Please refer to Sections 3.1 Air Quality and 3.4 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Table 1-1. Summary of Comments Received in Response to the Notice of Preparation

Commenter/Agency	Area of Controversy/Summary of Comment	Response
		for information on Project-related emissions and Sections 3.1 Air Quality and 3.5 Hazards and Hazardous Materials for further information on public health and safety.
Bradley Bang, National City Resident	This comment asks about the impact of current air pollution to health, sources of pollution, types of pollution, and methods to reduce air pollutants.	Please refer to Section 3.1 Air Quality for a complete analysis of Project-related air quality effects.
Jake Zindulka, National City Resident	This comment lists concerns with diesel exhaust, brake dust, road dust, air pollution, sensitive receptors, noise pollution, and traffic congestion. This comment suggests solar panel development as a Project alternative.	The analysis within the EIR relies on methodologies and guidelines adopted by regulatory agencies for the purpose of evaluating a Project's environmental effects. Please refer to Section 3.1 Air Quality for a complete analysis of Project-related air quality effects, Section 3.7 Noise for a complete analysis of Project-related noise effects, and Section 3.8 Transportation for a complete analysis of Project-related transportation effects. The purpose of the alternatives chapter of the EIR is to identify and analyze a range of reasonable alternatives to the Proposed Project that could feasibly attain most of the basic Project objectives while avoiding or substantially lessening one or more of the significant effects of the Proposed Project. Developing the site with solar panels would not achieve any of the Project objectives. Please refer to Chapter 5.0 Alternatives for further information on the Project alternatives evaluated in the EIR.
Madison Swayne, Scoping Meeting Attendee	This comment states that the DEIR should analyze the Project in comparison to the City's General Plan Health and Environmental Justice element. This comment states that soil and groundwater contamination from the containment basin must be considered.	Please refer to Section 3.6 Land Use and Planning for a Project consistency analysis to applicable land use plans, including the City's General Plan Health and Environmental Justice Element. The Project's containment features, including the basin, would be designed and constructed in accordance with all applicable building codes and regulations. A Facility Response Plan (FRP) will be developed and implemented to address and/or manage potential spills or emergency events onsite. During construction, the Project will include the implementation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). The SWPPP is specifically prepared to manage storm water quality and quantity, and prevent discharge of

Table 1-1. Summary of Comments Received in Response to the Notice of Preparation

Commenter/Agency	Area of Controversy/Summary of Comment	Response
		polluted runoff from the site Please refer to Section 3.5 Hazards and Hazardous Materials for further information on hazardous materials and the management of potential spills.
Nicholas Paul, National City Resident	This comment states that the DEIR should address the cumulative impacts of trucks, construction equipment, locomotives, worker vehicles, and other impacts. This comment states that the DEIR should address impacts to regional air quality, ozone, and PM_{2.5} including attainment goals. This comment states that the DEIR should mitigate potential fire/explosion risks and obtain permits from the Fire Marshall.	The Cumulative Impacts discussion within Chapter 4.0 provides a cumulative impact analysis and is included within the EIR. The analysis within the EIR relies on methodologies and guidelines adopted by regulatory agencies for the purpose of evaluating a Project's environmental effects. Please refer to Sections 3.1 Air Quality and 3.4 Greenhouse Gas Emissions for further information on railroad and truck emissions.. A Facility Response Plan (FRP) will be developed and implemented to address and/or manage potential spills or emergency events onsite. Additionally, an Aqueous Film Forming Foam Fluorine Free Firefighting platform with additional fire hydrants will be positioned onsite to use in case of fire. This foam trailer will also be available for use by the City's fire department to address and respond to hazards and emergencies within this core industrial area. Prior to approval, the Project would be reviewed and approved by the City's Fire Department officials. Please refer to Section 3.5 Hazards and Hazardous Materials for additional information related to fire hazards
Scoping Meeting Attendee	This comment states that the DEIR should address soil contamination and an emergency plan.	The Project's containment features, including the basin, would be designed and constructed in accordance with all applicable building codes and regulations. A Facility Response Plan (FRP) will be developed and implemented to address and/or manage potential spills or emergency events onsite. During construction, the Project will include the implementation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). The SWPPP is specifically prepared to manage storm water quality and quantity, and prevent discharge of polluted runoff from the site Please refer to Section 3.5 Hazards and Hazardous Materials for further information on hazardous materials and the management of potential spills.

Table 1-1. Summary of Comments Received in Response to the Notice of Preparation

Commenter/Agency	Area of Controversy/Summary of Comment	Response
Hally Hameel, Scoping Meeting Attendee	The commenter is concerned with land use, applicant interest, and environmental policies. The commenter suggests using zero emission trucks and creating plans based around people.	Please refer to Section 3.6 Land Use and Planning for a Project consistency analysis to applicable land use plans, including the City's General Plan Health and Environmental Justice Element. Truck fleets servicing the Project would be operated by third party operators, some of which may include zero emission fleets. Advanced biofuels (renewable diesel, low carbon ethanol, biodiesel) complement electric vehicle and zero emission vehicles in achieving reduction in carbon emissions. The analysis within the EIR identifies nearby sensitive receptors which include Kimball Elementary School and McKinley Apartments. An analysis of Project-related effects to these closest sensitive receptors is provided within the EIR. Please refer to Sections 3.1 Air Quality and 3.4 Greenhouse Gas Emissions for information on Project-related emissions.
Claire, West National City Resident	This comment states that more information about this Project is needed. This comment states that the DEIR should address air quality impacts to the community. This comment states that the DEIR should include a report on cumulative impacts.	This DEIR provides an in-depth analysis of the Proposed Project. During the scoping period and pursuant to the requirements of Section 15082(c)(1) of the State CEQA Guidelines, the City held a public scoping meeting on May 23, 2024 at the National City Public Library, which is located at 1401 National City Boulevard in National City. Spanish translation services were provided. The analysis within the EIR identifies nearby sensitive receptors which include Kimball Elementary School and McKinley Apartments. An analysis of Project-related effects to these closest sensitive receptors is provided within the EIR. The analysis within the EIR relies on methodologies and guidelines adopted by regulatory agencies for the purpose of evaluating a Project's environmental effects. Please refer to Sections 3.1 Air Quality and 3.4 Greenhouse Gas Emissions for further information on railroad and truck emissions. The Cumulative Impacts discussion within Chapter 4.0 provides a cumulative impact analysis and is included within the EIR.
Monse, West National City Resident	The commenter is concerned with current code enforcement regarding idling trucks and asks how the Project Applicant will address enforcement.	Code enforcement is the responsibility of the City and code violations would be addressed through the City, not the applicant. The City

Table 1-1. Summary of Comments Received in Response to the Notice of Preparation

Commenter/Agency	Area of Controversy/Summary of Comment	Response
		employs Code Enforcement Officers and provides contact information to residents on the City's website to report violations. The Project will include signage onsite to notify and require that truck operators turn off their engines during transloading operations. CARB has identified and established rules that require that engines are not idling for longer than 5 minutes.
Alicia, West National City Resident	The commenter is concerned with the Project's impact on air quality in the community. The commenter suggests moving the Project to a different location.	The analysis within the EIR identifies nearby sensitive receptors which include Kimball Elementary School and McKinley Apartments. An analysis of Project-related effects to these closest sensitive receptors is provided within the EIR. The analysis within the EIR relies on methodologies and guidelines adopted by regulatory agencies for the purpose of evaluating a Project's environmental effects. Please refer to Sections 3.1 Air Quality and 3.4 Greenhouse Gas Emissions for further information on railroad and truck emissions. An offsite location alternative has been identified as an alternative to the Proposed Project. Please refer to Chapter 5.0 Alternatives for further information on the offsite location alternative.
Montserrat Hernandez, National City Resident	The commenter expresses concern with current environmental impacts from local industries and trucks.	Emissions from existing sources within the City are not Project-related effects and are outside the scope of this EIR. The Cumulative Impacts discussion within Chapter 4.0 provides a cumulative impact analysis and considers effects from past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects combined with the Proposed Project and is included within the EIR.
National City Resident	This comment asks how the Project would affect schools, residents, and health considering that the community experiences too much pollution already.	The analysis within the EIR identifies nearby sensitive receptors which include Kimball Elementary School and McKinley Apartments. An analysis of Project-related effects to these closest sensitive receptors is provided within the EIR. Please refer to Sections 3.1 Air Quality and 3.4 Greenhouse Gas Emissions for information on Project-related emissions.

Table 1-1. Summary of Comments Received in Response to the Notice of Preparation

Commenter/Agency	Area of Controversy/Summary of Comment	Response
Paradise Creek Resident	The commenter expresses concern with trucks driving through the City 24 hours per day and with pollution affecting the health of residents.	The analysis within the EIR identifies nearby sensitive receptors which include Kimball Elementary School and McKinley Apartments. An analysis of Project-related effects to these closest sensitive receptors is provided within the EIR. The analysis within the EIR relies on methodologies and guidelines adopted by regulatory agencies for the purpose of evaluating a Project's environmental effects. Please refer to Sections 3.1 Air Quality and 3.4 Greenhouse Gas Emissions for further information on railroad and truck emissions.
Patricia B Rodriguez, Paradise Creek Resident	The commenter expresses concern over the environmental pollution hazard, proximity to schools, and the health of the community.	The analysis within the EIR identifies nearby sensitive receptors which include Kimball Elementary School and McKinley Apartments. An analysis of Project-related effects to these closest sensitive receptors is provided within the EIR. The analysis within the EIR relies on methodologies and guidelines adopted by regulatory agencies for the purpose of evaluating a Project's environmental effects. Please refer to Sections 3.1 Air Quality and 3.4 Greenhouse Gas Emissions for further information on railroad and truck emissions.
Scoping Meeting Attendee	The commenter expresses concern about the number of trucks in the community, the resulting pollution, and potential accidents. This comment suggests moving the Project to a different location.	The analysis within the EIR identifies nearby sensitive receptors which include Kimball Elementary School and McKinley Apartments. An analysis of Project-related effects to these closest sensitive receptors is provided within the EIR. The analysis within the EIR relies on methodologies and guidelines adopted by regulatory agencies for the purpose of evaluating a Project's environmental effects. Please refer to Sections 3.1 Air Quality and 3.4 Greenhouse Gas Emissions for further information on railroad and truck emissions. The Project's containment features, including the basin, would be designed and constructed in accordance with all applicable building codes and regulations. A Facility Response Plan (FRP) will be developed and implemented to address and/or manage potential spills or emergency events onsite. During construction, the Project will include the implementation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). The SWPPP is specifically prepared to manage storm water quality and quantity and prevent discharge of polluted runoff from the site Please refer to

Table 1-1. Summary of Comments Received in Response to the Notice of Preparation		
Commenter/Agency	Area of Controversy/Summary of Comment	Response
		Section 3.5 Hazards and Hazardous Materials for further information on hazardous materials and the management of potential spills. An alternate location alternative has been identified as an alternative to the Proposed Project. Please refer to Chapter 5.0 Alternatives for further information on the alternate location alternative.
Carmen Arroyo, National City Resident	The commenter expresses concern over the health impacts of the Project and the potential danger of trucks in the community.	The analysis within the EIR identifies nearby sensitive receptors which include Kimball Elementary School and McKinley Apartments. An analysis of Project-related effects to these closest sensitive receptors is provided within the EIR. The analysis within the EIR relies on methodologies and guidelines adopted by regulatory agencies for the purpose of evaluating a Project's environmental effects. Please refer to Sections 3.1 Air Quality and 3.4 Greenhouse Gas Emissions for further information on railroad and truck emissions. The transport of hazardous materials by truck is regulated by federal safety standards under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of Transportation. As described in Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations and implemented by Title 13 of the CCR, the United States Department of Transportation Office of Hazardous Materials Safety has established strict regulations for the safe transportation of hazardous materials. Please refer to Section 3.5 Hazards and Hazardous Materials for further information regarding fuel hazards.
Margarita Moreno, National City Resident	This comment states that more information about biodiesel fuel and its potential risks is needed. This comment states that the DEIR should address the benefits of locating the Project in National City.	Clean fuels (renewable diesel, biodiesel, ethanol) is the term used for fuels that are produced from renewable sources and have lower emissions than fossil fuels. A detailed description of the fuels that would be available from the Project is included in Chapter 2.0, Project Description. A Facility Response Plan (FRP) will be developed and implemented to address and/or manage potential spills or emergency events onsite. Additionally, an Aqueous Film Forming Foam Fluorine Free Firefighting platform with additional fire hydrants will be positioned onsite to use in case of fire. This foam trailer will also be available for use by the City's fire department to address and respond to

Table 1-1. Summary of Comments Received in Response to the Notice of Preparation

Commenter/Agency	Area of Controversy/Summary of Comment	Response
		hazards and emergencies within this core industrial area. Please refer to Section 3.5 Hazards and Hazardous Materials for additional information related to fire hazards.
Margarita Moreno, National City Resident	This comment states that the City experiences significant pollution from 67,000 trips per year. An EIR analyzing air pollution is requested.	Emissions from existing sources within the City are not Project-related effects and are outside the scope of this EIR. The Cumulative Impacts discussion within Chapter 4.0 provides a cumulative impact analysis and considers effects from past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects combined with the Proposed Project and is included within the EIR. The analysis within the EIR identifies nearby sensitive receptors which include Kimball Elementary School and McKinley Apartments. An analysis of Project-related effects to these closest sensitive receptors is provided within the EIR. The analysis within the EIR relies on methodologies and guidelines adopted by regulatory agencies for the purpose of evaluating a Project's environmental effects. Please refer to Sections 3.1 Air Quality and 3.4 Greenhouse Gas Emissions for further information on railroad and truck emissions.
Margarita Garcia, National City Resident	The commenter expresses concern over companies polluting the City.	Emissions from existing sources within the City are not Project-related effects and are outside the scope of this EIR. The Cumulative Impacts discussion within Chapter 4.0 provides a cumulative impact analysis and considers effects from past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects combined with the Proposed Project and is included within the EIR.
Comment Letters		
California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), District 11 (letter dated May 22, 2024)	This comment states that any oversize/overweight vehicles on the State Highway network require Caltrans to issue a special permit. This comment states Caltrans is not responsible for existing or future traffic noise impacts associated with the existing configuration of I-5. This comment states that any work performed within Caltrans ROW will require discretionary review and approval by Caltrans and an encroachment permit.	Table 1-2 in Chapter 1.0 Introduction lists anticipated agency approvals and permits for the Proposed Project.

Table 1-1. Summary of Comments Received in Response to the Notice of Preparation

Commenter/Agency	Area of Controversy/Summary of Comment	Response
California Air Resources Board (CARB) (letter dated June 7, 2024)	CARB highlights the Project's potential to help achieve the goals of Executive Order N-79-20 and the 2022 Scoping Plan for Achieving Carbon Neutrality and help the State attain federal national ambient air quality standards in the State's Implementation Plans. CARB expresses concern that heavy-duty truck and locomotive trips in the nearby Portside Community would increase localized health impacts. The comment letter summarizes existing sources of air pollution and health impacts within the Portside Community. The comment letter also describes legislation to consider for Project development, including Senate Bill (SB) 535, SB 1000, and Assembly Bill (AB) 617. CARB recommends preparing an HRA for the Project to account for potential operational health risks from Project-related diesel particulate matter (DPM). The comment letter states that health and cancer risks associated with construction DPM should be included in the air quality section of the DEIR and the Project's HRA. The comment letter also lists several air pollution mitigation measures that CARB recommends that the City include in the DEIR.	The analysis within the EIR identifies nearby sensitive receptors which include Kimball Elementary School and McKinley Apartments. An analysis of Project-related effects to these closest sensitive receptors is provided within the EIR. The analysis within the EIR relies on methodologies and guidelines adopted by regulatory agencies for the purpose of evaluating a Project's environmental effects. Please refer to Sections 3.1 Air Quality and 3.4 Greenhouse Gas Emissions for further information on railroad and truck emissions. SB 535 addresses disadvantaged communities such as the Portside Community located in the City. The DEIR addresses the Portside Community in Sections 3.1 Air Quality and 3.6 Land Use and Planning. SB 1000 requires local governments to incorporate an environmental justice element into their general plans and identify policies to reduce health risks in disadvantaged communities such as the Portside Community. The DEIR provides a consistency analysis with the City's General Plan, including the Health and Environmental Justice Element in Section 3.6 Land Use and Planning. CEQA requires public lead agencies to impose feasible mitigation measures as part of the approval of a "project" in order to substantially lessen or avoid the significant adverse effects of the project on the physical environment.
Campo Band of Mission Indians (Kumeyaay Tribe) (email dated June 3, 2024)	The Campo Band of Mission Indians requests consultation and inclusion during mitigation planning and tribal monitoring.	Pursuant to Assembly Bill 52, the City will engage in formal government-to-government consultation with the Campo Band of Mission Indians.
Environmental Health Coalition (letter dated June 10, 2024)	The comment letter notes the community's concern with increased truck traffic, noise, road infrastructure, and air quality. The comment letter states that the DEIR should address each of the following topics: 1) HRA 2) Consistency with Portside Community Emissions Reduction Plan (CERP) 3) State/federal PM_{2.5} and ozone standards 4) Emission estimates 5) Cumulative impacts of past, present, and future projects	The analysis within the EIR identifies nearby sensitive receptors which include Kimball Elementary School and McKinley Apartments. An analysis of Project-related effects to these closest sensitive receptors is provided within the EIR. The analysis within the EIR relies on methodologies and guidelines adopted by regulatory agencies for the purpose of evaluating a Project's environmental effects. Please refer to Sections 3.1 Air Quality and 3.4 Greenhouse Gas Emissions for further information on railroad and truck emissions.

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Commenter/Agency	Area of Controversy/Summary of Comment	Response
	6) Risk of fire, explosion, and spills 7) Public safety alert system 8) Emergency shelter sites 9) Action plan to address spills and clean-up 10) Spills affecting traffic and road conditions 11) Noise pollution and affected residences, schools, and churches 12) Road infrastructure 13) Construction- and operation-related truck traffic 14) Traffic impact study 15) Enforcement for idling trucks	The Cumulative Impacts discussion within Chapter 4.0 provides a cumulative impact analysis and considers effects from past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects combined with the Proposed Project and is included within the EIR. A Facility Response Plan (FRP) will be developed and implemented to address and/or manage potential spills or emergency events onsite. Additionally, an Aqueous Film Forming Foam Fluorine Free Firefighting platform with additional fire hydrants will be positioned onsite to use in case of fire. This foam trailer will also be available for use by the City's fire department to address and respond to hazards and emergencies within this core industrial area. Please refer to Section 3.5 Hazards and Hazardous Materials for additional information related to fire hazards. The transport of hazardous materials by truck is regulated by federal safety standards under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of Transportation. As described in Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations and implemented by Title 13 of the CCR, the United States Department of Transportation Office of Hazardous Materials Safety has established strict regulations for the safe transportation of hazardous materials. Please refer to Section 3.5 Hazards and Hazardous Materials for further information regarding fuel hazards. Noise impacts are determined based on whether or not the Project would result in 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. Please refer to Section 3.7 Noise for the results of this analysis. A Traffic Study has been prepared for the Proposed Project. Section 15064.3 of the State CEQA Guidelines describes specific considerations for evaluating a project's transportation impacts on transportation and identifies VMT as the most appropriate metric for determining the significance of impacts. Please refer to Section 3.8 Transportation for the methods employed to analyze traffic impacts.

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Commenter/Agency	Area of Controversy/Summary of Comment	Response
		Code enforcement is the responsibility of the City and code violations would be addressed through the City, not the applicant. The City employs Code Enforcement Officers and provides contact information to residents on the City's website to report violations. The Project will include signage onsite to notify and require that truck operators turn off their engines during transloading operations. SDAPCD and CARB have identified and established rules that require that engines are not idling for longer than 5 minutes.
Jake Zindulka, National City Resident (email dated June 10, 2024)	The comment letter states that the DEIR should address each of the following topics: 1) Reasonably foreseeable future projects 2) Sound and air pollution from extending train track length 3) Sound and air pollution impacts to nearby parks (i.e., Pepper Park) 4) Dust, road, tire, brake pollution 5) Air pollution and impacts to nearby receptors 6) Risk of fire, fuel leaks, train derailment 7) Train trips, truck trips, traffic 8) Spill impacts to coastal ecosystems 9) Risk to nearby military base/operations 10) Safety features 11) Economic and social impacts 12) Alternative locations 13) Use of electric trucks 14) Alternative project for the site (i.e., solar panel installation)	The Cumulative Impacts discussion within Chapter 4.0 provides a cumulative impact analysis and considers effects from past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects combined with the Proposed Project and is included within the EIR. The analysis within the EIR identifies nearby sensitive receptors which include Kimball Elementary School and McKinley Apartments. An analysis of Project-related effects to these closest sensitive receptors is provided within the EIR. The analysis within the EIR relies on methodologies and guidelines adopted by regulatory agencies for the purpose of evaluating a Project's environmental effects. Please refer to Sections 3.1 Air Quality and 3.4 Greenhouse Gas Emissions for further information on railroad and truck emissions. Noise impacts are determined based on whether or not the Project would result in 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. Please refer to Section 3.7 Noise for the results of this analysis. A Facility Response Plan (FRP) will be developed and implemented to address and/or manage potential spills or emergency events onsite. Additionally, an Aqueous Film Forming Foam Fluorine Free Firefighting platform with additional fire hydrants will be positioned onsite to use in case of fire. This foam trailer will also be available for use by the City's fire department to address and respond to hazards and emergencies within this core industrial area. Please refer to Section 3.5

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Commenter/Agency	Area of Controversy/Summary of Comment	Response
		Hazards and Hazardous Materials for additional information related to fire hazards. The transport of hazardous materials by truck is regulated by federal safety standards under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of Transportation. As described in Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations and implemented by Title 13 of the CCR, the United States Department of Transportation Office of Hazardous Materials Safety has established strict regulations for the safe transportation of hazardous materials. Please refer to Section 3.5 Hazards and Hazardous Materials for further information regarding fuel hazards. The Project's containment features, including the basin, would be designed and constructed in accordance with all applicable building codes and regulations. A Facility Response Plan (FRP) will be developed and implemented to address and/or manage potential spills or emergency events onsite. During construction, the Project will include the implementation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). The SWPPP is specifically prepared to manage storm water quality and quantity and prevent discharge of polluted runoff from the site Please refer to Section 3.5 Hazards and Hazardous Materials for further information on hazardous materials and the management of potential spills. Please refer to Section 3.6 Land Use and Planning for a Project consistency analysis to applicable land use plans, including the City's General Plan Health and Environmental Justice Element. Truck fleets servicing the Project would be operated by third party operators, some of which may include zero emission fleets. Advanced biofuels (renewable diesel, low carbon ethanol, biodiesel) complement electric vehicle and zero emission vehicles in achieving reduction in carbon emissions. The purpose of the alternatives chapter of the EIR is to identify and analyze a range of reasonable alternatives to the Proposed Project that could feasibly attain most of the basic Project objectives while avoiding or substantially lessening one or more of the significant effects of the Proposed Project. Developing the site with solar panels would not achieve any of the Project objectives.

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Commenter/Agency	Area of Controversy/Summary of Comment	Response
		Please refer to Chapter 5.0 Alternatives for further information on the Project alternatives evaluated in the EIR.
Margaret Avalos Godshalk, West National City Resident (email dated June 8, 2024)	The comment letter describes existing air quality in the community and health impacts to residents. The commenter expresses concern with heavy-duty diesel truck traffic and the Project not meeting the City's clean air goals. The comment letter states that the DEIR should address hazards and hazardous materials; noise; geology, soils, and paleontology.	The analysis within the EIR identifies nearby sensitive receptors which include Kimball Elementary School and McKinley Apartments. An analysis of Project-related effects to these closest sensitive receptors is provided within the EIR. The analysis within the EIR relies on methodologies and guidelines adopted by regulatory agencies for the purpose of evaluating a Project's environmental effects. Please refer to Sections 3.1 Air Quality and 3.4 Greenhouse Gas Emissions for further information on railroad and truck emissions. A Facility Response Plan (FRP) will be developed and implemented to address and/or manage potential spills or emergency events onsite. Additionally, an Aqueous Film Forming Foam Fluorine Free Firefighting platform with additional fire hydrants will be positioned onsite to use in case of fire. This foam trailer will also be available for use by the City's fire department to address and respond to hazards and emergencies within this core industrial area. Please refer to Section 3.5 Hazards and Hazardous Materials for additional information related to fire hazards. The transport of hazardous materials by truck is regulated by federal safety standards under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of Transportation. As described in Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations and implemented by Title 13 of the CCR, the United States Department of Transportation Office of Hazardous Materials Safety has established strict regulations for the safe transportation of hazardous materials. Please refer to Section 3.5 Hazards and Hazardous Materials for further information regarding fuel hazards. The Project's containment features, including the basin, would be designed and constructed in accordance with all applicable building codes and regulations. A Facility Response Plan (FRP) will be developed and implemented to address and/or manage potential spills or emergency events onsite. During construction, the Project will include the implementation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). The SWPPP is

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		specifically prepared to manage storm water quality and quantity and prevent discharge of polluted runoff from the site Please refer to Section 3.5 Hazards and Hazardous Materials for further information on hazardous materials and the management of potential spills. Noise impacts are determined based on whether or not the Project would result in 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. Please refer to Section 3.7 Noise for the results of this analysis. Section 4.7 of the Initial Study addressed geology, soils, and paleontology. This section was not carried forward to the EIR as discussed in Chapter 1.0 Introduction.
Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) (letter dated May 13, 2024)	The comment letter summarizes tribal consultation requirements under CEQA as well as portions of AB 52 and SB 18. The NAHC recommends consultation with California Native American tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of the Project. For cultural resource assessments, the NAHC recommends conducting an archeological records search using the regional California Historical Research Information System (CHRIS) Center; detailing survey findings in a report; contacting the NAHC; and including provisions for inadvertently discovered archeological resources, recovered cultural items, and inadvertently discovered Native American human remains.	Pursuant to Assembly Bill 52, the City will engage in formal government-to-government consultation with the AB 52 tribes that request consultation.
Pauline Faciolince (email dated May 31, 2024)	The comment letter states the DEIR should address potential accidents including spills and explosions and the potential impacts of an accident to the surrounding area.	The Project's containment features, including the basin, would be designed and constructed in accordance with all applicable building codes and regulations. A Facility Response Plan (FRP) will be developed and implemented to address and/or manage potential spills or emergency events onsite. During construction, the Project will include the implementation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). The SWPPP is specifically prepared to manage storm water quality and quantity and prevent discharge of polluted runoff from the site Please refer to

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Commenter/Agency	Area of Controversy/Summary of Comment	Response
		Section 3.5 Hazards and Hazardous Materials for further information on hazardous materials and the management of potential spills.
San Diego County Air Pollution Control District (SDAPCD) (letter dated June 6, 2024)	The comment letter summarizes the Project's location in the Portside Community, the existing air pollution levels, and the community's health and socioeconomic challenges. SDAPCD recommends that the DEIR consider locations outside the region's designated Environmental Justice communities. SDAPCD also recommends emission reduction strategies including an enclosed facility with exhaust treatment systems around fuel transfer points, using zero emission heavy duty trucks, and using zero emission locomotives and switching engines. The comment letter states that there are offensive odors associated with transloading biodiesel, SAF, and ethanol containing additives and the anticipated Project Area already receives air quality complaints from residents in the area. The SDAPCD recommends reviewing SDAPCD Rules 51, 54, 61.2, and 1200(b)(2) for the DEIR.	An offsite location alternative has been identified as an alternative to the Proposed Project. Please refer to Chapter 5.0 Alternatives for further information on the offsite location alternative. CEQA requires public lead agencies to impose feasible mitigation measures as part of the approval of a "project" in order to substantially lessen or avoid the significant adverse effects of the project on the physical environment. The analysis within the EIR identifies nearby sensitive receptors which include Kimball Elementary School and McKinley Apartments. An analysis of Project-related effects to these closest sensitive receptors is provided within the EIR. The analysis within the EIR relies on methodologies and guidelines adopted by regulatory agencies for the purpose of evaluating a Project's environmental effects.
San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians – San Pasqual Reservation (letter dated May 31, 2024)	The San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians state that the Project is not within the recognized San Pasqual Indian Reservation but is within the boundaries of their Aboriginal Territory. The tribe requests formal consultation under AB-52, access to any cultural resource reports, and cultural monitoring for the Project.	Pursuant to Assembly Bill 52, the City will engage in formal government-to-government consultation with the Tribe.
Ted Godshalk, West National City Resident (email dated June 10, 2024)	The comment letter states that the DEIR should discuss the history and enforcement documentation of the City's truck routes and CUPs that are similar to the Project. The comment letter states that the DEIR should detail all fuels stored or transferred onsite as well as who the end users are. The comment letter suggests Project alternatives including moving the Project to a location that is closer to end users or enclosing the transfer area and providing ventilation and a fire extinguishing apparatus. The comment letter states that the DEIR should analyze all Project conditions with the City's CAP,	An assessment of history and enforcement activities and CUPs similar to the Project is outside of the scope of this EIR. Code enforcement is the responsibility of the City and code violations would be addressed through the City, not the applicant. The City employs Code Enforcement Officers and provides contact information to residents on the City's website to report violations. The Project will include signage onsite to notify and require that truck operators turn off their engines during transloading operations. CARB has identified and established rules that require that engines are not idling for longer than 5 minutes.

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	evacuation procedures, emergency preparedness plans, and neighborhood health protections. The comment letter states that the DEIR should study and create a compensation plan for nearby homes that need to be retrofitted for noise and air pollution.	Fuel arriving to the Project Area would come from the Los Angeles-Inland Empire region and would be delivered to retail locations within a 35-mile radius of the Project Area. The Executive Summary, 1.3 Project Background and Chapter 2.0 Project Description, 2.2 Project Background provide relevant supply chain information. The analysis within the EIR identifies nearby sensitive receptors which include Kimball Elementary School and McKinley Apartments. An analysis of Project-related effects to these closest sensitive receptors is provided within the EIR. The analysis within the EIR relies on methodologies and guidelines adopted by regulatory agencies for the purpose of evaluating a Project's environmental effects. Additionally, the Project is evaluated against the goals and policies of the City's Climate Action Plan (CAP) as part of the evaluation of GHG impacts. A Facility Response Plan (FRP) will be developed and implemented to address and/or manage potential spills or emergency events onsite. Additionally, an Aqueous Film Forming Foam Fluorine Free Firefighting platform with additional fire hydrants will be positioned onsite to use in case of fire. This foam trailer will also be available for use by the City's fire department to address and respond to hazards and emergencies within this core industrial area. Please refer to Section 3.5 Hazards and Hazardous Materials for additional information related to fire hazards. An alternate location alternative has been identified as an alternative to the Proposed Project. Please refer to Chapter 5.0 Alternatives for further information on the alternate location alternative. CEQA requires public lead agencies to impose feasible mitigation measures as part of the approval of a "project" in order to substantially lessen or avoid the significant adverse effects of the project on the physical environment.

1.4.1.2 Environmental Effects Found Not to be Significant During Project Scoping

Under CEQA, the analysis of an EIR may be focused on issues determined in the Initial Study to be potentially significant, whereas issues found to have no impact or a less than significant impact do not require further evaluation (CEQA Guidelines Section 15063[c][3]). As part of the Project scoping process,

the following resource topics were determined to be less than significant, less than significant with mitigation, or were sufficiently discussed in the Initial Study and are therefore not carried forward for further analysis in this DEIR:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ■ Aesthetics | ■ Population and Housing |
| ■ Agriculture and Forestry Resources | ■ Public Services |
| ■ Cultural Resources | ■ Recreation |
| ■ Geology and Soils | ■ Utilities and Service Systems |
| ■ Hydrology and Water Quality | ■ Wildfire |
| ■ Mineral Resources | |

Aesthetics

The Project Area's current visual character and site quality is degraded because the vacant lot is littered with debris, contains no structures, and contains minimal vegetation. There are no scenic resources and there are no designated scenic highways within the Project Area. Any potential scenic views of San Diego Bay to the west or mountains to the east from the Project Area are currently obstructed by surrounding industrial development. Implementation of the Proposed Project would not degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings and would convert existing underutilized property into a developed use. The Proposed Project would provide lighting for the Project Area during operation as needed. This light source would not adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area, as views are already obstructed by surrounding industrial developments. Light fixtures to be installed as part of the Project are required to adhere to lighting standards established by the City's Municipal Code. The City determined that aesthetic impacts were not significant; therefore, these impacts are not discussed further in this DEIR.

Agriculture and Forestry Resources

The California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program maps the Project Area as Urban and Built-Up Land and not an agricultural preserve subject to a Williamson Act contract. The Project Area and surrounding properties are primarily for manufacturing/industrial use and are not currently designated for agriculture nor are there any existing agricultural uses present. Similarly, the Project Area is not located on land designated for forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned timberland production nor are there any existing forestry or timberland uses present. The City determined that impacts to agriculture and forestry resources were not significant; therefore, these impacts are not discussed further in this DEIR.

Cultural Resources

ECORP relocated and recorded portions of historic-period sites P-37-013073 and P-37-024739 during the field survey and found that P-37-013073 remains ineligible and P-37-024739 remains eligible for inclusion on the NRHP or CRHR. ECORP also identified and recorded six historic-period sites: NCD-001, NCD-002, NCD-003, NCD-004, NCD-005, and NCD-006. ECORP found that none of these previously unrecorded

resources are eligible for inclusion on the NRHP or CRHP under any criteria. The Project includes the construction and placement of a mechanical railroad switch (i.e., turnout) to bring rail cars from the railroad mainline to the Project Area along the segment of rail that is associated with the P-37-024739 feature. The installation of the railroad switch mechanism would be added on to the existing railroad and would not result in a significant impact to the segment of railroad associated with the P-37-024739 feature because it would not diminish the integrity of the resource.

Ground disturbance associated with this Project has the potential to impact surface and previously unknown subsurface historical resources should any be present. Impacts would be less than significant with implementation of Mitigation Measure CUL-1.

Due to the presence of sediments contemporaneous with human occupation of the region and the presence of previously recorded pre-contact resources in the surrounding area and within the Project Area, the potential for subsurface resources in previously undisturbed soils would be considered moderate by the City. Impacts to inadvertently discovered cultural resources and human remains would be less than significant with incorporation of Mitigation Measures CUL-1, CUL-2, and CUL-3 identified below.

- CUL-1: Archaeological Monitoring.** A qualified professional archaeologist, meeting or working under the direction of someone meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards for prehistoric and historic archaeology should be retained to monitor all ground-disturbing activities associated with Project construction, including vegetation removal, clearing, grading, trenching, excavation, or other activities that will disturb original (pre-project) ground. The monitor must have the authority to temporarily pause activity at the location in the event of an unanticipated discovery, so that he or she can direct the procedures in section 6.3.3.
- CUL-2: Native American Monitoring.** A Native American monitor from a tribe that is traditionally and culturally affiliated with the Project Area should be retained to monitor all ground-disturbing activities associated with Project construction, including vegetation removal, clearing, grading, trenching, excavation, or other activities that will disturb original (pre-project) ground. The Native American monitor should have the authority to temporarily pause activity at the location in the event of an unanticipated discovery, so that he or she can coordinate with the Project archaeologist on the identification of a potential cultural resource and the Project archaeologist can direct the procedures in the following section.
- CUL-3: Post-Review Discovery Procedures.** If subsurface deposits believed to be cultural or human in origin are discovered during construction, all work must halt within a 100-foot radius of the discovery. A qualified professional archaeologist, meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards for pre-contact and historic archaeology, shall be retained to evaluate the significance of the find, and shall have the authority to modify the no-work radius as appropriate, using professional judgment. The following notifications shall apply, depending on the nature of the find:

- If the professional archaeologist determines that the find does not represent a cultural resource, work may resume immediately, and no agency notifications are required.
- If the professional archaeologist determines that the find does represent a cultural resource from any time period or cultural affiliation, he or she shall immediately notify the City, and applicable landowner. The agencies shall consult on a finding of eligibility and implement appropriate treatment measures if the find is determined to be a Historical Resource under CEQA, as defined in Section 15064.5(a) of the CEQA Guidelines, or a Historic Property, as defined in 36 CFR 60.4. Work may not resume within the no-work radius until the lead agencies, through consultation as appropriate, determine that the site either: 1) is not a Historical Resource under CEQA or Section 106; or 2) that the treatment measures have been completed to their satisfaction.
- If the find includes human remains, or remains that are potentially human, he or she shall ensure reasonable protection measures are taken to protect the discovery from disturbance (AB 2641). The archaeologist shall notify the San Diego County Medical Examiner (per § 7050.5 of the Health and Safety Code). The provisions of § 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code, § 5097.98 of the California PRC, and AB 2641 will be implemented. If the Medical Examiner determines the remains are Native American and not the result of a crime scene, the Medical Examiner will notify the NAHC, which then will designate a Native American Most Likely Descendent (MLD) for the Project (§ 5097.98 of the PRC). The designated MLD will have 48 hours from the time access to the property is granted to make recommendations concerning treatment of the remains. If the landowner does not agree with the recommendations of the MLD, the NAHC may mediate (§ 5097.94 of the PRC). If no agreement is reached, the landowner must rebury the remains where they will not be further disturbed (§ 5097.98 of the PRC). This will also include either recording the site with the NAHC or the appropriate Information Center; using an open space or conservation zoning designation or easement; or recording a reinternment document with the county in which the property is located (AB 2641). Work may not resume within the no-work radius until the lead agencies, through consultation as appropriate, determine that the treatment measures have been completed to their satisfaction.

This topic was adequately discussed in the Initial Study and not discussed further in this DEIR.

Geology and Soils

No known active faults run through the City or the Project limits; therefore, there is no risk of fault rupture hazard associated with the Proposed Project. The Project Area is located at the City's western border and is within the area with the potential for soft soil types that may amplify effects of earthquakes to liquefaction. The Project Area is not located adjacent to a hillside area with unstable slopes. The potential

for a landslide, lateral spreading, liquefaction, or collapse in the Project Area is very low. Best Management Practices (BMPs) are included as part of the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) prepared for the Proposed Project and would be implemented to manage erosion and the loss of topsoil during construction-related activities. The near surface fill soils observed during the geotechnical investigation primarily consisted of clayey sand and lean clay. These materials typically have a low expansion potential. No septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposals systems are proposed.

Registered civil engineers would design the transloading facility in accordance with the CBC and ensure all necessary geotechnical constraints are considered during Project design. The City determined that impacts to geology and soils were not significant; therefore, they are not discussed further in this DEIR.

According to the paleontological records search results, the Project Area is underlain by artificial fill and young alluvial flood plain deposits. The majority of the Project Area is artificial fill, which has been previously disturbed. Artificial fill is assigned no paleontological sensitivity. The eastern margin of the Project Area is underlain at the surface by late Pleistocene to Holocene-age young alluvial flood plain deposits. These deposits are assigned a low paleontological sensitivity based on their relatively young age and lack of recorded fossil collection localities. Given the low or zero paleontological sensitivity of the geologic units underlying the Project Area and the lack of nearby recorded fossil collection localities, construction of the Project is unlikely to result in impacts to paleontological resources. The City determined that impacts to paleontological resources were not significant; therefore, these impacts are not discussed further in this DEIR.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Potential water quality impacts associated with the Proposed Project include short-term construction-related erosion/sedimentation from ground-disturbing activities and construction-related hazardous material discharge. Adherence to mandated SWPPP requirements would ensure that potential impacts that could cause a violation of any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements would be less than significant. The Proposed Project does not include withdrawal of groundwater, and the Project Area is not identified as a groundwater recharge area. The City determined that impacts to hydrology and water quality were not significant; therefore, these impacts are not discussed further in this DEIR.

Mineral Resources

The Proposed Project would not involve areas in the region mined for mineral resources or areas with known classified land containing regionally significant mineral resources, which is mandated by the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA) of 1975. For these reasons, the evaluation of mineral resources was not carried forward for further analysis in this DEIR.

Population and Housing

The City's General Plan estimates a growth in the City's population and jobs by 2050. The Project will not induce substantial unplanned growth in the area and will not displace substantial numbers of people or existing housing. The City determined that population and housing impacts were not significant; therefore, these impacts are not discussed further in this DEIR.

Public Services

Public Services was not carried forward for further analysis because the Proposed Project would not result in population growth increasing the demand for additional public services, the construction of which could result in environmental impacts. The City determined that public services impacts were not significant; therefore, these impacts are not discussed further in this DEIR.

Recreation

The Proposed Project would not induce population growth; therefore, no increase in the need for recreational resources and facilities would occur as a result. The City determined that recreation impacts were not significant; therefore, these impacts are not discussed further in this DEIR.

Utilities and Service Systems

The Proposed Project is the construction of a transloading facility to transload bio-diesel fuel and renewable diesel fuel directly from rail cars into trucks. No new or expanded water or wastewater treatment facilities would be required. Further, the Proposed Project would not impact natural gas, electric power, or telecommunications facilities. Project components do not include any connection to the sewer system, and no septic tank would be required. The City determined that utilities and service systems impacts were not significant; therefore, these impacts are not discussed further in this DEIR.

Wildfire

The Proposed Project is located within an urbanized area. According to the CAL FIRE Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ) Map, the Project Area is not located within a VHFHSZ. Truck access will follow a circulation route involving trucks entering the Project Area on West 18th Street from Cleveland Avenue and exiting on West 19th Street and Harrison Avenue. These streets are not prime arterials identified in the City's General Plan and would not be used as primary evacuation routes. The Proposed Project would not substantially alter the slope, wind patterns, or other factors and would not include the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure that could exacerbate wildfire risks. Thus, the Proposed Project would not expose Project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or uncontrolled spread of a wildfire and would not expose people or structures to significant risks from downstream flooding, runoff or post-fire instability. The City determined that wildfire impacts were not significant; therefore, these impacts are not discussed further in this DEIR.

1.4.1.3 Draft EIR

The City is distributing this DEIR for comment to the same public agencies and interested groups and individuals as the IS/NOP, in addition to any others that have requested to be on the Project mailing list.

The Draft EIR is also available for public review electronically on the City's website at <https://www.nationalcityca.gov/government/community-development/planning/current-projects> and at the following physical location:

City of National City, Planning Division, 1st Floor
1243 National City Boulevard

National City, CA 91950

A period of 54 days has been established for public review of the DEIR for the Proposed Project, starting December 6, 2024 through January 28, 2025. Agencies, organizations, and individuals are invited to comment on the information presented in the DEIR during this period. Specifically, comments are requested on the scope and adequacy of the environmental analysis presented in this Draft EIR and not on the prior Initial Study. All comments on the DEIR should be sent to the following contact:

David Welch, Associate Planner
City of National City
1243 National City Boulevard
National City, CA 91950
Email: dwelch@nationalcityca.gov

1.4.1.4 Final EIR

Following the 54-day public review period, the City will prepare responses to all comments and will compile these comments and responses into the Final EIR. The City of National City Council will consider the information in the Draft and Final EIR during Project review and when deciding on the Proposed Project. The Final EIR will need to be certified as complete by the City Council prior to deciding on the Proposed Project.

1.5 Organization of the Draft EIR

The Draft EIR is organized as follows:

Executive Summary. This section provides a summary of the major conclusions of the EIR, areas of controversy, and the issues to be resolved and how to comment on the Draft EIR, which includes the listing of the responsible agencies, lead agency contact information, a one paragraph abstract of the EIR, and the date by which Draft EIR comments must be received.

Chapter 1 Introduction. This chapter provides general background on the Project; identifies the purpose and need for action including the Project objectives; describes the roles of agencies having discretionary approval and authorities regulating various aspects of the Project; and summarizes the public involvement process for the Project.

Chapter 2 Project Description. This chapter provides a description of the Project location, Project objectives, and the elements of the Proposed Project.

Chapter 3 Environmental Impact Analysis. This chapter describes the regulatory setting, environmental setting, and impact analysis approach for each environmental resource. Each resource section also contains a comprehensive analysis and assessment of impacts (direct, indirect, and cumulative) of the Proposed Action/Proposed Project and other alternatives.

Chapter 4 Other Environmental Considerations. This chapter describes other aspects of compliance with CEQA procedures, which includes a description of unavoidable adverse impacts, the relationship between short-term use and long-term productivity, and any irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources (40 CFR 1502.16). This chapter also addresses CEQA requirements, which includes identifying

significant impacts and mitigation measures to reduce or minimize significant impacts describing growth-inducing impacts, and cumulative impacts.

Chapter 5 Alternatives. This chapter describes the alternatives development and screening process conducted for the Project. It also presents a range of reasonable Project alternatives that address the stated purpose and need for the Project, which includes the Proposed Action/Proposed Project and No Action/No Project Alternative. This chapter also identifies and explains why some alternatives were considered but not analyzed in detail. This chapter also compares alternatives and describes the preferred alternative and the Environmentally Superior Alternative pursuant to CEQA requirements.

Chapter 6 List of Preparers and Persons Consulted. This chapter provides a list of preparers, which includes the City and consultants. This chapter also identifies the persons, groups, agencies and other governmental bodies that were consulted or that contributed to the preparation of the EIR and lists agencies, organizations, and persons to whom the EIR will be sent or has been sent.

Chapter 7 References. This chapter provides the references used in preparing the EIR. This chapter also includes a list of acronyms and abbreviations used in the EIR.

Appendices. The appendices contain information and data that supplement or support the analyses in the body of the EIR.

1.6 Anticipated Permits and Approvals

This DEIR may also be used by other public agencies to issue approvals and permits related to the Proposed Project. Table 1-2 provides a list of the anticipated agency approvals required to implement the Proposed Project. The types of actions that these agencies, as well as other agencies not included on this list, may take in connection with this EIR include, but may not be limited to, the following:

- Approve, adopt, or amend applicable plans, policies, or programs
- Make findings of consistency
- Approve and issue permits
- Approve agreements
- Provide authorization and approval of funding
- Provide service

Table 1-2. Anticipated Agency Approvals and Reviews	
Agency	Permit or Approval
City of National City	■ Certification of the EIR ■ Conditional Use Permit ■ Coastal Development Permit
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Clean Water Act Section 404 Permit (as needed)

Table 1-2. Anticipated Agency Approvals and Reviews

Agency	Permit or Approval
California Department of Fish and Wildlife	■ EIR Review ■ Migratory Bird Treaty Act compliance ■ California Endangered Species Act compliance
Regional Water Quality Control Board, Los Angeles Region	Stormwater Construction General Permit (including the development and implementation of a SWPPP)
San Diego Air Pollution Control District	■ Permit to Construct ■ Permit to Operate

1.7 Documents Incorporated by Reference

An EIR may incorporate portions or all of any publicly available document by reference (CEQA Guidelines Section 15150). This Draft EIR, where applicable, incorporates by reference the San Diego Clean Fuels Facility LLC Project Initial Study (ECORP 2024a; Appendix A). The existing conditions and impact analysis that apply to this EIR are therefore referenced rather than repeated.

1.8 Project Technical Studies

The analysis contained in this DEIR is supported by the following Project-specific technical reports:

- *Draft Initial Study for the San Diego Clean Fuels Facility LLC Project* (May 2024) (ECORP 2024b; Appendix A)
- *Air Quality & Greenhouse Gas Emissions Assessment for the San Diego Clean Fuels Facility LLC Project* (February 2024) (ECORP 2024a; Appendix B)
- *Biological Resources Assessment for the San Diego Clean Fuels Terminal LLC Project* (July 2022) (ECORP 2022a; Appendix C)
- *Aquatic Resources Delineation for the San Diego Clean Fuels Terminal LLC Project* (July 2022) (ECORP 2022b; Appendix D)
- *Fuel Consumption Calculations*, (2022) (ECORP; Appendix E)
- *Report of Geotechnical Investigation, USD Group Clean Fuels Rail Terminal* (May 2022) (Group Delta 2022; Appendix F)
- *Noise Model Output*, (2022) (ECORP; Appendix G)
- *Traffic Impact Analysis for the Transload Clean Fuels Facility, 18th Street and Cleveland Avenue* (January 2024) (KOA 2024; Appendix H)

The results of these studies are discussed in Section 3.1 Air Quality, Section 3.2 Biological Resources, Section 3.4 Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Section 3.5 Hazards and Hazardous Materials, and Section 3.8 Transportation.

2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 Project Location and Setting

The San Diego Clean Fuels Facility LLC Project is located in San Diego County in the City of National City. The Project Area is located between the existing buildings along Cleveland Avenue and the existing BNSF Railway tracks and between Civic Center Drive and West 19th Street. The Project Area is approximately 6.5 acres and is primarily unimproved and undeveloped. The site address is 830 West 18th Street (Figure 1).

2.2 Project Background

The current supply chain transports fuel for the San Diego market by rail from the Midwest and Texas and then over 100 miles via trucks from the Los Angeles-Inland Empire region to serve the San Diego area. With this Project, the fuel will be delivered via truck to local retailers within a 35-mile radius.

Through the California Legislature and the governor's executive agencies, the citizens of California have set the requirements for California air quality and established the programs and tools for achieving those requirements. The California Low Carbon Fuel Standard (LCFS) is transforming the entire transportation sector in the state by raising demand for biodiesel, renewable diesel, low carbon ethanol, electric vehicles, renewable natural gas, E85 higher ethanol blends, and sustainable aviation fuels, among other low carbon transportation fuels. By maximizing the contributions of all these renewable fuels, studies published by the California Air Resources Board (CARB) and the California Energy Commission have concluded that greater carbon emission reductions are achievable (CARB 2018).

The Project contributes to carbon emissions reductions by:

- delivering lower emissions via fewer fuel transit truck miles and cleaner fuels sooner than the current supply chain;
- leveraging lower emissions rail transit to replace longer truck trips;
- replacing existing longer distance truck trips with shorter distance local deliveries;
- minimizing impacts from construction by locating the facility on existing railroad property;
- reducing the State's reliance on fossil-based diesel fuel and increasing the sustainability of the critical transportation sector by reducing its emissions footprint;
- expanding the availability of renewable fuels and offering lower emission fuels to California's construction, industrial, and agricultural industries and the public; and
- solving geographic imbalances in the availability of cleaner, lower carbon fuels.

The method for distributing transportation fuels that will most quickly and effectively achieve the State's goals will use an "all of the above" strategy with a balance of technological and sustainable solutions rather than an "either/or" approach that will delay the air quality benefits for the citizens of California.



Figure 1. Project Location and Vicinity

2021-285 San Diego Clean Fuels Facility, LLC

Using an “all of the above” approach to the LCFS allows advanced biofuels (renewable diesel, low carbon ethanol, biodiesel, etc.) to complement electric vehicle (EV) and zero emission vehicles (ZEV) in achieving reduction in carbon emissions. Further, the availability of advanced biofuels products will impact sectors that are difficult to electrify in the near/intermediate term. The proposed biofuels will not displace EVs or delay ZEV adoption; rather, they will deliver lower emission benefits that are available and proven.

The current LCFS policy is law, and CARB continues to strengthen the standard (which increases demand for lower emission fuels). Projects like the one proposed are needed to meet the LCFS standards. BNSF Railway and San Diego Clean Fuels, LLC are committed to serving the San Diego market with strategic, safe, and sustainable solutions.

2.3 Project Purpose and Objectives

USD Clean Fuels (USD-CF) proposes to construct a transloading facility on the BNSF Railway railroad right-of-way (ROW) and adjacent BNSF-owned property. The Project Area is approximately 6.5 acres and is primarily unimproved and undeveloped. The area was formerly used for railroad and industrial purposes. A portion of the Project Area contains four closed release cases; one open release case is located on the adjoining/adjacent properties. The open remediation case is the PSI property located adjacent and east of the Project Area at 1700 Cleveland Avenue. DTSC has completed site remediation for the PSI property.

The purpose of the Project is to provide a new transloading facility along the BNSF Railroad to deliver renewable fuels to the San Diego market. Upon development, the Proposed Project would achieve the following objectives by:

- facilitating the State’s commitment to achieve a just and equitable transition to carbon neutrality by 2045 and reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030;
- expanding the availability of renewable fuels to the region by advancing the goal of the State’s Low-Carbon Fuels Standard, which is a component of the 2022 CARB Scoping Plan, and solving geographic imbalances in the availability of cleaner, lower carbon fuels;
- delivering lower emissions to the San Diego market by significantly reducing fuel transit truck miles compared with the existing supply chain delivering to the current fuel delivery locations;
- increasing the availability of cleaner fuels sooner than the current supply chain;
- creating employment-generating opportunities for the citizens of National City and the surrounding communities;
- encouraging industrial development as compatible and productive uses within existing underutilized and previously contaminated property while minimizing conflicts with the surrounding existing uses;
- providing an appropriately sized facility that balances meeting business performance metrics and minimizing the total truck trips needed to deliver renewable fuels to the San Diego market;

- locating the facility in an appropriately zoned area of the City that would minimize conflicts with surrounding incompatible uses and utilize established City truck routes that provide direct access to Interstate 5 (I-5);
- providing infrastructure improvements required to meet Project needs and improve safety conditions along the BNSF railroad; and
- providing additional firefighting capacity in the Project Area to address and provide quick responses to hazards and emergencies within the City's core industrial area.

2.4 Existing and Future Land Use

The Proposed Project is located in an urban developed area characterized by industrial land uses. The Project Area includes vacant land and land previously used for a commercial metal recycling business.

The Project is located within the ¹Medium Manufacturing (MM) and Heavy Manufacturing (MH) Zones and has a land use designation of Industrial within the Coastal Zone overlay (City of National City 2008, 2024a). The Proposed Project is a conditional use under the Medium/Heavy Manufacturing Zone; therefore, a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) is required for the Project. The Project Area is located in the Coastal Zone, which requires a Coastal Development Permit. The Project is surrounded to the north, east, and south by Industrial land use designations and to the west by Marine Related Industrial land use designations (Table ES-1).

2.5 Project Characteristics

The new San Diego Clean Fuels Facility will reconfigure one existing rail spur and add truck loading spots to transload clean renewable and biofuels (renewable diesel, ethanol, and sustainable aviation fuel [SAF]) directly from rail cars into trucks. The delivered fuels will remain in the rail cars until they are transloaded. No stationary above- or below-ground fuel storage tanks are included as part of the Project. Each truck loading spot will consist of a pump skid, controls, and an above ground manifold system with piping between the belly of the rail cars and the bottom loading port of the truck. Small amounts of lubricity, conductivity, and red dye will be added in-line to renewable diesel fuels during the transload process depending on customer specifications. The lubricity, conductivity, and red dye would be stored onsite in three 330-gallon totes. The rail car unloading and truck loading areas will be equipped with a 37,700-gallon concrete containment basin capable of containing the contents of 110 percent of an entire rail car volume. A Facility Response Plan (FRP) will be developed and implemented to address and/or manage potential spills or emergency events onsite. Additionally, an Aqueous Film Forming Foam Fluorine Free Firefighting platform with additional fire hydrants will be positioned onsite to use in case of fire. This firefighting platform will also be available for use by the City's fire department to address and respond to hazards and emergencies within this core industrial area.

¹ The Project Area and the surrounding area is located in the Coastal Zone. Zoning in this area is regulated by the City's old municipal code and 2008 zoning map because the Local Coastal Plan was not updated with the City's General Plan in 2012.

Rail cars will be delivered to the facility by the adjacent BNSF Railway and placed directly on designated receiving tracks. Normal maximum capacity will be 21 rail cars that hold a total of approximately 630,000 gallons of product. Normal total daily throughput when the facility is operating will be approximately 579,600 gallons per day. Once the rail cars have been delivered by BNSF Railway, the cars will be switched and spotted for transloading by Plastic Express (PEX), the commercial operator of the facility. After completing the quality and quantity assurance requirements for the product in each rail car, facility operators will unload the fuel commodities directly from the rail cars into trucks via a short above ground manifold system. The transfer volume will be approximately 13,800 barrels of fuel per day or 402 gallons per minute. Once emptied, the railroad will remove and replace cars with full ones as needed.

The proposed transloading facility consists of the following improvements:

- Build tracks and turnouts/crossovers to facilitate car movement in/out and within the transload facility.
- Install concrete slab pump pads at each transload spot.
- Install truck load slabs sloped to a drain in the center at each transload spot.
- Install pumps and piping to move fuels from rail cars to truck loading spots.
- Provide containment enclosures for additive totes.
- Provide a concrete lined containment basin and pipe each load slab drain to the basin.
- Provide track pans for containment at the rail transloading cars.
- Provide an office trailer with control center, restrooms, and driver check-in area.
- Provide all weather paving for the facility and circulation.
- Provide lighting for the site as needed.

See Figures 2 through 5 for various civil site plans, which include those showing the overall site layout, site plan overview, crossing detail, and transfer area detail.

The Proposed Project would also provide infrastructure improvements at the Civic Center Drive rail crossing, which include improved rail crossing sign visibility, traffic direction control, and crosswalks (Figure 5). These improvements enhance the area for the purposes of the Project by providing offsite adjacent improvements and improve safety at the BNSF crossing for vehicles and pedestrians.

Biofuel Information

The category of these non-petroleum-based fuels ("biofuels") includes renewable diesel, biodiesel, ethanol and sustainable aviation fuel (SAF).

Renewable Diesel and **SAF** can be produced with new or recycled vegetable oils, animal fats, greases, algae, crop residues or woody biomass. Renewable diesel and SAF are also designated as a "drop-in" biofuels allowing them to fully replace petroleum-based fuels on a 1-to-1 basis with zero modification to storage facilities or combustion engine systems. California's Low Carbon Fuel Standard Certified Carbon

Intensities shows renewable diesel reduces carbon intensity on average by 65% when compared with petroleum diesel.

Biodiesel is a renewable, biodegradable fuel manufactured domestically from vegetable oils, animal fats, or recycled restaurant grease. Biodiesel is often used as a blend with Renewable Diesel, as encouraged in the LCFS. Both renewable diesel and a blend of renewable diesel and up to 20% biodiesel can also be used to replace petroleum diesel with no changes or adverse effects to the engine, also with a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

Ethanol is a renewable fuel manufactured from plant bio-mass which when burned has very low emissions. Ethanol was mandated in California in 2003 to replace the cancer-causing MTBE as oxygenator for gasoline. It is the only oxygenator currently allowed for gasoline in California. Nearly all gasoline today is blended with 10% ethanol which acts as an oxygenator and serves to reduce tailpipe emissions. E-85 is a blend of up to 85% ethanol and petroleum gasoline but requires engine modifications.

With the ability to utilize a wide variety of resources to produce renewable diesel, biodiesel, ethanol and SAF, these biofuels are considered 100% sustainable. All of this makes these fuels environmentally, socially, and in long-term respects economically preferable to petroleum-based fuels, helping achieve the LCFS and move toward the State goal of carbon neutrality. The benefits of the improved supply chain add to the community and state-wide benefits.

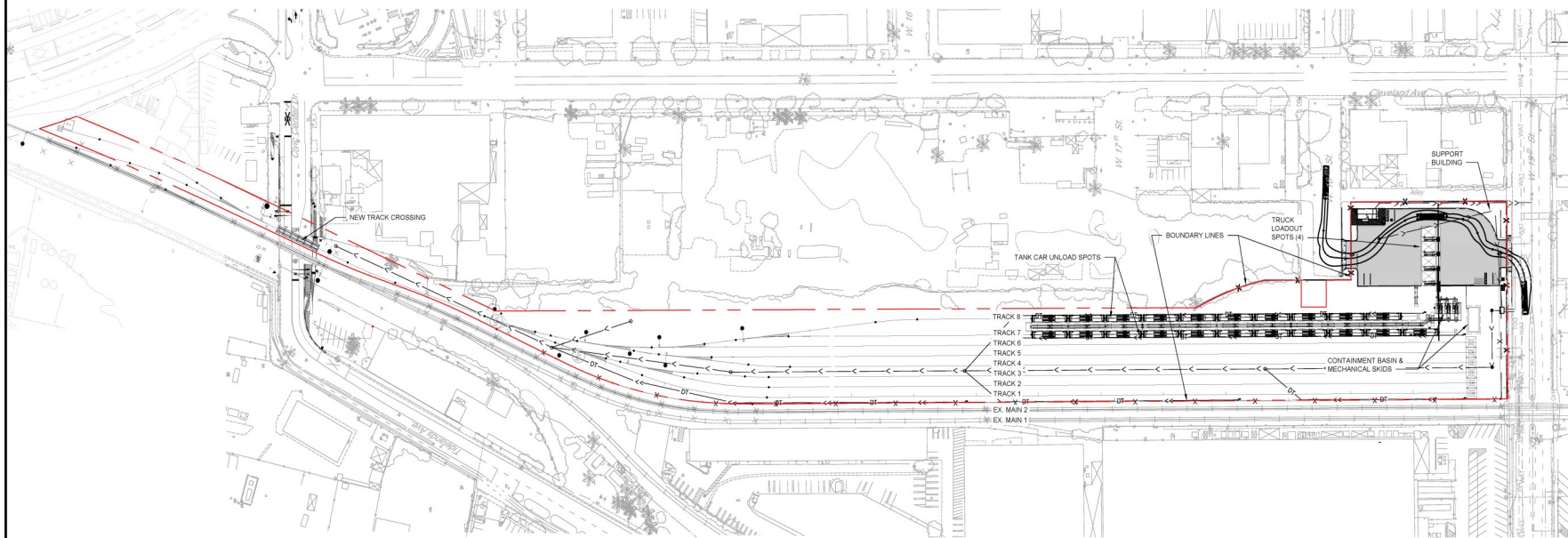
2.5.1 Employees

Plastic Express will operate the facility. Crews of 4 liquid fuel certified operators will work at the facility 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Up to 10 operators would be onsite at any given time (shift change). A total of 21 full-time operators with 1 supervisor per shift and 1 facility manager will be employed at the facility. A trailer will be provided as an office onsite and will incorporate the control center for equipment, restrooms, and an area for drivers to check in and receive their bill of lading.

2.5.2 Site Circulation and Parking

The Clean Fuels facility is expected to receive approximately 72 trucks per day (capable of transporting 13,800 barrels of fuel per day). Project trucks driven by third party operators would enter the facility via 18th Street, receive fuel at one of the truck loading spots, and then exit on West 19th Street before going on to their retail client deliveries within a 35-mile radius. Project trucks will be required to use the City's designated primary and alternate truck routes, which provide the most direct access routes to regional corridors such as I-5 (Figure 6). Tidelands Avenue, Civic Center Drive, and Harbor Drive are the designated primary truck routes that would be used by the Proposed Project. Approximately 70 percent of truck trips will occur between 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. to avoid high volume traffic times. Additionally, a second rail line will be added at the existing grade crossing on Civic Center Drive to facilitate rail car movements.

Approximately four off-street parking spaces would be provided onsite for employees, including one Americans with Disability (ADA)-compliant space.



1 OVERALL LAYOUT
G112
SCALE: 1" = 80'

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DATE: 04-08-22 BY: SMI 20% SUBMITTAL REVIEW

D	05-26-23	SMI	60% SUBMITTAL
C	10-21-22	SMI	60% SUBMITTAL
B	05-17-22	SMI	60% SUBMITTAL
A	04-08-22	SMI	20% SUBMITTAL REVIEW
NO.	DATE	BY	DESCRIPTION OF REVISIONS



DESIGNED WBS	DRAWN WBS	CHECKED SMI
BAR IS ONE INCH ON FULL SIZE AND ONE-HALF INCH ON HALF SIZE SHEETS. IF NOT, ADJUST SCALES ACCORDINGLY.		



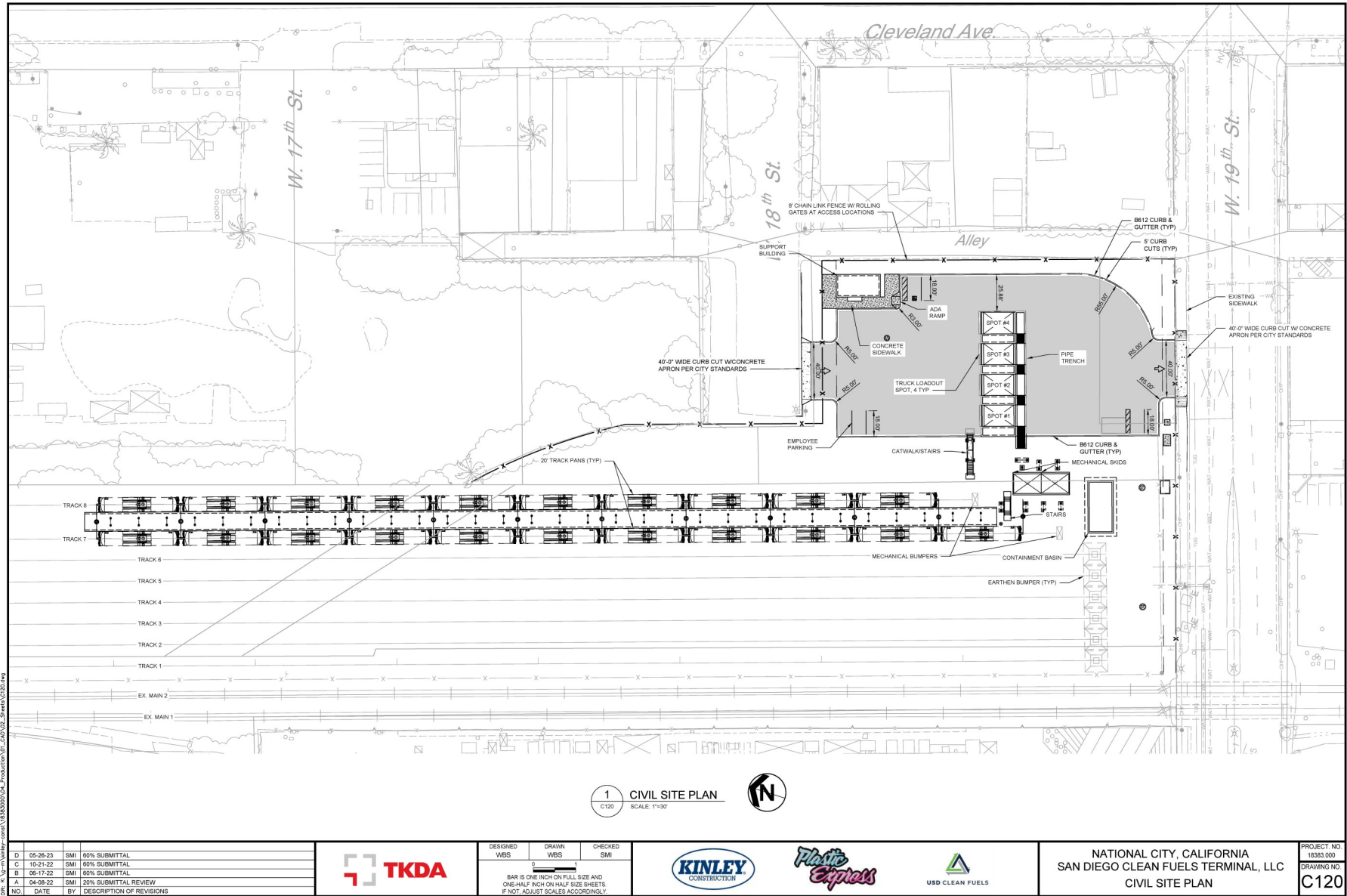
NATIONAL CITY, CALIFORNIA
SAN DIEGO CLEAN FUELS TERMINAL, LLC
OVERALL LAYOUT

PROJECT NO.
18383.000
DRAWING NO.
G112



ECORP Consulting, Inc.
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS

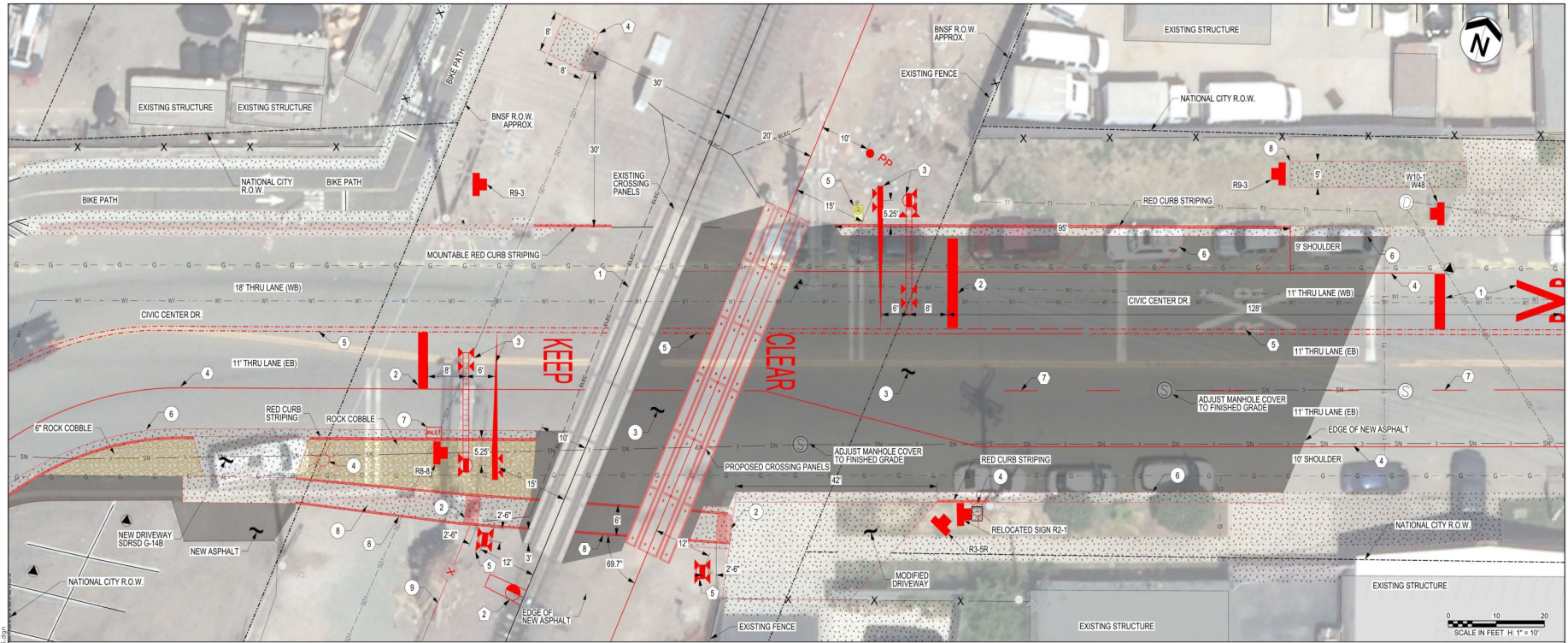
Figure 2. Project Site Layout
2021-285 San Diego Clean Fuels Facility, LLC



ECORP Consulting, Inc.
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS

Source: TKDA

Figure 3. Site Plan
2021-285 San Diego Clean Fuels Facility, LLC



GENERAL NOTES:

- ALL EXISTING SIGNS TO BE MAINTAINED DURING CONSTRUCTION AND RELOCATED AS SHOWN. ENSURE SIGN R8-8 DOES NOT CONFLICT WITH VIEW OF ANY FLASHING LIGHTS ALONG THE PATH OF TRAVEL WHILE IN CONSTRUCTION.
- SIDEWALKS SHALL BE ADA COMPLIANT.
- ALL CROSS SLOPES ARE EXPRESSED IN FT./FT.
- SLURRY SEAL ALL CONFLICTING STRIPES AND/OR PAVEMENT MARKINGS PER CITY STANDARDS AND ALL NEW PAVEMENT WITH NEW STRIPING.
- ALL LANE MARKINGS PER CALTRANS STANDARDS.
- UTILITIES SHOWN FOR REFERENCE ONLY. CONTRACTOR TO FIELD VERIFY.
- ALL IMPROVEMENTS FOR SIDEWALK, CURB AND GUTTER, AND DRIVEWAYS WILL BE CONSTRUCTED PER SDRSD

CONSTRUCTION NOTES:

- PROTECT IN PLACE.
- PLACE DETECTABLE WARNING PANEL PER CALTRANS STD. PLAN A88A.
- REMOVE AND CONSTRUCT NEW FULL DEPTH ASPHALT PAVEMENT BASED ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GEOTECHNICAL REPORT PROVIDED.
- INSTALL STREET LIGHT CALTRANS TYPE 15.
- EXISTING WATER BLOW-OFF VALVE TO BE RELOCATED. LOCATION TBD.
- NEW CURB & GUTTER PER SDRSD G-01 8" CURB.
- RELOCATE CURB INLET TYPE C PER SDRSD D-03A.
- NEW SIDEWALK PER SDRSD G-07.
- EXTEND EXISTING CHAIN LINKED FENCE

WORK BY BNSF:

- PROTECT IN PLACE.
- ROTATE EXISTING TURNOUT SWITCH HEAD BLOCK.
- INSTALL STD. NO. 3-A WARNING DEVICE WITH FLASHING LIGHTS, FACING BOTH DIRECTIONS.
- INSTALL NEW RR SIGNAL CABINETS AND CONCRETE SLAB ON GRADE.
- INSTALL STD. NO. 8 WARNING DEVICE WITH FLASHING LIGHTS.

STRIPING NOTES:

- PAVEMENT MARKINGS AS SHOWN PER CALTRANS STD. PLAN A24B.
- 24" SOLID WHITE STOP LINE PLACED 8' IN ADVANCE OF GATE ARM.
- INSTALL WHITE RIGHT EDGE LINE PER CALTRANS RSP A20B DETAIL 27B.
- INSTALL NO PASSING DOUBLE YELLOW LINES PER CALTRANS STD. PLAN A20A DETAIL 22.
- INSTALL 8" WIDE WHITE PAINT CHEVRON MARKINGS 15' ON CENTER AT 45°.
- INSTALL WHITE LANE LINE PER CALTRANS STD. PLAN A20A DETAIL 9.
- INSTALL 4" SOLID WHITE LINE.

LEGEND:

EXISTING	
REMOVAL	
PROPOSED	
ASPHALT REMOVAL	
LANDING AREA	
NEW ASPHALT	
EXISTING SIGNAGE	
PROPOSED SIGNAGE	

DATE	DESCRIPTION	BY
05-26-23	SM	60% RESUBMITTAL
05-26-23	SM	60% RESUBMITTAL
06-15-22	SM	60% SUBMITTAL
04-08-22	SM	10% SUBMITTAL REVIEW
NO.	DATE	BY
		DESCRIPTION OF REVISIONS



DESIGNED	DRAWN	CHECKED
FG	FG	LPG
BAR IS ONE INCH ON FULL SIZE AND ONE-HALF INCH ON HALF SIZE SHEETS. IF NOT, ADJUST SCALES ACCORDINGLY.		



NATIONAL CITY, CALIFORNIA
SAN DIEGO CLEAN FUELS TERMINAL, LLC
CIVIC CENTER DR. CROSSING
CONSTRUCTION PLAN

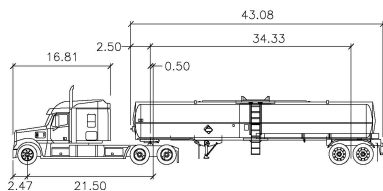
PROJECT NO.	18383.000
DRAWING NO.	T153



ECORP Consulting, Inc.
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS

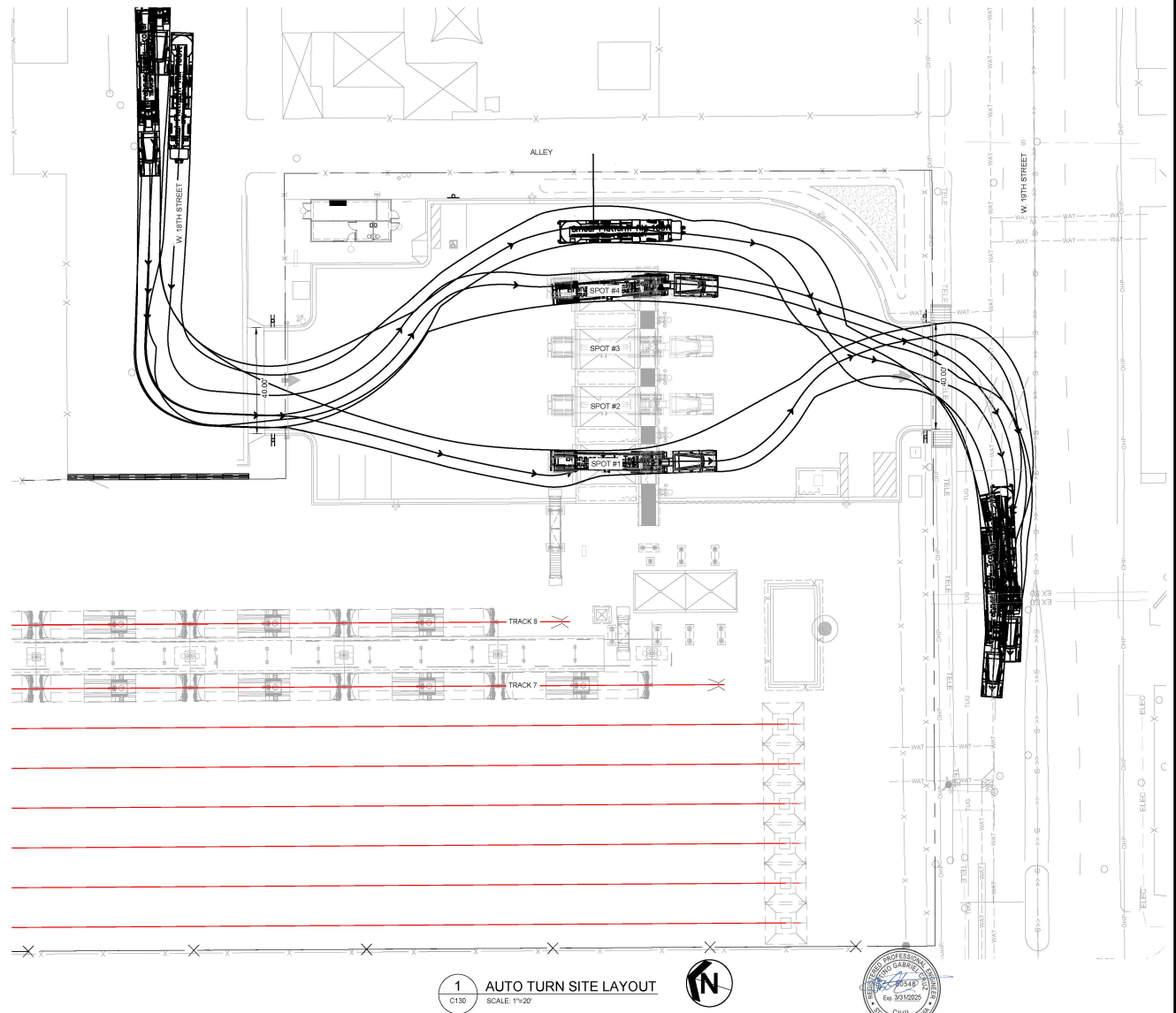
Figure 4. Crossing Detail
2021-285 San Diego Clean Fuels Facility, LLC

CURRENT: JUL 18, 2023 - 4:02pm
 PROJECT: 2021-285 San Diego Clean Fuels Facility, LLC
 DRAWING: 18383.000
 SHEET: C130.dwg



Brenner Tank Trailer

	feet		
Tractor Width	: 8.00	Lock to Lock Time	: 6.0
Trailer Width	: 8.00	Steering Angle	: 40.1
Tractor Track	: 8.00	Articulating Angle	: 70.0
Trailer Track	: 8.00		



1 AUTO TURN SITE LAYOUT
 C130 SCALE: 1"=20'



NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

NO.	DATE	BY	DESCRIPTION OF REVISIONS
1	07/17/2023	TSA	ISSUE FOR PERMITTING



DESIGNED	DRAWN	CHECKED
TSA	VJBS	SMI

BAR IS ONE INCH ON FULL SIZE AND ONE-HALF INCH ON HALF SIZE SHEETS. IF NOT, ADJUST SCALES ACCORDINGLY.



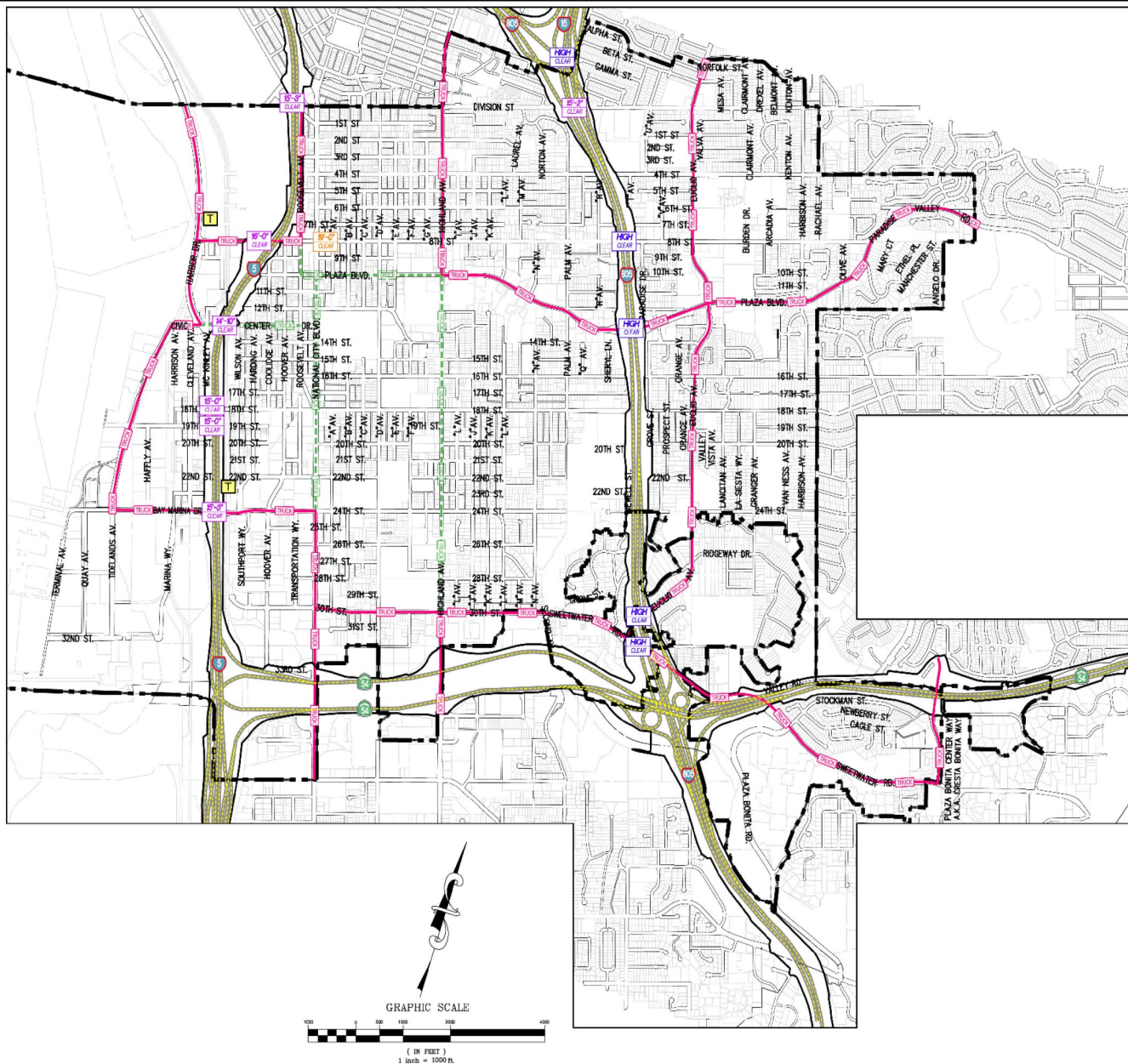
NATIONAL CITY, CALIFORNIA
 SAN DIEGO CLEAN FUELS TERMINAL, LLC
 AUTO TURN SITE LAYOUT

PROJECT NO. 18383.000
DRAWING NO. C130



ECORP Consulting, Inc.
 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS

Figure 5. Transfer Area Detail
 2021-285 San Diego Clean Fuels Facility, LLC



2.5.3 *Public Utilities*

2.5.3.1 *Water Service*

Water service for the City of National City is provided by Sweetwater Authority, which also provides for the City of Chula Vista and portions of the County of San Diego.

2.5.3.2 *Wastewater*

The Proposed Project will provide a 40-foot trailer as an onsite office and restroom facilities for driver use. Project components do not include any connection to the sewer system, and no septic tank will be required. A vendor will be used to dispose of waste from the restroom facilities.

2.5.3.3 *Solid Waste*

Residential and commercial solid waste collection and recycling services for the City are performed under the contract to residents and businesses by EDCO Disposal.

2.6 *Construction*

2.6.1 *Timing*

Construction is anticipated to begin July 2025 and take approximately 6 months to complete.

2.6.2 *Proposed Activities*

The Proposed Project will develop new loading areas, power poles, various bermed spill containment areas, new parking and truck pavements, and various fences and gates. An aboveground pipeline between the tracks will allow the fuel to be pumped on a pipe bridge to the truck loading lanes.

Construction activities will also include clearing and grubbing vegetation; removing barrier, fence, concrete, track, and sidewalk; abandoning or removing site utilities; demolishing foundation walls, structures, and concrete pads; grading; disposing of demolished material and debris; trenching; excavation; installing pipes and pipe culverts; asphalt paving; installing curb and gutter; and painting and striping.

Anticipated construction equipment may include the following:

- Air compressor
- Cement and mortar mixers
- Concrete/industrial saws
- Crane
- Forklift
- Generator set
- Graders

- Paver
- Paving equipment
- Roller
- Rubber tired dozers
- Tractors/loaders/backhoes
- Welders

2.6.3 *Staging*

The proposed construction staging area would be onsite.

3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

This is the main chapter of the Draft EIR, which will include separate sections for each environmental topic. The description of the alternatives will begin with an overview of existing conditions in the Project Area and in the surrounding area to provide a context for the range of alternatives considered and will be sufficient to support the analysis of environmental effects. Determinations regarding levels of significance will be developed for each issue area analyzed in the DEIR. These determinations will be based upon existing technical studies and reports related to the Project. ECORP will also utilize a review of local/regional plans and ordinances as well as consultation with representatives from responsible agencies to conduct the environmental analysis. The environmental issue areas to be evaluated in the EIR include the following:

- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Energy
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources

Direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the Project will be discussed.

The City determined during preparation of the Initial Study Environmental Checklist (Appendix A) that the Project would have either a Less than Significant or No Impact finding associated with the following resources: Aesthetics, Agricultural and Forestry Resources, Geology and Soils, Hydrology and Water Quality, Mineral Resources, Population and Housing, Public Services, Recreation, Utilities and Service Systems, and Wildfire. In addition, the City determined through the Initial Study Environmental Checklist that the Project would have an impact of Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated for the following resource: Cultural Resources. This issue does not warrant further analysis in this DEIR.

3.1 Air Quality

3.1.1 Introduction

This section describes the existing conditions and applicable laws and regulations for air quality and health risk. The section also discusses the Proposed Project's potential to increase air emissions in the region. Impacts on air quality are considered significant if the Proposed Project were to (1) conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan; (2) result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the Project region is designated as nonattainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard; (3) expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations; or (4) result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) that adversely affect a substantial number of people.

This analysis is based on the following technical document, which is included as an appendix to the DEIR:

- Air Quality & Greenhouse Gas Assessment for the San Diego Clean Fuels Facility LLC Project (Appendix B; ECORP 2024a).

3.1.2 Environmental Setting

A region's topography, meteorology, and existing air pollutant sources determine its air quality. These factors are discussed below along with the current regulatory structure that applies to the San Diego Air Basin (SDAB), which encompasses the Project Area, pursuant to the regulatory authority of the San Diego Air Pollution Control District (SDAPCD).

3.1.2.1 San Diego Air Basin

The Project Area is in National City in San Diego County (County). This region is within the SDAB. The topography in the SDAB varies greatly, from beaches in the west to mountains and desert in the east. Much of the topography in between consists of mesa tops intersected by canyon areas. The region's topography influences air flow and the dispersal and movement of pollutants in the basin. The mountains to the east prevent air flow mixing and prohibit the dispersal of pollutants in that direction.

Regional climate and local meteorological conditions influence ambient air quality. The climate of the SDAB is dominated by a semi-permanent, high-pressure cell located over the Pacific Ocean. This cell, which is called the Pacific High-Pressure Cell (or Zone), influences the direction of prevailing winds (westerly to northwesterly) and maintains clear skies for much of the year (ECORP 2024).

3.1.2.2 Criteria Air Pollutants

Criteria air pollutants are defined as those pollutants for which the federal and State governments have established air quality standards for outdoor or ambient concentrations to protect public health with a determined margin of safety. Ozone, coarse particulate matter (PM₁₀), and fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) are generally considered to be regional pollutants because they or their precursors affect air quality on a regional scale. Pollutants such as carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen oxides (NO_x), and sulfur dioxide (SO₂) are local pollutants because they tend to accumulate in the air locally. PM is also considered a local

pollutant in certain scenarios. The region is designated as a nonattainment area for the federal ozone (O₃) standard and as a nonattainment area for the State standards for O₃, PM₁₀, and PM_{2.5} (CARB 2022a). Table 3.1-1 summarizes health effects commonly associated with criteria pollutants.

Table 3.1-1. Summary of Criteria Air Pollutants Sources and Effects		
Pollutant	Major Manufactured Sources	Human Health and Welfare Effects
CO	An odorless, colorless gas formed when carbon in fuel is not burned completely; it is a component of motor vehicle exhaust.	Reduces the ability of blood to deliver oxygen to vital tissues, which affects the cardiovascular and nervous systems. Impairs vision, causes dizziness, and can lead to unconsciousness or death.
NO _x	A reddish-brown gas formed during fuel combustion for motor vehicles, energy utilities, and industrial sources.	Respiratory irritant that aggravates lung and heart problems. It is a precursor to ozone and acid rain and causes brown discoloration of the atmosphere.
O ₃	Formed by a chemical reaction between reactive organic gases (ROG) and nitrogen oxides (NO _x) in the presence of sunlight. Common sources of these precursor pollutants include motor vehicle exhaust, industrial emissions, solvents, paints, and landfills.	Irritates and causes inflammation of the mucous membranes and lung airways; causes wheezing, coughing, and pain when inhaling deeply; decreases lung capacity; aggravates lung and heart problems. Damages plants; reduces crop yield.
PM _{2.5} & PM ₁₀	Formed by power plants, steel mills, chemical plants, unpaved roads and parking lots, wood-burning stoves and fireplaces, automobiles, and others.	Increased respiratory symptoms, such as irritation of the airways, coughing, or difficulty breathing; aggravated asthma; development of chronic bronchitis; irregular heartbeat; nonfatal heart attacks; and premature death in people with heart or lung disease. Impairs visibility (haze).
SO ₂	An odorless, colorless gas formed when carbon in fuel is not burned completely; it is a component of motor vehicle exhaust.	Reduces the ability of blood to deliver oxygen to vital tissues, which affects the cardiovascular and nervous systems. Impairs vision, causes dizziness, and can lead to unconsciousness or death.

Notes: CO = carbon monoxide; NO_x = nitrogen oxides; O₃ = ozone; PM_{2.5} = Particulate Matter Less than 2.5 Microns in Diameter; PM₁₀ = Particulate Matter Less than 2.5 Microns in Diameter; SO₂ = sulfur dioxide
Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 2024.

Carbon Monoxide

In the urban environment, CO is associated primarily with the incomplete combustion of fossil fuels in motor vehicles. CO combines with hemoglobin in the bloodstream and reduces the amount of oxygen that can be circulated through the body. High CO concentrations can cause headaches, aggravate cardiovascular disease, and impair central nervous system functions. CO concentrations can vary greatly over comparatively short distances. Relatively high concentrations of CO are typically found near crowded intersections and along heavy roadways with slow-moving traffic. Even under the most severe meteorological and traffic conditions, high concentrations of CO are limited to locations within relatively short distances (i.e., up to 600 feet or 185 meters) of the source. Overall CO emissions are decreasing because of the Federal Motor Vehicle Control Program, which has mandated increasingly lower emission levels for vehicles manufactured since 1973.

Nitrogen Oxides

Nitrogen gas composes about 80 percent of the air and is naturally occurring. At high temperatures and under certain conditions, nitrogen can combine with oxygen to form several different gaseous compounds collectively called nitric oxides. Motor vehicle emissions are the main source of NO_x in urban areas. NO_x is very toxic to animals and humans because of its ability to form nitric acid with water in the eyes, lungs, mucus membrane, and skin. In animals, long-term exposure to NO_x increases susceptibility to respiratory infections, and lowers resistance to such diseases as pneumonia and influenza. Laboratory studies show that susceptible humans, such as asthmatics, who are exposed to high concentrations of NO_x can suffer from lung irritation or possible lung damage. Precursors of NO_x, such as nitric oxide and nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), attribute to the formation of O₃ and PM_{2.5}. Epidemiological studies have also shown associations between NO_x concentrations and daily mortality from respiratory and cardiovascular causes and with hospital admissions for respiratory conditions.

Ozone

Ozone is a secondary pollutant, which means that it is not directly emitted. It is formed when volatile organic compounds (VOC), which are also known as reactive organic gases (ROG), and NO_x undergo photochemical reactions that occur only in the presence of sunlight. The primary source of ROG emissions is unburned hydrocarbons in motor vehicle and other internal combustion engine exhaust. Sunlight and hot weather cause ground-level O₃ to form. Ground-level O₃ is the primary constituent of smog. Because O₃ formation occurs over extended periods of time, both O₃ and its precursors are transported by wind; therefore, high O₃ concentrations can occur in areas that are distant from the sources of its constituent pollutants.

People with lung disease, children, older adults, and people who are active can be affected when O₃ levels exceed ambient air quality standards. Numerous scientific studies have linked ground-level O₃ exposure to a variety of problems including lung irritation, difficult breathing, respiratory illnesses, and permanent lung damage to those with repeated exposure.

Particulate Matter

Particulate matter includes both aerosols and solid particulates of a wide range of sizes and composition. The particles of concern are smaller than or equal to 10 microns in diameter size (PM₁₀) and smaller than or equal to 2.5 microns in diameter (PM_{2.5}). Smaller particulates are of greater concern because they can penetrate deeper into the lungs than larger particles. PM₁₀ is generally emitted directly from mechanical processes that crush or grind larger particles or cause dust resuspension, which is typically the result of construction activities and vehicular travel. PM₁₀ generally settles out of the atmosphere rapidly and is not readily transported over large distances. PM_{2.5} is directly emitted in combustion exhaust and is formed in atmospheric reactions between various gaseous pollutants, which include NO_x, sulfur oxides (SO_x), and VOCs. PM_{2.5} can remain suspended in the atmosphere for days or weeks and can be transported long distances.

The principal health effects of airborne PM are on the respiratory system. Short-term exposure of high PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ levels are associated with premature mortality and increased hospital admissions and

emergency room visits. Long-term exposure is associated with premature mortality and chronic respiratory disease. According to the USEPA, some people are much more sensitive than others to breathing PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}. The elderly and people with influenza or chronic respiratory and cardiovascular diseases may suffer worse illnesses; people with bronchitis can expect aggravated symptoms; and children may experience decline in lung function due to breathing in PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}. Other sensitive groups include smokers and people who cannot breathe well through their noses. Exercising athletes are also considered sensitive because many breathe through their mouths.

3.1.2.3 Toxic Air Contaminants

In addition to the criteria pollutants discussed above, toxic air contaminants (TAC) are another group of pollutants of concern. The US EPA considers TACs to be either carcinogenic or noncarcinogenic based on the health effects associated with exposure to the pollutant. For regulatory purposes, carcinogenic The US EPA assumes TACs have no safe threshold below which health impacts would not occur, and cancer risk is expressed as excess cancer cases per one million exposed individuals. Noncarcinogenic TACs differ in that there is generally assumed to be a safe level of exposure below which no negative health impact is believed to occur. Regulatory authorities determine these levels on a pollutant-by-pollutant basis. Carcinogenic TACs can also have noncarcinogenic health hazard levels.

There are many different types of TACs with varying degrees of toxicity. Sources of TACs include industrial processes such as petroleum refining and chrome plating operations, commercial operations such as gasoline stations and dry cleaners, and motor vehicle exhaust. Additionally, diesel engines emit a complex mixture of air pollutants composed of gaseous and solid material. The solid emissions in diesel exhaust are known as diesel particulate matter (DPM). In 1998, California identified DPM as a TAC based on its potential to cause cancer, premature death, and other health problems (e.g., asthma attacks and other respiratory symptoms). Those most vulnerable are children, whose lungs are still developing, and the elderly, who may have other serious health problems. Overall, diesel engine emissions are responsible for the majority of California's known cancer risk from outdoor air pollutants. Diesel engines also contribute to California's PM_{2.5} air quality problems. Public exposure to TACs can result from emissions from normal day-to-day operations as well as from accidental releases of hazardous materials during upset conditions. The health effects of TACs include cancer, birth defects, neurological damage, and death.

3.1.2.4 Diesel Exhaust

As noted above, CARB identified DPM as a TAC. DPM differs from other TACs in that it is not a single substance but rather a complex mixture of hundreds of substances. Diesel exhaust is a complex mixture of particles and gases produced when an engine burns diesel fuel. DPM is a concern based on the relationship between diesel exhaust exposure and lung cancer and other adverse health effects. DPM includes the particle-phase constituents in diesel exhaust. The chemical composition and particle sizes of DPM vary between different engine types (i.e., heavy-duty, light-duty), engine operating conditions (i.e., idle, accelerate, decelerate), fuel formulations (i.e., high/low sulfur fuel), and an engine's year of the manufacture (USEPA 2002). Some short-term (acute) effects of diesel exhaust include eye, nose, throat, and lung irritation; diesel exhaust can also cause coughs, headaches, light-headedness, and nausea. DPM

poses the greatest health risk among the TACs; due to their extremely small size, these particles can be inhaled and eventually trapped in the bronchial and alveolar regions of the lung.

3.1.2.5 Ethanol

The storage of ethanol can potentially result in the emission of VOCs, which may pose health risks upon inhalation. The health effects from breathing VOCs emitted during ethanol storage depend on factors such as the concentration of VOCs, duration of exposure, and individual susceptibility. Some possible health effects associated with exposure to VOCs from stored ethanol include respiratory irritation, headaches and dizziness, eye irritation, nausea, and vomiting. Chronic exposure to certain VOCs emitted during the storage of ethanol may be associated with long-term health risks, including damage to the liver, kidneys, and central nervous system. It is important to note that health risks depend on the specific types and concentrations of VOCs emitted during ethanol storage. Adequate ventilation and proper storage practices can help minimize the release of VOCs.

3.1.2.6 Carbon Monoxide Hot Spots

CO exceedances are caused by vehicular emissions, primarily from idling at congested intersections. Concentrations of CO are a direct function of the number of vehicles, length of delay at intersections, and traffic flow conditions. Under certain meteorological conditions, CO concentrations that are close to congested intersections that experience high levels of traffic and elevated background concentrations may reach unhealthy levels, which will affect nearby sensitive receptors. Given their high traffic volume potential, areas of high CO concentrations, or *hot spots*, are typically associated with intersections that are projected to operate at unacceptable levels of service during peak commute hours. Transport of CO is extremely limited because it disperses rapidly with distance from the source under normal meteorological conditions, and vehicle emissions standards have become increasingly stringent in the last 20 years.

3.1.2.7 Ambient Air Quality

Ambient air quality at the Project Site can be inferred from ambient air quality measurements conducted at nearby air quality monitoring stations in comparison to health-based air quality standards established by California (California Ambient Air Quality Standards [CAAQS]) and the USEPA (National Ambient Air Quality Standards [NAAQS]). CARB and the USEPA compare ambient air criteria pollutant measurements with the CAAQS and NAAQS, respectively, to assess the status of air quality of regions. CARB maintains more than 60 monitoring stations throughout California. The Sherman Elementary School (450 24th Street, San Diego) air quality monitoring station, located approximately 3.5 miles north of the Project Area, is the closest station to the site and monitors ambient concentrations of O₃ and PM_{2.5}. The Chula Vista monitoring station (80 East J Street, Chula Vista), located approximately 4 miles southeast of the Project, monitors ambient concentrations of PM₁₀. The Sherman Elementary School monitoring station (450B 24th Street, San Diego) located approximately 3 miles north of the Project Site, monitors ambient concentrations of O₃ and PM_{2.5}. Ambient emission concentrations will vary due to localized variations in emission sources and climate and should be considered *generally* representative of ambient concentrations in the development area. Table 3.1-2 summarizes the published data concerning O₃, PM₁₀, and PM_{2.5} from the Sherman Elementary School and East J Street Chula Vista monitoring stations for each year that the monitoring data was provided.

Table 3.1-2. Summary of Ambient Air Quality Data			
Pollutant Scenario	2020	2021	2022
O₃ – Sherman Elementary School			
Max 1-hour concentration (ppm)	0.115	0.076	0.087
Max 8-hour concentration (ppm) (state/federal)	0.088/0.087	0.064/0.063	0.063/0.063
Number of days above 1-hour standard (state)	2	0	0
Number of days above 8-hour standard (state/federal)	3/3	0/0	0/0
PM₁₀ – J Street			
Max 24-hour concentration (µg/m ³) (state/federal)	*/178.5	*/122.8	*/150.9
Annual Average (federal)	50.8	43.0	42.1
Number of days above 24-hour standard (state/federal)	*/15.0	*/0.0	*/0.0
PM_{2.5} – Sherman Elementary School			
Max 24-hour concentration (µg/m ³) (state/federal)	54.4/51.9	26.3/25.6	20.8/20.8
Number of days above federal 24-hour standard	6.1	0.0	0.0

Notes: * = Insufficient data available; µg/m³ = micrograms per cubic meter; ppm = parts per million
Sources: California Air Resources Board 2023a

The USEPA and CARB designate air basins or portions of air basins and counties as being in *attainment* or *nonattainment* for each criteria pollutant. Areas that do not meet the ambient air quality standards are classified as nonattainment areas. Acceptable exceedances of the maximum value vary for the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) from fourth highest concentration for the 8-hour O₃ standard to 99th percentile to the SO₂ standard. The NAAQS for O₃, PM₁₀, and PM_{2.5} are based on statistical calculations over one- to three-year periods depending on the pollutant. The California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS) are not to be exceeded during a three-year period. Table 3.1-3 includes the attainment status for the San Diego County portion of the SDAB, which encompasses the Project Area.

Table 3.1-3. Attainment Status of Criteria Pollutants in the San Diego Air Basin		
Pollutant	State Designation	Federal Designation
O ₃	Nonattainment	Severe Nonattainment
PM ₁₀	Nonattainment	Unclassified/Attainment
PM _{2.5}	Nonattainment	Unclassified/Attainment

Table 3.1-3. Attainment Status of Criteria Pollutants in the San Diego Air Basin

Pollutant	State Designation	Federal Designation
CO	Attainment	Unclassified/Attainment
NO ₂	Attainment	Unclassified/Attainment
SO ₂	Attainment	Unclassified/Attainment

Source: California Air Resources Board 2022a

The determination of whether an area meets the State and federal ambient air quality standards is based on air quality monitoring data. Some areas are unclassified, which means there is insufficient monitoring data for determining whether they are attainment or nonattainment. Unclassified areas are typically treated as being in attainment. Because the attainment/nonattainment designation is pollutant-specific, an area may be classified as nonattainment for one pollutant and attainment for another. Similarly, because the State and federal standards differ, an area could be classified as attainment for the federal standards of a pollutant and as nonattainment for the State standards of the same pollutant. The region is designated as a nonattainment area for the federal O₃ standard and is also a nonattainment area for the state standards for O₃, PM₁₀, and PM_{2.5} (CARB 2022a).

3.1.2.8 Sensitive Receptors

Sensitive receptors are defined as facilities or land uses that include members of the population who are particularly sensitive to the effects of air pollutants, such as children, the elderly, and people with illnesses. Examples of sensitive receptors are residences, schools, hospitals, and daycare centers. CARB has identified the following groups of individuals as the most likely to be affected by air pollution: the elderly over 65, children under 14, athletes, and persons with cardiovascular and chronic respiratory diseases such as asthma, emphysema, and bronchitis. The Project Area is surrounded by a Costco Optical Laboratory directly to the west, and industrial and retail on all other sides. The nearest sensitive receptor is the McKinley Apartments Complex, which is approximately 380 feet east of the Project. The nearest school is Kimball Elementary School, which is located approximately 0.3-mile (1,580 feet) east of the Project.

3.1.3 Regulatory Setting

3.1.3.1 Federal

Federal Clean Air Act

The federal Clean Air Act (CAA) was enacted in 1970 to protect and enhance the quality of the Nation's air resources. The CAA and the CAA Amendments of 1971 required the USEPA to establish the NAAQS, with states retaining the option to adopt more stringent standards or to include other specific pollutants. On April 2, 2007, the Supreme Court found that carbon dioxide (CO₂) is an air pollutant covered by the CAA; however, no NAAQS have been established for CO₂.

These standards are the levels of air quality considered safe, with an adequate margin of safety, to protect public health and welfare. They are designed to protect those *sensitive receptors* that are most susceptible to further respiratory distress, such as asthmatics, the elderly, very young children, people already weakened by other disease or illness, and people engaged in strenuous work or exercise. Healthy adults can tolerate occasional exposure to air pollutant concentrations that are considerably higher than these minimum standards before adverse effects are observed.

The USEPA has classified air basins (or portions thereof) as being in attainment, nonattainment, or unclassified areas for each criteria air pollutant; this classification is based on whether the NAAQS have been achieved. Unclassified areas are designated as such because inadequate air quality data were available as a basis for a nonattainment or attainment designation.

3.1.3.2 State

California Clean Air Act

The California Clean Air Act (CCAA) allows the State to adopt ambient air quality standards and other regulations provided that they are at least as stringent as federal standards. CARB, which is a part of the California Environmental Protection Agency, is responsible for the coordination and administration of both federal and State air pollution control programs within California, which includes setting the CAAQS. CARB also conducts research, compiles emission inventories, develops suggested control measures, and provides oversight of local programs. CARB establishes emissions standards for motor vehicles sold in California, consumer products (e.g., hairspray, aerosol paints, and barbecue lighter fluid), and various types of commercial equipment. It also sets fuel specifications to reduce vehicular emissions. CARB is also primarily responsible for the development of California's State Implementation Plan (SIP), for which it works closely with the federal government and local air districts.

California State Implementation Plan

The federal CAA (and its subsequent amendments) requires each state to prepare an air quality control plan referred to as the SIP. The SIP is a living document that is periodically modified to reflect the latest emissions inventories, plans, and rules and regulations of air basins as reported by the agencies with jurisdiction over them. The CAA Amendments dictate that states containing areas violating the NAAQS revise their SIPs to include extra control measures to reduce air pollution. The SIP includes strategies and control measures to attain the NAAQS by deadlines established by the CAA. The USEPA is responsible for reviewing all SIPs to determine if they conform to the requirements of the CAA.

State law makes CARB the lead agency for all purposes related to the SIP. Local air districts and other agencies prepare SIP elements and submit them to CARB for review and approval. CARB then forwards SIP revisions to the USEPA for approval and publication in the Federal Register. The SDAPCD and the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) are responsible for developing and implementing the clean air plan for attainment and maintenance of the ambient air quality standards in the SDAB. The County Regional Air Quality Strategy (RAQS) was initially adopted in 1991 and is updated on a periodic basis. The RAQS was updated in 1995, 1998, 2001, 2004, 2009, 2016, and most recently in 2022. The RAQS outlines the SDAPCD's plans and control measures, which are designed to attain the State air quality standards for

O₃. The SDAPCD has also developed the SDAB's input to the SIP, which is required under the federal CAA for pollutants that are designated as being in a nonattainment area of federal air quality standards for the basin.

The RAQS relies on information from CARB and SANDAG, which includes mobile and area source emissions, as well as information regarding projected growth, to project future emissions and establish the strategies necessary for the reduction of emissions through regulatory controls. The RAQS and the SIP utilized the *2021 Regional Plan* prepared by the SANDAG to project future growth in the air basin. The SIP relies on the same information from SANDAG to develop emission inventories and emission reduction strategies that are included in the attainment demonstration for the air basin. The plan also includes rules and regulations that have been adopted by the SDAPCD to control emissions from stationary sources. Stationary source control measures are developed by the SDAPCD to set limits on the amounts of emissions from various types of sources and/or requiring specific emissions control technologies. In order to implement control measures, a permit system is used to impose controls on new and modified stationary sources and to ensure compliance with regulations by prescribing specific operation conditions or equipment on a source.

The SDAPCD adopted the *2020 Plan for Attaining the National Ozone Standards*, which was voted for approval by the District Board in early October 2020. The plan was submitted to CARB for their approval, and then to the USEPA as a revision to the California SIP for attaining the O₃ standards. The *2020 Plan for Attaining the National Ozone Standards* demonstrates how the region will further reduce air pollutant emissions in order to attain the current NAAQS for O₃ by specified dates. SANDAG was also involved in the preparation of the document through the collection and review of the data necessary to generate comprehensive emission inventories, which included socio-economic projections and industrial and travel activities (SDAPCD 2020).

Tanner Air Toxics Act & Air Toxics "Hot Spot" Information and Assessment Act

CARB's Statewide comprehensive air toxics program was established in 1983 with Assembly Bill (AB) 1807, the Toxic Air Contaminant Identification and Control Act (Tanner Air Toxics Act of 1983). AB 1807 created California's program to reduce exposure to air toxics and set forth a formal procedure for CARB to designate substances as TACs. Once a TAC is identified, CARB adopts an airborne toxics control measure for sources that emit the designated TAC. If there is a safe threshold for a substance at which there is no toxic effect, the control measure must reduce exposure to below that threshold. If there is no safe threshold, the measure must incorporate toxics best available control technology to minimize emissions.

CARB also administers the state's mobile source emissions control program and oversees air quality programs established by State statute, such as AB 2588, the Air Toxics *Hot Spots* Information and Assessment Act of 1987. Under AB 2588, TAC emissions from individual facilities are quantified and prioritized by the air quality management district or air pollution control district. High priority facilities are required to perform a Health Risk Assessment (HRA) and, if specific thresholds are exceeded, to communicate the results to the public in the form of notices and public meetings. In September 1992, the *Hot Spots* Act was amended by Senate Bill (SB) 1731, which required facilities that pose a significant health risk to the community to reduce their risk through a risk management plan.

In-Use Off-Road Diesel-Fueled Fleets Regulation (Off-Road Regulations)

In November 2022, CARB approved amendments to the In-Use Off-Road Diesel-Fueled Fleets Regulation (Off-Road Regulation), which were aimed at further reducing emissions from the off-road sector. The amendments require fleets to phase-out use of the oldest and highest polluting off-road diesel vehicles in California; prohibit the addition of high-emitting vehicles to a fleet; and require the use of R99 or R100 renewable diesel in off-road diesel vehicles. Off-road vehicles that are subject to the amended rule are used in construction, mining, industrial operations, and other industries. The amended rule went into effect in January 2024.

According to CARB, the amended rule will reduce harmful air pollutants from over 150,000 in-use off-road diesel vehicles that operate in California and is expected to yield \$5.7 billion in health benefits, prevent more than 570 air-quality related deaths and nearly 200 hospitalizations and emergency room visits from 2023 to 2038. From 2024 through 2038, the current amendments will generate an additional reduction to the current regulation of approximately 31,087 tons of NO_x and 2,717 tons of PM_{2.5}. About half of the additional reduction associated with the amended rule is expected to be realized within the first five years of implementation (CARB 2022b).

3.1.3.3 Local

National City General Plan

As described in Section 2.0, *Project Description*, the Project Site has a General Plan land use designation of Industrial. This designation provides for employment intensive uses, light manufacturing, business parks, research and development, technology centers, corporate and support office uses, “green” industry, recycling facilities, supporting retail uses, auto, truck and equipment sales and related services (i.e., auto service and repair), large format retail, storage facilities, warehousing and distribution, and other compatible uses. According to the City 2011 General Plan, 3.2 million square feet of industrial square footage is anticipated in the city by the year 2030.

The National City 2011 General Plan and the recent 2024 Focused General Plan, which contains an updated Land Use Element and Transportation Element, identifies goals and policies that are meant to balance the City’s actions regarding land use, circulation and other issues with their potential effects on air quality. The following relevant and applicable policies from the City’s 2011 General Plan and the recent 2024 Focused General Plan have been identified for the Project:

- **Goal HEJ-2:** Improved air quality to protect human and environmental health and minimized air quality impacts on sensitive population groups.
- **Policy HEJ-2.1:** Avoid land use conflicts by ensuring residential, public assembly, and other sensitive land uses are adequately buffered from industrial land uses that may pose a threat to human health, where feasible.
- **Policy HEJ-2.2:** Encourage existing stationary sources of emissions to use feasible measures to minimize emissions that could have potential impacts on air quality and incentivize non-

conforming uses to relocate to appropriate industrial zones if currently impacting sensitive land uses.

- **Policy HEJ-2.7:** Designate truck routes that avoid sensitive land uses, where feasible.
- **Policy T-8.1:** Work with the responsible and affected agencies to enhance infrastructure to facilitate timely movement of goods and security of trade, including facilities used for efficient intermodal transfer between truck, rail, and marine transport.
- **Policy T-8.2:** Enforce the use of designated truck routes for both local and regional goods transport. Route truck traffic away from residential zones and promote safety at crossings.
- **Policy T-8.4:** Work with railroad operators to facilitate the transport of goods by rail through the community by coordinating schedules to minimize impacts during peak travel periods.

National City Municipal Code

In addition to the City General Plan, the National City Municipal Code contains a performance standard addressing air pollutant emissions specific to all development in the city. Section 18.40.030, *Performance Standards for all Development and Land Uses*, requires that no visible dust, gasses, or smoke shall be emitted from any land uses within the city unless it is a source permitted by SDAPCD.

San Diego Air Pollution Control District

In addition to the RAQS, the SDAPCD is primarily responsible for controlling emissions from construction activity throughout the SDAB. In December 2005, the SDAPCD adopted the *Measures to Reduce Particulate Matter* in the SDAB. This document identifies fugitive dust as the major source of directly emitted particulate matter in the SDAB, with mobile sources and residential wood combustion as minor contributors. Data on PM_{2.5} source apportionment indicates that the main contributors to PM_{2.5} in the SDAB are combustion organic carbon and ammonium sulfate and ammonium nitrate from combustion sources. The main contributors to PM₁₀ include resuspended soil and road dust from unpaved and paved roads, construction and demolition sites, and mineral extraction and processing. Based on the report's evaluation of control measures recommended by CARB to reduce particulate matter emissions, the SDAPCD adopted Rule 55, the Fugitive Dust Rule, in June 2009. The SDAPCD requires that construction activities implement the measures listed in Rule 55 to minimize fugitive dust emissions. Rule 55 requires the following:

- No person shall engage in construction or demolition activity in a manner that discharges visible dust emissions into the atmosphere beyond the property line for a period or periods aggregating more than 3 minutes in any 60-minute period.
- Visible roadway dust as a result of active operations, spillage from transport trucks, erosion, or track-out/carry-out shall be minimized by the use of any of the equally effective track-out/carry-out and erosion control measures listed in Rule 55 that apply to the project or operation. These measures include track-out grates or gravel beds at each egress point; wheel-washing at each egress during muddy conditions; soil binders, chemical soil stabilizers, geotextiles, mulching, or seeding; watering for dust control; and using secured tarps or cargo covering, watering, or

treating of transported material for outbound transport trucks. Erosion control measures must be removed at the conclusion of each workday when active operations cease, or every 24 hours for continuous operations.

There are other SDAPCD rules and regulations, not detailed here, that may apply to the Proposed Project, but are administrative or descriptive in nature. These include rules associated with fees, enforcement and penalty actions, and variance procedures. The following additional rules and regulations would apply to the construction of the Project:

- Rule 20 *New Source Review* requires that any new or modified source of air emissions in the SDAB obtain an Authority to Construct from the SDAPCD prior to construction of the Project. Specifically Rule 20.2 applies to this Project as it will be likely be considered a Non-Major Stationary Source. An Air Quality Impact Analysis must be conducted and excepted by the SDAPCD if the Project's stationary source emissions exceed those presented in Table 20.2 – 1 of SDAPCD Rule 20.2.
- Rule 50 *Visible Emissions* establishes limits to the opacity of emissions within the SDAPCD.
- Rule 51 *Nuisance* prohibits emissions that cause injury, detriment, nuisance, or annoyance to any considerable number of persons or to the public; or that endanger the comfort, repose, health, or safety of any such persons or the public; or that cause injury or damage to business or property.
- Rule 52 *Particulate Matter* establishes limits to the discharge of any particulate matter from non-stationary sources.
- Rule 54 *Dust and Fumes* establishes limits to the amount of dust or fume discharged into the atmosphere in any single hour.
- Rule 67.0.1 *Architectural Coatings* requires manufacturers, distributors, and end users of architectural and industrial maintenance coatings to reduce VOC emissions from the use of such coatings, primarily by placing limits on the VOC content of various coating categories.
- Rule 67.7 *Cutback and Emulsified Asphalts* prohibits the sale and use of cutback and emulsified asphalt materials for the paving, construction, or maintenance of parking lots, driveways, streets, and highways that exceed the County standards for the percent by volume of VOC that evaporate into the atmosphere under temperate conditions.

Assembly Bill 617

AB 617 was established to reduce exposure to pollution in communities with high emission source densities. The Project is located in the Portside Community, which is identified as a community with a high amount of emission sources. The *Maritime Clean Air Strategy* and *Community Emissions Reduction Plan* discussed below were developed through AB 617 programs to assist the community in reducing exposure to harmful emissions.

Portside Community Emissions Reduction Plan

The Portside Community Emissions Reduction Plan (CERP) was adopted by both SDAPCD and CARB in 2021. The CERP aims to reduce the Portside Community's exposure to emissions and promote health and environmental justice for the Portside Community. The CERP is designed to guide the community and businesses to achieve emissions beyond regulatory standards by establishing various strategies to reduce criteria air pollutants emissions from various activities. The goals of the CERP are to be adjusted over time, as technology permits.

3.1.4 Impacts Analysis

3.1.4.1 Methodology

Air quality impacts were assessed in accordance with methodologies recommended by the SDAPCD. Where criteria air pollutant quantification was required, emissions were modeled using the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod), version 2022.1. CalEEMod is a statewide land use emissions computer model designed to quantify potential criteria pollutant emissions associated with both construction and operations from a variety of land use projects. Project construction-generated air pollutant emissions were calculated using CalEEMod model defaults for San Diego County and information provided by the Project proponent, such 7.5 of site acreage, 7.49 of which is assumed to be paved.

Operational air pollutant emissions were calculated based on an office building square footage of 500 square feet identified in the Project Site plans, the Project's daily throughput, truck tanker capacity, and trip distances provided by US Compliance, which is a consultant firm specializing in environmental, health, and safety compliance. Specifically, Project trucks would deliver renewable diesel to local retailers within a 35-mile radius, with an average trip distance of 12.3 miles per trip. In addition, the fleet mix was adjusted to reflect 72 heavy-duty trucks making both an inbound trip and outbound trip daily for a total of 144 daily heavy-duty truck trips and 25 passenger automobile trips associated with the onsite workers. In addition, mainline rail emissions were calculated with BNSF references, and operational emissions were calculated with CARB Vision Access Database emission factors. Project train emission calculations account for 65 miles of train travel per visit, which is the distance of Project train travel within the SDAB. Emissions from switching locomotives were also quantified. Thirty minutes per day is used as a "worst case" estimate for local switching activities. In addition to operational emissions that were calculated using CalEEMod, health conservative VOC/ROG emissions were calculated by the US Compliance for the fuel transfer process.

Additionally, offsite DPM concentrations resulting from onsite and offsite Project trucking operations within 1,000 feet of the Project were modeled. DPM emissions were calculated using the CalEEMod program and supplemental calculations prepared by ECORP Consulting, Inc. Mainline rail DPM emissions were calculated with BNSF references. Emissions were also quantified for onsite and offsite heavy duty truck traffic and switching engine operations.

AERMOD version 21112 with a unitized emission rate was used to determine the source receptor relationship for the onsite and offsite sources of DPM associated with both Project construction and

operations. AERMOD is a steady-state plume model that incorporates air dispersion based on planetary boundary layer turbulence structure and scaling concepts, which includes treatment of both surface and elevated sources, and both simple and complex terrain. Hot Spots Analysis & Reporting Program (HARP2, California Air Pollution Control Offices Association [CAPCOA] 2022) implements the latest regulatory guidance to develop inputs to the USEPA AERMOD dispersion model for dispersion and as the inputs for calculations for the various health risk levels. The resultant concentration values at vicinity sensitive receptors were then used to calculate chronic and carcinogenic health risk using the standardized equations contained in the *Office of Environment Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) Guidance Manual for Preparation of Health Risk Assessments* (2015).

3.1.4.2 Thresholds of Significance

Thresholds used to evaluate impacts related to air quality are based on applicable criteria in Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines. A significant impact related to air quality would occur if the Project would:

- 1) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan;
- 2) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the Project region is in a non-attainment area under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard;
- 3) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations; or
- 4) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people.

The significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district (SDAPCD) may be relied upon to make the above determinations. According to the SDAPCD, an air quality impact is considered significant if the Proposed Project would violate any ambient air quality standard, contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation, or expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations. The SDAPCD recommends the usage of San Diego County screening level thresholds of significance for air quality (San Diego County 2007) for construction and operational activities of land use development projects, such as that proposed, as shown in Table 3.1-4. The County has established screening level thresholds (SLTs) to assist lead agencies in determining the significance of project-level air quality impacts within the county. Emissions in excess of the County's SLTs, shown in Table 3.1-4, would be expected to have a significant impact on air quality because an exceedance of the SLTs is anticipated to contribute to CAAQS and NAAQS violations in the county.

Table 3.1-4. SDAPCD Significance Thresholds		
Air Pollutant	Daily Construction and Operational Activities (lbs/day)	Annual Construction and Operational Activities (tons/year)
Reactive Organic Gas	75	13.7
carbon monoxide	550	40

Table 3.1-4. SDAPCD Significance Thresholds

Air Pollutant	Daily Construction and Operational Activities (lbs/day)	Annual Construction and Operational Activities (tons/year)
nitrogen oxide	250	100
sulfur oxide	250	40
Coarse Particulate Matter	100	15
Fine Particulate Matter	55	10

Source: San Diego County 2007

By its very nature, air pollution is largely a cumulative impact. No single project is sufficient in size, by itself, to result in nonattainment of ambient air quality standards. Instead, a project's individual emissions contribute to existing cumulatively significant adverse air quality impacts. If a project's individual emissions exceed its identified significance thresholds, that project would be cumulatively considerable. Projects that do not exceed significance thresholds would not be considered cumulative considerable.

In addition to the emission of criteria air pollutants, this Project evaluates the health risk from construction and operations of the Proposed Project, and specifically the potential exposure of nearby existing residents to DPM, which is primarily caused by heavy duty trucks. The SDAPCD states that potential Project health risks should be evaluated according to the *OEHHA Guidance Manual for Preparation of Health Risk Assessments* (2015). In addition to the OEHHA Guidelines, the SDAPCD has published Supplemental Guidelines (2022) for how dispersion modeling and risk assessments should be conducted for projects within San Diego County. According to the SDAPCD's *Supplemental Guidelines for Submission of Air Toxics "Hot Spots" Program Health Risk Assessments* (2022), cancer, non-cancer chronic and acute, and cancer burden isopleths (contours) are required if offsite cancer risks are equal to or exceed 10 in 1 million, the non-cancer health hazard index are equal to or exceed 1.0, or the cancer burden equals or exceeds 1.0. In summary, the SDAPCD thresholds for what constitutes an exposure of substantial air toxics from TAC sources are as follows.

- *Cancer Risk*: emit carcinogenic or toxic contaminants that exceed the maximum individual cancer risk of 10 in one million.
- *Non-Cancer Risk*: emit toxic contaminants that exceed the maximum hazard quotient of 1 in 1 million.

Cancer risk is expressed in terms of expected incremental incidence per million in a population. The SDAPCD has established an incidence rate of 10 persons per million as the maximum acceptable incremental cancer risk due to TAC exposure from mobile sources. This threshold serves to determine whether a given project has a potentially significant development-specific and cumulative impact. The 10-in-1-million standard is a very health-protective significance threshold. A risk level of 10 in 1 million implies a likelihood that up to 10 persons out of 1 million equally exposed would contract cancer if exposed continuously (24 hours per day) to the levels of TACs over a specified duration of time. This risk

would be excess cancer in addition to any cancer risk borne by a person that was not exposed to these air toxics.

SDAPCD Rule 1200 establishes a cancer risk threshold with a 1 person per million incident rate for stationary sources of TACs that do not apply Toxics Best Available Control Technology (T-BACT) and a cancer risk threshold with a 10 persons per million incidence rate for stationary sources of TACs that do apply T-BACT. The TACs associated with the Project are primarily generated by mobile sources of emissions and therefore SDAPCD Rule 1200 does not directly apply. Furthermore, although fuel transfer activities from trains to trucks would occur in the Project Area, these activities would include T-BACT in the form of couplers that connect tanker trucks, spill containment drain valves, overfill prevention devices, and vent pressure/vacuum valves. Thus, consistent with SDAPCD Rule 1200 and San Diego County thresholds of significance (2007), the cancer risk threshold with the 10 persons per million incidence rate is employed.

The SDAPCD has also established non-carcinogenic risk parameters for use in HRAs. Noncarcinogenic risks are quantified by calculating a *hazard index*, which is expressed as the ratio between the ambient pollutant concentration and its toxicity or Reference Exposure Level (REL). An REL is a concentration at or below which health effects are not likely to occur. A hazard index of less than one (1.0) means that adverse health effects are not expected. Within this analysis, non-carcinogenic exposures of less than 1.0 are considered less than significant.

3.1.4.3 Impact Discussion

Threshold 1: Would the project conflict with or obstruct implementation of an applicable air quality plan?

Consistency with RAQS

As part of its enforcement responsibilities, the USEPA requires each state with nonattainment areas to prepare and submit an SIP that demonstrates the means to attain the federal standards. The SIP must integrate federal, state, and local plan components and regulations to identify specific measures to reduce pollution in federal nonattainment areas using a combination of performance standards and market-based programs. The SDAPCD currently monitors implementation of the SIP in the SDAB through the RAQS, which as previously described contains strategies and tactics to be applied in order to attain and maintain acceptable air quality in the SDAB. The RAQS is the applicable air quality plan for the Proposed Project. Air quality attainment plans outline emissions limits and control measures to achieve and maintain these standards by the earliest practical date. The SDAPCD has prepared the *2020 Plan for Attaining the National Ozone Standards* (SDAPCD 2020).

Consistency with the RAQS is determined by two standards: (1) whether the Project would increase the frequency or severity of violations of existing air quality standards, contribute to new violations, or delay the timely attainment of air quality standards or interim reductions as contained in the RAQS; and (2) whether the Proposed Project would exceed assumptions contained in the RAQS. The air quality emission projections and emission reduction strategies in the RAQS are based on information from CARB and SANDAG regarding mobile and area source emissions. CARB mobile source emissions projections and

SANDAG growth projections are derived from population and vehicle use trends and land use plans developed by the cities and the County of San Diego as part of their general plans. A project that proposes development consistent with the growth anticipated in a general plan would be consistent with the RAQS and *2020 Plan for Attaining the National Ozone Standards*. Projects that propose development that is greater than the population growth projections and land use intensity of the adopted local general plan warrant further analysis to determine consistency with the RAQS and the SIP.

As summarized in Tables 3.1-5 and 3.1-6, the Project would not exceed the short-term construction standards or long-term operational standards and would not violate any air quality standards. Therefore, the Project would not contribute to new violations or delay the timely attainment of air quality standards or interim reductions as contained in the RAQS. Thus, the Project would be consistent with the first RAQS criterion. Further, the Project Site has a General Plan land use designation of Industrial, and the Project is consistent with this designation. The Industrial General Plan land use designation provides for employment intensive uses, light manufacturing, business parks, research and development, technology centers, corporate and support office uses, “green” industry, recycling facilities, supporting retail uses, auto, truck and equipment sales and related services (i.e., auto service and repair), large format retail, storage facilities, warehousing and distribution, and other compatible uses. As previously described, the Project proposes a transloading facility to deliver renewable fuels to the San Diego market. Therefore, the Proposed Project would adhere to the land uses envisioned in the General Plan, and is therefore consistent with the types, intensity, and patterns of land use envisioned for the site vicinity in the RAQS and *2020 Plan for Attaining the National Ozone Standards*. The Project is not proposed to amend the City General Plan. Thus, the Proposed Project is consistent with the growth anticipated in the National City General Plan and is therefore consistent with the second criterion. Because the Project would be consistent with both criteria, the Project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the RAQS and *2020 Plan for Attaining the National Ozone Standards*.

Consistency with Portside CERP

The CERP has various strategies to ensure the health, safety, and environmental justice of the Portside Community, which surrounds the Project Area. Several of the goals established by the CERP include reducing emissions and the health risks from the operations of commercial and industrial land uses within the community. The majority of the action items are associated with the strategies of the CERP direct agencies such as SANDAG, SDAPCD, and local cities to develop and implement the outlined strategies.

One of the categories that the CERP addresses is Heavy Duty Truck Strategies, which aims to reduce emissions from diesel trucks in the community. As noted in the Heavy-Duty Truck Strategies, the USEPA and CARB have several upcoming actions that would reduce truck emissions statewide. These State and federal agencies will continue to make progress on the goals to reduce truck emissions. Within the CERP’s strategies, Action E3 encourages the enforcement of the Truck Route. The City has an established Truck Route Map as Figure C-8 in its General Plan Circulation Element (Figure 6 in Section 2.5.2), which indicates the main routes that trucks are permitted on (City of National City 2011). According to the Traffic Study prepared for the Proposed Project, approximately 97 percent of the truck trip distribution would head directly towards I-5. The remaining 3 percent of the truck trip distribution would head east on 18th Street (KOA 2024, Appendix H). These trucks would be expected to travel on the nearest primary truck route or

alternate truck route in the necessary direction. The CERP establishes the City of National City as the enforcement officer of these truck routes within the City's limits. As such, the Proposed Project's trucking trips will be subject to the enforcement actions that the City may provide, which may include the requirement that Project trucks travel on the National City Truck Route exclusively.

Furthermore, the Proposed Project proposes to transload renewable fuels and SAF (non-petroleum-based) directly from rail cars into trucks for local deliveries. Renewable Diesel and SAF can fully replace petroleum-based fuels with zero modification to storage facilities or combustion engine systems. Biodiesel is a renewable, biodegradable fuel that is often used as a blend with renewable diesel. This blend can replace petroleum diesel with no changes or adverse effects to the engine. Furthermore, according to calculations completed by U.S. Compliance, the Proposed Project's distribution of renewable diesel in the San Diego Area would result in reductions in local air pollutants from the replacement of combustion of regular diesel with renewable diesel. More specifically, the US Compliance calculations showed meaningful local reductions in NO_x, CO, and PM air pollutants from the introduction of renewable diesel from the Proposed Project. For every 1,000 gallons of conventional diesel replaced with renewable diesel, combustion emissions of NO_x, CO, and PM would be reduced by 43.5, 28.5, and 0.7 pounds, respectively.

Additionally, a white paper published by the International Council on Clean Transportation (ICCT) on the air quality impacts of biodiesel found that biodiesel combustion results in lower emissions of PM, CO, and hydrocarbons (ICCT 2021). Furthermore, the amended Off-Road Regulation, which as previously described requires the use of R99 or R100 renewable diesel in off-road diesel vehicles, will reduce harmful air pollutants from over 150,000 in-use off-road diesel vehicles that operate in California and is expected to yield \$5.7 billion in health benefits and prevent more than 570 air-quality related deaths and nearly 200 hospitalizations and emergency room visits from 2023 to 2038 (CARB 2022b). From 2024 through 2038, the current amendments will generate an additional reduction of the current regulation of approximately 31,087 tons of NO_x and 2,717 tons of PM_{2.5} (CARB 2022b).

According to the Project Applicant, the Proposed Project enables the delivery of 336,000 gallons per day of R100 renewable diesel to replace existing CARB diesel at local retail stations, which would result in the following local tailpipe emission reductions (USEPA 2023a; National Renewable Energy Laboratory [NREL] 2018; CARB 2011):

- 115 million pounds of CO₂ emissions per year
- 5.3 million pounds of NO_x emissions per year
- 3.5 million pounds of CO emissions per year
- 460 thousand pounds of total hydrocarbons (THC) emissions per year
- 90 thousand pounds of DPM emissions per year

Additionally, the Project would reduce overall truck mileage by approximately 2 million miles per year by eliminating lengthy truck trips from Los Angeles/Inland Empire locations, which would remove the following regional tailpipe emissions from the supply chain (EPA 2023; NREL 2018; CARB 2011):

- 7 million pounds of CO₂ emissions per year
- 74 thousand pounds of NO_x emissions per year
- 26 thousand pounds of CO emissions per year
- 10 thousand pounds of THC emissions per year
- 8 hundred pounds of DPM emissions per year

This confirms that the Proposed Project's distribution of renewable and biodiesel to the surrounding area would support implementation of the Portside CERP and may have a positive impact on local air quality. As such, the Proposed Project would not conflict with the CERP's goals to reduce diesel PM, would not impede progress towards the goals of establishing zero emission vehicle trucks within the Portside Community, and as described below, would not result in a substantial health risk.

The Project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the Portside CERP or any other applicable air quality plans. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Threshold 2: Would the proposed project result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is in nonattainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?

Project Construction-Generated Criteria Air Quality Emissions

Emissions associated with Project construction would be temporary and short-term but would potentially represent a significant air quality impact. Three basic sources of short-term emissions would be generated through construction of the Proposed Project: operation of the construction vehicles (i.e., tractors, forklifts, and pavers), the creation of fugitive dust during clearing and grading, and the use of asphalt or other oil-based substances during paving activities. Construction activities such as excavation and grading operations, construction vehicle traffic, and wind blowing over exposed soils would generate exhaust emissions and fugitive PM emissions that would affect local air quality at various times during construction. These effects would be variable depending on the weather, soil conditions, the amount of activity taking place, and the nature of dust control efforts.

Construction-generated emissions associated with the Proposed Project were calculated using the CARB-approved CalEEMod computer program, which is designed to model emissions for land use development projects based on typical construction requirements.

Table 3.1-5 summarizes predicted maximum daily construction-generated emissions for the Proposed Project. Construction-generated emissions are short-term and of temporary duration, and last only while construction activities occur, but would be considered a significant air quality impact if the volume of pollutants generated exceeds the derived thresholds of significance.

Table 3.1-5. Construction-Related Criteria Air Pollutant Emissions

Construction Year	Pollutant (maximum pounds per day)					
	ROG	NO _x	CO	SO ₂	PM ₁₀	PM _{2.5}
Project Construction	3.72	36.00	33.80	0.05	21.40	11.60
<i>SDAPCD Potentially Significant Impact Threshold</i>	75	250	550	250	100	55
Exceed SDAPCD Threshold?	No	No	No	No	No	No

Notes: CO = carbon monoxide; NO_x = nitrogen oxides; PM_{2.5} = Particulate Matter Less than 2.5 Microns in Diameter; PM₁₀ = Particulate Matter Less than 10 Microns in Diameter; ROG = Reactive Organic Gases; SO₂ = sulfur dioxide
Construction emissions taken from the season (summer or winter) with the highest output.

Source: CalEEMod version 2022.1. Refer to Appendix B for Model Data Outputs.

As shown in Table 3.1-5, emissions generated during Project construction would not exceed the SDAPCD's screening thresholds. Therefore, criteria pollutant emissions generated during Project construction would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the Project region is designated as nonattainment under an applicable federal or State ambient air quality standard.

Project Operations Criteria Air Quality Emissions

Implementation of the Project would result in long-term operational emissions of criteria air pollutants, such as PM₁₀, PM_{2.5}, CO, and SO₂ as well as O₃ precursors such as ROG and NO_x, over the existing baseline, which is vacant/undeveloped land that currently generates no emissions. Table 3.1-6 summarizes the predicted maximum daily operational-generated emissions of criteria air pollutants for the Proposed Project compared to the operational significance thresholds promulgated by the SDAPCD. Operational emissions were estimated using CalEEMod and the applicant's estimated emissions for fuel transport and fugitive leaks. Trip counts and distances were calculated based on the Project's daily throughput, truck tanker capacity, and trip distances provided by US Compliance. In addition, mainline rail emissions were calculated for the portion of the trip in the SDAB using the BNSF ton-mile per gallon, Project throughput, BNSF engine inventory (BNSF 2020), and CARB Vision Access Database emission factors in grams per gallon diesel. EPA AP-42 Section 5.2 was used to estimate the emissions from the transloading process.

Table 3.1-6. Operational Criteria Air Pollutant Emissions

Emission Source	Pollutant					
	ROG	NO _x	CO	SO ₂	PM ₁₀	PM _{2.5}
Summer Emissions (Pounds per Day)						
CalEEMod Sources (area sources, worker commutes and truck trips)	0.34	9.23	4.39	0.06	1.87	0.57
Calculated Fugitive Evaporation (fuel transfer off-gassing)	32.27	--	--	–	–	–

Table 3.1-6. Operational Criteria Air Pollutant Emissions

Emission Source	Pollutant					
	ROG	NO _x	CO	SO ₂	PM ₁₀	PM _{2.5}
Mainline SDAB Rail Emissions (65 miles of transport per train trip)	7.67	31.24	5.97	1.96	1.09	1.00
Project Emissions	40.28	40.47	10.36	2.02	2.96	1.57
Winter Emissions (Pounds per Day)						
CalEEMod Sources (area sources, worker commutes and truck trips)	0.26	9.58	4.39	0.06	1.87	0.57
Calculated Fugitive Evaporation (fuel transfer off-gassing)	32.27	--	--	--	--	--
Mainline SDAB Rail Emissions (65 miles of transport per train trip)	7.67	31.24	5.97	1.96	1.09	1.00
Project Emissions	40.20	40.82	10.36	2.02	2.96	1.57
<i>Daily Significance Threshold</i>	75	250	550	250	100	55
Exceed Daily Threshold?	No	No	No	No	No	No
Annual Emissions (Tons per Year)						
CalEEMod Sources (area sources, worker commutes and truck trips)	0.1	1.7	0.8	0.0	0.3	0.1
Calculated Fugitive Evaporation (fuel transfer off-gassing)	5.9	--	--	--	--	--
Mainline SDAB Rail Emissions (65 miles of transport per train trip)	1.4	5.7	1.1	0.4	0.2	0.2
Project Emissions	7.4	7.4	1.9	0.4	0.5	0.3
<i>Annual Significance Threshold</i>	13.7	40	100	40	15	10
Exceed Annual Threshold?	No	No	No	No	No	No

Notes: US Compliance calculated the operational emissions for the Proposed Project fugitive VOC/ROG emissions. Trip counts and distances were calculated based on the Project's daily throughput, truck tanker capacity, and trip distances provided by US Compliance. In addition, mainline rail emissions were calculated using the BNSF ton-mile per gallon, Project throughput, BNSF engine inventory and CARB Vision Access Database emission factors in grams per gallon diesel.

Source: CalEEMod version 2022.1. Refer to Appendix B for Model Data Outputs.

As shown in Table 3.1-6, the Project's emissions would not exceed any SDAPCD thresholds for any criteria air pollutants during operations. Therefore, criteria pollutant emissions generated during Project operations would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the Project region is designated as nonattainment under an applicable federal or State ambient air quality standard.

Threshold 3: Would the project expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

The Project Area is surrounded by a Costco Optical Laboratory directly to the west, and industrial and retail development on all other sides. The nearest sensitive receptor is McKinley Apartments, which is approximately 380 feet east of the Project Area. The nearest school is Kimball Elementary School, which is located approximately 0.3 mile east of the Project Area.

As discussed above, the Proposed Project's emissions would not exceed any SDAPCD thresholds for any criteria air pollutants during construction or operations. Therefore, sensitive receptors would not be exposed to substantial pollutant concentrations.

Health Risk Assessment

An HRA was performed to determine the health risk associated with the operations of the Proposed Project. The HRA analyzed cancer and chronic non-cancer risk calculated for 70-, 30- and 25-year exposure scenarios for operational emissions. Per OEHHA guidance, the HRA uses the 25-year scenario to model the health risk for workers at business locations and uses the 70- and 30- year scenarios for residents in residential areas.

Construction Toxic Air Contaminant Emission Sources

All onsite and offsite diesel truck traffic related emissions were generated using EMFAC2021, conservatively assuming an analysis year of 2024. As previously described, CARB has recently approved amendments to the In-Use Off-Road Diesel-Fueled Fleets Regulation (Off-Road Regulation), which is aimed at further reducing emissions from the off-road sector. These amendments require the use of R99 or R100 renewable diesel in off-road diesel vehicles. According to CARB, the amended rule will generate an additional reduction of the current regulation of approximately 31,087 tons of NO_x and 2,717 tons of PM_{2.5}. About half of the additional reduction associated with the amended rule is expected to be realized within the first five years of implementation (CARB 2022b).

Construction emissions modeling for the Proposed Project does not account for the use of renewable diesel to provide a conservative estimate of emissions. Construction off-road equipment for onsite activities was modeled as 111 line-volume sources placed along the perimeter of the Project Area totaling 0.82 mile. Construction on-road equipment for offsite activities was modeled as 55 line-volume sources traversing the entrance of the Project Area, onto 18th Street, and then heading north onto Cleveland Avenue before heading east on Civic Center Drive where I-5 is accessible. Roadway sources all have a width of 3.7 meters using standard line sizing and an estimated one lane. Annual off-road PM₁₀ exhaust emissions generated using the CalEEMod model were used to represent emissions from onsite off-road diesel equipment used throughout construction. The annual emissions for all aspects of construction were used to conservatively estimate annual construction emissions for the estimated Project construction duration of eight months.

Operational Toxic Air Contaminant Emission Sources

Operational emissions sources include onsite and offsite trucks and rail traffic. Emissions from mainline and switching locomotives were quantified for a 0.5-mile buffer around the Project Area. Thirty minutes

per day is used as a “worst case” estimate for local switching activities. The 10 mile per hour speed limitation, latest BNSF locomotive engine distribution, and ton-mile for a 0.95-mile section of the San Diego track were used to quantify mainline emissions.

In addition, small amounts of TACs emitted from residual fossil fuels in transfer equipment and “worst case” gasoline contents in the ethanol transferred were included. It should be noted that the trucks picking up fuel must either show proof that their last fuel load was the same (bio or renewable diesel) or that they have had a certified washout since their last fuel load. These emissions include benzene, xylene, and ethylbenzene. However, these emissions are well under their reportable levels. The VOC emissions from additives are less than one pound per year. Therefore, the effects of these TACs are considered negligible.

Dispersion Modeling

The air dispersion modeling for the HRA was performed using the USEPA AERMOD Version 21112 dispersion model. The USGS_NED_13_n33w118 file found at U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) was used for elevation data for all sources and receptors in the Project domain. All regulatory defaults were used for dispersion modeling.

AERMOD requires hourly meteorological data consisting of wind vector, wind speed, temperature, stability class, and mixing height. Pre-processed meteorological data files provided by SDAPCD using USEPA’s AERMET program, which are designed to create AERMOD input files for the Perkins Elementary School monitoring station, were selected as being the most representative meteorology based on proximity. Emissions for each source group as described above were input into HARP2 to calculate the ground level concentrations related to Project operations.

Risk during operations was also modeled utilizing worker factors and residential factors to find the Maximumly Exposed Individual Resident (MEIR) and Maximumly Exposed Individual Worker (MEIW). The chronic and carcinogenic health risk calculations are based on the standardized equations contained in the *OEHHA Guidance Manual* (2015) as implemented in CARB’s HARP2 program (CAPCOA 2022). The risk associated with traffic emissions related to Project operations was assessed as risk associated with future Project operations.

Based on the OEHHA methodology, the residential inhalation cancer risk from the annual average TAC concentrations is calculated by multiplying the daily inhalation or oral dose by a cancer potency factor, the age sensitivity factor, the frequency of time spent at home, and the exposure duration divided by averaging time to yield the excess cancer risk. Cancer risk must be separately calculated for specified age groups because of age differences in sensitivity to carcinogens and age differences in intake rates (per kilogram [kg] body weight). Separate risk estimates for these age groups provide a health-protective estimate of cancer risk by accounting for greater susceptibility in early life, which includes both age-related sensitivity and the amount of exposure.

Non-cancer chronic impacts are calculated by dividing the annual average concentration by the REL for a specific substance. The REL is defined as the concentration at which no adverse non-cancer health effects are anticipated. The potential for acute non-cancer hazards is evaluated by comparing the maximum

short-term exposure level to an acute REL. RELs are designed to protect sensitive individuals within the population.

Cancer Risk

Operational cancer risk calculations for existing residential receptors are based on 70- and 30-year exposure periods and worker receptors are based on a 25-year exposure period to workers. The calculated cancer risk accounts for 350 days per year of exposure to residential receptors. While the average American spends 87 percent of their life indoors (USEPA 2001), neither the pollutant dispersion modeling nor the health risk calculations account for the reduced exposure structures provided. Instead, health risk calculations account for the equivalent exposure of continual outdoor living. Table 3.1-7 shows the calculated carcinogenic risk at Project vicinity receptors. The MEIR is located at the southwest corner of the McKinley Apartments on McKinley Avenue and the MEIW is located at the boat facility directly to the east of the Project Area. The offsite Point of Maximum Impact is located on West 18th Street directly to the east of the Project Area.

Table 3.1-7. Maximum Cancer Risk Summary	
Maximum Exposure Scenario	Total Maximum Risk
Project Operations	
70-Year Exposure Resident	8.92
30-Year Exposure Resident	7.56
25-Year Exposure Worker	1.02
Project Construction	
1-Year Exposure Resident	0.05
1-Year Exposure Worker	0.13
<i>Significance Threshold</i>	<i>10</i>
Exceed Threshold?	No

Source: ECORP Consulting, Inc. 2024. See Appendix B.

As shown, neither Project operations nor Project construction would result in a significant contribution to cancer risk in the community. These calculations do not account for any pollutant-reducing remedial components inherent to the Project or the Project Area.

Non-Carcinogenic Risk

In addition to cancer risk, the significance thresholds for TAC exposure require an evaluation of non-cancer risk stated in terms of a hazard index. The calculation of acute non-cancer impacts is similar to the procedure for calculating chronic non-cancer impacts. Acute impacts would not result from the fuel transfer operations because there is currently no acute hazard index for DPM.

An acute or chronic hazard index of 1.0 is considered individually significant. The hazard index is calculated by dividing the acute or chronic exposure by the REL. Table 3.1-8 shows the highest maximum chronic hazard and acute hazard indexes for residents and workers in the Proposed Project vicinity as a result of operations emission exposure.

Table 3.1-8. Maximum Non-Carcinogenic Hazard Index Health Risk Summary			
Chronic Health Hazard Index			
Exposure Scenario	Maximum (70 year) Residential Hazard	Maximum (30 year) Residential Hazard	Maximum (25 year) Worker Hazard
Operation	0.003	0.003	0.0005
Construction	0.0001	0.0001	0.0000
<i>Significance Threshold</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>
Exceed Threshold?	No	No	No
Acute Health Hazard Index			
Exposure Scenario	Maximum Residential Hazard	Maximum Worker Hazard	Maximum School Hazard
Operation	0.0001	0.0006	--
Construction	0.0000	0.0000	--
<i>Significance Threshold</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>
Exceed Threshold?	No	No	No

Source: ECORP Consulting, Inc. 2024. See Appendix B.

As shown in Table 3.1-8, Project impacts related to non-cancer risk (chronic and acute hazard index) do not exceed the significance threshold and are therefore less than significant.

Carbon Monoxide Hot Spots

Currently, the allowable CO emissions standard in California is a maximum of 3.4 grams per mile for passenger cars (requirements for certain vehicles are more stringent). With the turnover of older vehicles, introduction of cleaner fuels, and implementation of increasingly sophisticated and efficient emissions control technologies, CO concentration in the SDAB is designated as attainment.

A CO *hot spot* would occur if an exceedance of the state one-hour standard of 20 parts per million (ppm) or the eight-hour standard of 9 ppm were to occur. The analysis prepared for CO attainment in the South Coast Air Quality Management District's (SCAQMD) 1992 *Federal Attainment Plan for Carbon Monoxide* in Los Angeles County and a Modeling and Attainment Demonstration prepared by the SCAQMD as part of

the 2003 Air Quality Management Plan can demonstrate the potential for CO exceedances of these standards. The SCAQMD conducted a CO *hot spot* analysis as part of the 1992 CO Federal Attainment Plan at four busy intersections in Los Angeles County during the peak morning and afternoon time periods. The intersections evaluated included Long Beach Boulevard and Imperial Highway (Lynwood), Wilshire Boulevard and Veteran Avenue (Westwood), Sunset Boulevard and Highland Avenue (Hollywood), and La Cienega Boulevard and Century Boulevard (Inglewood). The busiest intersection evaluated was at Wilshire Boulevard and Veteran Avenue, which has a traffic volume of approximately 100,000 vehicles per day. Despite this level of traffic, the CO analysis concluded that there was no violation of CO standards (SCAQMD 1992). In order to establish a more accurate record of baseline CO concentrations affecting the South Coast Air Basin, a CO *hot spot* analysis was conducted in 2003 at the same four busy intersections in Los Angeles at the peak morning and afternoon time periods. This *hot spot* analysis did not predict any violation of CO standards. The highest one-hour concentration was measured at 4.6 ppm at Wilshire Boulevard and Veteran Avenue and the highest eight-hour concentration was measured at 8.4 ppm at Long Beach Boulevard and Imperial Highway. Current CO concentrations in the South Coast Air Basin are much lower than the measurements mentioned in this example and SDAB CO measurements are lower than the South Coast Air Basin.

Other Air Districts employ similar considerations when evaluating potential CO concentration impacts. More specifically, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, the air pollution control officer for the San Francisco Bay Area, concludes that under existing and future vehicle emission rates; in order to generate a significant CO impact a given project would have to increase traffic volumes at a single intersection by more than 44,000 vehicles per hour or 24,000 vehicles per hour where vertical or horizontal air does not mix.

According to the Project's throughput amounts and capacity of the delivery trucks, the Proposed Project would generate no more than 169 automobile trips daily and would therefore not generate traffic volumes at any intersection of more than 100,000 vehicles per day (or 44,000 vehicles per day) and there is no likelihood of the Project traffic exceeding CO values. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Threshold 4: Would the proposed project result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?

This topic was adequately analyzed in the Initial Study and was determined to have a less than significant impact.

3.1.5 Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

3.1.6 Level of Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be less than significant.

3.2 Biological Resources

3.2.1 Introduction

This section describes the existing conditions and applicable laws, regulations, and policies for biological resources. This section also analyzes the Proposed Project's potential to impact biological resources during construction and operation. Impacts on biological resources are considered significant if the Proposed Project would: (1) have a substantial adverse effect on candidate, sensitive, or special-status species; (2) have a substantial adverse effect on riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community; (3) result in substantial interference with the movement of native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impedance of the use of native wildlife nursery sites; or (4) conflict with applicable local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources or with the provisions of an applicable adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan (HCP).

The analysis is based on the following technical document included as an appendix to this DEIR:

- *Biological Resources Assessment for the San Diego Clean Fuels Facility LLC Project* (Appendix C; ECORP 2022a).
- *Aquatic Resources Delineation for the San Diego Clean Fuels Facility LLC Project* (Appendix D; ECORP 2022b).

3.2.2 Environmental Setting

The Proposed Project is approximately 6.5 acres and is primarily unimproved and undeveloped. The Project Area was formerly used for railroad and industrial purposes. A portion of the Project Area contains four closed release cases. There is one open release case located on the adjoining/adjacent properties. The open remediation case is the Pacific Steel, Inc. property located adjacent and east of the Project Area (herein referred to as Remediation Area). The Project Area is located in the Medium Manufacturing (MM) and Heavy Manufacturing Zones within the Coastal Zone overlay.

The Proposed Project is located entirely within the National City municipal boundary in San Diego County, California. As depicted on the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute National City, California topographic quadrangle, the Proposed Project is located within an un-sectioned portion of the La Nación Land Grant of Township 17 South, Range 2 West, San Bernardino Base and Meridian (USGS 1975). The Proposed Project is located at the northeastern corner of the intersection of West 19th Street and the existing BNSF double tracks, approximately 500 feet west of I-5 and 2,000 feet east of the Pacific Ocean.

A literature search, biological reconnaissance survey, focused rare plant survey, and aquatic resources delineation were conducted for the Project to determine its vegetation communities and wildlife habitats, potential to provide habitat for special-status plant and wildlife species, potential to facilitate wildlife movement, and potentially jurisdictional areas (ECORP 2022a, 2022b). A biological reconnaissance survey was conducted on March 17, 2022, to determine the vegetation communities and wildlife habitats in the Biological Study Area (BSA). The BSA includes the Project Area plus a 500-foot buffer. The Project Area at

the time of the survey was approximately 10.9 acres but has been refined to 6.5 acres over the course of Project planning. An aquatic resources delineation was conducted on March 17, 2022, to identify potentially jurisdictional areas in the Delineation Area (DA). The DA used includes the Project Area plus a 50-foot buffer. The Project boundary at the time of the survey was approximately 10.9 acres but has been refined to 6.5 acres over the course of Project planning. A focused rare plant survey was conducted on June 22, 2022, during the appropriate blooming period for special-status plants species determined to have potential to occur, particularly the target plant species, San Diego ambrosia (*Ambrosia pumila*). San Diego ambrosia was the highest priority target species because it is a federally listed endangered and California Rare Plant Rank (CRPR) 1B.1 species due to the disturbed nature of the Project Area and recent, close-proximity occurrences within the literature review search.

3.2.2.1 Vegetation Communities

The BSA consists of disturbed mulefat thickets and ornamental vegetation. Two additional land cover types, developed and disturbed, occur within the BSA. Within the disturbed area is an approximately 0.25-acre area of loose sandy soils located in the southwestern portion of the Project Area. Acreages of each habitat and vegetation community within the Project Area where direct impacts would occur, as well as other land cover types, are presented in Table 3.2-1.

Table 3.2-1. Vegetation Communities and Land Cover Types in Project Area	
Vegetation Communities and Land Cover Types	Acres
Disturbed Mulefat Thickets	0.82
Ornamental	0.18
Disturbed	4.34
Developed	5.52
Project Area Totals	10.86

Disturbed Mulefat Thickets (Disturbed Baccharis salicifolia Shrubland Alliance)

Mulefat thickets are characterized as having mulefat dominant or co-dominant in the shrub canopy, typically with other native plant species. Within the Project Area, mulefat thickets are disturbed with sparse cover of mulefat and broom baccharis (*Baccharis sarothroides*) intermixed with nonnative and ornamental species such as red brome (*Bromus madritensis* ssp. *rubens*) and golden wattle (*Acacia pycnantha*). This vegetation community was not associated with any drainages and is present within an upland area of disturbed soils within the Remediation Area. Mulefat is known to be a colonizer of disturbed sites and is not considered a sensitive vegetation community.

Ornamental

The ornamental classification consists of vegetation that has been landscaped. The ornamental area of the Project Area is at the southern end of the Remediation Area and is comprised primarily of golden wattle intermixed with nonnative species such as red brome and sweet fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*).

Other Land Cover Types

Disturbed

The disturbed classification includes areas where the native vegetation community has been heavily influenced by human actions such as grading, trash dumping, and dirt roads, but lacks development. Disturbed is not a vegetation classification, but rather a land cover type and is not typically restricted to a known elevation. Disturbed areas of the Project Area included a large portion of the Remediation Area, a majority of the Project Area situated between the railroad and parking lot. Some of these disturbed areas had remnant native plant species present; however, cover was scattered and intermittent. An active dump site and an itinerant encampment were observed within the disturbed areas. Vegetation was absent or consisted primarily of nonnative species, such as tamarisk (*Tamarix* sp.), foxtail barely (*Hordeum murinum*), Russian thistle (*Salsola tragus*), smilo grass (*Stipa miliacea*), yellow sweet clover (*Melilotus indicus*), and crown daisy (*Glebionis coronaria*) in areas classified as disturbed.

Developed/Urban Lands

Developed lands are those that are heavily affected by human use, including landscaping, residential homes, commercial or industrial buildings and associated infrastructure, and transportation corridors. Within the Project Area this included the parking lot, materials storage yard, and railroad tracks. Within the larger BSA, this included surrounding commercial buildings and roads. Landscaped areas consisted primarily of ornamental species Mexican fan palm (*Washingtonia robusta*) and sea lavender (*Limonium perezii*) as well as nonnative species, including tree tobacco (*Nicotiana glauca*), rabbitsfoot grass (*Polypogon monspeliensis*), and crown daisy.

3.2.2.2 Soils

A soils analysis search conducted using the Web Soil Survey data revealed two soil types occurring in the BSA, Huerhuero-Urban land complex and Md Made land (ECORP 2022a). Soil characteristics observed in the field were generally consistent with what has been identified for these soil units and their official series descriptions.

3.2.2.3 Plants

Plant species observed within the Project Area were generally characteristic of disturbed and ornamental vegetation communities. Biologists observed no special-status plants during the reconnaissance survey. Nonnative plant species observed in the Project Area were dominant within the disturbed areas, intermittently found within the disturbed native vegetation communities and amongst the ornamental vegetation. A full list of plant species observed in the Project Area is included in Appendix C.

3.2.2.4 Wildlife

Wildlife species observed within the Project Area included those typical of urban environments such as rock pigeon (*Columba livia*), mourning dove (*Zenaida macroura*), black phoebe (*Sayornis nigricans*), house finch (*Haemorhous mexicanus*), and Anna's hummingbird (*Calypte anna*). Special-status wildlife was not observed. Seventeen bird species and four insect species were observed during the reconnaissance survey (ECORP 2022a). A full list of wildlife species observed in the Project Area is included in Appendix C.

3.2.2.5 Special-Status Species

Special-Status Plants

The literature review resulted in 72 special-status plant species with potential to occur in the Project Area. Of these 72 special-status plants, one special-status plant species, Nuttall's acmispon (*Acmispon prostratus*), was observed within the Project Area.

Nuttall's acmispon is designated as a CRPR 1B.1 plant species. This plant is known to occur at elevations between 0 and 10 meters (0 and 33 feet) above mean sea level (amsl) and blooms between March and July. Nuttall's acmispon is known to inhabit coastal dunes and sandy soils of coastal scrub. Eight CNDDDB observations of this species occur within a 5-mile radius of the Project Area, five of which are within the last 20 years. The nearest record is 0.45 mile south of the Project Area from 2011 where it was observed growing in disturbed vegetation adjacent to the railroad tracks within the San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge. Potential habitat occurs within the Project Area for this species in the sandy soils of the disturbed habitats. This species was not observed during the biological reconnaissance survey but was identified during the focused rare plant survey effort growing in the area with loose sandy soils (ECORP 2022a).

3.2.2.6 Potential Waters of the U.S.

As a result of the aquatic resources delineation, two brow-ditches and one depressional feature were identified as aquatic resources. Features identified as an aquatic resource have wetland indicators present and/or physical evidence of flow including ordinary high-water mark (OHWM), defined bed and bank, presence of a clear and natural line impressed on the bank, the presence or absence of sediment deposits, litter/debris, and/or exposed roots indicating active hydrology within the channel (ECORP 2022b).

As shown as Figure 4 in the ARD Report (Appendix D), Features 1 and 2 are the two brow-ditches functioning as stormwater conveyance systems. These features displayed ephemeral characteristics. These features daylight within the Project Area and enter and exit via culverts underground. The features are dry or mostly dry, with straight, confined channels. There is minimal or no compositional difference between upland and riparian corridors along these channels and the soil particle size inside the channels are the same or roughly the same as the soil particle size outside of the channels. These features contain rooted upland plants within the streambed.

There is one 0.144-acre depressional feature within the southwest portion of the DA. According to aerial imagery, the location of the current depression used to partially overlap Harrison Avenue (compacted road base) and the other half was covered by a concrete lot that was removed in approximately 2018. Ponding is evident on aerial imagery beginning in 2018. Review of aerial imagery for 2018 revealed that after the concrete lot was removed, off-highway vehicle (OHV) use occurred with some regularity and multiple tracks through the depression are evident as well as mud splatter marks in all directions indicating vehicles were repeatedly driving through the depression. Deep tire ruts were visible in the depression during field work conducted for the aquatic resources delineation. The elevation of the depression was likely at or near that of Harrison Avenue in 2018; however, OHV activities likely lowered the elevation of the depression. At the time of the survey this depression did not have standing water but there were dried algal mats present.

There are three manufactured drainage culverts and two storm drain inlets that generally serve the purpose of conveying stormwater and urban runoff underneath local roads, the railroad, and surrounding developed areas. These consist mostly of concrete features with metal drainage pipes that range from approximately 1 to 2 feet in diameter. They are largely unvegetated and lack a natural bed and bank. These features are likely associated with municipal storm sewer systems (ECORP 2022b).

The two brow-ditch features observed and/or mapped within the DA do not appear to be tributary to Traditional Navigable Waters (TNW) or connected to interstate waters based on the field assessment and an assessment of aerial photographs, but rather the various features located in the DA are considered isolated. These aquatic resources may not be subject to regulation under the Clean Water Act (CWA) if the drainages recorded within the DA do not connect downstream to TNW or to Interstate Waters, as determined by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). They are not considered jurisdictional. The 0.144-acre depressional feature located within the DA is considered to be potentially jurisdictional under the California Coastal Act (CCA). Under the CCA, the presence of a single criteria/parameter (i.e., wetland vegetation or hydric soils or wetland hydrology) is sufficient to make a presumptive finding for the presence of wetlands. As such, wetlands defined under the CCA are more extensive in the DA as compared to USACE wetlands.

3.2.3 Regulatory Setting

3.2.3.1 Federal

Endangered Species Act

The federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) protects plants and animals that are listed as endangered or threatened by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the National Marine Fisheries Service. Section 9 of the ESA prohibits the taking of endangered wildlife, where taking is defined as “harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, collect, or attempt to engage in such conduct” (50 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 17.3). For plants, this statute governs removing, possessing, maliciously damaging, or destroying any endangered plant on federal land and removing, cutting, digging up, damaging, or destroying any endangered plant on non-federal land in knowing violation of state law (16 U.S. Code 1538). Under Section 7 of the ESA, federal agencies are required to consult with the USFWS if their actions, including permit approvals or funding, could adversely affect a listed (or proposed) species (including plants) or its critical habitat. Through consultation and the issuance of a biological opinion, the USFWS may issue an incidental take statement allowing take of the species that is incidental to an otherwise authorized activity provided the activity will not jeopardize the continued existence of the species. Section 10 of the ESA provides for issuance of incidental take permits where no other federal actions are necessary provided a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) is developed.

Migratory Bird Treaty Act

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) implements international treaties between the U.S. and other nations devised to protect migratory birds, any of their parts, eggs, and nests from activities such as hunting, pursuing, capturing, killing, selling, and shipping, unless expressly authorized in the regulations or by permit. As authorized by the MBTA, the USFWS issues permits to qualified applicants for the

following types of activities: falconry, raptor propagation, scientific collecting, special purposes (rehabilitation, education, migratory game bird propagation, and salvage), take of depredating birds, taxidermy, and waterfowl sale and disposal. The regulations governing migratory bird permits can be found in 50 CFR Part 13 General Permit Procedures and 50 CFR Part 21 Migratory Bird Permits. The State of California has incorporated the protection of birds of prey in Sections 3800, 3513, and 3503.5 of the California Fish and Game Code.

Clean Water Act

The purpose of the federal Clean Water Act (CWA) is to “restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nation’s waters.” Section 404 of the CWA prohibits the discharge of dredged or fill material into Waters of the U.S. without a permit from the USACE. The definition of Waters of the U.S. includes rivers, streams, estuaries, the territorial seas, ponds, lakes, and wetlands. Wetlands are defined as those areas “that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions” (33 CFR 328.3 7b). The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) acts as a cooperating agency to set policy, guidance, and criteria for use in evaluation permit applications and also reviews USACE permit applications. The USACE regulates *fill* or dredging of fill material within its jurisdictional features. *Fill material* means any material used for the primary purpose of replacing an aquatic area with dry land or changing the bottom elevation of a water body. Substantial impacts to wetlands may require an individual permit. Projects that only minimally affect wetlands may meet the conditions of one of the existing Nationwide Permits. A Water Quality Certification or waiver pursuant to Section 401 of the CWA is required for Section 404 permit actions; this certification or waiver is issued by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), administered by each of nine California Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCB).

3.2.3.2 State

California Endangered Species Act

The California ESA generally parallels the main provisions of the federal ESA but, unlike its federal counterpart, the California ESA applies the take prohibitions to species proposed for listing (called *candidates* by the State). Section 2080 of the California Fish and Game Code prohibits the taking, possession, purchase, sale, and import or export of endangered, threatened, or candidate species, unless otherwise authorized by permit or in the regulations. 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.” The California ESA allows for take incidental to otherwise lawful development projects. State lead agencies are required to consult with California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to ensure that any action they undertake is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any endangered or threatened species or result in destruction or adverse modification of essential habitat.

Fully Protected Species

The State of California first began to designate species as fully protected prior to the creation of the federal and California ESAs. Lists of fully protected species were initially developed to provide protection

to those animals that were rare or faced possible extinction, and included fish, amphibians and reptiles, birds, and mammals. Most fully protected species have since been listed as threatened or endangered under federal and/or California ESAs. The regulations that implement the Fully Protected Species Statute (California Fish and Game Code § 4700) provide that fully protected species may not be taken or possessed at any time. Furthermore, CDFW prohibits any state agency from issuing incidental take permits for fully protected species, except for necessary scientific research.

Native Plant Protection Act

The Native Plant Protection Act (NPPA) of 1977 (California Fish and Game Code §§ 1900-1913) was created with the intent to “preserve, protect and enhance rare and endangered plants in this State.” The NPPA is administered by CDFW. The Fish and Wildlife Commission has the authority to designate native plants as *endangered* or *rare* and to protect endangered and rare plants from take. The California ESA of 1984 (California Fish and Game Code §§ 2050-2116) provided further protection for rare and endangered plant species, but the NPPA remains part of the California Fish and Game Code.

Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act

The RWQCB implements water quality regulations under the federal CWA and the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act (hereafter referred to as Porter-Cologne Act). These regulations require compliance with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), including compliance with the California Storm Water NPDES General Construction Permit for discharges of storm water runoff associated with construction activities. General Construction Permits for projects that disturb one or more acres of land require development and implementation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan. Under the Porter-Cologne Act, the RWQCB regulates actions that would involve “discharging waste, or proposing to discharge waste, with any region that could affect the water of the state” [Water Code 13260(a)].

Waters of the State are defined as “any surface water or groundwater, including saline waters, within the boundaries of the state” (Water Code 13050[e]). The RWQCB regulates all such activities, as well as dredging, filling, or discharging materials into Waters of the State that are not regulated by the USACE due to a lack of connectivity with a navigable water body. The RWQCB may require issuance of Waste Discharge Requirements for these activities.

On April 2, 2019, the SWRCB adopted the *State Wetland Definition and Procedures for Discharges of Dredged or Fill Material to Waters of the State* (referred to as the Procedures) for inclusion in the *Water Quality Control Plan for Inland Surface Waters, Enclosed Bays, and Estuaries of California* (Resolution No. 2019-0015). The new Procedures include:

- definition of wetlands and aquatic resources that are Waters of the State,
- description of application requirements for individual orders (not general orders) for water quality certification, or waste discharge requirements,
- description of information required in compensatory mitigation plans, and
- definition of exemptions to application procedures.

The Office of Administrative Law approved the procedures on August 28, 2019; the rule went into effect May 28, 2020.

Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972

The U.S. Congress recognized the importance of meeting the challenge of continued growth in the coastal zone by passing the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) of 1972. The CZMA provides for management of the nation's coastal resources and balances economic development with environmental conservation. Two national programs were created under this act, the National Coastal Zone Management Program (CZMP) and the National Estuarine Research Reserve System. Out of 35 eligible states, only 34 have established management programs. The CZMP is administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Office for Coastal Management. The key goals of the National CZMP include: "protecting natural resources, managing development in high hazard areas, giving development priority to coastal-dependent uses, providing public access for recreation, coordinating state and federal actions."

California Coastal Act of 1976

The California Coastal Act of 1976 (20 PRC 30000-30900) was created with guidance from the California Coastal Plan to protect natural coastal resources, enhance public access to the coast, and balance conservation and development and to be managed by the newly formed California Coastal Zone Conservation Commission or, as it's called today, the California Coastal Commission (CCC). The CCA applies to the government, businesses, and private individuals and establishes an on land coastal zone which varies in width from several hundred feet in highly urbanized areas up to 5 miles in some rural areas on land as well as an offshore coastal zone from the high tide line of the California coast out to 3 nautical miles. The coastal zone established by the CCA does not include San Francisco Bay, where development is regulated by the Bay Conservation and Development Commission. Local governments serve as the regulatory agency within the boundaries of their jurisdiction and are also responsible for creating Local Coastal Programs (LCP) to guide coastal planning, development, and conservation as well as issuing permits. The CCC operates under the federal CSMA and reviews LCPs for approval. It is also important to note that the CCC criteria for wetlands varies from USACE and CDFW. The CCA protects important coastal biological resources including wetlands, riparian habitats and other areas defined as Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas by the CCC in accordance with the CCA.

California Fish and Game Code

Streambed Alteration Agreement

Section 1602 of the California Fish and Game Code requires that a Notification of Lake or Streambed Alteration be submitted to CDFW for "any activity that may substantially divert or obstruct the natural flow or substantially change the bed, channel, or bank of any river, stream, or lake." The CDFW reviews the proposed actions and, if necessary, submits to the Applicant a proposal for measures to protect affected fish and wildlife resources. The final proposal that is mutually agreed upon by CDFW and the Applicant is the Streambed Alteration Agreement (SAA). Projects that require an SAA also often require a permit from the USACE under Section 404 of the CWA. In these instances, the conditions of the Section 404 permit and the SAA may overlap.

Migratory Birds

The CDFW enforces the protection of nongame native birds in Sections 3503, 3503.5, and 3800 of the California Fish and Game Code. Section 3513 of the California Fish and Game Code prohibits the possession or take of birds listed under the MBTA. These sections mandate the protection of California nongame native birds' nests and also make it unlawful to take these birds. All raptor species are protected from *take* pursuant to California Fish and Game Code Section 3503.5 and are also protected at the federal level by the MBTA of 1918 (USFWS 1918).

3.2.3.3 Local

City of National City General Plan

The Open Space and Agriculture Element of the City's General Plan provides plans and measures for the preservation and conservation of open-space lands, including open space for the preservation of natural resources; outdoor recreation; public health and safety; in support of military installations; and for Native American historical, cultural, or sacred sites (City of National City 2011). The following goals and policies are applicable to the Proposed Project:

- **Goal OS-2:** The preservation of sensitive habitat areas, including steep slopes, drainages, and wetlands for their biological value and functioning of natural systems.
 - **Policy OS-2.7:** Ensure that potential impacts to biological resources are carefully evaluated prior to approval of development projects.
 - **Policy OS-2.8:** Ensure that development is consistent with all federal, State, and regional regulations for habitat and species protection.

3.2.4 Impacts Analysis

3.2.4.1 Methodology

Biological Reconnaissance Survey

A literature review and biological reconnaissance survey were conducted for the Proposed Project to determine the special-status plant and wildlife species documented in the vicinity of the Project Area (ECORP 2022a).

Using information from the literature review and observations in the field, a list of special-status plant and animal species that have potential to occur within the BSA was generated. For the purposes of this DEIR, special-status species are defined as plants or animals that:

- have been designated as either rare, threatened, or endangered by CDFW, CNPS, or the USFWS, and/or are protected under either the federal or California ESAs;
- are candidate species being considered or proposed for listing under these same acts;
- are fully protected by the California Fish and Game Code Sections 3511, 4700, 5050, or 5515; and

- are of expressed concern to resource and regulatory agencies or local jurisdictions.

Special-status species reported for the region in the literature review or for which suitable habitat occurs in the BSA were assessed for their potential to occur within the BSA based on the following guidelines:

- **Present:** The species was observed onsite during a reconnaissance visit or focused survey.
- **High:** Habitat (including soils and elevation factors) strongly associated with the species occurs within the BSA and a known occurrence has recently been recorded (within the last 20 years) within 5 miles of the area.
- **Moderate:** Habitat (including soils and elevation factors) for the species occurs within the BSA and a recent documented observation occurs within the database search, but not within 5 miles of the area; habitat for the species occurs and a historic documented observation (more than 20 years old) was recorded within 5 miles of the BSA; or a recently documented observation occurs within 5 miles of the area and marginal or limited amounts of habitat occurs in the Project Area.
- **Low:** Limited or no suitable habitat for the species occurs within the BSA but a recently documented observation occurs within the database search; a historic documented observation (more than 20 years old) was recorded within 5 miles of the BSA and suitable habitat strongly associated with the species occurs onsite.
- **Presumed Absent:** The species was not observed during a site visit, or focused surveys conducted in accordance with protocol guidelines at an appropriate time for identification; habitat (including soils and elevation factors) does not exist onsite; and/or no records occur within 5 miles; and/or the known geographic range of the species does not include the BSA.

Aquatic Resources Delineation

An aquatic resources delineation was conducted for the location of all proposed culvert improvements plus a 50-foot buffer in accordance with the *Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual* (Environmental Laboratory 1987), the *Regional Supplement to the Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual: Arid West Region* (USACE 2008a), *A Field Guide to the Identification of the Ordinary High Water Mark (OHWM) in the Arid West Region of the Western United States* (OHWM Guide; USACE 2008b), the *Updated Datasheet for the Identification of the Ordinary High Water Mark (OHWM) in the Arid West Region of the Western United States* (USACE 2010), and the State of New Mexico's *Hydrology Protocol for the Determination of Ephemeral, Intermittent, and Perennial Waters* (Surface Water Quality Bureau [SWQB] 2010). In addition, stream conditions were assessed based on the USACE-recommended protocol (SWQB 2010) to properly classify features as ephemeral, intermittent, or perennial waters.

Focused Rare Plant Survey

The focused rare plant survey conducted for the Proposed Project involved a pedestrian-based survey of the BSA. Focused rare plant survey methods were devised with consideration of USFWS' *General Rare Plant Survey Guidelines* (USFWS 2002), CDFW's *Protocols for Surveying and Evaluating Impacts to Special Status Native Plant Populations and Sensitive Natural Communities* (CDFW 2018), CNPS' *Botanical Survey Guidelines* (CNPS 2001).

3.2.4.2 Thresholds of Significance

This section provides a Project-level biological resource impact analysis and addresses biological resource issues derived from Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, as well as biological resource issues specific to the National City. Direct impacts include the primary effects of construction that displace habitats and species. These impacts will occur in association with Proposed Project construction due to grading, paving, and other disturbances associated with general construction activities. Indirect impacts occur from a secondary effect of construction activities. Indirect impacts are those that occur due to the proximity of a disturbance or development to a species or its habitat. These impacts occur over the short term, during construction, and over the long term due to proximity of the new Proposed Project features. This type of impact could include habitat isolation or degradation, urban edge effects, nonnative species introduction, runoff, alteration of a wildlife species' normal behaviors and activities, vehicular noise, or increased human or pet intrusion. The magnitude of an indirect effect can be as adverse as that of a direct effect, depending on the circumstances. Mitigation, monitoring, and reporting requirements to avoid, eliminate, or reduce potentially significant impacts to special-status biological resources to a less than significant level are discussed below. The following sections present impacts to sensitive biological resources resulting from Proposed Project activities. Impacts are considered significant if the Proposed Project would result in any of the following:

- 1) 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 CDFW and USFWS.
- 2) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by CDFW or USFWS.
- 3) 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.
- 4) Result in substantial interference with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impendance of the use of native wildlife nursery sites.
- 5) Conflict with any applicable local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance or with the provisions of an applicable adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or State habitat conservation plan.

3.2.4.3 Impact Discussion

Threshold 1: Would the project 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 CDFW and USFWS?

Special-Status Plant Species

The literature review resulted in 72 special-status plant species with potential to occur in the Project Area. Of these 72 special-status plants, one special-status plant species, Nuttall's acmispon (*Acmispon prostratus*), was observed within the Project Area.

A focused rare plant survey was conducted for special-status plants species determined to have potential to occur; particularly, the target plant species San Diego ambrosia. This species was originally determined to have potential based on the literature review and habitat present in the Project Area. During the survey, there were no observations of federally or state-listed plants; however, one plant species listed as rare by CNPS was located within the Project Area. Special-status plant species Nuttall's acmispon, a CRPR 1B.1 species, was detected within the southwestern portion of the Project Area where loose sandy soils are located. Nuttall's acmispon is a CRPR 1B species, meaning it is rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere, and its threat rank is rated 0.1, or seriously endangered in CA (over 80 percent of occurrences threatened/high degree and immediacy of threat). One individual of Nuttall's acmispon (annual species) was observed in proximity to a non-special-status species, Heermann's lotus (*Acmispon heermannii* var. *heermannii*). No other special-status plant species were detected within the Project Area.

Direct impacts to Nuttall's acmispon may occur as a result of the Proposed Project in the form of mortality or injury due to ground-disturbing and vegetation removal activities within the Project Area, as this species was detected during the focused rare plant survey. Impacts to Nuttall's acmispon would be less than significant with the implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-1 which requires salvage of seed and donation to a refuge and/or native plant nursery.

To maximize salvage of Nuttall's acmispon prior to the start of construction, seed collection and donation has been initiated by Project biologists as of June 2022. Sweetwater Marsh National Wildlife Refuge and Native West Nursery were contacted on June 28, 2022 and August 30, 2022 respectively, to confirm the Project's seed donations would be accepted. Native West Nursery responded on August 31, 2022 that donations of seed would be accepted. Sweetwater Marsh National Wildlife Refuge responded on October 17, 2022 that donations of seed would be accepted. Table 3.2-2 provides a log of seed collection and donation to date.

Table 3.2-2. Nuttall's acmispon Seed Collection and Donation				
Collection Date	Location	Notes	Donation Date	Refuge/Nursery
07/07/2022	Near the cross streets of Harrison Avenue & West 19th Street	Seed collected. Stored in a paper bag in a dry location, out of direct sun, and away from moisture until donation can be made.	10/25/2022	Sweetwater Marsh National Wildlife Refuge
09/17/2024	830 West 18th Street	No seed collected. Plants appeared stressed and dry. A few viable flowers remain that could seed in a few weeks.	-	-

Special-Status Wildlife Species

The results of the literature review identified 35 special-status wildlife species with potential to occur within the BSA. Of these 35 special-status wildlife species, two special-status wildlife species (osprey and western yellow bat), have a moderate potential to occur within the BSA due to the presence of highly suitable habitat and recent occurrences within 5 miles. Nine special-status wildlife species have a low potential to occur, and 24 special-status wildlife species are presumed absent. Special-status wildlife species were not encountered within the Project Area during the biological resources survey.

Special-status Bird Species

An osprey was observed flying to the west of the Project Area during the reconnaissance survey. Osprey are large birds of prey that feed mainly on fish. They tolerate a wide variety of habitats and nest in any location near a body of water providing an adequate food supply. They have been documented in San Diego nesting on utility poles and light fixtures in urban areas adjacent to bodies of water. Although there is low likelihood of nesting of osprey within the Project Area itself, there is potential for nesting within the buffer of the Project Area and the bay nearby provides suitable foraging habitat. Therefore, this species could be indirectly impacted by development of the Proposed Project. Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-2 would reduce impacts to osprey and other special-status bird species to a less than significant level.

Protected Bat Species

The palm trees located within the Project Area and buffer may provide roosting habitats for bat species, particularly western yellow bat, an SSC species. These trees could function as maternity roost sites for this species. Bat species in California are protected by Section 4150 (protection of non-game mammals from take) of the California Fish and Game Code. Section 4150 of the California Fish and Game Code prohibits the take of any naturally occurring mammals in California that are non-game mammals, which includes all species of the Order Chiroptera (bats).

All bat species with potential for occurrence for the Project are SSC species and Project-related impacts to bat species and bat maternity roosts are potentially significant. Impacts to bat species are expected to be temporary in nature and individual bats are expected to be able to vacate the trees that are removed during construction without being subject to harm if a two-step palm tree removal process is conducted. The two-step removal process for palm trees involves the following:

- The uppermost live fronds (the top of the tree) should be removed entirely on the first day along with the upper 25 percent of the frond skirt. This method would allow for sufficient disturbance of the tree that would encourage any roosting bats within the frond skirt to abandon the tree during evening emergence without directly impacting roosting bats within the skirt. The remainder of the tree should be removed the following day.
- If bats emerge at any time during the tree trimming, trimming activities should cease at that individual tree for the remainder of the day to allow for any additional bats roosting in the tree to emerge during evening hours when it is safe and appropriate for them to do so. Trimming of the tree may resume the following morning.

- Tree trimming activities in the fall should be conducted on days when weather conditions are such that roosting bats are unlikely to be in torpor (i.e., predicted overnight lows on evenings before and after the tree trimming activities are above 45 degrees Fahrenheit) to the extent practicable.

Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-3 would reduce impacts to bat species and maternity roosts to a less than significant level.

Raptors and Migratory Birds

The vegetation within and infrastructure adjacent to the Project Area (e.g., utility poles, existing buildings) could provide nesting habitat for nesting birds and raptors protected by the MBTA and California Fish and Game Code, and also provides foraging habitat for songbird and raptor species. If construction of the Proposed Project occurs during the bird breeding season (typically February 1 through August 31 for passerines and January 15 through July 31 for raptors), ground-disturbing construction activities could directly affect MBTA-protected birds and their nests through the removal of habitat in the Project Area, and indirectly through increased noise, ground vibrations, and increased human activity. Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-2 would reduce impacts to a less than significant level.

Threshold 2: Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by CDFW or USFWS?

The Proposed Project is not located within any USFWS-designated critical habitat. The closest designated critical habitat is for western snowy plover (*Charadrius nivosus nivosus*) located approximately 1 mile to the south and Otay tarplant (*Deinandra conjugens*) located approximately 5 miles to the southeast of the Project Area.

The Proposed Project consists of disturbed vegetation communities and disturbed and developed land. These vegetation communities and land covers are not considered sensitive to local, state, or federal agencies; therefore, there is no impact and no mitigation is required.

Threshold 3: Would the project 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?

Under the CCA, potential wetlands defined by the California Coastal Commission total 0.144 acre. One depression feature exists within the southwest portion of the DA.

The Proposed Project would provide a new transloading facility along the BNSF railroad to deliver renewable fuels to the San Diego market to expand the availability of renewable fuels in the region in support of California's clean energy transition. The Proposed Project is located within the Medium/Heavy Manufacturing Zone. Permitted uses in the MM zone include automotive; heavy equipment and machinery; light and medium manufacturing; off-street parking; public utilities; research and development; and wholesaling, warehousing, and distribution. Conditional uses in the MM zone include food processing, gasoline service stations, mineral resource extraction, and truck transportation facilities. Permitted uses in the HM zone include food processing, public protection facilities, public utilities, and

scrap metal processing. Conditional uses in the HDM zone include heavy manufacturing. The Proposed Project is a transloading facility that would deliver biofuels for use as a transportation energy source and is an allowed use that fits within the Coastal Act Section 30233(a)(1) category: *New or expanded, port, energy, and coastal-dependent industrial facilities, including commercial fishing facilities.*

Project components planned within the location of the depression include tracks 8 and 9, mechanical skids, pumps and piping, and mechanical track bumpers. Areas surrounding the location of the depression include the construction of a containment basin to the south, track 6 to the west, tracks 8 and 9 to the north, and the truck loadout area to the east. The Proposed Project does not include any dredging or spoils disposal activities. The Project Area is not located within an identified priority area of the South San Diego Bay as identified in the report entitled *Acquisition Priorities for the Coastal Wetlands of California*. Additionally, the Project does not include erosion control and flood control facilities constructed on watercourses.

As a project design feature, each truck loading spot will consist of a pump skid, controls, and above ground piping between the belly of the rail cars and the bottom loading port of the truck. Each spot also provides a concrete pad and drain for the containment of potential spills which will be piped to a containment basin onsite. The rail car and truck unloading area will be equipped with a containment system capable of containing the contents of 110 percent of an entire rail car volume. The Project includes four truck loadout spots where trucks would enter the Project Site from W. 18th Street to load up with fuel and exit on W. 19th Street to local retail destinations. Given the irregularity of the shape of the Project Site and site vehicular access constraints, truck loadout can only occur within the eastern portion of the Project Site between W. 18th Street and W. 19th Street for truck maneuverability, safety, and mechanical function of fuel transfer. Under all alternatives considered, for the Project to occur in this location, reconfiguration of the truck loadout location for the Project would not be feasible. Additionally, the Project Applicant has entered into a lease agreement with BNSF, the underlying landowner, for use of the Project Site. The Proposed Project is a rail-dependent use and consolidation with other existing industrial facilities or development on a separate property is also not feasible. A separate offsite location alternative was considered within the City limits that is capable of being served by rail. There are no other locations outside of the coastal zone where the Project could be served by rail. The potential offsite location for the transloading facility would be south of the Proposed Project on a 6.07-acre parcel east of I-5 and the BNSF rail line at 3202 Hoover Avenue within National City. The offsite location is mainly disturbed and developed/urban lands; however, the northern part of the parcel includes approximately 1 acre of the adjacent 2.2-acre Paradise Marsh, which is designated by the National Wetlands Inventory as an estuarine and marine wetland (USFWS 2024). Development of the Proposed Project at this location has the potential for greater impacts requiring direct impacts to Paradise Marsh to construct the Project with enough rail capacity to accommodate a similar daily throughput.

The features observed and/or mapped within the DA do not appear to be tributary to TNW or connected to interstate waters based on the field assessment and an assessment of aerial photographs, but rather than various features located in the DA are considered isolated. These aquatic resources may not be subject to regulation under the Clean Water Act (CWA) if the drainages recorded within the DA do not

connect downstream to TNW or to Interstate Waters, as determined by the USACE. However, the depressional feature located within the DA is considered to be potentially jurisdictional under the CCA.

Pursuant to the CCA (PRC Section 30233), the CCC regulates the diking, filling, or dredging of wetlands within the Coastal Zone. The CCA Section 30121 defines wetlands as land which “may be covered periodically or permanently with shallow water.” The 1981 CCC Statewide Interpretive Guidelines state that “hydric soils and hydrophytic vegetation are useful indicators of hydric conditions but the presence or absence of hydric soils and/or hydrophytes alone are not necessarily determinative when the Commission identifies wetlands under the Coastal Act.” The CCC’s wetland definition, taken from 14 CCR Section 13577 states:

Wetlands shall be defined as land where the water table is at, near or above the land surface long enough to promote the formation of hydric soils or promote the growth of hydrophytes, and shall also include those types of wetlands where vegetation is lacking and soils are poorly developed or absent as a result of frequent and drastic fluctuations of surface water levels, wave action, water flow, turbidity or high concentrations of salts or other substances in the substrate. Such wetlands can be recognized by the presence of surface water or saturated substrate at some time during each year and their location within, or adjacent to, vegetated wetlands or deepwater habitats.

As part of the Proposed Project’s geotechnical investigation, six exploratory borings and six cone penetration test soundings were completed throughout the Project Area including one boring (B-2) within the Harrison Avenue right-of-way adjacent to the location of the depressional feature. Groundwater at this location was measured at 14.5 feet. Throughout the Project Area, groundwater elevations varied from 14.5 to 16.5 feet. The geotechnical evaluation concluded that the groundwater table within the Project Area does not appear to be influenced by tidal fluctuations in San Diego Bay. For these reasons, the depressional feature and the Project Area are not considered to be subject to frequent and drastic fluctuations of surface water levels, wave action, water flow, turbidity, or high concentrations of salts or other substances in the substrate. The soils of the feature are fill soils that are also considered to be non-hydric, showing no hydric indicators based on the field survey. The depressional feature is an isolated puddle whose occurrence is likely due to compaction of fill soils within the existing property. Nevertheless, the presence of water and algal mats indicates that the pool regularly contains water from year to year which is the result of runoff from adjacent roadways.

The only portion of the parcel usable for internal circulation is the area near West 18th Street and West 19th Street. The remainder of the site is narrow and constrained by existing development and the BNSF rail line. Due to the size constraints of the parcel, Project components cannot be rearranged to avoid this puddle. Therefore, Proposed Project would result in an impact to this puddle; however, it would also improve site drainage and water quality within surrounding areas by providing storm drains and filtering of pollutants, which is not occurring at the present time. For the reasons listed above and because the Project would result in an overall improvement in water quality for the region, a less than significant impact was identified for impacts to the feature.

Threshold 4: Would the project result in substantial interference with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impedance of the use of native wildlife nursery sites?

The concept of habitat corridors addresses the linkage between large blocks of habitat that allow the safe movement of mammals and other wildlife species from one habitat area to another. The definition of a corridor is varied, but corridors may include such areas as greenbelts, refuge systems, underpasses, and biogeographic land bridges, for example. In general, a corridor is described as a linear habitat, embedded in a dissimilar matrix, which connects two or more large blocks of habitat. Wildlife movement corridors are critical for the survivorship of ecological systems for several reasons. Corridors can connect water, food, and cover sources, spatially linking these three resources with wildlife in different areas. In addition, wildlife movement between habitat areas provides for the potential of genetic exchange between wildlife species populations, thereby maintaining genetic variability and adaptability to maximize the success of wildlife responses to changing environmental conditions. This is especially critical for small populations subject to loss of variability from genetic drift and effects of inbreeding. The nature of corridor use, and wildlife movement patterns varies greatly among species.

The Proposed Project was assessed for its ability to function as a wildlife corridor. The Project Area is surrounded by urban development with major roads that block wildlife movement through the area. Furthermore, the Proposed Project does not connect valuable blocks of habitat and lacks valuable habitat itself. The disturbed habitats within the Project Area provide an island of foraging and nesting habitat for wildlife species but they are not considered sensitive ecological areas. No impact would occur, and no mitigation is required.

Threshold 5: Would the project conflict with any applicable local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance or with the provisions of an applicable adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or State habitat conservation plan?

The Proposed Project is not located within an HCP or natural community conservation plan area. No impact would occur, and no mitigation is required.

3.2.5 Mitigation Measures

BIO-1: Rare Plant Salvage. Prior to the start of construction activities, a qualified biologist shall salvage seed from the Nuttall's acmispson during the appropriate time of year (June to October), store under appropriate conditions, and coordinate donation of the seeds with a refuge and/or plant nursery (e.g., Sweetwater Marsh National Wildlife Refuge and Native West Nursery) that would apply seed within the refuge boundaries. Appropriate seed storage conditions are in a paper bag, placed in a dry location out of direct sunlight, away from moisture, ideally at 72 degrees Fahrenheit. Seed shall be collected from June to October 2024 and the subsequent spring (2025), provided that the plant is present and ready to seed.

BIO-2: Pre-Construction Survey for Nesting Birds and Special-Status Avian Species. Where feasible, ground-disturbing activities, including vegetation removal, shall be conducted

during the non-breeding season (approximately September 1 through January 14) to avoid violations of the MBTA and California Fish and Game Code Sections 3503, 3503.5 and 3513. Several species were identified as having potential to nest year-round; therefore, regardless of time of year, a pre-construction survey for nesting birds and special-status avian species shall be conducted by a qualified biologist (experienced in the identification of avian species and conducting nesting bird surveys) if activities with the potential to disrupt nesting birds or special-status avian species are scheduled to occur. The survey shall include the Proposed Project and adjacent areas where Project activities have the potential to cause nest failure. The pre-construction survey shall be conducted no more than 3 days prior to the start of ground-disturbing activities (including vegetation removal) within the bird breeding season. Site preparation and construction activities may begin if no nesting birds or special-status avian species are observed during the survey. If nesting birds or raptors or special-status avian species are found to be present, avoidance or minimization measures shall be implemented to avoid potential proposed Project-related impacts to the species. Avoidance and minimization measures shall be developed by the qualified biologist and may include seasonal work restrictions, additional survey and monitoring requirements, or non-disturbance buffers established around active nests until the biologist has determined that the nesting cycle is completed. The width of non-disturbance buffers established around active nests will be determined by the qualified biologist (300 feet is typically recommended for songbirds and 500 feet is typically recommended for raptors). Once nesting is deemed complete by the qualified biologist as determined through periodic nest monitoring, the non-disturbance buffer will be removed by the qualified biologist and proposed Project work may resume in the area.

BIO-3: Compliance with Section 4150 of California Fish and Game Code: If tree trimming and removal activities are required, these activities should take place outside of the bat maternity season (April 1 to August 31) to the greatest extent feasible. If tree removal must take place during the maternity season, a pre-removal bat survey shall take place no more than 48 hours prior to planned tree removal to determine if bats are roosting in the trees. If bats are determined to be present in the trees during surveys, tree removal shall be postponed until after the maternity season (September 1 through March 31). All tree-trimming and removal activities shall be conducted under the direct supervision of a qualified bat biologist.

To minimize direct mortality to any roosting bats, including western yellow bat, each palm tree requiring removal shall be trimmed using a two-step process conducted over two consecutive days. On the first day only the outermost fronds of each individual tree shall be removed, including the uppermost live fronds (the top of the tree) entirely on the first day along with the upper 25 percent of the frond skirt. The innermost fronds shall not be trimmed. No more than 50 percent of the palm fronds shall be removed from each tree during Day 1. This method would allow for sufficient disturbance of the tree that would encourage any roosting bats within the frond skirt to abandon the tree during evening emergence without directly impacting roosting bats within the skirt. The remainder of the tree should be removed on the second day. This procedure need not be implemented if the

tree does not have fronds. All fronds must be removed/trimmed using chainsaws or other hand-tools. No use of heavy equipment shall be used to remove fronds.

If bats emerge at any time during the tree trimming, trimming activities shall cease at that individual tree for the remainder of the day to allow for any additional bats roosting in the tree to emerge during evening hours when it is safe and appropriate for them to do so. Trimming of the tree may resume the following morning.

Tree trimming activities in the fall should be conducted on days when weather conditions are such that roosting bats are unlikely to be in torpor (predicted overnight lows on evenings before and after the tree trimming activities are above 45 degrees Fahrenheit) to the extent practicable.

3.2.6 *Level of Significance After Mitigation*

Impacts would be less than significant.

3.3 Energy

3.3.1 Introduction

This section describes the existing conditions and regulatory setting for energy systems that serve the Project Area. According to the CEQA Checklist, energy impacts are considered significant if the Proposed Project would (1) result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources during project construction or operation; and (2) conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency.

This section relies on the emission modeling results provided in Appendix E.

3.3.2 Environmental Setting

California relies on a regional power system composed of a diverse mix of natural gas, renewable, hydroelectric, and nuclear generation resources. Natural gas provides California with a majority of its electricity, which is followed by renewables, large hydroelectric, and nuclear (California Energy Commission [CEC] 2021). San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) currently provides natural gas and electricity transmission and distribution infrastructure in San Diego County. SDG&E has made several efforts to promote energy efficiency and reduce the climate impacts of energy usage. For instance, SDG&E has committed to achieving net zero emissions by 2045, which is in alignment with State goals. Additionally, approximately 50 percent of the power provided by SDG&E comes from renewable sources (SDG&E 2024). SDG&E is regulated by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), which is responsible for ensuring that California utilities customers have safe and reliable service. The Proposed Project's energy needs would be supplied through the various combinations of energy resources available. The analysis in this section takes into account the anticipated future SDG&E energy resource use patterns.

The CPUC regulates SDG&E and has developed energy efficiency programs such as smart meters, low-income programs, distribution generation programs, self-generation incentive programs, and a California solar initiative. Additionally, the CEC maintains a power plant database that describes all of the operating power plants in the State by County. San Diego County contains approximately 22 plants powered by solar energy, 3 by wind, 30 by natural gas, 4 by hydrogen fuel cells, and 8 by the incineration of biomass. (CEC 2021).

3.3.2.1 Existing Transmission and Distribution Facilities

The components of transmission and distribution systems include the generating facility, switching yards and stations, primary substation, distribution substations, distribution transformers, various sized transmission lines, and the customers. The U.S. contains over a quarter million miles of transmission lines, most of which are capable of handling voltages between 115 kilovolts (kv) and 345 kv, and a handful of systems with up to 500 kv and 765 kv capacity. Transmission lines are rated according to the amount of power they can carry, the product of the current (rate of flow), and the voltage (electrical pressure). Generally, transmission is more efficient at higher voltages. Generating facilities, hydro-electric dams, and power plants usually produce electrical energy at fairly low voltages, which are increased by transformers in substations. Energy proceeds from substations through switching facilities to the transmission lines. At

various points in the system, the energy is “stepped down” to lower voltages for distribution to customers. Power lines are either high voltage (115, 230, 500, and 765 kv) transmission lines or low voltage (12, 24, and 60 kv) distribution lines. Overhead transmission lines consist of the wires carrying the electrical energy (conductors), insulators, support towers, and grounded wires that protect the lines from lightning (called shield wires). Support towers must meet the structural requirements of the system in several ways. They must be able to support the electrical wires, conductors, and shield wires under varying weather conditions, including wind and ice loading, as well as under a possible unbalanced pull caused by one or two wires breaking on one side of a tower. Every mile or so, a “dead-end” tower must be able to take the strain resulting if all the wires on one side of another tower break. Every change in direction requires a special tower design. In addition, the number of towers required per mile varies depending on the electrical standards, weather conditions, and terrain. All towers must have appropriate foundations and be available at a fairly regular spacing along a continuous route accessible for both construction and maintenance. An ROW is a fundamental requirement for all transmission lines. An ROW must be kept clear of vegetation that could obstruct the lines or towers by falling limbs or interference with the sag or wind sway of the overhead lines. If necessary, land acquisition and maintenance requirements can be substantial. The dimensions of an ROW depend on the voltage, number of circuits carried, and tower design. Typically, transmission line ROWs range from 100 to 300 feet in width.

The California Independent System Operator (CAISO) manages the flow of electricity across the high-voltage, long-distance power lines (high-voltage transmissions systems) that make up 80 percent of California’s and a small part of Nevada’s grid. This nonprofit public benefit corporation keeps power moving to and throughout California by operating a competitive wholesale electricity market that is designed to promote a broad range of resources at lower prices and manage the reliability of the electrical transmission grid. In managing the grid, CAISO centrally dispatches generation and coordinates the movement of wholesale electricity in California. As the only independent grid operator in the western U.S., CAISO grants equal access to 26,000 circuit miles of transmission lines and coordinates competing and diverse energy resources into the grid where it is distributed to consumers. Every 5 minutes, CAISO forecasts electrical demand and dispatches the lowest cost generator to meet demand while ensuring that transmission capacity is sufficient for the delivery of power.

3.3.2.2 Regional Energy Consumption

Electricity use is measured in kilowatt-hours (kWh), and natural gas use is measured in therms. Vehicle fuel use is typically measured in gallons (e.g., of gasoline or diesel fuel); however, energy use for electric vehicles is measured in kWh.

The electricity consumption associated with all non-residential uses in San Diego County from 2018 to 2022 is shown in Table 3.3-1. As indicated, the demand has increased since 2018.

Table 3.3-1. Non-Residential Electricity Consumption in San Diego County 2018-2022

Year	Electricity Consumption (kilowatt hours)
2022	12,802,545,160
2021	12,353,416,157
2020	11,722,882,508
2019	12,453,450,012
2018	12,793,962,295

Source: California Energy Commission 2023

Automotive fuel consumption in San Diego County from 2019 to 2023 is shown in Table 3.3-2. Fuel consumption has decreased between 2019 and 2023.

Table 3.3-2. Automotive Fuel Consumption in San Diego County 2019-2023

Year	Total On-road Fuel Consumption (gallons)
2023	1,548,885,694
2022	1,563,236,305
2021	1,569,307,501
2020	1,398,441,429
2019	1,592,511,108

Source: California Air Resources Board 2023b

3.3.3 Regulatory Setting

3.3.3.1 Federal

Energy Policy and Conservation Act of 1975 and Alternative Motor Fuels Act of 1988

The Energy Policy and Conservation Act of 1975 (EPCA) established the first fuel economy standards for on-road motor vehicles sold in the United States and assigned responsibility for establishing and revising vehicle fuel economy standards to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). The Alternative Motor Fuels Act of 1988 amended a portion of the EPCA to encourage the use of alternative fuels, including electricity. The act directs the Secretary of Energy to take action to ensure that the maximum practical number of federal passenger vehicles and light-duty trucks be powered by alcohol or natural gas or be dual-fueled vehicles.

Corporate Average Fuel Economy and Vehicle Fuel Efficiency Standards

Established by the U.S. Congress in 1975, the Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards reduce energy consumption by increasing the fuel economy of cars and light trucks (collectively, light-duty

vehicles). The NHTSA CAFE standards regulate how far vehicles must travel on a gallon of fuel. The NHTSA and United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) jointly administer the CAFE standards.

Fuel efficiency standards for medium- and heavy-duty trucks have been jointly developed by NHTSA and EPA. The Phase 1 heavy-duty truck standards applied to combination tractors, heavy-duty pickup trucks and vans, and vocational vehicles for model years 2014 through 2018. In August of 2016, the agencies adopted more stringent Phase 2 standards for medium- and heavy-duty vehicles, which apply to model years 2018 through 2027 for certain trailers and model years 2021 through 2027 for semi-trucks, large pickup trucks, vans, and all types and sizes of buses and work trucks. The Phase 2 heavy-duty truck standards require the phase-in of a 5 to 25 percent reduction in fuel consumption over the 2017 baseline, depending on the compliance year and vehicle type. The most recent fuel efficiency standards for heavy-duty pickup trucks and vans, announced in June 2024, would require an industry-wide fleet average of roughly 2.851 gallons per 100 miles in model year 2035. The final fuel efficiency standards for heavy-duty pickup trucks and vans increase at a rate of 10 percent per year in model years 2030 through 2032 and 8 percent per year in model years 2033 through 2035 (NHTSA 2024).

Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007

The Energy Independence and Security Act (EISA) was enacted in December 2007 with the aim of moving the United States toward greater energy independence by increasing the production of clean renewable fuels; increasing the efficiency of products, buildings, and vehicles; improving the energy performance of the federal government; and improving vehicle fuel economy. The EISA included the first increase in fuel economy standards for passenger cars since 1975 and included a new energy grant program for use by local governments in implementing energy-efficiency initiatives, as well as a variety of green building incentives and programs.

Inflation Reduction Act of 2022

The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) of 2022 is considered the most ambitious climate law in U.S. history and is intended to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, help build a clean economy, reduce energy costs for Americans, and advance environmental justice. With funding from the IRA, the EPA has launched a network of clean energy financing and provided grant funding for climate pollution reduction programs (USEPA 2024b).

3.3.3.2 State

Warren-Alquist Energy Resources Conservation and Development Act

Initially passed in 1974 and amended since, the Warren-Alquist Energy Resources Conservation and Development Act (Warren-Alquist Act) created the CEC, California's primary energy policy and planning agency. The seven responsibilities of the CEC are (1) forecasting future energy needs, (2) promoting energy efficiency and conservation through setting standards, (3) supporting energy-related research, (4) developing renewable energy resources, (5) advancing alternative and renewable transportation fuels and technologies, (6) certifying thermal power plants 50 MW or larger, and (7) planning for and directing State response to energy emergencies. The CEC regulates energy resources by encouraging and coordinating research into energy supply and demand problems to reduce the rate of growth of energy consumption.

Additionally, the Warren-Alquist Act acknowledges the need for renewable energy resources and encourages the CEC to explore renewable energy options that would be in line with environmental and public safety goals (PRC Section 25000 et seq.)

Senate Bill 1389

SB 1389 (SB 1389, Bowen and Sher, Chapter 568, Statutes of 2002) requires the CEC to prepare a biennial Integrated Energy Policy Report (IEPR) that assesses major energy trends and issues facing California's electricity, natural gas, and transportation fuel sectors and provides policy recommendations to conserve resources; protect the environment; ensure reliable, secure, and diverse energy supplies; enhance the State's economy; and protect public health and safety (Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 25301a).

Executive Order B-55-18 and Assembly Bill 1279

Executive Order (EO) B-55-18 was established in September 2018 by Governor Jerry Brown to set a new statewide goal "to achieve carbon neutrality as soon as possible, and no later than 2045, and achieve and maintain net negative emissions thereafter." Although this EO has not been codified in law, it directs CARB to ensure that future climate change scoping plans identify and recommend measures for achieving the carbon neutrality goal. On September 16, 2022, the California State Legislature passed AB 1279, which codified the goal of achieving carbon neutrality and an 85 percent reduction in 1990 emissions level by 2045.

California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 6 – Energy Efficiency Standards

California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 24, Part 6 provides the California Energy Efficiency Standards for Residential and Nonresidential Buildings. This code was established in 1978 in response to a legislative mandate to reduce California's energy consumption. Title 24 is updated approximately every three years. The 2019 Title 24 updates went into effect on January 1, 2020. The 2022 standards went into effect January 1, 2023.

The 2022 Energy Standards improve upon the 2019 Energy Standards for new construction of, and additions and alterations to, residential and nonresidential buildings. The 2022 update to the Energy Standards focuses on several key areas to improve the energy efficiency of newly constructed buildings and additions and alterations to existing buildings, encouraging improved energy efficiency, strengthening ventilation standards, and more.

California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 11 – California Green Building Standards Code

The State of California adopted the California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen) in January 2010. CALGreen establishes mandatory green building standards for all buildings in California. The California Building Standards Commission has the authority to propose CALGreen standards for nonresidential structures such as new buildings or portions of new buildings, including additions and alterations. The code was subsequently updated in 2013, 2016, 2019, and most recently in 2022. The 2022 CALGreen Code has been effective as of January 2023. The code covers five categories: planning and design, energy efficiency, water efficiency and conservation, material conservation and resource efficiency, and indoor environmental quality (California Department of General Services [DGS] 2024).

Assembly Bill 1493 Pavley Regulations and Fuel Efficiency Standards

AB 1493, enacted on July 22, 2002, required CARB to develop and adopt regulations that reduce GHGs emitted by passenger vehicles and light duty trucks. Under this legislation, CARB adopted regulations to reduce GHG emissions from non-commercial passenger vehicles (cars and light-duty trucks). Although aimed at reducing GHG emissions, specifically, a co-benefit of the Pavley standards is an improvement in fuel efficiency and consequently a reduction in fuel consumption.

Assembly Bill 32 & Senate Bill 32

In 2006, the California State Legislature adopted AB 32 (codified in the California HSC, Division 25.5–California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006), which focuses on reducing GHG emissions in California to 1990 levels by 2020. CARB has the primary responsibility for reducing the State’s GHG emissions; however, AB 32 also tasked the CEC and the CPUC with providing information, analysis, and recommendations to CARB regarding strategies to reduce GHG emissions in the energy sector.

In 2016, SB 32 and its companion bill AB 197 amended HSC Division 25.5, established a new climate pollution reduction target of 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030, and included provisions to ensure that the benefits of state climate policies reach into disadvantaged communities.

2022 Scoping Plan for Achieving Carbon Neutrality

The 2022 Scoping Plan for Achieving Carbon Neutrality (2022 Scoping Plan), approved by CARB in December 2022, assesses progress toward achieving the State’s GHG reduction goals and establishes a path to achieve carbon neutrality no later than 2045. The 2022 Scoping Plan focuses on outcomes needed to achieve carbon neutrality by assessing paths for advancing transportation technology, clean energy deployment, maintenance and preservation of natural and working lands, and others, and is designed to meet the State’s long-term climate objectives. Carbon negative technologies are identified as an essential component in achieving state-wide carbon neutrality (CARB 2022c).

Low Carbon Fuel Standard

In 2007, Executive Order S-01-07 established the Low Carbon Fuel Standard (LCFS), which requires producers of petroleum-based fuels to reduce the carbon intensity of their products, starting with 0.25 percent in 2011 and culminating in a 10 percent total reduction in 2020. Petroleum importers, refiners and wholesalers can either develop their own low carbon fuel products or buy LCFS credits from other companies that develop and sell low carbon alternative fuels, such as biofuels, electricity, natural gas and hydrogen. CARB is responsible for administering the LCFS.

The LCFS regulation was amended in 2018 to require a 20 percent reduction in the carbon intensity of transportation fuels by 2030 and expand the fuel types and activities eligible to participate in the LCFS (CARB 2018).

3.3.3.3 Local

San Diego Association of Governments Regional Energy Strategy

SANDAG created the Regional Energy Strategy (RES) in 2009 for the San Diego Region. The 2003 RES proposed a series of goals and implementation steps to achieve the goals addressing issues such as regional consensus, peak demand, renewable energy, distributed generation, transmission, per capita electricity and natural gas consumption, and natural gas supply. The RES was updated in 2014 to highlight progress toward the goals from 2009 to 2014, identify data for monitoring progress, and provide recommendations for continued progress (SANDAG 2014).

National City General Plan

Goal CS-7 and associated policies of the Conservation and Sustainability Element of the National City General Plan focuses on energy efficiency. This goal emphasizes the need to reduce energy consumption and improve energy conservation throughout National City. Key policies and objectives under this goal include improving building standards, promoting renewable energy and energy-efficient transportation, and expanding public awareness. Specifically, the General Plan encourages the incorporation of energy-efficient technologies in building design, construction, and retrofitting. This involves promoting the use of energy-efficient appliances, lighting, and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems in both new developments and existing structures. Additionally, the General Plan promotes the use of renewable energy sources, such as solar panels, to reduce reliance on non-renewable energy. It supports local initiatives to provide incentives for homeowners and businesses to install solar energy systems. The Conservation and Sustainability Element encourages transportation systems and land-use patterns that reduce energy consumption and seeks to increase public awareness about energy efficiency and conservation strategies.

National City Climate Action Plan

The City prepared its first climate action plan (CAP) in 2011 to address climate change at a local level. As part of the CAP, the City implemented emissions targets up until 2020. Per subsequent emissions inventories, the City has achieved the 2020 target. In 2024, the City adopted a CAP Update to address GHG emissions on a local level to help achieve the State's GHG emission reduction goals. The 2024 National City Climate Action Plan places a significant emphasis on energy efficiency as part of its broader strategy to reduce GHG emissions and enhance sustainability. The plan aligns with the city's goals to transition toward net-zero emissions by targeting energy use in buildings and transportation, two major contributors to GHG emissions. The plan promotes energy-efficient upgrades for both residential and commercial buildings. This includes retrofitting existing structures with modern, energy-efficient systems like improved insulation, better windows, and energy-efficient HVAC systems. The City also supports new construction projects adhering to strict energy efficiency standards, ensuring all new buildings are as close to zero emissions as possible. In addition to energy efficiency improvements, the CAP encourages the adoption of renewable energy systems, such as rooftop solar installations. This helps reduce dependence on fossil fuels while making the energy system more resilient and cost-effective. Through these measures, the 2024 plan positions National City to contribute significantly to California's broader climate goals while ensuring energy savings and resilience for its residents.

3.3.4 Impact Analysis

3.3.4.1 Methodology

The impact analysis focuses on the three sources of energy that are relevant to the Proposed Project: electricity, the equipment-fuel necessary for Project construction, and the automotive fuel necessary for Project operations.

Electricity consumption estimates were calculated using CalEEMod, version 2022.1 (Appendix B). CalEEMod is a statewide land use computer model designed to quantify resources associated with both construction and operations from a variety of land use projects. The total amount of construction-related fuel used was estimated using ratios provided in the Climate Registry's General Reporting Protocol for the Voluntary Reporting Program, Version 2.1 (Climate Registry 2016). Operational automotive fuel consumption has been calculated with Emission Factor (EMFAC) 2021. EMFAC 2021 is a mathematical model that was developed to calculate emission rates and rates of gasoline consumption from motor vehicles that operate on highways, freeways, and local roads in California. Project train fuel consumption calculations account for 65 miles of train travel per visit, which is the distance of Project train travel within the San Diego County.

3.3.4.2 Thresholds of Significance

Thresholds used to evaluate impacts related to energy are based on applicable criteria in Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines. A significant impact related to energy would occur if the Project would:

- 1) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation; or
- 2) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency.

There are no established thresholds of significance, statewide or locally, for what constitutes a wasteful, inefficient, and unnecessary consumption of energy for a proposed land use project. For the purpose of this analysis, the amount of electricity estimated to be consumed by the Project is quantified and compared to that consumed by all non-residential land uses in San Diego County. The amount of fuel necessary for Project construction is calculated and compared to that which is consumed in San Diego County. Similarly, the amount of fuel necessary for Project operations is calculated and compared to that which is consumed in San Diego County.

3.3.4.3 Impact Discussion

Threshold 1: Would the project result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction?

As stated above, this impact analysis focuses on the three sources of energy that are relevant to the Proposed Project: electricity, the equipment-fuel necessary for Project construction, and the automotive fuel necessary for Project operations.

Construction-Related Energy Consumption

The levels of construction-related energy consumption estimated to be consumed by the Project includes gallons of gasoline for construction vehicles and equipment. The amount of total construction-related automotive fuel used was estimated using ratios provided in the Climate Registry's General Reporting Protocol for the Voluntary Reporting Program, Version 2.1. Table 3.3-3 summarizes energy consumption associated with construction of the Proposed Project.

Table 3.3-3. Construction-Related Fuel Consumption		
Energy Type	Annual Energy Consumption	Percentage Increase Countywide
Fuel Consumption	27,783 gallons	0.00179 percent

Notes: The Project increases in construction automotive fuel consumption is compared with the countywide fuel consumption in 2023, the most recent full year of data.

Source: Climate Registry 2016. See Appendix E.

Fuel necessary for Project construction would be required for the operation and maintenance of construction equipment and the transportation of materials to the Project Area. The fuel expenditure necessary to construct the physical building and infrastructure would be temporary, lasting only as long as Project construction, which is anticipated to span six months. Table 3.3-3 indicates that the Project's gasoline fuel consumption during the one-time construction period is estimated to be 27,783 gallons. This would increase the annual construction-related fuel use in the county by 0.00179 percent. As such, Project construction would have a nominal effect on local and regional energy supplies. No unusual Project characteristics would necessitate the use of construction equipment that would be less energy efficient than at comparable construction sites in the region or the State. Construction contractors would purchase their own gasoline and diesel fuel from local suppliers and judiciously use fuel supplies to minimize costs due to waste. Additionally, construction equipment fleet turnover and increasingly stringent State and federal regulations on engine efficiency combined with State regulations limiting engine idling times and requiring recycling of construction debris would further reduce the demand for transportation fuel during Project construction. For these reasons, it is expected that construction fuel consumption associated with the Project would not be any more inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary than other development projects of this nature. Therefore, construction-related energy consumption impacts would be less than significant.

Operation-Related Energy Consumption

The levels of operation-related energy consumption estimated to be consumed by the Project include the number of kWh of electricity and gallons of gasoline. Table 3.3-4 summarizes energy consumption associated with operation of the Proposed Project.

Table 3.3-4. Operation-Related Energy and Fuel Consumption		
Energy Type	Annual Energy Consumption	Percentage Increase Countywide
Building Energy Consumption		
Electricity Consumption ¹	2,180 kilowatt-hours	0.00002 percent

Table 3.3-4. Operation-Related Energy and Fuel Consumption		
Energy Type	Annual Energy Consumption	Percentage Increase Countywide
Mobile Fuel Consumption		
Automotive Fuel Consumption ²	108,239 gallons	0.00698 percent
Train Fuel Consumption ³	47,948 gallons	0.00309 percent
Total Mobile Fuel Consumption	156,187 gallons	0.01008 percent

Notes: The Project increases in electricity consumption are compared with all of the non-residential buildings in San Diego County in 2022, the latest data available. The Project increases in operations automotive fuel consumption are compared with the countywide fuel consumption in 2023, the most recent full year of data.

Source: ¹CalEEMod Version 2022.1; ²EMFAC2021; ³BNSF 2020. See Appendix B for Building Energy Consumption and Train Fuel Consumption. See Appendix E for Construction Fuel Consumption and Operational Automotive Fuel Consumption.

Electricity Consumption

Electricity consumption estimates were calculated using CalEEMod, Version 2022.1. Operation of the Proposed Project would include electricity for lighting and space and water heating for the small building onsite. Table 3.3-4 shows that the annual electricity consumption due to Project operations would be 2,180 kWh, which would result in a negligible increase (0.00002 percent) in the typical annual electricity consumption attributable to all non-residential uses in San Diego County. However, this is potentially a conservative estimate. As stated above, EO B-55-18 established a new statewide goal “to achieve carbon neutrality as soon as possible, and no later than 2045, and achieve and maintain net negative emissions thereafter.” Carbon neutrality refers to achieving net zero CO₂ emissions. This can be achieved by reducing or eliminating carbon emissions, balancing carbon emissions with carbon removal, or a combination of the two. This goal is in addition to existing statewide targets for GHG emission reduction. EO B-55-18 requires CARB to “work with relevant state agencies to ensure future Scoping Plans identify and recommend measures to achieve the carbon neutrality goal.” For these reasons, the Project would not result in the inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary consumption of building energy. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Automotive Fuel Consumption

As a conservative measure, the automotive energy modeling accounts for all vehicle trips as heavy-heavy duty trucks. Table 3.3-4 indicates that Project trucks and trains would result in the consumption of approximately 156,187 gallons of automotive fuel per year, which would increase the annual countywide automotive fuel consumption by 0.01 percent. This analysis conservatively assumes that all of the automobile trips projected to arrive at the Project during operations would be new to San Diego County. Fuel consumption associated with vehicle trips generated by the Project would not be inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary in comparison to similar developments in the region. For these reasons, this impact would be less than significant.

Threshold 2: Would the project conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?

Consistency with Senate Bill 1389

As stated above, SB 1389 requires the CEC to prepare a biennial IEPR to assess major energy trends and provide policy recommendations to be implemented by energy providers in California. Electricity for the Proposed Project would be provided by SDG&E. Approximately 55 percent of SDG&E customers' electricity comes from renewable resources, such as solar and wind. Furthermore, in 2022, SDG&E published an economy-wide greenhouse gas study that provides information on the options for achieving net zero emissions by 2045. SDG&E has also committed to converting the entire fleet of service vehicles to zero emissions by 2035. Therefore, SDG&E is consistent with, and would not otherwise interfere with, or obstruct implementation of, the goals presented in the 2023 IEPR. Because SDG&E is employing the use of renewable and GHG-free energy sources consistent with the IEPR, the Proposed Project's electricity energy consumption would be consistent with the 2023 IEPR because the Project would purchase electricity from SDG&E. As such, the Proposed Project is consistent with, and would not otherwise interfere with, or obstruct implementation of, the goals presented in the 2023 IEPR. Impacts would be less than significant.

Consistency with Low Carbon Fuel Standard

Through the California Legislature and the governor's executive agencies, the citizens of California have set the requirements for California air quality and established the programs and tools for achieving those requirements. The California LCFS is transforming the entire transportation sector in the state by raising demand for biodiesel, renewable diesel, low carbon ethanol, electric vehicles, renewable natural gas, E85 higher ethanol blends, and sustainable aviation fuels, among other low carbon transportation fuels. By maximizing the contributions of all these renewable fuels, studies published by the CARB and the California Energy Commission have concluded that greater carbon emission reductions are achievable (CARB 2018).

The Project contributes to the LCFS and carbon emissions reductions by:

- delivering lower emissions via fewer fuel transit truck miles and cleaner fuels sooner than the current supply chain;
- leveraging lower emissions rail transit to replace longer truck trips;
- replacing existing longer distance truck trips with shorter distance local deliveries;
- minimizing impacts from construction by locating the facility on existing railroad property;
- reducing the State's reliance on fossil-based diesel fuel and increasing the sustainability of the critical transportation sector by reducing its emissions footprint;
- expanding the availability of renewable fuels and offering lower emission fuels to California's construction, industrial, and agricultural industries and the public; and
- solving geographic imbalances in the availability of cleaner, lower carbon fuels.

The method for distributing transportation fuels that will most quickly and effectively achieve the State's goals will use an "all of the above" strategy with a balance of technological and sustainable solutions rather than an "either/or" approach that will delay the air quality benefits for the citizens of California. As such, the Proposed Project is consistent with, and would not otherwise interfere with, or obstruct implementation of, the goals of the LCFS. Impacts would be less than significant.

Consistency with California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 6 – Energy Efficiency Standards

The Project would be designed in a manner that is consistent with relevant energy conservation plans that are designed to encourage development that results in the efficient use of energy resources. The Project would be built to the Energy Efficiency Standards for Residential and Nonresidential Buildings, which is specified in Title 24, Part 6, of the CCR. The 2022 Energy Standards improve upon the 2019 Energy Standards for new construction of, and additions and alterations to, residential and nonresidential buildings. The 2022 update to the Energy Standards focuses on several key areas to improve the energy efficiency of newly constructed buildings and additions and alterations to existing buildings, encouraging improved energy efficiency, strengthening ventilation standards, and more. The 2022 Energy Standards are a major step toward meeting zero net energy. Buildings permitted on or after January 1, 2023, must comply with the 2022 Standards. Compliance with Title 24 is mandatory at the time that new building permits are issued by city and county governments. As such, the Proposed Project is consistent with, and would not otherwise interfere with, or obstruct implementation of, the Energy Efficiency Standards for Residential and Nonresidential Buildings. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Consistency with California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 11 – California Green Building Standards Code

As stated in Section 3.3.3.2, CALGreen establishes mandatory green building standards for all buildings in California. The California Building Standards Commission has the authority to propose CALGreen standards for nonresidential structures such as new buildings or portions of new buildings, including additions and alterations. The Project would be designed in a manner that is consistent with CALGreen's building standards. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Consistency with the San Diego Association of Governments Regional Energy Strategy

The RES recommends actions for SANDAG, local governments, and other regional entities to contribute to regional energy goals, which include the following two applicable goals:

- Energy Efficiency and Conservation Goal: reduce per capita electricity consumption by 20 percent by 2030 in order to keep total electricity consumption flat.
- Transportation Fuels Goal: substantially increase the deployment of alternative transportation fuels and vehicles. Alternative fuels to petroleum-based fuels include biofuels, electricity, hydrogen, natural gas, and liquefied petroleum gas (propane).

As discussed in Section 3.3.4.3 above, the annual electricity consumption due to Project operations would be 2,180 kWh, which would result in a negligible increase (0.00002 percent) in the typical annual electricity consumption attributable to all non-residential uses in San Diego County. This negligible increase in

typical annual electricity consumption would not conflict with or obstruct SANDAG's RES Energy Efficiency and Conservation Goal. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

The Project proposes to transload renewable fuels directly from rail cars into trucks for local deliveries. The trucks would be loaded with nonpetroleum-based fuels (biofuels) including renewable diesel, ethanol, or SAF. Renewable diesel can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 80 percent. The Project utilizes alternative fuels and therefore would not conflict with or obstruct SANDAG's RES Transportation Fuels Goal. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Consistency with the City of National City General Plan

The City's General Plan Conservation Element Goal CS-7 aims to lower per capita energy demands due to conservation and reduced dependence on fossil fuels through an increase in the use of alternative and renewable energy sources.

The Project proposes to transload renewable fuels directly from rail cars into trucks for local deliveries. Trucks would be loaded with nonpetroleum-based fuels (biofuels) including renewable diesel, ethanol, or SAF. The fuel would then be delivered via truck to local retailers. Renewable diesel and SAF can be produced with new or recycled vegetable oils, animal fats, greases, algae, crop residues, or woody biomass. Renewable diesel and SAF are also designated as "drop-in" biofuels, which allow for the full replacement of petroleum-based fuels with zero modification to storage facilities or combustion engine systems. When used in diesel engines, renewable diesel can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 80 percent. Biodiesel is a renewable, biodegradable fuel manufactured domestically from vegetable oils, animal fats, or recycled restaurant grease. Biodiesel is often used as a blend with renewable diesel. Renewable diesel and a blend of renewable diesel and up to 20 percent biodiesel can also be used to replace petroleum diesel with no changes or adverse effects to the engine, also with a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Furthermore, with the ability to utilize a wide variety of resources to produce renewable diesel, biodiesel, and SAF, these biofuels are considered 100 percent sustainable. Thus, the Proposed Project aligns with the City's General Plan Conservation Element Goal CS-7 to increase the use of alternative and renewable energy sources. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

3.3.5 Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

3.3.6 Level of Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be less than significant.

3.4 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

3.4.3 Introduction

This section describes existing conditions and applicable laws, regulations, and policies pertaining to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and analyzes the proposed project's potential to (1) generate GHG emissions, either directly or indirectly, that would have a significant impact on the environment; and (2) conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of GHGs.

The analysis is based on the following technical document included as an appendix to the DEIR:

- *Air Quality & Greenhouse Gas Assessment for the San Diego Clean Fuels Facility LLC Project* (Appendix B; ECORP 2024a).

3.4.4 Environmental Setting

Certain gases in the earth's atmosphere, classified as GHGs, play a critical role in determining the earth's surface temperature. Solar radiation enters the earth's atmosphere from space. A portion of the radiation is absorbed by the earth's surface and a smaller portion of this radiation is reflected back toward space. This absorbed radiation is then emitted from the earth as low-frequency infrared radiation. The frequencies at which bodies emit radiation are proportional to temperature. Because the earth has a much lower temperature than the sun, it emits lower-frequency radiation. Most solar radiation passes through GHGs; however, infrared radiation is absorbed by these gases. As a result, radiation that otherwise would have escaped back into space is instead trapped, resulting in a warming of the atmosphere. This phenomenon, known as the greenhouse effect, is responsible for maintaining a habitable climate on earth. Without the greenhouse effect, the earth would not be able to support life as we know it.

Prominent GHGs contributing to the greenhouse effect are carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), and nitrous oxide (N₂O). Fluorinated gases also make up a small fraction of the GHGs that contribute to climate change. Fluorinated gases include chlorofluorocarbons, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, sulfur hexafluoride, and nitrogen trifluoride; however, it is noted that these gases are not associated with typical land use development. Human-caused emissions of these GHGs in excess of natural ambient concentrations are believed to be responsible for intensifying the greenhouse effect and leading to a trend of unnatural warming of the earth's climate, known as global climate change or global warming. More specifically, experts agree that human activities, principally through emissions of GHGs, have unequivocally caused global warming, with global surface temperature reaching 1.1°C above 1850–1900 in 2011–2020 (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC] 2023).

Each GHG differs in its ability to absorb heat in the atmosphere based on the lifetime, or persistence, of the gas molecule in the atmosphere. CH₄ traps over 25 times more heat per molecule than CO₂, and N₂O absorbs 298 times more heat per molecule than CO₂. Often, estimates of GHG emissions are presented in carbon dioxide equivalents (CO₂e), which weigh each gas by its global warming potential. Expressing GHG

emissions in CO₂e takes the contribution of all GHG emissions to the greenhouse effect and converts them to a single unit equivalent to the effect that would occur if only CO₂ were being emitted.

Climate change is a global problem. GHGs are global pollutants, unlike criteria air pollutants and TACs, which are pollutants of regional and local concern. Whereas pollutants with localized air quality effects have relatively short atmospheric lifetimes (about 1 day), GHGs have long atmospheric lifetimes (1 to several thousand years). GHGs persist in the atmosphere for long enough time periods to be dispersed around the globe. Although the exact lifetime of any particular GHG molecule is dependent on multiple variables and cannot be pinpointed, it is understood that more CO₂ is emitted into the atmosphere than is sequestered by ocean uptake, vegetation, or other forms. Despite the sequestration of CO₂, human-caused climate change is already causing damaging effects, including weather and climate extremes in every region across the globe (IPCC 2023).

Table 3.4-1 describes the primary GHGs attributed to global climate change, including their physical properties, primary sources, and contributions to the greenhouse effect.

Table 3.4-1. Summary of Greenhouse Gases	
Greenhouse Gas	Description
CO ₂	Carbon dioxide is a colorless, odorless gas. CO ₂ is emitted in a number of ways, both naturally and through human activities. The largest source of CO ₂ emissions globally is the combustion of fossil fuels such as coal, oil, and gas in power plants, automobiles, industrial facilities, and other sources. A number of specialized industrial production processes and product uses such as mineral production, metal production, and the use of petroleum-based products can also lead to CO ₂ emissions. The atmospheric lifetime of CO ₂ is variable because it is so readily exchanged in the atmosphere. ¹
CH ₄	Methane is a colorless, odorless gas and is the major component of natural gas, about 87 percent by volume. It is also formed and released to the atmosphere by biological processes occurring in anaerobic environments. Methane is emitted from a variety of both human-related and natural sources. Human-related sources include fossil fuel production, animal husbandry (intestinal fermentation in livestock and manure management), rice cultivation, biomass burning, and waste management. These activities release significant quantities of CH ₄ to the atmosphere. Natural sources of CH ₄ include wetlands, gas hydrates, permafrost, termites, oceans, freshwater bodies, non-wetland soils, and other sources such as wildfires. The atmospheric lifetime of CH ₄ is about 12 years. ²
N ₂ O	Nitrous oxide (N ₂ O) is a clear, colorless gas with a slightly sweet odor. Nitrous oxide is produced by both natural and human-related sources. Primary human-related sources of N ₂ O are agricultural soil management, animal manure management, sewage treatment, mobile and stationary combustion of fossil fuels, adipic acid production, and nitric acid production. N ₂ O is also produced naturally from a wide variety of biological sources in soil and water, particularly microbial action in wet tropical forests. The atmospheric lifetime of N ₂ O is approximately 120 years. ³

Sources: (1) USEPA 2023b; (2) USEPA 2023c; (3) USEPA 2023d

The quantity of GHGs that it takes to ultimately result in climate change is not precisely known; it is sufficient to say the quantity is enormous, and no single project alone would measurably contribute to a noticeable incremental change in the global average temperature or to global, local, or microclimates. From the standpoint of CEQA, GHG impacts contributing to global climate change are inherently cumulative.

3.4.4.1 Sources of Greenhouse Gas Emissions

In 2023, CARB released the 2023 edition of the California GHG inventory covering calendar year 2021 emissions. In 2021, California emitted 381.3 million gross metric tons of CO₂e including from imported electricity. This inventory is 3.4 percent higher than the State's 2020 inventory, but 5.7 percent lower than 2019 level, which aligns with the global changes, shutdowns, and economic recoveries affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, between 2020 and 2021, California's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) increased 7.8 percent while the GHG intensity of California's economy (GHG emissions per unit GDP) decreased 4.1 percent. Combustion of fossil fuel in the transportation sector was the single largest source of California's GHG emissions in 2021, accounting for approximately 38.2 percent of total GHG emissions in the state. Transportation emissions have increased 7.4 percent compared to 2020, which is most likely from light duty vehicle emissions that rebounded when COVID-19 shelter-in-place orders were lifted. Emissions from the electricity sector account for 16.4 percent of the inventory, which is an increase of 4.8 percent since 2020, despite the growth of in-state solar and imported renewable energy. California's industrial sector accounts for the second largest source of the state's GHG emissions in 2021, accounting for 19.4 percent, which saw an increase of nearly 1 percent since 2020 (CARB 2023c).

3.4.5 Regulatory Setting

3.4.5.1 State

Executive Order S-3-05

EO S-3-05, signed by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger in 2005, proclaims that California is vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. It declares that increased temperatures could reduce the Sierra Nevada snowpack, further exacerbate California's air quality problems, and potentially cause a rise in sea levels. To combat those concerns, the EO established total GHG emission targets for the state. Specifically, emissions are to be reduced to the 2000 level by 2010, the 1990 level by 2020, and to 80 percent below the 1990 level by 2050.

Assembly Bill 32 Climate Change Scoping Plan and Updates

In 2006, the California legislature passed AB 32 (Health and Safety Code § 38500 et seq., or AB 32), also known as the Global Warming Solutions Act. AB 32 required CARB to design and implement feasible and cost-effective emission limits, regulations, and other measures, such that statewide GHG emissions are reduced to 1990 levels by 2020 (representing a 25 percent reduction in emissions). Pursuant to AB 32, CARB adopted a Scoping Plan in December 2008, which outlined measures to meet the 2020 GHG reduction goals. California exceeded the target of reducing GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2017.

The Scoping Plan is required by AB 32 to be updated at least every 5 years. The latest update, the 2022 Scoping Plan Update, outlines strategies and actions to reduce GHG emissions in California. The plan focuses on achieving the state's goal of reaching carbon neutrality by 2045 and reducing GHG emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. The plan includes a range of strategies across various sectors, including transportation, industry, energy, and agriculture. Some of the key strategies include transitioning to zero-emission vehicles, expanding renewable energy sources, promoting sustainable land

use practices, implementing a low-carbon fuel standard, and reducing emissions from buildings. Additionally, the plan addresses equity and environmental justice by prioritizing investments in communities most impacted by pollution and climate change. The plan also aims to promote economic growth and job creation through the transition to a low-carbon economy.

Senate Bill 375

SB 375 was signed in 2008 and requires the preparation of a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) as part of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The RTP will contain land use, housing and transportation policies that will move the region toward its GHG target.

Senate Bill 32 and Assembly Bill 197 of 2016

In August 2016, Governor Edmund "Jerry" Brown signed SB 32 and AB 197, which serve to extend California's GHG reduction programs beyond 2020. SB 32 amended the Health and Safety Code to include § 38566, which contains language to authorize CARB to achieve a statewide GHG emission reduction of at least 40 percent below 1990 levels by no later than December 31, 2030.

Senate Bill X1-2 of 2011, Senate Bill 350 of 2015, and Senate Bill 100 of 2018

In 2018, SB 100 was signed codifying a goal of 60 percent renewable procurement by 2030 and 100 percent by 2045 Renewables Portfolio Standard.

2022 Building Energy Efficiency Standards for Residential and Nonresidential Buildings

The Building and Efficiency Standards (Energy Standards) were first adopted and put into effect in 1978 and have been updated periodically in the intervening years. These standards are a unique California asset that have placed the State on the forefront of energy efficiency, sustainability, energy independence and climate change issues. The 2022 California Building Code (CBC) includes provisions related to energy efficiency to reduce energy consumption and GHG emissions from buildings. Some of the key energy efficiency components of the codes are:

- 1) Energy Performance Requirements: The codes specify minimum energy performance standards for the building envelope, lighting, heating and cooling systems, and other components.
- 2) Lighting Efficiency: The codes require that lighting systems meet minimum efficiency standards, such as the use of energy-efficient light bulbs and fixtures.
- 3) Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) Systems: The codes establish requirements for HVAC systems, including the use of high-efficiency equipment, duct sealing, and controls.
- 4) Building Envelope: The codes include provisions for insulation, air sealing, glazing, and other building envelope components to reduce energy loss and improve indoor comfort.
- 5) Renewable Energy: The codes encourage the use of renewable energy systems, such as photovoltaic panels and wind turbines, to reduce dependence on non-renewable energy sources.

- 6) Commissioning: The codes require the commissioning of building energy systems to ensure that they are installed and operate correctly and efficiently.

Overall, the energy efficiency provisions of the 2022 CBC aim to reduce the energy consumption of buildings, lower energy costs for building owners and occupants, and reduce the environmental impact of the built environment. The *2022 Building Energy Efficiency Standards* improve upon the 2019 Energy Standards for new construction of, and additions and alterations to, residential and nonresidential buildings. The exact amount by which the 2022 CBC is more efficient compared to the 2019 CBC would depend on the specific provisions that have been updated and the specific building being considered. However, in general, the 2022 CBC has been updated to include increased requirements for energy efficiency, such as higher insulation and air sealing standards, which are intended to result in more efficient buildings. The 2022 standards are a major step toward meeting Zero Net Energy.

3.4.5.2 Local

City of National City General Plan

The City of National City adopted its General Plan in 2011 and recently adopted a Focused General Plan, which contains an updated Land Use Element, updated Transportation Element, and updated Climate Action Plan (CAP) in 2024. The CAP acts to support implementation of the General Plan through support for continued incremental changes to the urban land use form, providing greater transportation choices, and transforming the way energy is used and produced. Further, the CAP complements the General Plan policies to reduce GHG emissions with quantified benchmarks for success.

The Conservation and Sustainability Element of the General Plan includes goals related to reducing GHG emissions with a focus on the two largest emission sources: the built environment and vehicles (City of National City 2011).

City of National City Climate Action Plan

The City prepared its first CAP in 2011 to address climate change at a local level. As part of the CAP, the City implemented emissions targets up until 2020. Per subsequent emissions inventories, the City has achieved the 2020 target. In 2024, the City adopted a CAP Update to address GHG emissions on a local level to help achieve the State's GHG emission reduction goals. The CAP Update has set targets for the City to reduce 2018 baseline conditions 40 percent by 2030 and 80 percent by 2050 to align its reductions with Statewide targets. These reduction targets equate to 310,959 metric tons of CO₂e by 2030 (4.5 metric tons of CO₂e per capita) and 103,653 metric tons (1.21 metric tons of CO₂e per capita) by 2050. The CAP Update has several strategies that it plans to employ to reduce community-wide GHG emissions, including from transportation, commercial and industrial land uses, residential land uses, solid waste, and water and wastewater.

3.4.6 Impact Analysis

3.4.6.1 Methodology

The Appendix G thresholds for GHG emissions do not prescribe specific methodologies for performing an assessment, do not establish specific thresholds of significance, and do not mandate specific mitigation measures. Rather, the CEQA Guidelines emphasize the lead agency's discretion to determine the appropriate methodologies and thresholds of significance consistent with the manner in which other impact areas are handled in CEQA. With respect to GHG emissions, the CEQA Guidelines § 15064.4(a) states that lead agencies "shall make a good-faith effort, based to the extent possible on scientific and factual data, to describe, calculate or estimate" GHG emissions resulting from a project. The CEQA Guidelines note that the lead agency has the discretion to either quantify a project's GHG emissions or rely on a "qualitative analysis or other performance-based standards" (14 CCR 15064.4(b)). A lead agency may use a "model or methodology" to estimate GHG emissions and has the discretion to select the model or methodology it considers "most appropriate to enable decision makers to intelligently consider the project's incremental contribution to climate change" (14 CCR 15064.4(c)).

GHG-related impacts were assessed in accordance with methodologies recommended in the City's CAP. While GHG emission quantification is not required by the City, emissions were modeled using CalEEMod, version 2022.1 for disclosure purposes. CalEEMod is a statewide land use emissions computer model designed to quantify potential GHG emissions associated with both construction and operations from a variety of land use projects. Project construction generated GHG emissions were primarily calculated using CalEEMod model defaults for San Diego County and information provided by the Project proponent, such as 7.5 of site acreage, 7.49 of which is assumed to be paved. Operational air pollutant emissions were calculated based on an office building square footage of 500 square feet identified in the Project Site plans, the Project's daily throughput, truck tanker capacity, and trip distances provided by US Compliance, which is a consultant firm specializing in environmental, health, and safety compliance. Specifically, Project trucks would deliver renewable diesel to local retailers within a 35-mile radius, with an average trip distance of 12.3 miles per trip. In addition, the fleet mix was adjusted to reflect 72 heavy-duty trucks making both an inbound trip and outbound trip daily for a total of 144 daily heavy-duty truck trips and 25 passenger automobile trips associated with the onsite workers. In addition, mainline rail emissions were calculated using information from BNSF (BNSF 2020), and operational emissions were calculated with CARB Vision Access Database emission factors. Project train emission calculations account for 65 miles of train travel per visit, which is the distance of Project train travel within the SDAB. Emissions from switching locomotives were also quantified. Thirty minutes per day is used as a "worst case" estimate for local switching activities.

3.4.6.2 Thresholds of Significance

Thresholds used to evaluate impacts related to GHGs are based on applicable criteria in Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines. A significant impact related to GHGs would occur if the project would:

- 1) Generate GHG emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment; or

- 2) Conflict with any applicable plan, policy, or regulation of an agency adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases.

As stated above, the Appendix G thresholds for GHG emissions do not establish specific thresholds of significance. Rather, it emphasizes the lead agency's discretion to determine the appropriate thresholds of significance consistent with the manner in which other impact areas are handled in CEQA. With respect to GHG emissions, the CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.4(a) states that lead agencies "shall make a good-faith effort, based to the extent possible on scientific and factual data, to describe, calculate or estimate" GHG emissions resulting from a project. The CEQA Guidelines note that an agency has the discretion to either quantify a project's GHG emissions or rely on a "qualitative analysis or other performance-based standards" (14 CCR 15064.4(b)). A lead agency may use a "model or methodology" to estimate GHG emissions and has the discretion to select the model or methodology it considers "most appropriate to enable decision makers to intelligently consider the project's incremental contribution to climate change." (14 CCR 15064.4(c)). CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.4(b) provides that the lead agency should consider the following when determining the significance of impacts from GHG emissions on the environment:

- 1) The extent a project may increase or reduce GHG emissions as compared to the existing environmental setting.
- 2) Whether the project emissions exceed a threshold of significance that the lead agency determines applies to the project.
- 3) The extent to which the project complies with regulations or requirements adopted to implement a statewide, regional, or local plan for the reduction or mitigation of GHG emissions (14 CCR 15064.4(b)).

In addition, Section 15064.7(c) of the CEQA Guidelines specifies that:

"[w]hen adopting or using thresholds of significance, a lead agency may consider thresholds of significance previously adopted or recommended by other public agencies, or recommended by experts, provided the decision of the lead agency to adopt such thresholds is supported by substantial evidence" (14 CCR 15064.7(c)).

The CEQA Guidelines also clarify that the effects of GHG emissions are cumulative and should be analyzed in the context of CEQA's requirements for cumulative impact analysis (see CEQA Guidelines Section 15130). As a note, the CEQA Guidelines were amended in response to SB 97. In particular, the CEQA Guidelines were amended to specify that compliance with a GHG emissions reduction plan renders a cumulative impact insignificant.

Per CEQA Guidelines Section 15064(h)(3), a project's incremental contribution to a cumulative impact can be found not cumulatively considerable if the project would comply with an approved plan or mitigation program that provides specific requirements that would avoid or substantially lessen the cumulative problem within the geographic area of the project. To qualify, such plans or programs must be specified in law or adopted by the public agency with jurisdiction over the affected resources through a public review process to implement, interpret, or make specific the law enforced or administered by the public agency. Examples of such programs include a "water quality control plan, air quality attainment or maintenance plan, integrated waste management plan, habitat conservation plan, natural community

conservation plans [and] plans or regulations for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.” Put another way, CEQA Guidelines Section 15064(h)(3) allows a lead agency to make a finding of less than significant for GHG emissions if a project complies with adopted programs, plans, policies and/or other regulatory strategies to reduce GHG emissions.

The significance of the Proposed Project’s GHG emissions is evaluated consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.4(b)(2) by considering whether the Project complies with applicable plans, policies, regulations, and requirements adopted to implement a statewide, regional, or local plan for the reduction or mitigation of GHG emissions. The SDAPCD does not identify any numeric GHG significance thresholds. Section 15064.7(c) of the CEQA Guidelines specifies that “[w]hen adopting or using thresholds of significance, a lead agency may consider thresholds of significance previously adopted or recommended by other public agencies, or recommended by experts, provided the decision of the lead agency to adopt such thresholds is supported by substantial evidence” (14 CCR 15064.7(c)). Thus, in the absence of any numeric GHG emissions significance thresholds, the Project is also evaluated for consistency with the CAP.

In addition to a comparison of Project consistency with the City CAP, Project GHG emissions are compared to the GHG thresholds recommended by the SCAQMD, the air pollution control officer for the South Coast Air Basin. The SCAQMD threshold of 3,000 metric tons of CO₂e annually is considered appropriate for the purposes of this analysis due to the proximities of the South Coast Air Basin and the SDAB. The 3,000 metric tons of CO₂e per year threshold represents a 90 percent capture rate (i.e., this threshold captures projects that represent approximately 90 percent of GHG emissions from new sources). The 3,000 metric tons of CO₂e per year value is typically used in defining small projects that are considered less than significant because it represents less than 1 percent of future 2050 statewide GHG emissions target and the lead agency can provide more efficient implementation of CEQA by focusing its scarce resources on the top 90 percent. Land use projects above the 3,000 metric tons of CO₂e per year level would fall within the percentage of largest projects that are worth mitigating without wasting scarce financial, governmental, physical, and social resources.

In *Center for Biological Diversity v. Department of Fish and Wildlife* (2015) 62 Cal. 4th 2014, 213, 221, 227, following its review of various potential GHG thresholds proposed in an academic study [Crockett, Addressing the Significance of Greenhouse Gas Emissions: California's Search for Regulatory Certainty in an Uncertain World (July 2011), 4 Golden Gate U. Env'tl. L. J. 203], the California Supreme Court identified the use of numeric bright-line thresholds as a potential pathway for compliance with CEQA GHG requirements. The study found numeric bright line thresholds designed to determine when small projects were so small as to not cause a cumulatively considerable impact on global climate change was consistent with CEQA. Specifically, PRC section 21003(f) provides it is a policy of the state that:

“[a]ll persons and public agencies involved in the environmental review process be responsible for carrying out the process in the most efficient, expeditious manner in order to conserve the available financial, governmental, physical and social resources with the objective that those resources may be better applied toward the mitigation of actual significant effects on the environment.”

The Supreme Court-reviewed study noted:

"[s]ubjecting the smallest projects to the full panoply of CEQA requirements, even though the public benefit would be minimal, would not be consistent with implementing the statute in the most efficient, expeditious manner. Nor would it be consistent with applying lead agencies' scarce resources toward mitigating actual significant climate change impacts" (Crockett 2011).

3.4.6.3 Impact Discussion

Threshold 1: Would the project generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?

Construction-Related Emissions

Project construction is anticipated to last approximately 6 to 8 months. Construction activities associated with the Proposed Project would include the addition of new receiving and departure rail spurs and four fixed truck loading spots with the required secondary containment infrastructure.

Construction-related activities that would generate GHG emissions include on- and off-road equipment traffic. Table 3.4-2 shows the specific construction-generated GHG emissions that would result from Project construction.

Table 3.4-2. Construction Related Greenhouse Gas Emissions	
Description	CO ₂ e Emissions (Metric Tons/Year)
Project Construction	282
Total Construction Emissions	282
<i>Significance Threshold</i>	<i>3,000</i>
Exceed Threshold?	No

Sources: California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) version 2022.1.1.21. Refer to Appendix B for Model Data Outputs

As shown in Table 3.4-2, Project construction would result in the generation of approximately 282 metric tons of CO₂e over the course of construction. Once construction is complete, the generation of these GHG emissions would cease. Construction related emissions would not exceed the numeric bright-line threshold of 3,000 metric tons of CO₂e annually. This significance threshold was developed based on substantial evidence that such thresholds represent quantitative levels of GHG emissions, compliance with which means that the environmental impact of the GHG emissions will normally not be cumulatively considerable under CEQA. The 3,000 metric tons of CO₂e per year value represents less than 1 percent of future 2050 statewide GHG emissions target. Impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

Operation-Related Emissions

The San Diego Clean Fuels Facility will reconfigure one existing rail spur and add truck loading spots to transload clean renewable and biofuels (i.e., renewable diesel, biodiesel, ethanol, and potentially sustainable aviation fuels at a later date) directly from rail cars into trucks for more efficient delivery to local retailers than the current supply chain. Truck traffic will enter the Project Area from 18th Street and

exit on West 19th Street and on to their retail client deliveries. A second rail line will be added at the existing grade crossing on Civic Center Drive to facilitate rail car movements. These trucks trips will replace existing trips of conventional fuels, delivering the benefits of the lower carbon, renewable fuels to the area.

Operation of the Project would result in GHG emissions predominantly associated with motor vehicle use. Long-term operational GHG emissions attributable to the Project are identified in Table 3.4-3 and include mainline train locomotive emissions.

Table 3.4-3. Operation-Related Greenhouse Gas Emissions	
Description	CO₂e Emissions (Metric Tons/Year)
Mobile	1,147
Area	<1
Energy	1
Water	<1
Waste	<1
Mainline Rail	486
Project Operations Total	1,633
<i>Significance Threshold</i>	<i>3,000</i>
Exceed Threshold?	No

Sources: California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) version 2022.1. Refer to Appendix B for Model Data Outputs

Notes: Trip counts and distances were calculated based on the Project's daily throughput, truck tanker capacity, and trip distances provided by US Compliance. In addition, mainline rail emissions were calculated using the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) ton-mile per gallon, Project throughput, BNSF engine inventory and California Air Resources Board (CARB) Vision Access Database emission factors in grams per gallon diesel.

As shown in Table 3.4-3, operational emissions would total approximately 1,633 metric tons of CO₂e, which would not exceed the numeric bright-line threshold of 3,000 metric tons of CO₂e annually. This significance threshold was developed based on substantial evidence that such thresholds represent quantitative levels of GHG emissions, compliance with which means that the environmental impact of the GHG emissions will normally not be cumulatively considerable under CEQA. The 3,000 metric tons of CO₂e per year value represents less than one percent of future 2050 statewide GHG emissions target. Impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

Threshold 2: Would the project conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?

Consistency with City of National City General Plan

The Project is consistent with the land use designation and development density presented in the General Plan. The Project does not propose to amend the City's General Plan and is consistent with all land use designations applied to the Project Area. Since the Project is consistent with the General Plan's land use

designation map, it is consistent with the types, intensity, and patterns of land use envisioned for the site vicinity in the General Plan, and therefore aligns with the land use assumptions used in the CAP Update.

Consistency with City of National City Climate Action Plan

As previously described, the City adopted a CAP Update in 2024 to establish new GHG reduction goals and to align with new California regulations and targets to address climate change. The CAP is a strategic planning document that identifies sources of GHG emissions within the City, presents current and future emission estimates, identifies a GHG reduction target for future years, and presents policy provisions to reduce emissions. As part of the CAP Update, the City implemented an emissions target of reducing 2018 baseline conditions 40 percent by 2030 and 80 percent by 2050 (City of National City 2024b).

The CAP Update has several required policies and actions that would apply to the Proposed Project's construction and operations. The Proposed Project would need to incorporate all applicable actions to demonstrate consistency with this climate planning document. These measures will be enforced as required mitigation (see mitigation measure GHG-1 below) for ensuring that compliance can be confirmed before the Project can be implemented (City of National City 2024b). Therefore, the following actions have been identified that apply to the Proposed Project:

- **TLU-2.6:** Encourage the reduction of idling times for commercial vehicles and construction equipment.
- **RCB-2.1:** Encourage private development projects to exceed the energy efficiency requirements of CalGreen by providing technical assistance, financial assistance, and other incentives.
- **RCB-2.2:** Encourage LEED certification for all new commercial and industrial buildings.
- **RE-1.2:** Encourage restricting new natural gas lines in buildings.

As noted above, the Project would need to incorporate all applicable CAP Update actions to demonstrate consistency with the City's climate action planning efforts. The Project proponent has noted that there will be no natural gas used as a part of the Project's operations, consistent with Action RE-1.2. Additionally, the Project does not propose a new commercial or industrial building rendering Action RCB-2.2 not applicable. Mitigation Measure GHG-1 ensures compatibility and consistency with the rest of the applicable GHG reduction plans, policies, and regulations as well as compatibility and consistency with the City's climate action planning goals and would reduce impacts to less than significant.

The Project proposes to transload renewable fuels and SAF (non-petroleum-based) directly from rail cars into trucks for local deliveries. Renewable Diesel and SAF can be produced with new or recycled vegetable oils, animal fats, greases, algae, crop residues or woody biomass. Renewable Diesel and SAF are also designated as a drop-in biofuel allowing them to fully replace petroleum-based fuels with zero modification to storage facilities or combustion engine systems. When used in diesel engines, renewable diesel can reduce GHG emissions by up to 70 percent compared to traditional diesel fuels when accounting for the complete life cycle of renewable diesel. Biodiesel is a renewable, biodegradable fuel manufactured domestically from vegetable oils, animal fats, or recycled restaurant grease. Biodiesel is often used as a blend with renewable diesel. Renewable diesel and a blend of biodiesel reduce GHG

emissions compared with traditional diesel fuel and can be used to replace petroleum diesel with no changes or adverse effects to the engine. Project delivery trucks would be loaded with renewable diesel fuel, ethanol or SAF and would distribute the fuel to local retailers in the greater San Diego area. The Project would replace petroleum diesel with renewable diesel, ethanol, or SAF, which would reduce reliance on fossil fuels, reduce and reuse waste streams, and reduce GHG emissions. Therefore, the Project would promote the goals set out by SB 32 and the latest CARB Scoping Plan (2022), which addresses ways for California to reach carbon neutrality by 2045 and reducing GHG emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. Specifically, the production and use of biofuels advances the goal of California's Low-Carbon Fuels Standard, a component of the AB 32 Scoping Plan. The Low Carbon Fuel Standard is designed to decrease the carbon intensity of California's transportation fuel pool and provide an increasing range of low-carbon and renewable alternatives, which reduce petroleum dependency and achieve air quality benefits. It is a key part of a comprehensive set of programs in California to cut GHG emissions and other smog-forming and toxic air pollutants by improving vehicle technology, reducing fuel consumption, and increasing transportation mobility options. According to the CARB Scoping Plan (2022), the Low Carbon Fuel Standard is a key driver of market development for renewable diesel and its coproducts, with total consumption of renewable diesel in the California Low Carbon Fuel Standard market skyrocketing from approximately 1.8 million gallons in 2011 to nearly 589 million gallons in 2020.

3.4.7 Mitigation Measures

GHG-1: Adhere to National City's Climate Action Planning Reduction Measures

The Project shall implement the following applicable greenhouse gas-reducing measures, consistent with National City Climate Action Plan Update:

- Prior to issuance of a building permit, the Applicant shall demonstrate that the employee parking lot is electric vehicle ready (i.e., charging stations, preferred parking, etc.).
- Limit idling times for all employee and tanker truck vehicles, as well as construction equipment, to less than 5 minutes.
- Prior to issuance of a building permit, the Applicant shall demonstrate implementation of all applicable Nonresidential Voluntary Measures of the California Green Building Standards Code – Part 11, Title 24, California Code of Regulations (CalGreen) from the Planning and Design, Energy Efficiency, Water Efficiency and Conservation, and Material Conservation and Resource Efficiency Divisions (Appendix A5 of the 2022 California Green Building Standards Code). These measures shall include, but are not limited to, energy efficiency enhancements, water use reduction, sustainable building materials, improved indoor environmental quality, and waste management strategies.

Timing/Implementation: *Prior to the issuance of occupancy permits*

Monitoring/Enforcement: *The National City Planning Division*

3.4.8 *Level of Significance After Mitigation*

Impacts would be less than significant.

3.5 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

3.5.1 Introduction

This section describes the existing conditions within the Project Area and applicable laws, regulations, plans, and policies for hazards and hazardous materials. This section also analyzes the Proposed Project's potential to (1) create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials; (2) 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; and (3) be located on a site that is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5.

The analysis utilizes information from the following documents:

- Report of Geotechnical Investigation, USD Group Clean Fuels Rail Terminal Project, National City, California (Appendix F; Group Delta 2022).
- Facility Response Plan, San Diego Clean Fuels Facility LLC Project, 830 W. 18th Street, National City, California 91950 (Appendix G; CURA 2024).

3.5.2 Environmental Setting

The manufacture, storage, transport, and use of hazardous materials can result in accidents or intentional acts that release toxic chemicals into the environment. The release of hazardous materials can cause injuries or death and can contaminate air, water, and soils (City of National City 2011).

Facilities that use, manufacture, or store hazardous materials in California must comply with several state and federal regulations. The Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act directs businesses that handle, store, or manufacture hazardous materials in specified amounts to develop emergency response plans and report any release of toxic chemicals. It is also illegal for private individuals to dispose of hazardous materials improperly. The Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) is the state agency responsible for ensuring the safe and responsible management of household hazardous waste.

3.5.2.1 Site History and Remediation

The Proposed Project is located on a former PSI lease site. Site remediation of the PSI property is a separate project with DTSC as the CEQA lead agency. DTSC issued PSI an ISE Order in 2002 after finding heavy metals such as lead, zinc, and copper, as well as PCBs and used oils in the soil at the former PSI lease site (current location of Project Area). In 2004, PSI entered into a Corrective Action Consent Agreement (CACA) with DTSC for the affected parcels that directed several phases of work to be completed on the property, including the removal of large stockpiles of soil mixed with metal debris and remedial soil excavation. By 2014, PSI successfully transported and recycled approximately 27,000 tons of non-RCRA excavated soil from the property to its steel mill located in Mexicali, Mexico. PSI was unable to secure authorization from Mexico's SEMARNAT to transport the remaining RCRA hazardous waste (PS-1) to Mexico; therefore, it was shipped to a Class I landfill in Buttonwillow, California in 2015 (*People v. Pacific Steel, Inc.* 2015).

In 2016, DTSC and PSI entered into a Stipulation for Entry of Final Judgement and Order for the adjoining PSI properties. The judgement ordered PSI to conduct soil sampling for heavy metals around the perimeter of the location where the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) hazardous waste soil pile was located and remove any residual contaminated soil in a manner consistent with their 2015 Draft Stockpile Removal Workplan.

The IMW was approved by DTSC in 2021 for the remediation of a portion of the Project Area, as shown in Figure 1, pursuant to the CACA executed in 2004 between DTSC and PSI. The proposed cleanup goals of the IMW are to remove metals and PCB impacted soils previously identified in the BNSF facility to eliminate the risk to human health and the environment posed by impacted surface soils. The extent of soil removal will be contingent on the results of confirmation samples. Soils will be removed until the detection of metals and PCBs are below the proposed cleanup levels and commercial risk screening level, respectively. The implementation of IMW will conclude the cleanup efforts on the BNSF property. The cleanup measures to be conducted will reduce or eliminate the potential risks to the environment and surrounding neighborhood posed by the impacted soils at the BNSF property. DTSC filed a Notice of Exemption (NOE) on May 31, 2022 to comply with CEQA as part of the approval process for the IMW. DTSC determined that the IMW is exempt from CEQA under CCR Title 14, Section 15330 *Minor Actions Taken to Prevent, Minimize, Stabilize, Mitigate, or Eliminate the Release or Threat of Release of Hazardous Waste or Hazardous Substance*.

In accordance with the 2021 IMW and 2004 CACA, a Remedial Action Completion Report was completed in September 2023 (TRC 2023). The remedial action activities included conducting additional soil excavation of primary chemicals of concern, conducting soil confirmation sampling in the excavated areas at the site to confirm the elimination of potential risk to human health and the environment, and providing documentation of the cleanup efforts. Project activities associated with the remediation were conducted from January 23, 2023 through August 18, 2023 and included the following elements:

- Permit preparation and correspondence
- Waste profiling
- Excavation of impacted soil
- Dust monitoring during excavation and soil handling activities
- Loading of impacted soil
- Transportation and disposal of impacted soil
- Field screening and confirmation soil sampling
- Import, placement, and compaction of imported clean soil

The primary goal of the remediation was to remove “soils containing concentrations of contaminants of concern in excess of their respective risk screening levels on the BNSF property to eliminate the risk to human health and the environment posed by those impacted surface soils.” Lead and PCB concentrations

were evaluated compared to their site screening levels (SSLs) determined in the IMW (TRC 2023). Table 3.5-1 summarizes the results.

Table 3.5-1. Primary Chemicals of Concern Remediation Results		
Site	Chemical Concentration (milligrams per kilograms [mg/kg])	
	Lead	PCB
Pre-Remediation		
Northern Property	2,660	12
Central Property	1,580	0.591
SSL	320	0.94
Exceed SSL?	Yes	Yes
Post-Remediation		
Northern Property	1.84 – 257	0.0279 – 0.466
Central Property	2.86 – 212	0.0816 – 0.411
SSL	320	0.94
Exceed SSL?	No	No

Source: TRC 2023

Based on the results shown in Table 3.5-1, the lead concentrations in the soil, at depth, dropped by one order of magnitude and were below the SSL of 320 milligrams per kilograms compared with pre-remediation soil concentrations. PCB concentrations in the soil, at depth, dropped by two orders of magnitude in the Northern Property (northerly portion of the remediation area within the Project Site as shown in Figure 1) and were below the SSL of 0.94 milligrams per kilograms. Based on these results and in accordance with the IMW, the site excavation activities successfully removed impacted soil that could have been a potential risk to human health and the environment.

Excavation and waste transportation and disposal activities were conducted from June 26, 2023 through July 21, 2023. Republic Services evaluated the soil laboratory data prior to waste transportation and approved waste profiles for their Otay Landfill as non-California hazardous waste and Copper Mountain Landfill as non-RCRA California hazardous waste. A total of 15,677 tons of impacted soil was transported to the aforementioned landfills. Backfill and grading activities were initiated at the remediation area within the Project Site following the excavation and confirmation sampling activities and the City of National City Inspector's approval of the rough grade pursuant to the approved Grading Plan. Approximately 29,551 tons of clean fill and 1,131 tons of rock were imported to the remediation site to bring it up to current final grade. Based on the remediation activities conducted within the remediation area of the Project Site, DTSC determined that the impacted soils were successfully removed, the remediation area has been restored to current final grade, and the Project Area is suitable for future commercial redevelopment.

3.5.3 Regulatory Setting

3.5.3.1 Federal

Toxic Substances Control Act/Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Safety Act of the 21st Century

The Toxic Substances Control Act of 1976 (TSCA) (15 USC 2601 et. seq.) addresses the production, importation, use, and disposal of specific chemicals and provides the USEPA with the authority to require reporting, record-keeping and testing requirements, and restrictions on chemical substances (USEPA 2023e). The TSCA was amended by the Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Safety Act of the 21st Century (Lautenberg Chemical Safety Act) in 2016. The Lautenberg Chemical Safety Act provides improvements such as a mandatory requirement for the USEPA to evaluate existing chemicals with clear and enforceable deadlines, risk-based chemical assessments, increased public transparency, and consistent sources of funding (USEPA 2023f).

Solid Waste Disposal Act of 1965/Resource Conservation and Recovery Act/Federal Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments

The Solid Waste Disposal Act of 1965, the first major federal law directed at waste disposal, regulated the treatment, storage, and disposal of solid non-hazardous and hazardous waste. The Solid Waste Disposal Act of 1965 was amended by the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) in 1976 (42 USC 6901 et. seq). The RCRA established a program, which is administered by the USEPA, to regulate the generation, transport, treatment, storage, and disposal of hazardous waste and the management of non-hazardous solid wastes. The RCRA program also establishes management standards for hazardous waste treatment, storage, and disposal units, which are intended to minimize present and future threats to the environment and human health. The RCRA was amended in 1984 by the Federal Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments, which focused on waste minimization and phasing out land disposal of hazardous waste as well as corrective action for releases. The Federal Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments also increased the USEPA's enforcement authority and established strict hazardous waste management standards and a comprehensive underground storage tank program (USEPA 2023g).

Department of Transportation Hazardous Materials Regulations

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Hazardous Materials Regulations (49 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 100 – 185) governs the transportation of hazardous materials through air, highway, rail, and water transportation. Parts 107 (Hazard Materials Program Procedures), 130 (Oil Spill Prevention and Response Plans), 172 (Emergency Response Information), 173 (Packaging Requirements), 174 (Carriage by Rail), 178 (Packaging Specifications), 179 (Specifications for Tank Cars), and 180 (Packaging Maintenance) would all apply to fuel transport to and from the Proposed Project site.

Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980

The Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) of 1980 was established to respond directly to releases or threatened releases of hazardous substances that could endanger public health or the environment. CERCLA established prohibitions and requirements for inactive and abandoned hazardous waste sites, emphasized liability for cleanup costs on persons

responsible for releases of hazardous waste at these sites, and established a trust fund to provide for cleanup when no responsible party could be identified.

Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure Plans

Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure (SPCC) Plans (40 CFR 112.7) are required for certain oil storage facilities to prevent oil discharges into navigable waters or adjoining shorelines. A project is subject to SPCC requirements if the facility (1) is non-transportation related or for construction, the construction operations involve storing, using, transferring, or otherwise handling oil; (2) could reasonably be expected to discharge oil into or upon navigable Waters of the United States or adjoining shorelines; and (3) has a total buried storage capacity greater than 42,000 gallons or aboveground storage capacity greater than 1,320 gallons. The SPCC Plans should address oil storage container capacity, discharge prevention measures; discharge or drainage controls; countermeasures for discharge discovery, response, and cleanup; and disposal methods for recovered materials.

Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970

The Occupational Safety and Health Act was established in 1970 to set and enforce safety and health standards for workers. The act also provides for training, outreach, education, and assistance to establish a safe working environment.

3.5.3.2 State

Cortese List

The Cortese List, under California Government Code Section 65962.5, includes a list of hazardous waste facilities and sites. The list, or a site's presence on the list, has bearing on the local permitting process as well as on compliance with the CEQA. Under Section 65962.5 (a) through (d):

- DTSC shall compile and update a list of:
 - all hazardous waste facilities subject to corrective action pursuant to Section 25187.5 of the California Health and Safety Code (HSC);
 - all land designated as hazardous waste property or border zone property pursuant to HSC Article 11, Chapter 6.5, Division 20;
 - all information received by DTSC pursuant to HSC Section 25242 on hazardous waste disposals on public land;
 - all sites listed pursuant to HSC Section 25356; and
 - all sites included in the Abandoned Site Assessment Program.
- The State Department of Health Services shall compile and update a list of all public drinking water wells that contain detectable levels of organic contaminants and that are subject to water analysis pursuant to HSC Section 116395.
- The SWRCB shall compile and update a list of:

- all underground storage tanks for which an unauthorized release report is filed pursuant to HSC Section 25295;
 - all solid waste disposal facilities from which there is a migration of hazardous waste and for which a California RWQCB has notified DTSC pursuant to subdivision (e) of Section 13273 of the Water Code; and
 - all cease-and-desist orders issued after January 1, 1986, pursuant to Section 13301 of the Water Code, and all cleanup or abatement orders issued after January 1, 1986, pursuant to Section 13304 of the Water Code, that concern the discharges of wastes that are hazardous materials.
- The local enforcement agency shall compile a list of all solid waste disposal facilities from which there is a known migration of hazardous waste.

California Health and Safety Code

- Division 20, Chapter 6.5 (Hazardous Waste Control Law) identifies hazardous waste control regulations pertaining to transportation, treatment, recycling, disposal, enforcement, and the permitting of hazardous waste.
- Division 20, Chapter 6.10 identifies regulations applicable to the cleanup of hazardous materials releases.
- Division 20, Chapter 6.11, Sections 25404 through 25404.9 (Unified Hazardous Waste and Hazardous Materials Management Regulatory Program) consolidates and coordinates the administrative, permit, inspection, and enforcement requirements of the environmental and emergency response programs. It also gives the Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA) implementation and enforcement authority.

Hazardous Waste Control Act

The Hazardous Waste Control Act (22 CCR Division 4.5) contains regulations adopted from the HSC, such as environmental health standards for the management of hazardous waste. Chapter 11 describes standards for the identification of hazardous waste, and Chapter 13 describes standards that are applicable to transporters of hazardous waste.

3.5.3.3 Local

City of National City General Plan

The Safety Element of the City's General Plan provides plans and measures addressing hazardous materials, brownfields, and military installations (City of National City 2011). The following goals and policies are applicable to the Proposed Project:

- **Goal S-7:** Minimized risks to life, property, and the environment associated with the storage, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials.

- **Policy S-7.2:** Continue to consult with the County and other appropriate agencies in the administration and enforcement of hazardous materials permit requirements, where feasible.
- **Policy S-7.3:** Facilitate coordinated, effective response to hazardous materials emergencies in the City to minimize health and environmental risks.
- **Policy S-7.5:** Ensure the compatibility of uses which store, collect, treat, or dispose of hazardous materials with adjacent uses.
- **Policy S-7.7:** Work with property owners and lead agencies to reduce soil contamination from industrial operations and other activities that use, produce, or dispose of hazardous or toxic substances.
- **Goal S-8:** The redevelopment of brownfields with appropriate uses that reduce safety hazards and enhance the character of the community.
 - **Policy S-8.4:** Proposed development shall be evaluated to determine the applicability of preparing a Hazardous Materials Management Plan (HMMP), Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), Standard Urban Storm Water Mitigation Plan, (SUSWMP), Jurisdictional Urban Runoff Management Program (JURMP), stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs), and additional site-specific assessments including research, file reviews, and/or Phase I Environmental Assessments.

National City Code of Ordinances – Chapter 9.40

Chapter 9.40 discusses the City's adoption of the three following San Diego County Ordinances:

- **Disclosure of Hazardous Materials Ordinance** (Chapter 8 commencing with Section 68.801 of Division 8 of Title 6 of the San Diego County Code of Regulatory Ordinances) requires submittal of a hazardous substance disclosure form to the County Department of Health Services. The disclosure form includes a listing of the names of each hazardous substance, carcinogen, or reproductive toxin; a listing of hazardous waste; amounts of each hazardous material; discharge permits; material safety data sheets; and emergency response information.
- **Hazardous Waste Regulatory Ordinance** (Chapter 9 commencing with Section 68.901 of Division 8 of Title 6 of the San Diego County Code of Regulatory Ordinances) establishes a program to monitor establishments where hazardous wastes are produced, stored, handled, disposed of, treated, or recycled.
- **Certified Unified Program Agency, Hazardous Materials Inventory and Response Plans** (Chapter 11 of Division 8 of Title 6 of the San Diego County Code of Regulatory Ordinances). Under this ordinance, the Director of the Department of Environmental Health shall expand the application of the Business Plan, Area Plan, other reporting, disclosure, and monitoring requirements. It also enforces hazardous materials response plans and inventory requirements at agricultural businesses. Any business which handles hazardous compressed gas, carcinogens, and

reproductive toxins shall report these materials as part of their chemical inventory and submit a business plan through the California Environmental Reporting System.

3.5.4 Impact Analysis

3.5.4.1 Methodology

The following impact discussion evaluates the potential effects from hazards and hazardous materials associated with the Proposed Project. Based upon the existing conditions above, the impact discussion addresses the direct and indirect impacts related to hazards and hazardous materials by determining whether the Proposed Project would trigger any of the thresholds listed below.

3.5.4.2 Thresholds of Significance

Thresholds used to evaluate impacts related to hazards and hazardous materials are based on criteria in Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines. A significant impact related to hazards and hazardous materials would occur if the Project would:

- 1) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?
- 2) 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?
- 3) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within 1 quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?
- 4) 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?
- 5) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within 2 miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?
- 6) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?
- 7) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires?

3.5.4.3 Impact Discussion

Threshold 1: Would the project create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?

Construction Impacts

Some hazardous materials, such as petroleum products, pesticides, fertilizer, and other household hazardous products such as paint products, solvents, and cleaning products, would be used or stored within the Project Area during construction. The use of such materials for the construction of the Proposed Project would not create a significant hazard to the public because the release of any construction-related spills would be prevented through the implementation of BMPs listed in the SWPPP.

Operational Impacts

The Proposed Project involves the construction of a transloading facility that will transload biodiesel fuel and renewable diesel fuel directly from rail cars into trucks via a short above ground manifold. Trucks will be loaded with either renewable diesel fuel or a combination of renewable diesel fuel and up to 20 percent biodiesel fuel, ethanol, or SAF. The fuel will then be delivered via truck to local retailers within a 35-mile radius. Small amounts of lubricity, conductivity, and red dye will be added in-line to renewable diesel fuels during the transload process depending on customer specifications. Each truck loading spot will consist of a pump skid, controls, and above ground piping between the belly of the rail cars and the bottom loading port of the truck. Each spot also provides a concrete pad and drain for the containment of potential spills, which will be piped to an onsite 37,700-gallon containment basin located on the southern portion of the Project Area. The rail car and truck unloading area will be equipped with a containment system capable of containing the contents of 110 percent of an entire rail car volume until the material can be evacuated, transported, and disposed of. A second rail line will be added at the existing grade crossing on Civic Center Drive to facilitate rail car movements.

The transportation of hazardous materials by rail is regulated by federal safety standards under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Railroad Administration. The transport of hazardous materials by truck is regulated by federal safety standards under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of Transportation. The facility is expected to receive approximately 72 trucks per day coming in on West 18th Street, exiting the facility on West 19th Street, and moving on to their retail client deliveries.

As described in Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations and implemented by Title 13 of the CCR, the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) Office of Hazardous Materials Safety has established strict regulations for the safe transportation of hazardous materials. Appropriate documentation for all hazardous waste that is transported in connection with Project activities would be provided as required for compliance with existing hazardous materials regulations. Hazardous wastes produced onsite are subject to requirements associated with accumulation time limits, proper storage locations and containers, and proper labeling. Additionally, for removal of hazardous waste from the Project Area, hazardous waste generators are required to use a certified hazardous waste transportation company, which must ship hazardous waste to a permitted facility for treatment, storage, recycling, or disposal.

Compliance with applicable regulations would reduce impacts associated with the use, transport, storage, and sale of hazardous materials. For example, as discussed above, the Hazardous Waste Control Law (California HSC, Division 20, Chapter 6.5) requires that businesses handling or storing certain amounts of hazardous materials prepare a Hazardous Materials Business Plan (HMBP), which includes an inventory of hazardous materials stored onsite (above specified quantities), an emergency response plan, and an employee training program. Fuel delivered to the Project Area via train will remain in the rail cars until it is transloaded to trucks for delivery. No stationary above- or below-ground fuel storage tanks are included as part of the Project. Lubricity, conductivity, and red dye would be stored onsite in three 330-gallon totes.

As previously stated, both the federal government and the State of California require all businesses that handle more than a specified amount of hazardous materials or extremely hazardous materials, to submit an HMBP to its local CUPA. The CUPA with responsibility for the City of National City is the County of San Diego, Department of Environmental Health and Quality. The HMBP must include an inventory of the hazardous materials used in the facility, and emergency response plans and procedures to be used in the event of a significant or threatened significant release of a hazardous material. The HMBP must include the Material Safety Data Sheet for each hazardous and potentially hazardous substance used. The Material Safety Data Sheets summarize the physical and chemical properties of the substances and their health impacts. The plan also requires immediate notification to all appropriate agencies and personnel of a release, identification of local emergency medical assistance appropriate for potential accident scenarios, contact information of all company emergency coordinators of the business, a listing and location of emergency equipment at the business, an evacuation plan, and a training program for business personnel.

A Facility Response Plan (FRP) has been developed and will be implemented to address or manage potential spills or emergency events onsite to minimize hazards to human health and the environment (CURA 2024). The FRP includes the following key components: protective actions for life safety, incident stabilization, administrative duties, other systems and components, and site plan countermeasures and control plan components. Protective actions for life safety include but are not limited to evacuation, sheltering, shelter-in-place in the event of life-threatening incidents such as a fire or spill, and facility lockdown in the event of an act of violence.

Stabilizing an emergency may involve many different actions including firefighting, administering medical treatment, rescue, containing a spill of hazardous chemicals, or handling a threat or act of violence. Specific preparation activities include but are not limited to staffing trained 40-hour HAZWOPER employees onsite, maintaining sufficient supplies of spill remediation materials onsite, and providing fire extinguishers and other firefighting platform required by the terminal permit onsite.

The San Diego Clean Fuels Terminal Manager (or designee) would be the FRP administrator, who will have overall responsibility for adherence to the plan. This responsibility includes the following:

- Maintaining the written Emergency Response Plan for regular and after hours work conditions.
- Notifying the proper rescue and law enforcement authorities and the building owner/superintendent in the event of an emergency affecting the facility.

- Taking security measures to protect employees.
- Integrating the Emergency Response Plan with any existing plans or requirements.
- Distributing procedures for reporting emergencies, the location of safe exits, and evacuation routes to each employee.
- Conducting drills to acquaint employees with emergency procedures and to judge the effectiveness of the plan.
- Training designated employees in emergency response such as the use of fire extinguishers and the application of first aid.
- Deciding which emergency response to initiate (evacuate or not); ensuring that equipment is placed and locked in storage rooms or desks for protection.

Other systems, procedures, and plans included as part of the FRP include an onsite alarm system; communication plan; emergency shutdown procedures; first aid and rescue procedures; training requirements; discharge prevention procedures; facility site plan; containment systems; security; and regular inspections.

Additionally, the FRP is designed to complement the SPCC Plan prepared for this facility. The SPCC Plan is incorporated by reference in the FRP. The SPCC Plan would minimize the potential for a petroleum spill, prevent any spill from reaching navigable waterways, and ensure that the spill's causes are corrected.

With the implementation of the FRP, SPCC Plan, and SWPPP, the Proposed Project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. Impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

Threshold 2: Would the project 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?

As previously identified, the Project involves the construction of a transloading facility. The release of hazardous materials into the environment would be prevented or managed through the FRP, SPCC Plan, and SWPPP.

Facility Response Plan

The FRP identifies the potential hazards and failures per oil storage container located at the facility, including the oil source, rate of flow, direction of flow, and the containment systems. Additionally, the FRP provides emergency response information, evacuation routes and emergency assembly areas, training procedures, and plan implementation (CURA 2024).

Discharge Detection System

The FRP describes the Proposed Project's discharge detection system, which detects spills from a rail car, tanker truck, tank, or other onsite equipment via an automated system or visual detection from company personnel or the public. The automated detection system provides information regarding oil movements,

pressure, temperature, and equipment status and control. The pumps and flow lines are also equipped with pressure and flow monitors that are set to trigger an alarm or shut down on present deviations of pressure flow. Each pump and transloading spot would be equipped with an emergency shutdown button that would automatically terminate the transfer of product within 30 seconds.

Discharge

Biodiesel, renewable diesel, ethanol, and SAF are temporarily stored onsite in rail cars. One rail car holds approximately 30,000 gallons of product. Normal total capacity is 21 rail cars that hold approximately 630,000 gallons of product. Normal total daily throughput when the facility is operating is approximately 579,600 gallons per day. This transfer volume is approximately 13,800 barrels of fuel per day or 402 gallons per minute (KOA 2024). Lubricity, conductivity, and red dye would be stored in three 330-gallon totes. As stated above, all of the areas containing biodiesel, renewable diesel, ethanol, or SAF have a means of secondary containment. The filling stations' secondary containment areas have drains set in concrete. The area between the railroad tracks also has rail car spill drain risers and portable spill drip pans located under the rail cars during unloading. All the drains route to the onsite 37,700-gallon concrete containment basin via underground piping. The rail car and truck unloading area will be equipped with a containment system capable of containing the contents of 110 percent of an entire rail car volume. Spill kits containing granular absorbents, sorbent booms, sorbent pads, and sorbent pillows would be located in strategic areas throughout the Facility, such as near the rail tracks and filling stations. In the event of a spill, product or contaminated water would be evacuated via vacuum trucks and would be disposed of in accordance with all applicable state and federal regulatory requirements. Other spill mitigation procedures are outlined in the FRP.

Vulnerability Analysis

The FRP also conducted a vulnerability analysis to address the potential effects of a minor, medium, or major oil spill or hazardous release at the Proposed Project. According to this analysis, the greatest risk of release is from rail cars. These rail car tanks do not have built in secondary containment. In the event of a spill, the oil will discharge from the drain pans to the 37,700-gallon containment basin. The likelihood of a major spill (greater than 36,000 gallons) or even a medium spill (between 2,100 and 36,000 gallons) occurring is extremely unlikely and could occur only if multiple railcars failed simultaneously, the drain system was overwhelmed, and the containment basin's 37,700-gallon capacity was exceeded. The worst-case spill would be 630,000 gallons discharged from 21 rail cars. This discharge would flow into the containment basin in the southern portion of the Project Area. If discharge were to leave the basin and property boundary, it would flow via the National City Stormwater system into Paradise Creek, Paradise Marsh, Sweetwater Channel (Sweetwater River), and San Diego Bay. In the event of a discharge from the containment basin, these areas along with two drinking water intakes could potentially be impacted with oil. The potential for either a large or medium accidental spill is relatively low because of the adequate secondary containment, ongoing maintenance, and training and procedures outlined in the FRP.

The highest expected risk of a spill would be caused by natural disasters such as a seismic event. Due to the proximity of the Project Area to the coast (approximately 0.34 mile), flash floods are possible but would be managed through onsite stormwater controls. However, there is little risk of a large to medium

spill due to ongoing monitoring of the rail cars, tanker trucks, and containment systems. Additionally, the probability of a chain reaction of failures is extremely low. The failure of more than one rail car is very unlikely as the rail cars are not manifolded together.

Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasure Plan

Materials Storage

Rail cars, tanker trucks, and the three totes containing lubricity, conductivity, and red dye would be located onsite in appropriate containers and positioned to prevent a discharge (e.g., containers would be positioned to be readily accessible for use but protected from accidental damage; containers would be positioned in designated loading/unloading areas with designated vehicle parking areas; and containers would be positioned away from surface water, storm drains, and other sensitive receptors).

Inspection and Monitoring Program

The filling stations, area between the railroad tracks, and containment basin would be monitored at all times by Project personnel. Warning signs as well as verbal instructions will be used to warn against unattended loading/unloading operations and railcar or tanker truck departure before complete disconnection of transfer lines.

Daily cursory visual inspections would be conducted on each piece of equipment used for the day. Weekly detailed inspections would be conducted on the rail cars, tanker trucks, tanks, piping, waste storage areas, drains, and chemical products to check for any issues such as corroded or leaking valves, spills, proper labeling, overfilled drums, and excessive oil/grease flow. Monthly, quarterly, and annual in-depth inspections would be conducted as well. Appropriate repairs would be made as needed.

Discharge Response Resources

The Proposed Project has spill control equipment to allow personnel to respond to small spills. Response resources for small, medium, and worst-case discharges are as follows:

- Small Discharge
 - One thousand feet of containment boom.
 - Capability to deploy boom within one hour of discharge discovery.
 - Oil recovery device with an effective daily recovery capacity equal to the amount of oil discharged in a small discharge or greater (2,100 gallon-per-day recovery capacity and 4,200 gallon-per-day storage capacity).
 - Response equipment available onsite within two hours of discharge detection.
- Medium Discharge
 - Availability of sufficient quantities of containment boom.
 - Oil recovery device with an effective daily recovery capacity equal to 50 percent of the total volume of the medium discharge (approximately 2,000 gallons per day).
 - Response equipment arrival within 6 hours and onsite availability in no more than 12 hours.

- Availability of temporary storage capacity equal to the volume of medium discharge (approximately 4,000 gallons per day).
- Worst-case Discharge
 - Availability of sufficient quantities of containment boom.
 - Identification of response resources with fire-fighting capabilities.
 - Identification of an individual located at the Proposed Project to work within the fire department for Group 1 through Group 4 oil fires.
 - Identification of response resources to meet the applicable worst-case discharge planning volume and capable of arriving at the scene within 6 hours.
 - Availability of temporary storage capacity equal to twice the response equipment's daily recovery capacity.

Spill Mitigation

The SPCC Plan outlines spill mitigation procedures for each spill mitigation situation. Spill mitigation procedures are discussed for failure of transfer equipment, tank overfill/failure, piping rupture/leak, fire/explosion, and manifold failure. Upon discovery of a spill, the first responder would notify the Proposed Project's Senior Facility Manager and facility control center and advise on any public safety concerns. The Senior Facility Manager or designee would assume the role of Emergency Coordinator (IC/QI).

In the event of a small discharge, the Proposed Project's personnel would handle the response. The appropriate action would be to conduct a safety assessment and evacuate personnel as needed, direct facility responders to shut down ignition sources, direct facility personnel to position resources, complete a spill report, and ensure regulatory agencies are notified.

In the event of a small/medium discharge, the QI/IC would initiate spill assessment procedures, including surveillance operations, trajectory calculations, and spill volume estimation. The Emergency Response Checklist would be used to address safety, response, and post response issues. The Emergency Response Personnel would develop the following plans, as appropriate for the size of the discharge: site safety and health, site security, incident action, decontamination, disposal, and demobilization.

Material Disposal

All recovery diesel, oil liquids, oily sorbents, and other oiled debris resulting from the cleanup of a spill incident will be stored temporarily onsite in an area north of the rail spurs where no industrial activities occur. Solids will be temporarily stored in roll-off boxes and liquids can be disposed via vacuum truck or temporarily stored in frac tanks. Solids can also be temporarily stored in stockpiles on poly and covered with poly to prevent exposure to stormwater.

The disposal of material recovered from spill cleanup operations, which cannot be recycled or used locally, will in every case be disposed of in a manner approved by DTSC or the RWQCB and in compliance with applicable USEPA/DOT regulations.

Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan

Additionally, some hazardous materials, such as diesel fuel, would be used during construction. An SWPPP that lists BMPs to prevent construction pollutants and products from violating any water quality standard or waste discharge requirements would be prepared for the Proposed Project. The release of any construction-related spills would be prevented through the implementation of BMPs listed in the SWPPP. With these measures in place, impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation would be required.

As described above, the biodiesel fuel and renewable diesel fuel would be transloaded directly from rail cars to tanker trucks. Each truck loading spot will consist of a pump skid, controls and above ground piping between the belly of the rail cars and the bottom loading port of the truck. Each spot also provides a concrete pad and drain for the containment of potential spills that will be piped to a containment basin onsite. In addition, the FRP, SPCC Plan, and SWPPP, would be implemented, to address and/or manage any potential spills or emergency events onsite to reduce hazard to the public or environment. Impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

Threshold 3: Would the project emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?

The IS analyzed this topic and determined that the Project would not have any impacts.

Threshold 4: Would the project 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?

The IS analyzed this topic and determined that the Project would result in a less than significant impact.

Threshold 5: For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?

The IS analyzed this topic and determined that the Project would not have any impacts.

Threshold 6: Would the project impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

The IS analyzed this topic and determined that the Project would result in a less than significant impact.

Threshold 7: Would the project expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?

The IS analyzed this topic and determined that the Project would not have any impacts.

3.5.5 Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

3.5.6 Level of Significance After Mitigation

The impacts of the Proposed Project would be less than significant.

3.6 Land Use and Planning

3.6.1 Introduction

This section describes the existing conditions and applicable laws and regulations for land use and planning. The section also discusses the Proposed Project's potential to increase air emissions in the region. Impacts on land use and planning are considered significant if the Proposed Project were to (1) physically divide an established community or (2) 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.

The analysis includes information from the following technical document, which is included as an appendix to the DEIR:

- Air Quality & Greenhouse Gas Assessment for the San Diego Clean Fuels Facility LLC Project (Appendix B; ECORP 2024a).

3.6.2 Environmental Setting

The City is composed of three main communities identified by major parks: El Toyon, Kimball, and Las Palmas. These communities are further divided into residential neighborhoods and business districts with distinct identities. Residential areas are organized with elementary schools as the focal point of each neighborhood. Current land uses within the planning area based off the 2018 current land use layer from SanGIS. Residential uses constitute the largest use (26.4 percent, or 1,634.8 acres). Transportation, Communications, and Utilities are the next largest use (22.4 percent or 1,389.4 acres). This category includes all street ROWs, railroad ROWs, trolley stations and associated parking lots. Industrial uses constitute 10.3 percent (640.1 acres) of the City's planning area and include a combination of light and heavy industrial uses, which are concentrated within the western portion of the National City by the harbor front. The remaining uses include commercial and office (7 percent, or 432.0 acres); military (5.2 percent, or 323.7 acres); recreation, open space, and agriculture (3.9 percent, or 243.5 acres); schools (2.3 percent, or 143.4 acres); public facilities and services (1.9 percent, or 117.6 acres); and vacant and undeveloped land (1.5 percent, or 101.6 acres) (City of National City 2023).

The Proposed Project is located in an urban developed area characterized by industrial land uses. The Project Area is located between the existing buildings along Cleveland Avenue and the existing BNSF Railway tracks and between Civic Center Drive and West 19th Street. The Project Area includes vacant land and land used for commercial business.

The Proposed Project is located on private property and within the BNSF ROW. The Project Area is within the Medium Manufacturing (MM) and Heavy Manufacturing Zone and has a land use designation of Industrial/Salt Production. The Proposed Project is a conditional use under the Medium/Heavy Manufacturing Zone; therefore, a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) is required. The Project is surrounded to the north, east, and south by Industrial land use designations and by Marine Related Industrial to the west, as described in Table 3.6-1.

Table 3.6-1. Surrounding Land Uses

	Land Use Designation	Zoning Designation	Existing Land Use
Project Area	Industrial	MM – Medium Manufacturing; MH – Heavy Manufacturing	Vacant Lot, Pacific Steel, Railroad
North	Industrial	MH – Heavy Manufacturing	Warehouses
East	Industrial	MM – Medium Manufacturing	Industrial Businesses
South	Industrial	M – Military	Industrial Businesses
West	Military	Military	Naval Base San Diego

Source: City of National City 2008, 2024

The Project Area is also located in the Coastal Zone, which requires a Coastal Development Permit, for development proposals within the zone. The Project, pursuant to California Coastal Act (CCA), is subject to the City's Local Coastal Program (LCP). An LCP includes a local government's land use plans, zoning ordinances, zoning district maps, and actions to implement the policies of the CCA. The City's Coastal Zone includes approximately 575 acres and is divided into four districts. Subarea I covers the industrial area west of I-5, Subarea II covers the Paradise Marsh wetlands area, Subarea III covers the Sweetwater industrial area east of I-5 and south of 30th Street, and Subarea IV covers I-5 and the San Diego Trolley ROW. The Project Area is located in Subarea I, which encompasses approximately 210 acres and contains light and medium industrial uses.

3.6.3 Regulatory Setting

3.6.3.1 Federal

Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972

The U.S. Congress recognized the importance of meeting the challenge of continued growth in the coastal zone by passing the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) of 1972. The CZMA provides for management of the nation's coastal resources and balances economic development with environmental conservation. Two national programs were created under this act, the National Coastal Zone Management Plan (CZMP) and the National Estuarine Research Reserve System. Out of 35 eligible states, only 34 have established management programs. The CZMP is administered by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Office for Coastal Management. The key goals of the National CZMP include: "protecting natural resources, managing development in high hazard areas, giving development priority to coastal-dependent uses, providing public access for recreation, coordinating state and federal actions."

3.6.3.2 State

California Coastal Act of 1976

The California Coastal Act of 1976 (CCA, 20 PRC 30000-30900) was created to protect natural coastal resources, enhance public access to the coast, and balance conservation and development and to be managed by the California Coastal Commission (CCC). The CCA applies to the government, businesses, and private individuals and establishes an on land coastal zone, which varies in width from several

hundred feet in highly urbanized areas up to 5 miles in some rural areas on land as well as an offshore coastal zone from the high tide line of the California coast out to 3 nautical miles. The coastal zone established by the CCA does not include San Francisco Bay, where development is regulated by the Bay Conservation and Development Commission. Local governments serve as the regulatory agency within the boundaries of their jurisdiction and are also responsible for creating Local Coastal Programs (LCPs) to guide coastal planning, development, and conservation as well as issuing permits. The CCC operates under the federal CZMA and reviews LCPs for approval. Development activities, which are broadly defined by the CCA to include construction of buildings, divisions of land, and activities that change the intensity of use of land or public access to coastal waters, generally require a Coastal Development Permit from either the CCC or the local government.

Sections of the CCA that are applicable to the Proposed Project include the following:

Public Access (PRC Sections 30210-30214)

- Section 30212(a). Public access from the nearest public roadway to the shoreline and along the coast shall be provided in new development projects except where (1) it is inconsistent with public safety, military security needs, or the protection of fragile coastal resources, (2) adequate access exists nearby, or (3) agriculture would be adversely affected. Dedicated accessway shall not be required to be opened to public use until a public agency or private association agrees to accept responsibility for maintenance and liability of the accessway.

Marine Environment (PRC Sections 30230-30236)

- Section 30231. The biological productivity and the quality of coastal waters, streams, wetlands, estuaries, and lakes appropriate to maintain optimum populations of marine organisms and for the protection of human health shall be maintained and, where feasible, restored through, among other means, minimizing adverse effects of waste water discharges and entrainment, controlling runoff, preventing depletion of ground water supplies and substantial interference with surface waterflow, encouraging waste water reclamation, maintaining natural vegetation buffer areas that protect riparian habitats, and minimizing alteration of natural streams.
- Section 30232. Protection against the spillage of crude oil, gas, petroleum products, or hazardous substances shall be provided in relation to any development or transportation of such materials. Effective containment and cleanup facilities and procedures shall be provided for accidental spills that do occur.

Development (PRC Sections 30250-30255)

- Section 30250
 - (a) New residential, commercial, or industrial development, except as otherwise provided in this division, shall be located within, contiguous with, or in close proximity to, existing developed areas able to accommodate it or, where such areas are not able to accommodate it, in other areas with adequate public services and where it will not have significant adverse effects, either individually or cumulatively, on coastal resources. In addition, land divisions, other than leases for agricultural uses, outside existing developed

areas shall be permitted only where 50 percent of the usable parcels in the area have been developed and the created parcels would be no smaller than the average size of surrounding parcels.

- (b) Where feasible, new hazardous industrial development shall be located away from existing developed areas.
- (c) Visitor-serving facilities that cannot feasibly be located in existing developed areas shall be located in existing isolated developments or at selected points of attraction for visitors.

■ Section 30253. New development shall do all of the following:

- (a) Minimize risks to life and property in areas of high geologic, flood, and fire hazard.
- (b) Assure stability and structural integrity, and neither create nor contribute significantly to erosion, geologic instability, or destruction of the site or surrounding area or in any way require the construction of protective devices that would substantially alter natural landforms along bluffs and cliffs.
- (c) Be consistent with requirements imposed by an air pollution control district or the State Air Resources Board as to each particular development.
- (d) Minimize energy consumption and vehicle miles traveled.
- (e) Where appropriate, protect special communities and neighborhoods that, because of their unique characteristics, are popular visitor destination points for recreational uses.

Industrial Development (PRC Sections 30260-30265.5)

- Section 30261. Multicompany use of existing and new tanker facilities shall be encouraged to the maximum extent feasible and legally permissible, except where to do so would result in increased tanker operations and associated onshore development incompatible with the land use and environmental goals for the area. New tanker terminals outside of existing terminal areas shall be situated as to avoid risk to environmentally sensitive areas and shall use a monobuoy system, unless an alternative type of system can be shown to be environmentally preferable for a specific site. Tanker facilities shall be designed to (1) minimize the total volume of oil spilled, (2) minimize the risk of collision from movement of other vessels, (3) have ready access to the most effective feasible containment and recovery equipment for oil spills, and (4) have onshore deballasting facilities to receive any fouled ballast water from tankers where operationally or legally required.

3.6.3.3 Local

City of National City General Plan

California State law (Government Code Section 63500) requires each city and county to prepare and adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan for physical development every 10 years. The *City of National City General Plan* serves as a blueprint for all land use actions of the City. It is a policy document that articulates the goals, strategies, and, in some areas, regulations regarding the distribution of land and its type and intensity of use, both public and private. The General Plan elements applicable to this EIR analysis of the Proposed Project are described below.

Land Use and Community Character Element

The Land Use Element plans for and identifies locations where future development and redevelopment should be directed within the City. This element balances growth and change with the need to preserve and improve well-established residential neighborhoods, commercial and industrial cores, and overall quality of life. The Land Use Element establishes goals and policies intended to support a sustainable community by creating a complementary mix of residential, employment, commercial, service, food producing, and recreational uses (City of National City 2024).

Transportation Element

The Transportation Element provide a transportation plan for the movement of people and goods and identifies the general location and extent of existing and proposed major roadways, transportation routes, terminals, air and water ports, and pedestrian and bikeway facilities. These Elements address the needs of mobility through the development of an integrated, multi-modal circulation network that accommodates both local and regional trips and supports public transit, walking, bicycling, and vehicular traffic, and parking. The City's circulation system is strongly correlated to the Land Use Element, which supports increased densities and a mix of uses that reduce reliance on personal vehicles by making walking and bicycling more comfortable and convenient (City of National City 2024).

Safety Element

The Safety Element establishes goals and policies that work to protect the community from risks of injury, loss of life and property, and environmental damage associated with natural and manmade hazards such as wildfires, geologic and seismic hazards, flooding, hazardous materials, military installations, and brownfields. This element provides guidance for environmental design to reduce or avoid the destructive effects of various hazards and safety issues (City of National City 2024).

Noise and Nuisance Element

The Noise and Nuisance Element identifies and assesses sources of noise generation within the City to minimize problems associated with intrusive sound and establishes goals and policies to ensure that new development does not expose people to unacceptable noise levels. This element also serves to abate other common nuisances such as the accumulation of outdoor trash and debris, abandoned and dilapidated buildings, overgrown weeds and vegetation, noxious odors, light pollution, and encroachments in the public ROW which interferes with pedestrian passage (City of National City 2011).

Open Space and Agriculture Element

The Open Space and Agriculture Element establishes goals and policies for the preservation and conservation of open-space lands, the managed production of agricultural lands, outdoor recreation, and open space. Due to the highly developed nature of the community, the City faces significant challenges in the provision of additional open space and recreational facilities. Consequently, this Element examines methods to increase open space and recreational areas within the developed environment, presents mechanisms to preserve remaining natural open space areas and valuable cultural resources, and seeks solutions for integrating urban agriculture within the community (City of National City 2011).

Conservation and Sustainability Element

The Conservation and Sustainability Element establishes goals and policies for the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources, such as water. This element provides guidance for the sustainability of the City's water, sewer, and drainage infrastructure; energy consumption; waste management; and carbon footprint. Because the City is almost completely developed, reducing the City's energy consumption and improving the sustainability of its infrastructure will depend almost entirely on the retrofitting and adaptation of existing systems. Consequently, this element's goals and policies explore creative solutions for water and energy conservation, water quality preservation, and reduction of the City's carbon footprint (City of National City 2011).

Health and Environmental Justice Element

The Health and Environmental Justice Element identifies public health risks and environmental justice concerns to improve living conditions, physical health, and well-being of National City's residents. The Health and Environmental Justice Element is not a state-mandated element; however, California Government Code Section 65303 permits local jurisdictions to adopt additional elements beyond the mandatory elements when they relate to the physical development of the jurisdiction. Because public health and environmental justice are themes that are tied to all the General Plan elements, this element cross-references other goals and policies to provide a complete picture of the City's efforts to improve health and equality (City of National City 2011).

City of National City Zoning Ordinance

Chapter 18 of the Municipal Code is the City's Zoning Ordinance and is the primary tool for implementing the General Plan. The Land Use Code provides detailed standards for development or the use of land. These standards include what types of uses are permitted in particular zone, minimum lot size, height restrictions, building setbacks, parking requirements, wall heights, sign criteria and other standards.

City of National City Local Coastal Program

The coastal zone of National City includes all the area west of I-5, and a small area east of I-5 south of 30th Street. The coastal zone area over which National City retains jurisdiction totals approximately 575 acres and is bound by the U.S. Navy lands to the north, and the Chula Vista Bayfront to the south. The Land Use Plan of National City's LCP contains technical background information, policy recommendations, and a land use plan map. The City's LCP discusses public access, recreation, marsh preservation, visual resources, industrial development, and environmental hazards and applicability to Coastal Act policies and Coastal Commission guidelines. The most recent amendment to the City's LCP was certified by the CCC July 10, 1997.

3.6.4 Impact Analysis

3.6.4.1 Methodology

The following impact discussion evaluates the potential effects from land use and planning associated with the Proposed Project. Based upon the existing conditions above, the impact discussion addresses the

direct and indirect impacts related to land use and planning by determining whether the Proposed Project would trigger any of the thresholds listed below.

3.6.4.2 Thresholds of Significance

Thresholds used to evaluate impacts related to land use and planning are based on applicable criteria in Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines. A significant impact related to land use would occur if the Project would:

- 1) Physically divide an established community.
- 2) 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.

Changes in land use, project inconsistencies, or conflicts with a plan do not in and of itself constitute a significant environmental impact. The plan or policy inconsistency would have to result in a physical effect on the environment to be considered significant pursuant to CEQA.

3.6.4.3 Impact Discussion

Threshold 1: Would the project physically divide an established community?

The IS analyzed this topic and determined that the Project would not have any impacts.

Threshold 2: Would the project 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?

Section 15125 (d) of the *CEQA Guidelines* requires EIRs to “discuss any inconsistencies between the Proposed Project and applicable general plans and regional plans.” The objective of such a discussion is to find ways to modify the Project, if warranted, to reduce any identified inconsistencies with relevant plans and policies. Pursuant to CEQA Section 15125 (d), this EIR section includes an evaluation of the consistency of the Proposed Project with pertinent goals and policies of relevant adopted local and regional plans.

Land Use and Zoning Consistency

The Proposed Project is located within the Medium Manufacturing (MM) and Heavy Manufacturing (MH) zones and has a land use designation of Industrial/Salt Production within the Coastal Zone overlay. The Project consists of construction within the BNSF Railway ROW and on adjacent private property. The Proposed Project is a conditional use under the Medium/Heavy Manufacturing zone; therefore, a CUP is required for the Project. Issuance of the CUP would align the Proposed Project with the City’s land use regulations and would not constitute a significant environmental impact.

Local Coastal Program Consistency

The Project Area is located in the Coastal Zone of National City and under the CCA is subject to the City’s LCP. The Project Area is located in Subarea I of the LCP, which encompasses approximately 210 acres and

contains light and medium industrial uses. The Proposed Project would obtain a CUP to align with the City's land use regulations and the LCP. Additionally, the Project would apply for a Coastal Development Permit.

Sections 30210, 30211, 30212 and 30214 of the Coastal Act require that public access and recreational opportunities be provided for all the people; that development not interfere with the public's right of access; that new development provide public access to the shoreline; and that public access be managed to protect fragile resources and property rights. There are no public access locations to coastal resources within the City. Existing public access to coastal resources near the Project Area include Pepper Park and Pier 32 Marina, which are under the jurisdiction of the Port of San Diego. Project implementation would not interfere with the public's right of access to these locations and would not conflict with policies related to increasing public access to and use of the City's bayfront.

Sections 30212.5, 30213, 30220-30223, and 30256(c) of the Coastal Act require the provision of public and low-cost recreation and visitor-serving facilities, and the protection of coastal water and land areas that are suitable for recreational use. As identified above, the only existing public access to coastal recreational resources near the Project Area include Pepper Park and Pier 32 Marina which are under the jurisdiction of the Port of San Diego. Project implementation would not interfere with the public's right of access to these locations and would not conflict with policies related to the provision of recreational facilities and protection of coastal water and land areas suitable for recreational use.

Sections 30230, 30231, and 30236 of the Coastal Act require the preservation, enhancement, and restoration of water and marine resources including coastal waters, streams, wetlands, estuaries, and lakes. Sections 30233 and 30235 establish conditions under which diking, dredging, filling and the use of shoreline structures may and may not occur. Section 30233 (c) limits dredging in the 19 priority wetlands identified by the Department of Fish and Game to minor public facilities, restorative measures, and nature study. Section 30240 provides for the protection of environmentally sensitive habitat areas by restricting uses within or adjacent to such areas. The Proposed Project does not include any dredging or spoils disposal activities. The Project Area is not located within an identified priority area of the South San Diego Bay as identified in the report entitled *Acquisition Priorities for the Coastal Wetlands of California*. Additionally, the Project does not include erosion control and flood control facilities constructed on watercourses. One depressional feature exists within the southwest portion of the Project Area. As discussed in Section 3.2 Biological Resources, the depressional feature is an isolated puddle whose occurrence is likely due to compaction of fill soils within the existing property. The Proposed Project would eliminate this puddle; however, it would also improve site drainage and water quality within surrounding areas by providing storm drains and filtering of pollutants, which is not occurring at the present time. For these reasons, because the Project would result in an overall improvement in water quality for the region, a less than significant impact was identified for impacts to the feature. Project implementation would not interfere with the preservation, enhancement, and restoration of water and marine resources.

Section 30251 of the Coastal Act calls for the protection of the scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas, and, where feasible, to restore and enhance visual quality in visually degraded areas. San Diego Bay is located to the west and mountains are located to the east of the Project Area, however, any potential

scenic views in the Project Area are obstructed by surrounding industrial development. The Project Area's current visual character and quality of the site is degraded as the vacant lot is littered with debris, contains no structures, and contains minimal vegetation. Project implementation would replace the existing and vacant and degraded with an attractive, well-designed development through the use of screening elements, landscaping, and design of the Project. In addition, the Proposed Project would be designed and constructed per applicable City Municipal Code and General Plan standards. Therefore, because no demonstrable negative aesthetic effect to the existing visual character or quality of the Project Area or their surroundings is anticipated to result from the Proposed Project, there would be no conflict with policies related to the protection of scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas and the Project would enhance the visual quality of the existing Project Site.

By law, all activities undertaken by a planning agency must be consistent with the goals and policies of the agency's general plan. The City has an adopted Health and Environmental Justice Element, which acknowledges the relationship between pollution and negative health effects and identifies policies aimed at reducing adverse health effects within the community. This element provides guidance to improve living conditions in order to foster the physical health and well-being of City residents.

A consistency analysis with the applicable policies of the City's General Plan and other applicable land use plans and policies is provided in Table 3.6-2 below.

Table 3.6-2. Summary of Project Consistency with Environmental Policies of the General Plan and Other Applicable Land Use Plans	
National City General Plan	
Applicable Policies	Project Applicability and Consistency
Land Use Element	
Policy LU-4.2: Encourage features such as trees, adequate lighting, wide sidewalks, appropriately scaled buildings, street furnishings, and deemphasized parking lots to support pedestrian-scale urban design that aims to make streets, sidewalks, and buildings pedestrian-friendly.	Consistent. The Proposed Project includes landscaped areas with planters and onsite lighting for safety and security. Existing sidewalks along 18th and 19th streets will remain and would not impact the use of sidewalks by pedestrians.
Policy LU-4.4: Ensure that sidewalks and bicycle routes, lanes, and tracks are adequately maintained.	Consistent. Existing sidewalks along 18th and 19th streets will remain and would not impact the use of sidewalks by pedestrians. The Bayshore Bikeway is a 26-mile regional bicycle route that encircles San Diego Bay and passes through the City's planning area along Harbor Drive and Tidelands Avenue. It provides a link to the nearby cities of San Diego, Coronado, Imperial Beach, and Chula Vista. In the vicinity of the Project, the Bikeway is a separated bicycle facility that is located to the outside of the southbound lanes. For the Project, outbound truck traffic will use the northbound lanes on Tidelands Avenue, therefore, there will be no conflicting traffic movements between Project-generated truck traffic and bicycles on the Bikeway. The Proposed Project would also provide infrastructure improvements at the Civic Center Drive rail crossing, which include improved rail crossing sign visibility, traffic direction control, and crosswalks. These improvements enhance the area for the purposes of the Project by providing offsite adjacent improvements and improve safety at the BNSF crossing.
Policy LU-5.3: Encourage businesses to employ National City residents and support efforts to reduce local unemployment.	Consistent. Project implementation would create jobs associated with the facility that would offer employment at multiple income levels.
Policy LU-5.4: Encourage and incentivize strategic adaptive reuse and infill development of vacant land in commercial and mixed-use areas.	Consistent. While not a commercial or mixed-use development, the Proposed Project is located within a vacant and underutilized parcel that previously had site contamination. Site remediation has occurred and cleared the area for infill development on a parcel previously not suitable for development.
Policy LU-6.1: Prevent the intrusion of new incompatible land uses and environmental hazards, such as industrial and automotive uses, into existing residential areas, and continue to phase out non-conforming land uses.	Consistent. The Proposed Project is located on private property and within the BNSF ROW. The Project Area is within the Medium/High Industrial zones and has a land use designation of Industrial. The Project is surrounded to the north, east, and south by Industrial land use designations and by Marine Related Industrial to the west. The Project is a compatible use within the appropriate land use and zoning designation established by the
Policy LU-6.2: Ensure that development is consistent with the Zoning Code, General Plan, and applicable specific plans.	

Table 3.6-2. Summary of Project Consistency with Environmental Policies of the General Plan and Other Applicable Land Use Plans

National City General Plan	
Applicable Policies	Project Applicability and Consistency
Policy LU-6.4: Require new development to include mitigation measures such as buffers between areas where incompatibilities may occur.	City. The Project is not located within an existing residential area. The Proposed Project does not result in incompatible land use conflicts.
Policy LU-6.5: Encourage new development to incorporate features that will help the City meet its Climate Action Plan and emissions reduction targets.	Consistent. Several measures have been incorporated into the Project as design features for ensuring that compliance with the Climate Action Plan (CAP) is achieved before the Project is approved. These measures include the provision of two electric vehicle ready parking spaces onsite, signage prohibiting idling in excess of 5 minutes; all electric building and site facilities, and United States Department of Agriculture Higher Blends Infrastructure Incentive Program grant funding approval.
Policy LU-8.2: Require new development, including infill projects, to provide fair share contributions toward the costs of the public facilities, services, and infrastructure necessary to serve the development, including but not limited to transportation, water, sewer and wastewater treatment, solid waste, flood control and drainage, schools, fire and police protection, and parks and recreation.	Consistent. All applicable fees required by the City will be collected in accordance with the City's Municipal Code.
Transportation Element	
Policy T-4.5: Exact fees on new development and redevelopment sufficient to cover the fair share portion of that development's impacts on the local and regional transportation system, including multi-modal facilities, and/or directly mitigate its impacts to the transportation system through construction of improvements.	Consistent. All applicable fees required by the City will be collected in accordance with the City's Municipal Code.
Policy T-5.3: Project transportation impacts shall be measured by VMT in accordance with CEQA and to assist the City in meeting their climate action goals.	Consistent. Analysis of transportation impacts, as described in Section 3.8 Transportation, is measured by VMT per CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3.
Policy T-5.7: Improve circulation for specific areas of the City such as the Harbor Drive/Tidelands Avenue/Civic Center Drive Intersection and the area west of National City Boulevard, south of 22nd Street, and north of Miles of Cars Way.	Consistent. The Proposed Project would provide infrastructure improvements at the Civic Center Drive rail crossing, which include improved rail crossing sign visibility, traffic direction control, and crosswalks. These improvements enhance the area for the purposes of the Project by providing offsite adjacent improvements and improve safety at the BNSF crossing.
Policy T-7.5: Require the use of Universal Design standards in parking design and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility guidelines.	Consistent. The Proposed Project includes four off-street parking spaces in accordance with the City's Municipal Code. One space would be dedicated for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) vehicles.
Policy T-7.10: Ensure development does not overbuild parking by examining parking minimums and maximums by neighborhood and use, creating partnerships with shared	

Table 3.6-2. Summary of Project Consistency with Environmental Policies of the General Plan and Other Applicable Land Use Plans	
National City General Plan	
Applicable Policies	Project Applicability and Consistency
mobility options, and utilizing transportation demand management programs where possible.	
Policy T-8.2: Enforce the use of designated truck routes for both local and regional goods transport. Route truck traffic away from residential zones and promote safety at crossings.	Consistent. The City has identified designated primary and secondary truck routes throughout the circulation network. Project trucks are required to utilize those routes to access regional corridors such as I-5. The City has designated these truck routes with the primary intent of identifying routes that avoid travel along roads that include sensitive land uses such as schools and residences to the greatest extent possible. The Proposed Project would also provide infrastructure improvements at the Civic Center Drive rail crossing, which include improved rail crossing sign visibility, traffic direction control, and crosswalks. These improvements enhance the area for the purposes of the Project by providing offsite adjacent improvements and improve safety at the BNSF crossing.
Policy T-8.4: Work with railroad operators to facilitate the transport of goods by rail through the community by coordinating schedules to minimize impacts during peak travel periods.	Consistent. The Proposed Project will reconfigure one existing rail spur and add truck loading spots to transload clean renewable and biofuels (i.e., renewable diesel, ethanol, and potentially sustainable aviation fuels at a later date) directly from rail cars into trucks for more efficient delivery to local retailers than the current supply chain.
Safety Element	
Policy SE-1.1: Enforce development standards and building restrictions as a means to limit seismic-related risks to acceptable levels.	Consistent: The Geotechnical Evaluation prepared for the Proposed Project determined that there are no known active faults crossing the Project Area, nor is the Project Area located within an earthquake fault zone as defined by the State of California. Compliance with City regulations, the California Building Code (CBC), and adherence to the grading and site preparation recommendations presented in the Geotechnical Evaluation would reduce impacts associated with seismic-related risks to a level less than significant.
Policy SE-1.2: Require new development and redevelopment to comply with recognized standards for geologic hazards, soils (including but not limited to subsidence and liquefaction), and seismic hazards to ensure public safety.	
Policy SE-1.3: Control site preparation procedures and construction phasing to reduce erosion and exposure of soils to the maximum extent possible.	Consistent: The Project would implement the construction BMPs identified in the SWPPP that would reduce exposure of soils to the maximum extent possible. Impacts associated with construction-related water quality impacts would be avoided or reduced to a level below significance through implementation of standard construction BMPs.
Policy SE-2.2: Ensure that new development adequately provides for on- and off-site mitigation of potential flood hazards and drainage problems.	Consistent: Construction of the transloading facility and associated improvements would not increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner that would substantially increase the risk of flooding, locally impede flow, or transfer flood risk to downstream areas.
Policy SE-2.7: Require new development and significant redevelopment projects to assess stormwater runoff impacts on the local and regional storm drain and flood control system,	

Table 3.6-2. Summary of Project Consistency with Environmental Policies of the General Plan and Other Applicable Land Use Plans	
National City General Plan	
Applicable Policies	Project Applicability and Consistency
and to develop detention and drainage facilities to ensure that increased risks of flooding do not result from development.	
Policy SE-2.8: Promote the use of bioswales, tree wells, green roofs, and other infiltration mechanisms to reduce of the volume of stormwater runoff.	Consistent: The Project would implement the BMPs identified in the SWPPP that would reduce exposure of soils to the maximum extent possible. Impacts associated with construction-related water quality impacts would be avoided or reduced to a level below significance through implementation of standard construction BMPs.
Policy SE-3.1: Consult with neighboring jurisdiction's fire response services, San Diego County, and the American Red Cross to ensure adequate fire and emergency response coverage, daily staffing needs are met, and public safety facilities and services are being efficiently utilized.	Consistent: The Proposed Project would provide an onsite Aqueous Film Forming Foam Fluorine Free Firefighting platform with additional fire hydrants, as per the National City Fire Department (NCFD) requirements.
Policy SE-5.1: Improve emergency communication and outreach planning through establishing partnerships with San Diego County, the U.S. Navy, other appropriate agencies and trusted community organizations to maintain a communication plan and warning system that includes multiple or tiered approaches designed to reach diverse populations and those with language or other access barriers	
Policy S-7.3: Continue to ensure that effective response to hazardous materials emergencies in the City are provided to minimize health and environmental risks.	
Policy S-7.5: Ensure the compatibility of uses which store, collect, treat, or dispose of hazardous materials with adjacent uses.	Consistent: The Project is a compatible use within the appropriate land use and zoning designation established by the City. The Project is not located within an existing residential area.
Policy S-7.7: Work with property owners and lead agencies to reduce soil contamination from industrial operations and other activities that use, produce, or dispose of hazardous or toxic substances.	Consistent: The Proposed Project is located within a vacant and underutilized parcel that previously had site contamination. Site remediation has occurred and cleared the area for infill development on a parcel previously not suitable.
Policy S-8.1: Promote the clean-up and reuse of contaminated sites and prioritize remediation and redevelopment of brownfield sites within and adjacent to residential and mixed-use areas.	
Policy S-8.2: Require owners of contaminated sites to develop a remediation plan, as required by State and Federal law.	

Table 3.6-2. Summary of Project Consistency with Environmental Policies of the General Plan and Other Applicable Land Use Plans

National City General Plan	
Applicable Policies	Project Applicability and Consistency
Policy S-8.4: Ensure reuse developments prepare all required hazardous waste and material assessments, studies, and implement necessary avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures.	Consistent: A SWPPP with BMPs was prepared for the Project that identified measures that would reduce all impacts to a level less than significant. Additionally, the rail car and truck unloading area will be equipped with a containment system capable of containing the contents of 110 percent of an entire rail car volume. In addition, a Facility Response Plan has been developed and will be implemented, to address and/or manage potential spills or emergency events onsite.
Noise and Nuisance Element	
Policy NN-1.9: Work with responsible agencies and the railways to reduce noise and vibration impacts from the BNSF and San Diego and Imperial Valley Railroads to nearby land uses.	Consistent: Noise from rail activity along the BNSF mainline currently exists and is part of the existing condition. The Project proposes replacing one existing rail turnout and installing new receiving and departure track for the facility; however, two or more trains would not be running simultaneously and therefore would not increase the amount of noise in the Project Area when compared to existing conditions. Operation of the Project would not contribute any noise sources beyond what is currently experienced in the Project Area and would not result in a significant noise-related impact associated with onsite sources.
Policy NN-1.10: Require a study to demonstrate that ground borne vibration issues associated with rail operations are adequately addressed for new development within 100 feet from the centerline of the railroad tracks.	Consistent: Vibration as a result of onsite construction activities on the Project Area would not exceed 0.2 peak particle velocity (PPV) at the nearest structure. Thus, onsite Project construction would not exceed the recommended threshold. Project operations would not include the use of any stationary equipment that would result in excessive vibration levels. While the Project would accommodate heavy-duty trucks, these vehicles can only generate groundborne vibration velocity levels of 0.006 PPV at 50 feet under typical circumstances. The additional rail line would not increase the vibration levels from the existing rail line as no simultaneous train trips would occur. Existing rail noise and associated vibration with rail activity is an existing condition. Two or more trains would not be running simultaneously and therefore would not increase the amount of vibration in the Project Area when compared to existing conditions. Therefore, the Project would result in negligible groundborne vibration impacts during operations.
Policy NN-2.5: Require development to minimize the exposure of neighboring properties to excessive noise levels from construction-related activity during all phases of construction.	Consistent: As shown in Table 4.13-2, no individual or cumulative pieces of mobile construction equipment would exceed the City's threshold of 75 A-weighted decibel (dBA) at the nearest noise-sensitive land use during construction activities.
Policy NN-3.1: Work with responsible agencies and City departments to address potential noise issues associated with land use proposals or projects.	Consistent: A Noise Analysis was prepared for the Proposed Project that evaluated potential impacts consistent with the requirements of Title 24 California Code of Regulations

Table 3.6-2. Summary of Project Consistency with Environmental Policies of the General Plan and Other Applicable Land Use Plans

National City General Plan	
Applicable Policies	Project Applicability and Consistency
Policy NN-3.3: Assure the appropriateness of proposed developments relative to existing and future noise levels by consulting the guidelines for noise-compatible land use (shown on Table NN-5) and the Noise Contour Exhibits (shown on Figures NN-1 and NN-3) to minimize the effects on noise-sensitive land uses.	(CBC) and the City's Noise Ordinance. The Noise Analysis determined that all impacts would be less than significant.
Policy NN-3.4: Require an acoustical study when required by Title 24 California Code of Regulations (California Building Code) for proposed developments, so that noise mitigation measures can be included in the project design.	
Policy NN-4.2: Reduce the number of complaints and/or violations associated with offensive odors, spray paint, sandblasting compounds, use of insecticides or other noxious substances.	Consistent: The Project does not contain any of the land uses identified as typically associated with emissions of objectionable odors. The Project would result in the transloading of biodiesel, SAF, and ethanol utilizing various mechanical equipment to transfer from rail car to truck. Offensive odors associated with fuels and additives mostly come from combustion of these fuels and the Project would not result in combustion of these fuels. Additionally, the Project is subject to San Diego Air Pollution Control District (SDAPCD) Rule 51 (Public Nuisance) which prohibits emissions that cause injury, detriment, nuisance, or annoyance to any considerable number of persons or to the public; or which endanger the comfort, repose, health, or safety of any such persons or the public; or that cause injury or damage to business or property. No impact would occur, and no mitigation is required.
Open Space Element	
Policy OS-1.1: Protect and conserve the landforms and open spaces that define the city's urban form, provide public views/vistas, serve as core biological areas and wildlife linkages, or are wetland habitats.	Consistent: The Project has been designed to avoid impacts to sensitive natural communities to the maximum extent practicable. Evaluation of the potential for the Project to impact sensitive biological resources is included in this EIR (Section 3.2). Mitigation measures have been identified to reduce impacts to a less than significant level.
Policy OS-1.2: Minimize or avoid impacts to environmentally sensitive lands by minimizing construction of infrastructure or access roads into these areas.	
Policy OS-1.4: Apply appropriate land use and development regulations to limit development of open spaces such as floodplains, sensitive biological areas including wetlands, steep hillsides, canyons, and coastal lands.	
Policy OS-2.1: Preserve significant habitat and environmentally sensitive areas, including hillsides, streams, and marshes.	

Table 3.6-2. Summary of Project Consistency with Environmental Policies of the General Plan and Other Applicable Land Use Plans	
National City General Plan	
Applicable Policies	Project Applicability and Consistency
Policy OS-2.2: Preserve the ecological integrity of creek corridors, canals, and drainage ditches that support riparian resources by working with California Department of Fish and Game to establish a plant palette that is satisfactory and providing for up to 100-foot buffers that protect against development impacts but allow for existing uses and limited future recreational uses	
Policy OS-2.3: Preserve and enhance wetland resources including creeks, rivers, ponds, marshes, vernal pools, and other seasonal wetlands to the extent feasible	
Policy OS-2.5: Protect rivers, watersheds, and groundwater as a resource for wildlife through flood control measures and the use of stormwater infiltration BMPs that protect groundwater quality.	
Policy OS-2.7: Ensure that potential impacts to biological resources are carefully evaluated prior to approval of development projects.	
Policy OS-2.8: Ensure that development is consistent with all federal, State, and regional regulations for habitat and species protection.	
Policy OS-8.4: Consult with property owners and land developers early in the development review process to minimize potential impacts to historic and cultural resources.	Consistent: The Cultural Resources Inventory Report (ECORP 2022c) determined that the project would not impact any historic resources or known cultural resources. In the event that earthwork activities inadvertently unearthed unknown archaeological resources, tribal cultural resources, or human remains during construction, implementation of mitigation measures CUL-1 through CUL-3 would reduce impacts to a level less than significant as identified in the Initial Study.
Policy OS-8.8: Require monitoring for sub-surface cultural and paleontological resources during grading and construction activities for all development projects.	
Conservation and Sustainability Element	
Policy CS-3.1: Protect rivers, watersheds, reservoirs and groundwater as a water supply source through flood control measures and the use of stormwater BMPs that protect water quality.	Consistent: The Project would implement the construction BMPs identified in the SWPPP that would reduce exposure of soils to the maximum extent possible. Impacts associated with construction-related water quality impacts would be avoided or reduced to a level below significance through implementation of standard construction BMPs.
Policy CS-3.3: Promote the use of low-impact development practices in new and existing development, including the use of bioswales, tree wells, pervious materials for hardscape, and other stormwater management practices to increase groundwater infiltration.	

Table 3.6-2. Summary of Project Consistency with Environmental Policies of the General Plan and Other Applicable Land Use Plans

National City General Plan	
Applicable Policies	Project Applicability and Consistency
Policy CS-4.2: Require landscaping for all new government facilities, commercial, industrial, multi-family, and mixed-use development to use drought tolerant plants and no vegetative turf, unless recreation needs or other area functions specifically require turf.	Consistent. The Proposed Project includes landscaped areas with planters and onsite lighting for safety and security.
Policy CS-8.1: Control sources of pollutants and improve and maintain urban runoff water quality through storm water protection measures that are at a minimum consistent with the City's NPDES Permit.	Consistent: The City of National City is a co-permittee for San Diego County under San Diego RWQCB Order Number R9-2015-0100, an order amending Order Number R9-2013-0001, NPDES Permit No. CAS010266, as amended by Order Number R9-2015-0001 also known as the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System or MS4 permit. A Water Quality Control Plan for the San Diego Basin (Basin Plan) was developed for water quality management and control for the San Diego Region. Pursuant to the requirements of the NPDES permit, all development projects are required to implement source control BMPs that will minimize the generation of pollutants.
Health and Environmental Justice Element	
Policy HEJ-1.2: Consider environmental justice issues as they are related to potential health impacts associated with land use decisions, including enforcement actions, to reduce the adverse health effects of hazardous materials, industrial activities, and other undesirable land uses, on residents regardless of age, culture, ethnicity, gender, race, socioeconomic status, or geographic location.	Consistent. The Proposed Project is located on private property and within the BNSF ROW. The Project Area is within the Medium/High Manufacturing zones and has a land use designation of Industrial/Salt Production. The Project is surrounded to the north, east, and south by Industrial land use designations and by Marine Related Industrial to the west. The Project is a compatible use within the appropriate land use and zoning designation established by the City subject to a CUP. The Project is not located within an existing residential area. The Proposed Project does not result in incompatible land use conflicts and no mitigation is required. The nearest sensitive receptor is McKinley Apartments, approximately 380 feet east of the Project. The nearest school is Kimball Elementary School, located approximately 0.3 mile east of the Project Area and across I-5. McKinley Apartments are within the Medium Manufacturing zone and has a land use designation of Industrial/Salt Production and is a non-conforming use. The Project's air quality analysis included an evaluation of Project-related emissions of criteria pollutants during construction and operation. The results of the analysis demonstrate that Project-related emissions would not exceed applicable daily thresholds of significance established by the SDAPCD. These thresholds are used to determine if a project's emissions would result in either 1) interference or impediment with attainment of State or federal ambient air quality standards; or, 2) increased risk to human health.

Table 3.6-2. Summary of Project Consistency with Environmental Policies of the General Plan and Other Applicable Land Use Plans

National City General Plan	
Applicable Policies	Project Applicability and Consistency
	The Project's air quality analysis included a health risk assessment to evaluate health risks from construction and operation and the potential for these emissions to expose nearby sensitive receptors to diesel particulate matter from heavy-duty truck activity and rail activity. The results of the health risk assessment demonstrated that neither Project operation nor construction would result in a significant contribution to cancer risk in the community. Additionally, impacts related to non-cancer risk (chronic and acute hazard index) are less than significant. Project emissions are below applicable thresholds that are adopted to ensure air quality standards are attained and for the protection of public health. Sections 3.1 – Air Quality and 3.4 – Greenhouse Gas Emissions of this DEIR include additional analysis demonstrating consistency with this policy.
Policy HEJ-1.5: Assure potentially affected community residents that they have opportunities to participate in decisions that affect their environment and health, and that the concerns of all participants involved will be considered in the decision-making process.	Consistent. Through the CEQA environmental review process, the City will be providing affected community residents the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process including the Project scoping process and public review period for this DEIR.
Policy HEJ-2.1: Avoid land use conflicts by ensuring residential, public assembly, and other sensitive land uses are adequately buffered from industrial land uses that may pose a threat to human health, where feasible.	Consistent. The Proposed Project is located on private property and within the BNSF ROW. The Project Area is within the Medium/High Manufacturing zones and has a land use designation of Industrial/Salt Production. The Project is surrounded to the north, east, and south by Industrial land use designations and by Marine Related Industrial to the west. The Project is a compatible use within the appropriate land use and zoning designation established by the City subject to a CUP. The Project is not located within an existing residential area. The Proposed Project does not result in incompatible land use conflicts and no mitigation is required. The nearest sensitive receptor is McKinley Apartments, approximately 380 feet east of the Project. The nearest school is Kimball Elementary School located approximately 0.3 mile east of the Project Area and across I-5. McKinley Apartments are within the Medium Manufacturing zone and has a land use designation of Industrial/Salt Production and is a non-conforming use. Several businesses are located between the Proposed Project and the McKinley Apartments providing a buffer between the Project and the residences.
Policy HEJ-2.6: Consider air quality impacts, including cumulative impacts, from existing and new development when making land use decisions and limit the number of industrial facilities or uses to prevent cumulative air pollution impacts.	Consistent. The Project's air quality analysis included an evaluation of Project-related emissions of criteria pollutants during construction and operation (refer to Section 3.1 of this DEIR). The results of the analysis demonstrate that Project-related emissions would not exceed applicable daily thresholds of significance established by the SDAPCD. These thresholds are used to determine if a project's emissions would result in either:

Table 3.6-2. Summary of Project Consistency with Environmental Policies of the General Plan and Other Applicable Land Use Plans	
National City General Plan	
Applicable Policies	Project Applicability and Consistency
	1) interference or impediment with attainment of State or federal ambient air quality standards; or 2) increased risk to human health. Criteria pollutant emissions generated during Project construction would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the Project region is nonattainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard. The Project's air quality analysis included a health risk assessment to evaluate health risks from construction and operation and the potential for these emissions to expose nearby sensitive receptors to diesel particulate matter from heavy duty truck activity and rail activity. The results of the health risk assessment demonstrated that neither Project operation nor construction would result in a significant contribution to cancer risk in the community. Additionally, impacts related to non-cancer risk (chronic and acute hazard index) are less than significant. Project emissions are below applicable thresholds that are adopted to ensure air quality standards are attained and for the protection of public health.
Policy HEJ-2.7: Designate truck routes that avoid sensitive land uses, where feasible.	Consistent. The City has identified designated primary and secondary truck routes throughout the circulation network. Project trucks are required to utilize those routes to access regional corridors such as I-5. The City has designated these trucks routes with the primary intent of identifying routes that avoid travel along roads that include sensitive land uses such as schools and residences during construction activities.
Policy HEJ-2.9: Request lead and responsible agency consultation on land use and transportation planning, design, and implementation projects to ensure that feasible measures are included to minimize potential impacts on the city from air pollution.	Consistent. The City will be providing Responsible Agencies the opportunity to comment during public review period through the CEQA environmental review process. Additionally, responses to comments will be provided to Responsible Agencies at least 10 days prior to certification of the CEQA document.

Source: City of National City 2011, 2024

Portside Community Emissions Reduction Plan

The other applicable plan includes the Portside Community Emissions Reduction Plan (CERP). The CERP has various strategies to ensure the health, safety, and environmental justice of the Portside community, which surrounds the Project Area. Several of the goals established by the CERP include reducing emissions and the health risks from the operations of commercial and industrial land uses within the community (SDAPCD 2021). The majority of the action items associated with the CERP strategies direct agencies such as SANDAG, SDAPCD, and local cities to develop and implement the outlined strategies.

Category 5 of the CERP addresses heavy-duty trucks and aims to reduce emissions from diesel trucks in the community. As noted in the Heavy-Duty Truck Strategies, USEPA and CARB have several upcoming actions that would reduce truck emissions statewide (SDAPCD 2021). These state and federal agencies will continue to make progress on the goals to reduce truck emissions. Within the CERP's strategies, Action E3 encourages the enforcement of the Truck Route. The City's General Plan Transportation Element includes an established Truck Route Map (Figure T-16), indicating the main routes on which trucks are permitted (City of National City 2024). According to the Traffic Study prepared for the Proposed Project, approximately 97 percent of the truck distribution would head directly toward I-5. The remaining 3 percent of the truck trip distribution would head east on 18th Street (KOA 2024). These trucks would be expected to travel on the nearest primary truck route or alternate truck route in the necessary direction. The CERP establishes the City of National City as the enforcement officer of these truck routes within the City's limits. As such, the Proposed Project's trucking trips will be subject to the enforcement actions that the City may provide, including the requirement that Project trucks travel on the National City Truck Route exclusively.

Furthermore, the Proposed Project proposes to transload renewable fuels and SAF (non-petroleum-based) directly from rail cars into trucks for local deliveries. Renewable diesel and SAF are able to fully replace petroleum-based fuels with zero modification to storage facilities or combustion engine systems. Biodiesel is a renewable, biodegradable that is often used as a blend with renewable diesel. This blend can be used to replace petroleum diesel with no changes or adverse effects to the engine. Furthermore, according to calculations completed by US Compliance, the Proposed Project's distribution of renewable diesel in the San Diego Area would result in reductions in local air pollutants from the replacement and combustion of regular diesel with renewable diesel. More specifically, the calculations showed meaningful local reductions in nitrous oxides (NO_x), carbon monoxide (CO), and particulate matter (PM) air pollutants from the introduction of renewable diesel from the Proposed Project.

The Proposed Project would not conflict with applicable environmental policies of the City's General Plan and with the CERP. Impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

3.6.5 Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

3.6.6 Level of Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be less than significant.

3.7 Noise

3.7.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the existing conditions within the Project Area and applicable laws, regulations, plans, and policies for noise and vibration. This chapter also provides an analysis of the Proposed Project's potential to: (1) result in the 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; (2) result in the generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels; and (3) expose people that reside or work in the Project Area within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within 2 miles of a public airport or public use airport to excessive noise levels.

This section relies on the noise prediction modeling results provided in Appendix H.

3.7.2 Environmental Setting

3.7.2.1 Fundamentals of Sound and Environmental Noise

Addition of Decibels

The decibel (dB) scale is logarithmic, not linear; therefore, sound levels cannot be added or subtracted through ordinary arithmetic. Two sound levels that are 10 dB apart differ in acoustic energy by a factor of 10. When the standard logarithmic decibel is A-weighted (dBA), which is defined as the relative loudness of sound as perceived by the human ear, an increase of 10 dBA is generally perceived as a doubling in loudness. For example, a 70 dBA sound is half as loud as an 80 dBA sound and twice as loud as a 60 dBA sound. When two identical sources are each producing sound of the same loudness, the resulting sound level at a given distance would be 3 dB higher than one source under the same conditions (Federal Transit Administration [FTA] 2018). For example, a 65 dB source of sound, such as a truck, when joined by another 65 dB source results in a sound amplitude of 68 dB, not 130 dB (i.e., doubling the source strength increases the sound pressure by 3 dB). Under the dB scale, three sources of equal loudness together would produce an increase of 5 dB. Typical noise levels associated with common noise sources are depicted in Figure 7. As shown in Figure 7, city traffic and diesel trucks at a distance of 50 feet have a noise level of 90 dBA, whereas heavy traffic at a distance of 300 feet has a noise level between 60 and 70 dBA.

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)	70	Vacuum Cleaner at 3 m (10 ft)
Commercial Area		Normal Speech at 1 m (3 ft)
Heavy Traffic at 90 m (300 ft)	60	Large Business Office
Quiet Urban Daytime	50	Dishwasher Next Room
Quiet Urban Nighttime	40	Theater, Large Conference Room (Background)
Quiet Suburban Nighttime		Library
Quiet Rural Nighttime	30	Bedroom at Night, Concert Hall (Background)
	20	Broadcast/Recording Studio
	10	
Lowest Threshold of Human Hearing	0	Lowest Threshold of Human Hearing

Source: California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) 2020a



Figure 7. Common Noise Levels

Sound Propagation and Attenuation

Noise can be generated by a number of sources, including mobile sources such as automobiles, trucks and airplanes, and stationary sources such as construction sites, machinery, and industrial operations. Sound propagates (spreads) uniformly outward in a spherical pattern, and the sound level attenuates (decreases) at a rate of approximately 6 dBA for each doubling of distance from a stationary or point source (Federal Highway Administration [FHWA] 2017). Sound from a line source, such as a roadway or highway, propagates outward in a cylindrical pattern, which is often referred to as *cylindrical spreading*. Sound levels attenuate at a rate of approximately 3 dBA for each doubling of distance from a line source, depending on ground surface characteristics (FHWA 2017). No excess attenuation is assumed for hard surfaces like a parking lot or a body of water. Soft surfaces, such as soft dirt or grass, can absorb sound; therefore, an excess ground-attenuation value of 1.5 dBA per doubling of distance is normally assumed. For line sources, an overall attenuation rate of 3 dBA per doubling of distance is assumed (FHWA 2011).

Noise levels may also be reduced by intervening structures; generally, a single row of detached buildings between the receptor and the noise source reduces the noise level by about 5 dBA (FHWA 2006), whereas a solid wall or berm generally reduces noise levels by 10 to 20 dBA (FHWA 2011). However, noise barriers or enclosures specifically designed to reduce site-specific construction noise can provide a sound reduction of 35 dBA or greater (Western Electro-Acoustic Laboratory, Inc. 2021). To achieve the most potent noise-reducing effect, a noise enclosure/barrier must physically fit in the available space, must completely break the *line of sight* between the noise source and the receptors, must be free of degrading holes or gaps, and must not be flanked by nearby reflective surfaces. To be most effective, noise barriers must be sizable enough to cover the entire noise source and extend lengthwise and vertically as far as feasibly possible. The limiting factor for a noise barrier is not the component of noise transmitted through the material, but rather the amount of noise that flanks around and over the barrier. In general, barriers contribute to decreasing noise levels only when the structure breaks the *line of sight* between the source and the receiver.

The manner in which older structures in California were constructed generally provides a reduction of exterior-to-interior noise levels of about 20 to 25 dBA with closed windows (California Department of Transportation [Caltrans] 2002). The exterior-to-interior reduction of newer structures is generally 30 dBA or more (Harris Miller Miller & Hanson Inc. 2006). Generally, in exterior noise environments that range from 60 to 65 dBA Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL), interior noise levels can typically be maintained below 45 dBA (which is a typical residential interior noise standard) with the incorporation of an adequate forced-air mechanical ventilation system in each residential building and standard thermal-pane residential windows/doors with a minimum rating of Sound Transmission Class (STC) 28. The STC is an integer rating of how well a building partition attenuates airborne sound. In the U.S., it is widely used to rate interior partitions, ceilings, floors, doors, windows, and exterior wall configurations. In exterior noise environments of 65 dBA CNEL or greater, a combination of forced-air mechanical ventilation and sound-rated construction methods is often required to meet the interior noise level limit. Attaining the necessary noise reduction from exterior-to-interior spaces is readily achievable in noise environments with less than 75 dBA CNEL by using proper wall construction techniques that follow CBC methods, selecting proper windows and doors, and incorporating forced-air mechanical ventilation systems.

Noise Descriptors

Noise is generally defined as sound that is loud, disagreeable, or unexpected. The selection of a proper noise descriptor for a specific source is dependent on the spatial and temporal distribution, duration, and fluctuation of the noise. The noise descriptors most often encountered when dealing with traffic, community, and environmental noise include the average hourly noise level (L_{eq}) and the average daily noise levels/community noise equivalent level ($L_{dn}/CNEL$); L_{eq} is a measure of ambient noise, whereas L_{dn} and CNEL are measures of community noise. These descriptors are applicable to this analysis and are defined as follows:

- **Equivalent Noise Level (L_{eq})** is the average acoustic energy content of noise for a stated period of time. Therefore, the L_{eq} of a time-varying noise and that of a steady noise are the same if they deliver the same acoustic energy to the ear during exposure. For evaluating community impacts, this rating scale does not vary, regardless of whether the noise occurs during the day or the night.
- **Day-Night Average (L_{dn})** is a 24-hour average L_{eq} with a 10 dBA *weighting* added to noise during the hours of 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. to account for noise sensitivity in the nighttime. The logarithmic effect of these additions is that a 60 dBA 24-hour L_{eq} would result in a measurement of 66.4 dBA L_{dn} .
- **Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL)** is a 24-hour average L_{eq} with a 5 dBA weighting during the hours of 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. and a 10 dBA weighting added to noise during the hours of 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. to account for noise sensitivity in the evening and nighttime, respectively.

Table 3.7-1 provides a list of other common acoustical descriptors.

Table 3.7-1 Common Acoustical Descriptors	
Descriptor	Definition
Decibel (dB)	A unit describing the amplitude of sound, equal to 20 times the logarithm to the base 10 of the ratio of the pressure of the sound measured to the reference pressure. The reference pressure for air is 20.
Sound Pressure Level	Sound pressure is the sound force per unit area, usually expressed in micropascals (or 20 micronewtons per square meter), where 1 pascal is the pressure resulting from a force of 1 newton exerted over an area of 1 square meter. The sound pressure level is expressed in decibels as 20 times the logarithm to the base 10 of the ratio between the pressures exerted by the sound to a reference sound pressure (e.g., 20 micropascals). Sound pressure level is the quantity that is directly measured by a sound level meter.
Frequency, hertz (Hz)	The number of complete pressure fluctuations per second above and below atmospheric pressure. Normal human hearing is between 20 Hz and 20,000 Hz. Infrasonic sound are below 20 Hz and ultrasonic sounds are above 20,000 Hz.
A-Weighted Sound Level (dBA)	The sound pressure level in decibels as measured on a sound level meter using the A-weighting filter network. The A-weighting filter de-emphasizes the very low and very high frequency components of the sound in a manner similar to the frequency response of the human ear and correlates well with subjective reactions to noise.

Table 3.7-1 Common Acoustical Descriptors

Descriptor	Definition
Equivalent Noise Level (Leq)	The average acoustic energy content of noise for a stated period of time. Therefore, the Leq of a time-varying noise and that of a steady noise are the same if they deliver the same acoustic energy to the ear during exposure. For evaluating community impacts, this rating scale does not vary, regardless of whether the noise occurs during the day or the night.
Lmax, Lmin	The maximum and minimum A-weighted noise level during the measurement period.
L01, L10, L50, L90	The A-weighted noise levels that are exceeded 1%, 10%, 50%, and 90% of the time during the measurement period.
Day/Night Noise Level (Ldn or DNL)	A 24-hour average Leq with a 10 dBA weighting added to noise during the hours of 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. to account for noise sensitivity in the nighttime. The logarithmic effect of these additions is that a 60 dBA 24-hour Leq would result in a measurement of 66.4 dBA Ldn.
Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL)	A 24-hour average Leq with a 5 dBA weighting during the hours of 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. and a 10 dBA weighting added to noise during the hours of 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. to account for noise sensitivity in the evening and nighttime, respectively. The logarithmic effect of these additions is that a 60 dBA 24-hour Leq would result in a measurement of 66.7 dBA CNEL.
Ambient Noise Level	The composite of noise from all sources near and far. The normal or existing level of environmental noise at a given location.
Intrusive	The noise that intrudes over and above the existing ambient noise at a given location. The relative intrusiveness of a sound depends on its amplitude, duration, frequency, and time of occurrence and tonal or informational content, as well as the prevailing ambient noise level.

The dBA scale gives greater weight to the frequencies of sound that the human ear is most sensitive to. Because sound levels can vary significantly over a short period of time, a method for describing either the average character of the sound or the statistical behavior of the variations must be utilized. Most commonly, environmental sounds are described in terms of an average level that has the same acoustical energy as the summation of all the time-varying events.

The scientific instrument used to measure noise is the sound level meter. Sound level meters can accurately measure environmental noise levels to within approximately 1 dBA. Various computer models are used to predict environmental noise levels from sources, such as roadways and airports. The accuracy of the predicted models depends on the distance between the receptor and the noise source. Close to the noise source, the models are accurate to within approximately 1 to 2 dBA.

Human Response to Noise

General Well-Being

The human response to environmental noise is subjective and varies considerably from individual to individual. Noise in the community has often been cited as a health problem, not in terms of actual physiological damage, such as hearing impairment, but in terms of inhibiting general well-being and contributing to undue stress and annoyance. The health effects of noise in the community arise from interference with human activities, including sleep, speech, recreation, and tasks that demand concentration or coordination.

Noise environments and consequences of human activities are usually well represented by median noise levels during the day or night or over a 24-hour period. Environmental noise levels are generally considered low when the CNEL is below 60 dBA, moderate in the 60 to 70 dBA range, and high above 70 dBA. Examples of low daytime levels include isolated natural settings with noise levels as low as 20 dBA and quiet, suburban, residential streets with noise levels around 40 dBA. Noise levels above 45 dBA at night can disrupt sleep. Examples of moderate-level noise environments include urban residential or semi-commercial areas (typically 55 to 60 dBA) and commercial locations (typically 60 dBA). People may consider louder environments adverse, but most will accept the higher levels associated with noisier urban residential or residential-commercial areas (60 to 75 dBA) or dense urban or industrial areas (65 to 80 dBA). Regarding increases in dBA, the following relationships should be noted in understanding this analysis:

- Except in carefully controlled laboratory experiments, a change of 1.0 dBA cannot be perceived by humans.
- Outside of the laboratory, a 3.0 dBA change is considered a just-perceivable difference.
- A change in level of at least 5.0 dBA is required before any noticeable change in community response is expected. An increase of 5.0 dBA is typically considered substantial.
- A 10.0 dBA change is subjectively heard as an approximate doubling in loudness and would almost certainly cause an adverse change in community response.

Hearing Loss

Although physical damage to the ear from an intense noise impulse is rare, a degradation of auditory acuity can occur even within a community noise environment. Hearing loss can occur at the highest noise intensity levels. It occurs mainly due to chronic exposure to excessive noise but may be caused by a single event such as an explosion. Natural hearing loss associated with aging may also be accelerated from chronic exposure to loud noise.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has a noise exposure standard that is set at the noise threshold where hearing loss may occur from long-term exposures. The maximum allowable level is 90 dBA averaged over 8 hours. If the noise is above 90 dBA, the allowable exposure time is correspondingly shorter.

3.7.2.2 Fundamentals of Environmental Groundborne Vibration

Vibration Sources and Characteristics

Sources of earthborne vibrations include natural phenomena (e.g., earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, sea waves, landslides) and manufactured causes (e.g., machinery, traffic, trains, construction equipment). Vibration sources may be continuous or intermittent. Ground vibration can be measured in several ways to quantify the amplitude of vibration produced, including through Peak Particle Velocity (PPV) or root mean square velocity. These velocity measurements measure the maximum particle at one point or the average of the squared amplitude of the signal, respectively.

Vibration Effects

Vibration impacts on people can be described as the level of annoyance and can vary depending on an individual's sensitivity. To sensitive individuals, vibrations approaching the threshold of perception can be annoying. Generally, low-level vibrations may cause window rattling but do not pose any threats to the integrity of buildings or structures. In high-noise environments, which are more prevalent where groundborne vibration approaches perceptible levels, this rattling phenomenon may also be produced by loud airborne environmental noise causing vibration in exterior doors and windows. Table 3.7-2 summarizes the reactions of people and the effects on buildings produced by continuous vibration levels as outlined in Caltrans' *Transportation and Construction Vibration Guidance Manual* (Caltrans 2020).

Ground vibration can be a concern in instances where buildings shake, and substantial rumblings occur. However, it is unusual for vibration from typical urban sources such as buses and heavy trucks to be perceptible. For instance, heavy-duty trucks typically generate groundborne vibration velocity levels of 0.006 PPV at 50 feet under normal circumstances, which as identified in Table 3.7-2 is considered very unlikely to cause damage to buildings of any type. Common sources of groundborne vibration are planes, trains, and construction activities which require the use of heavy-duty earthmoving equipment.

Table 3.7-2 Human Reaction and Damage to Buildings for Continuous or Frequent Intermittent Vibration Levels			
Peak Particle Velocity (inches per second)	Vibration Velocity Level (VdB)	Human Reaction	Effect on Buildings
0.006 to 0.019	64 to 74	Range of threshold of perception	Vibrations unlikely to cause damage of any type
0.08	87	Vibrations readily perceptible	Threshold at which there is a risk of architectural damage to extremely fragile historic buildings, ruins, ancient monuments
0.1	92	Level at which continuous vibrations may begin to annoy people, particularly those involved in vibration sensitive activities	Virtually no risk of architectural damage to normal buildings
0.2	94	Vibrations may begin to annoy people in buildings	Threshold at which there is a risk of architectural damage to historic and some older buildings
0.3	96	Vibrations may begin to feel severe to people in buildings	Threshold at which there is a risk of architectural damage to older residential structures
0.5	103	Vibrations considered unpleasant by people subjected to continuous vibrations	Threshold at which there is a risk of architectural damage to new residential structures and modern industrial/commercial buildings

Source: Caltrans 2020

3.7.2.3 Existing Environmental Noise Environment

Existing Ambient Noise Environment

The most common and significant source of noise in the City of National City is mobile noise generated by transportation-related sources. Other sources of noise are the various land uses (i.e., residential, industrial, and commercial) that generate stationary-source noise. Figures 8 and 9 of the City's General Plan Noise and Nuisance Element shows the existing traffic noise contours from the City's major roadways modeled using SoundPLAN V7.0, which is a three-dimensional raytracing program that considers the source of noise, the frequency spectra, and the topography of the area. According to Figure 3.7-2, most of the Project Area is located within the 65 to 70 dBA traffic noise contour, whereas the northern portion near Civic Center Street is in the 70 to 75 dBA traffic noise contour. The City's General Plan also notes that planned land uses to the west of I-5 do not include noise-sensitive land uses because the area is primarily planned for industrial and commercial uses. Residential uses are generally not permitted in this area; however, there are a few nonconforming residential land uses (City of National City 2011) located approximately 380 feet to the east of the Project Site, fronting McKinley Avenue.

The Project Area is bound by Civic Center Drive to the north, industrial uses to the east, West 19th Street and industrial uses to the south, and the BNSF Railway railroad to the west. The most significant noise within the Project Area is generated by the adjacent BNSF railroad. Trains are a source of intermittent, high noise levels. The City's General Plan notes that train warning whistles, which trains are required to sound before *at-grade* crossings, can generate noise levels from 100 to 105 dBA at a distance of 50 feet (City of National City 2011).

The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Standard 12.9-2013/Part 3 *Quantities and Procedures for Description and Measurement of Environmental Sound – Part 3: Short-Term Measurements with an Observer Present* provides a table of approximate background sound levels in CNEL, daytime L_{eq} , and nighttime L_{eq} , based on land use and population density. The ANSI standard estimation divides land uses into six distinct categories. Table 3.7-3 below provides descriptions of these land use categories, along with the typical daytime and nighttime levels. At times, one could reasonably expect the occurrence of periods that are both louder and quieter than the levels listed in the table. ANSI notes that 95 percent prediction interval [confidence interval] is on the order of +/- 10 dB. The majority of the area surrounding the Project Area consists of industrial land uses and the BNSF Railway railroad. Therefore, the Project vicinity would be considered *Ambient Noise Category 1* and generally would experience noise levels of 67 dBA CNEL.

Table 3.7-3. ANSI Standard 12.9-2013/Part 3 A-Weighted Sound Levels Corresponding to Land Use and Population Density						
Ambient Noise Category	Land Use	Description	People per Square Mile	Typical CNEL	Daytime L_{eq}	Nighttime L_{eq}
				(dBA)		
1	Noisy Commercial & Industrial Areas	Very heavy traffic conditions, such as in busy, downtown commercial areas; at intersections for mass transportation or	63,840	67	66	58

Table 3.7-3. ANSI Standard 12.9-2013/Part 3 A-Weighted Sound Levels Corresponding to Land Use and Population Density						
Ambient Noise Category	Land Use	Description	People per Square Mile	Typical CNEL	Daytime Leq	Nighttime Leq
				(dBA)		
	and Very Noisy Residential Areas	for other vehicles, including elevated trains, heavy motor trucks, and other heavy traffic; and at street corners where many motor buses and heavy trucks accelerate.				
2	Moderate Commercial & Industrial Areas and Noisy Residential Areas	Heavy traffic areas with conditions similar to Category 1, but with somewhat less traffic; routes of relatively heavy or fast automobile traffic, but where heavy truck traffic is not extremely dense.	20,000	62	61	54
3	Quiet Commercial, Industrial Areas, and Normal Urban & Noisy Suburban Residential Areas	Light traffic conditions where no mass transportation vehicles and relatively few automobiles and trucks pass, and where these vehicles generally travel at moderate speeds; residential areas and commercial streets, and intersections, with little traffic compose this category.	6,384	57	55	49
4	Quiet Urban & Normal Suburban Residential Areas	These areas are similar to Category 3, but for this group, the background is either distant traffic or is unidentifiable; typically, the population density is one-third the density of Category 3.	2,000	52	50	44
5	Quiet Residential Areas	These areas are isolated, far from significant sources of sound, and may be situated in shielded areas, such as a small, wooded valley.	638	47	45	39
6	Very Quiet Sparse Suburban or Rural Residential Areas	These areas are similar to Category 4 but are usually in sparse suburban or rural areas; and, for this group, there are few if any nearby sources of sound.	200	42	40	34

Source: American National Standards Institute 2013

Existing Roadway Noise Levels

The City's General Plan Noise and Nuisance Element describes noise monitoring surveys conducted in 2009 to monitor noise levels along freeways, arterials, and some collector roadways throughout the City. The selected locations document existing trends in noise levels along the City's primary transportation routes and locations of proposed noise-sensitive developments. The City conducted short-term noise measurements at 22 site locations and long-term noise measurements at eight site locations. The City collected short-term measurements in concurrent time intervals with data collected at nearby long-term measurement sites to provide for a direct comparison of the noise data and to estimate daily noise levels

at the short-term sites (City of National City 2011). Table 3.7-4 shows the average noise level measurements of the sites located within a 1-mile radius of the Project Area.

Table 3.7-4. Long- and Short-Term Noise Measurements at Selected Locations in National City				
Site No.	Description	Measured L _{eq} (dBA)		Calculated L _{dn} (dBA)
Long-Term Noise Measurements				
LT-1	Traffic along I-5. 65 ft from centerline of Roosevelt Ave., 22 ft from center of 5th St., and 215 ft from centerline of I-5.	Day 69 – 75	Night 63 – 69	76
LT-3	Traffic along National City Blvd. 52 ft from centerline of National City Blvd.	Day 65 – 75	Night 52 – 64	69
LT-6	Traffic along Bay Marina Dr. and industrial noise from adjacent warehouse operations. 40 ft from centerline of Bay Marina Dr.	Day 63 – 74	Night 57 – 63	72
Short-Term Noise Measurements				
ST-8	52 ft from centerline of Plaza Ave. in front of Central School.	64		68
ST-12	31 ft from centerline of Civic Center Dr., near Coolidge Ave. and Harding Ave.	65		68
ST-13	46 ft from centerline of D Ave., in front of the Senior Center.	63		66
ST-14	40 ft from centerline of Kimball Way, near rear entrance to Wal-Mart.	59		63
ST-15	48 ft from centerline of 16th St., 35 ft from the center of F Ave.	59		60
ST-19	45 ft from center of Cleveland Ave., along sidewalk just north of 22nd St.	64		65

Source: City of National City 2011

As shown, the existing roadway noise levels within a 1-mile radius of the Project Area range from 52 to 76 dBA. Sites LT-6 and ST-19 were located in an industrial area to the west of I-5 and are the closest sites to the Project Area.

Noise Sensitive Land Uses

Noise-sensitive land uses are generally considered to include uses where noise exposure could result in health-related risks to individuals, as well as places where quiet is an essential element of their intended purpose. Residential dwellings are of primary concern due to the potential for increased and prolonged exposure of individuals to both interior and exterior noise levels. Additional land uses such as hospitals, historic sites, cemeteries, and certain recreation areas are considered sensitive to increases in exterior noise levels. Schools, churches, hotels, libraries, and other places where low interior noise levels are essential are also considered noise-sensitive land uses.

The nearest existing noise-sensitive land use to the Project Area are the nonconforming residential land uses fronting McKinley Avenue, which is located approximately 380 feet east of the Project Area.

3.7.3 Regulatory Setting

3.7.3.1 Federal

Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970

OSHA regulates onsite noise levels and protects workers from occupational noise exposure. To protect hearing, worker noise exposure is limited to 90 dBA over an 8-hour work shift (29 CFR 1910.95). Employers are required to develop a hearing conservation program when employees are exposed to noise levels that exceed 85 dBA. These programs include providing hearing protection devices and testing employees for hearing loss on a periodic basis.

National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), which is a division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, has established a construction-related noise level threshold as identified in the *Criteria for a Recommended Standard: Occupational Noise Exposure* prepared in 1998. NIOSH identifies a noise level threshold based on the duration of exposure to the source. The NIOSH construction-related noise level threshold starts at 85 dBA for more than 8 hours per day; for every 3 dBA increase, the exposure time is halved. This reduction results in noise level thresholds of 88 dBA for more than 4 hours per day, 92 dBA for more than 1 hour per day, 96 dBA for more than 30 minutes per day, and up to 100 dBA for more than 15 minutes per day. The intention of these thresholds is to protect people from hearing losses resulting from occupational noise exposure.

Federal Interagency Committee on Noise

The Federal Interagency Committee on Noise (FICON) thresholds of significance assist in the evaluation of increased traffic noise. The 2000 FICON findings provide guidance regarding the significance of changes in ambient noise levels due to transportation noise sources. FICON recommendations are based on studies that relate aircraft and traffic noise levels to the percentage of persons highly annoyed by the noise. According to FICON's measure of substantial increases for transportation noise exposures, a project would have a substantial increase if any of the following occur:

- If the existing ambient noise levels at existing and future noise-sensitive land uses (e.g., residential) are less than 60 dBA CNEL, the project creates a readily perceptible 5 dBA CNEL or greater noise level increase and the resulting noise level would exceed acceptable exterior noise standards.
- If the existing noise levels range from 60 to 65 dBA CNEL, the project creates a barely perceptible 3 dBA CNEL or greater noise level increase and the resulting noise level would exceed acceptable exterior noise standards.
- If the existing noise levels already exceed 65 dBA CNEL and the project creates a community noise level increase of greater than 1.5 dBA CNEL.

3.7.3.2 State

State of California General Plan Guidelines

The State of California regulates vehicular and freeway noise that affects classrooms, sets standards for sound transmission and occupational noise control, and identifies noise insulation standards and airport noise/land-use compatibility criteria. The State of California *General Plan Guidelines* (Office of Planning and Research [OPR] 2003) published by the OPR also provides guidance for the acceptability of projects within specific L_{dn} /CNEL contours. The guidelines also present adjustment factors that may be used in order to arrive at noise acceptability standards that reflect the noise control goals of the community, the particular community's sensitivity to noise, and the community's assessment of the relative importance of noise pollution.

State Office of Planning and Research Noise Element Guidelines

The OPR *Noise Element Guidelines* include recommended exterior and interior noise level standards for local jurisdictions to identify and prevent the creation of incompatible land uses due to noise. Table 3.7-5 describes the compatibility of land uses with a range of environmental noise levels in terms of the CNEL.

Table 3.7-5. Land Use Compatibility for Community Noise Environments				
Land Use Category	Community Noise Exposure (L_{dn} or CNEL, dBA)			
	Normally Acceptable	Conditionally Acceptable	Normally Unacceptable	Clearly Unacceptable
Residential – Low Density, Single-Family, Duplex, Mobile Homes	50 – 60	55 – 70	70 – 75	75 – 85
Residential – Multiple Family	50 – 65	60 – 70	70 – 75	70 – 85
Transient Lodging – Motel, Hotels	50 – 65	60 – 70	70 – 80	80 – 85
Schools, Libraries, Churches, Hospitals, Nursing Homes	50 – 70	60 – 70	70 – 80	80 – 85
Auditoriums, Concert Halls, Amphitheaters	N/A	50 – 70	N/A	65 – 85
Sports Arenas, Outdoor Spectator Sports	N/A	50 – 75	N/A	70 – 85
Playgrounds, Neighborhood Parks	50 – 70	N/A	67.5 – 75	72.5 – 85
Golf Courses, Riding Stables, Water Recreation, Cemeteries	50 – 70	N/A	70 – 80	80 – 85
Office Buildings, Business Commercial and Professional	50 – 70	67.5 – 77.5	75 – 85	N/A
Industrial, Manufacturing, Utilities, Agriculture	50 – 75	70 – 80	75 – 85	N/A

Table 3.7-5. Land Use Compatibility for Community Noise Environments

Land Use Category	Community Noise Exposure (L _{dn} or CNEL, dBA)			
	Normally Acceptable	Conditionally Acceptable	Normally Unacceptable	Clearly Unacceptable

Notes: N/A=Not Applicable; L_{dn}=average day/night sound level; CNEL=Community Noise Equivalent Level

Normally Acceptable: Specified land use is satisfactory, based upon the assumption that any buildings involved are of normal conventional construction, without any special noise insulation requirements.

Conditionally Acceptable: New construction or development should be undertaken only after a detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirements is made and needed noise insulation features included in the design. Conventional construction, but with closed windows and fresh air supply systems or air conditioning will normally suffice.

Normally Unacceptable: New construction or development should be discouraged. If new construction or development does proceed, a detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirements must be made and needed noise insulation features included in the design.

Clearly Unacceptable: New construction or development should generally not be undertaken.

Source: Office of Planning and Research, California, General Plan Guidelines, October 2003.

3.7.3.3 Local

City of National City General Plan

The Noise and Nuisance Element of the City of National City General Plan provides policy direction for minimizing noise impacts on the community. The City aims to monitor and regulate noise and noise sources, which will help maintain the conditions that contribute to the local quality of life. The Noise and Nuisance Element sets various goals and policies that would apply to projects within the City. The following goals and policies, which have been included in their entirety, are applicable to the Proposed Project:

- **Goal NN-1:** Minimized impacts from transportation noise sources.
 - **Policy NN-1.1:** Encourage the enforcement of State and City noise standards for trucks, cars, and motorcycles through coordination with the California Highway Patrol and National City Police Department.
 - **Policy NN-1.3:** Reduce transportation noise impacts on new and existing development through the inclusion of appropriate noise reduction strategies (e.g., setbacks, noise barriers, building design, materials, etc.) in new development and redevelopment projects.
 - **Policy NN-1.9:** Work with responsible agencies and the railways to reduce noise and vibration impacts from the BNSF and San Diego and Imperial Valley Railroads to nearby land uses.
 - **Policy NN-1.10:** Require a study to demonstrate that ground borne vibration issues associated with rail operations are adequately addressed for new development within 100 feet from the centerline of the railroad tracks.
- **Goal NN-2:** Minimized impacts from non-transportation noise sources.

- **Policy NN-2.5:** Require development to minimize the exposure of neighboring properties to excessive noise levels from construction-related activity during all phases of construction.
- **Goal NN-3:** The incorporation of noise considerations into land use planning decisions.
 - **Policy NN-3.1:** Work with responsible agencies and City departments to address potential noise issues associated with land use proposals or projects.
 - **Policy NN-3.3:** Assure the appropriateness of proposed developments relative to existing and future noise levels by consulting the guidelines for noise-compatible land use (shown in Table NN-5 [included as Table 3.7-6 in this EIR]) and the Noise Contour Exhibits (shown on Figures Noise-2 and Noise-3 [included as Figures 8 and 9 2024a in this EIR, respectively]) to minimize the effects on noise-sensitive land uses.

Table 3.7-6. Land Use Noise Compatibility Guidelines

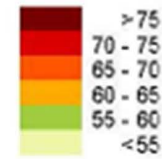
Land Use Category	Exterior Noise Exposure (dBA CNEL)				
	<60	60–65	65–70	70–75	75+
Residential land uses					
Single-family, Mobile Homes, Senior Housing	–	45*	45*	45*	–
Multi-family	–	–	45*	45*	–
Minor Mixed-Use, Major Mixed-Use	–	–	45*	45*	45*
Commercial					
Automotive, Service Commercial	–	–	–	–	–
Office	–	–	–	–	–
Shopping Center	–	–	–	–	–
Visitor Accommodations	–	–	45*	45*	45*
Industrial	–	–	–	–	–
Institutional					
Infrastructure (water treatment facilities, electrical substations)	–	–	–	–	–
Worship facilities, educational facilities, community centers, libraries museums and cultural centers	–	45*	45*	45*	–
Open Space, Parks and Recreation					
Community and Neighborhood Parks	–	–	–	–	–
Golf Courses, Athletic Fields	–	–	–	–	–

Note: * = Interior Noise Level
Legend:

	Compatible	Indoor Uses	Standard construction methods should attenuate exterior noise to an acceptable indoor noise level.
		Outdoor Uses	Activities associated with the land use may be carried out.
	Conditionally Compatible	Indoor Uses	Building structure must attenuate exterior noise to the indoor noise level. Conventional construction, but with closed windows and fresh air supply systems will normally suffice.
		Outdoor Uses	Best practices for reducing noise interference should be incorporated to make outdoor activities acceptable.
	Normally Compatible	Indoor Uses	If new construction or development does proceed, a detailed acoustical analysis is needed to identify the noise reduction requirements and needed noise insulation features shall be included in the design.
		Outdoor Uses	Feasible noise mitigation techniques shall be analyzed and incorporated to make the outdoor activities acceptable.
	Incompatible	Indoor Uses	New construction should not be undertaken.
		Outdoor Uses	Severe noise interference makes outdoor activities unacceptable.

Existing Traffic Noise Contours for Major Roadways in National City

Traffic Noise Level
Ldn, in dB(A)



Calculations assume an acoustically hard soil ground surface and do not take shielding from barriers or structures into account.

Source: Illingworth & Rodkin, Inc.
National City Comprehensive Land Use Update and ER Existing Conditions Report, 2009

The information on this map was derived from various digital databases, sourced above. Care was taken in the creation of this map but it is provided "as is". PDC cannot accept any responsibility for any errors, omissions, or positional accuracy, and therefore, there are no warranties which accompany this product. Users are cautioned to field verify information on this product before making any decisions.

— CALIFORNIA —
NATIONAL CITY
— 3307 —
— 3300000, 4200 —

3-129

Source: City of National City 2024a

Figure 8. Existing Noise Contours

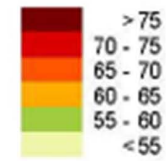
2021-285 San Diego Clean Fuels Facility, LLC



ECORP Consulting, Inc.
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS

Year 2030 Traffic Noise Contours for Major Roadways in National City

Traffic Noise Level
Ldn, in dB(A)



Calculations assume an acoustically hard soil ground surface and do not take shielding from barriers or structures into account.

Source: Illingworth & Rodkin, Inc.
National City Comprehensive Land Use Update and ER Existing
Conditions Report, 2009

The information on this map was derived from various digital
databases, sourced above. Care was taken in the creation of this map
but it is provided "as is". PDC cannot accept any responsibility for any
errors, omissions, or positional accuracy, and therefore, there are no
warranties which accompany this product. Users are cautioned to
field verify information on this product before making any decisions.

NATIONAL CITY
CALIFORNIA
1307
BROADWAY

3-139

Source: City of National City 2024a

Figure 9. Projected 2030 Noise Contours

2021-285 San Diego Clean Fuels Facility, LLC



ECORP Consulting, Inc.
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS

City of National City Municipal Code

Title 12 of the City's Municipal Code, also known as the City's Noise Control Ordinance, provides noise and vibration standards and restrictions to protect the public health and welfare of residents.

Chapter 12.06 – Exterior Noise Limits

Section 12.06.040 presents exterior environmental noise limits for various land use types. These allowable noise level standards are presented in Table 3.7-7.

Table 3.7-7. Exterior Environmental Noise Limits		
Receiving Land Use Category	Allowable Noise Level (dBA)	
	10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.	7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.
All Residential (less than 9 dwelling units)	45	55
Multi-Unit Residential (9 or more dwelling units and Public Space)	50	60
Commercial	60	65
Light Industry (Industry east of I-5)	70	70
Heavy Industry (Industry west of I-5)	80	80

Notes: Environmental Noise shall be measured in L_{eq} in any hour; Nuisance Noise shall be measured as a decibel level not to be exceeded at any time; Except when other hours are specified in Municipal Code Chapter 12.10.

Source: City of National City Municipal Code Section 12.06.040

Chapter 12.10 – Prohibited Acts

Section 12.10.160 prohibits construction- and demolition- related noise between weekday hours of 7:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. or at any time on weekends or holidays such that the sound creates a noise across a residential or commercial real property line that violates the provisions of Section 12.06.020. Noise from construction demolition activities shall not exceed the maximum noise levels at or within the boundaries of affected properties listed in the schedule presented in Table 3.7-8.

Table 3.7-8. Maximum Noise Levels for Mobile and Stationary Equipment		
	Maximum Noise Level (dBA)	
	Type I Areas Residential	Type II Areas Semi-Residential/Commercial
Mobile Equipment		
Daily, 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. (except Sundays and legal holidays)	75	85
Stationary Equipment		
Daily, 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. (except Sundays and legal holidays)	60	70

Notes: Maximum noise levels for nonscheduled, intermittent, short-term operation (less than 10 days) for mobile equipment; Maximum noise levels for repetitively scheduled and relatively long-term operation (periods of 10 days or more) for stationary equipment.
Source: City of National City Municipal Code Section 12.10.160

Section 12.10.180 prohibits the operation of any device that creates a vibration that exceeds the vibration perception threshold at or beyond the property boundary of the source for private property or at a distance of 150 feet or more from the source if originating from public space or public right-of-way.

3.7.4 Impact Analysis

3.7.4.1 Methodology

This analysis of the existing and future noise environments is based on noise prediction modeling and empirical observations. ECORP calculated the predicted construction noise levels using the FHWA's Roadway Construction Noise Model (2006). Groundborne vibration levels associated with construction-related activities for the Project have been evaluated using typical groundborne vibration levels associated with construction equipment. Potential groundborne vibration impacts related to structural damage and human annoyance were evaluated, taking into account the distance from construction activities to nearby structures and typically applied criteria for structural damage and human annoyance.

3.7.4.2 Thresholds of Significance

According to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, noise impacts are considered significant if implementation of a proposed project would result in:

- 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;
- generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels; or
- 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 2 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.

For the purposes of this analysis, Project construction noise is compared to the allowable hours of construction mandated by the City in Chapter 12.10 of the Municipal Code. The City does not regulate

vibrations associated with construction or operations. However, a discussion of construction vibration is included for full-disclosure purposes. For comparison purposes, the Caltrans (2020) recommended standard of 0.2 inch per second PPV with respect to the prevention of structural damage for older residential buildings is used as a threshold; this is also the level at which vibrations may begin to annoy people in buildings.

3.7.4.3 Impact Discussion

Threshold 1: Would the project result in 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?

Project Onsite Construction Noise

Construction noise associated with the Proposed Project would be temporary and would vary depending on the nature of the activities being performed. Noise generated would primarily be associated with the operation of off-road equipment for onsite construction activities as well as construction vehicle traffic on area roadways. Construction noise typically occurs intermittently and varies depending on the nature or phase of construction (e.g., land clearing, grading, excavation, building construction, paving). Noise generated by construction equipment, including earth movers, material handlers, and portable generators, can reach high levels. Typical operating cycles for these types of construction equipment may involve 1 or 2 minutes of full power operation followed by 3 to 4 minutes at lower power settings. Other primary sources of acoustical disturbance would be random incidents, which would last less than 1 minute (such as dropping large pieces of equipment or the hydraulic movement of machinery lifts). During construction, exterior noise levels could negatively affect sensitive land uses in the vicinity of the construction site.

The City's regulations with respect to construction noise are included in Title 12 of the City's Municipal Code. Section 12.10.160 states that construction is prohibited on weekdays between the hours of 7:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m., or at any time on weekends or holidays. Additionally, mobile construction equipment in Type I areas (residential) shall not exceed 75 dBA and stationary equipment shall not exceed 60 dBA. As previously described, the Project Area is located in an area that is surrounded mainly by industrial land uses. The nearest noise-sensitive land use to the Project Area are residents located in McKinley Apartments, which is located approximately 380 feet east of the Project Area. The anticipated short-term construction noise levels generated for the necessary equipment during each phase are summarized in Table 3.7-9.

Table 3.7-9. Construction Average (dBA) Noise Levels at Nearest Receptor

Equipment	Estimated Exterior Construction Noise Level at Nearest Residences (dBA)	Construction Noise Standards (dBA L_{eq})	Exceeds Standards?
Site Preparation	70.0	75	No
Grading	70.1	75	No
Paving and Painting	69.1	75	No

Notes: It is noted that the building on-site would be a mobile office; therefore, there would be no building construction. Construction noise modeling accounts for all pieces of construction equipment operating simultaneously from a distance of 380 feet, the distance to the nearest sensitive receptor. L_{eq} , the equivalent energy noise level, is the average acoustic energy content of noise for a stated period of time. Thus, the L_{eq} of a time-varying noise and that of a steady noise are the same if they deliver the same acoustic energy to the ear during exposure. For evaluating community impacts, this rating scale does not vary, regardless of whether the noise occurs during the day or the night. Source: Construction noise levels were calculated by ECORP using the FHWA Roadway Noise Construction Model (FHWA 2006). Refer to Appendix G for Model Data Outputs.

As shown in Table 3.7-9, no individual or cumulative pieces of mobile construction equipment used during Project construction would exceed the City's threshold of 75 dBA at the nearest noise-sensitive land use. Construction noise was modeled on a worst-case basis (all construction operating simultaneously); however, it is very unlikely that all pieces of construction equipment would be operating at the same time for the various phases of Project construction as well as at the point closest to the nearest noise-sensitive receptor.

Offsite Construction Worker Traffic Noise

Project construction would result in additional traffic on adjacent roadways over the period that construction occurs. According to the CalEEMod model, which is used to predict the number of worker commute trips, the maximum number of construction workers traveling to and from the Project Area during a single construction phase would not be expected to exceed 18 trips in total.

According to Caltrans' *Technical Noise Supplement to the Traffic Noise Analysis Protocol*, doubling of traffic on a roadway is required to result in an increase of 3 dBA (outside of the laboratory, a 3 dBA change is considered a just-perceivable difference) (Caltrans 2013). The Project Area is accessible from West 18th Street via Cleveland Avenue. According to the City's General Plan Update Background Report, the roadway segment on Cleveland Avenue from Civic Center Drive to West 19th Street, which traverses the Project Area, has an average daily traffic count of 3,600 vehicles. Thus, Project construction would not result in a doubling of traffic; therefore, its contribution to existing traffic noise would not be perceptible. Additionally, because construction is temporary, these trips would cease upon completion of the Project.

Operational Onsite Stationary Noise

The Project Area is located in a heavily developed industrial area and adjacent to the BNSF Railway railroad, which is one of the largest freight railroads in North America. Noise from rail activity along the BNSF mainline currently exists and is part of the existing condition. The Project proposes to construct a transloading facility within the railroad ROW located between the existing buildings along Cleveland Avenue and the existing railway tracks. Potential stationary noise sources related to long-term operation

within the Project Area would include railway activity, internal circulation of heavy-duty trucks, and unloading of the railcars. The most basic planning strategy to minimize adverse impacts on new land uses due to noise is to avoid designating land uses that allow for major noise sources at locations within the community that would negatively affect nearby noise-sensitive land uses. As previously described, the Project is proposing a transloading facility on an active rail network within a heavily developed industrial area, though there are a few nonconforming residential land uses located approximately 380 feet to the east of the Project Site, fronting McKinley Avenue. The Project is consistent with the types, intensity, and patterns of land use envisioned for the Project Area, as outlined in the City's General Plan. The Project proposes to replace one existing rail turnout and install a new receiving and departure track for the facility. Two or more trains would not be running simultaneously; therefore, the level of noise within the Project Area would not increase when compared to existing conditions. Operation of the Project would not contribute any noise sources beyond what is currently experienced in the Project Area and would not result in a significant noise-related impact associated with onsite sources.

Operational Offsite Traffic Noise

Project operations would also result in additional traffic on adjacent roadways, thereby increasing vehicular noise in the Project vicinity. The Project Area would be accessible from West 18th Street via Cleveland Avenue. Operational trucking trips were calculated based on the Project's daily throughput and truck tanker capacity. The Project would result in a total of 169 total daily trips, which includes 144 heavy-duty truck trips and 25 passenger automobile trips associated with the onsite employees; after applying an equivalence factor of 2.5 for heavy-duty trucks, the Project would result in a total of 385 daily passenger car equivalent trips. The City's General Plan Update Background Report determined that the roadway segment on Cleveland Avenue from Civic Center Drive to West 19th Street, which traverses the Project Area, has an average daily traffic count of 3,600 vehicles. According to the Caltrans *Technical Noise Supplement to the Traffic Noise Analysis Protocol*, doubling of traffic on a roadway would result in an increase of 3 dBA (a barely perceptible increase) (Caltrans 2013). The Project would not result in a doubling of traffic; therefore, its contribution to existing traffic noise would not be perceptible. Impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

Threshold 2: Would the project result in generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?

Project Construction

Excessive groundborne vibration impacts result from continuously occurring vibration levels. Increases in groundborne vibration levels attributable to the Project would be primarily associated with short-term, construction-related activities. Construction within the Project Area would have the potential to result in varying degrees of temporary groundborne vibration, depending on the specific construction equipment used and the operations involved. Ground vibration generated by construction equipment spreads through the ground and diminishes in magnitude with increases in distance.

Construction-related ground vibration is normally associated with impact equipment such as pile drivers, jackhammers, and the operation of some heavy-duty construction equipment such as dozers and trucks.

Pile drivers would not be necessary during Project construction. Vibration decreases rapidly with distance, and construction activities would occur throughout the Project Area rather than concentrated at the point closest to sensitive receptors. Groundborne vibration levels associated with construction equipment at 25 feet distant are summarized in Table 3.7-10.

Table 3.7-10. Representative Vibration Source Levels for Construction Equipment	
Equipment Type	Peak Particle Velocity at 25 Feet (inches per second)
Large Bulldozer	0.089
Caisson Drilling	0.089
Loaded Trucks	0.076
Hoe Ram	0.089
Jackhammer	0.035
Small Bulldozer/Tractor	0.003
Vibratory Roller	0.210

Source: Caltrans 2020; FTA 2018

The City does not regulate vibrations associated with construction. However, a discussion of construction vibration is included for full disclosure purposes. For comparison purposes, the Caltrans recommended standard of 0.2 inches per second PPV with respect to the prevention of structural damage for older residential buildings is used as a threshold (Caltrans 2020). This is also the level at which vibrations may begin to annoy people in buildings. Consistent with FTA recommendations for calculating vibration generated from construction equipment, construction vibration was measured from the center of the Project Area (FTA 2018). The nearest structure of concern to the construction site is Honor Marine Electronics, which is located approximately 175 feet east of the Project Area's center.

Based on the representative vibration levels presented for various construction equipment types in Table 3.7-10 and the construction vibration assessment methodology published by the FTA (2018), it is possible to estimate the potential Project construction vibration levels. The FTA provides the following equation:

$$PPV_{equip} = PPV_{ref} \times (25/D)^{1.5}$$

Table 3.7-11 presents the expected Project-related vibration levels at a distance of 175 feet.

Table 3.7-11. Onsite Construction Vibration Levels at 175 Feet							
Receiver Peak Particle Velocity Levels (inches per second)					Peak Vibration	Threshold	Exceed Threshold?
Large Bulldozer, Caisson Drilling & Hoe Ram	Loaded Trucks	Jackhammer	Small Bulldozer	Vibratory Roller			
0.0048	0.0041	0.0018	0.0001	0.0113	0.0113	0.2	No

Notes: Based on the Vibration Source Levels of Construction Equipment included on Table 3.7-10 (FTA 2018). Distance to the nearest structure of concern is approximately 175 feet measured from Project Area center.

As shown in Table 3.7-11, vibration as a result of onsite construction activities within the Project Area would not exceed 0.2 PPV at the nearest structure. Therefore, onsite Project construction would not exceed the recommended threshold.

Project Operations

Project operations would not include the use of any stationary equipment that would result in excessive vibration levels. Although the Project would accommodate heavy-duty trucks, these vehicles can only generate groundborne vibration velocity levels of 0.006 PPV at 50 feet under typical circumstances. The additional rail line would not increase the vibration levels from the existing rail line because no simultaneous train trips would occur. As described above, existing rail noise and associated vibration with rail activity is an existing condition. Two or more trains would not be running simultaneously; therefore, they would not increase the amount of vibration within the Project Area when compared to existing conditions. Therefore, the Project would result in negligible groundborne vibration impacts during operations. Impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

Threshold 3: 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 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?

The IS analyzed this topic and determined that the Project would not have any impacts.

3.7.5 Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

3.7.6 Level of Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be less than significant.

3.8 Transportation

3.8.1 Introduction

This section describes the existing conditions and applicable laws and regulations for transportation. Impacts to transportation are considered significant if the Proposed Project were to (1) conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities; (2) conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines § 15064.3, subdivision (b); (3) substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment); or (4) result in inadequate emergency access.

The analysis is based on the following technical document included as an appendix to the DEIR:

- *Traffic Impact Analysis for the Transload Clean Fuels Facility, 18th Street and Cleveland Avenue* (Appendix I; KOA 2024)

3.8.2 Environmental Setting

3.8.2.1 Roadways

The main regional freeway facilities through the City are I-5, I-805, and State Route (SR) 54. Both I-5 and I-805 provide north-south movement while SR-54 is an east-west corridor. The City has 15 major arterial roadways providing circulation across the City and to major destination points throughout the region. Additionally, the City is served by 30 collector roadways that operate as local conduits to take users in and out of neighborhoods and business districts onto the arterial routes. These are generally two-lane roads with signalized intersections (City of National City 2021).

The Traffic Impact Study prepared for the Proposed Project analyzed the following roadways:

- **West 18th Street (Cleveland Avenue west into Project Area)** – 18th Street is a two-lane local street that provides direct access to the Project Area. It connects under I-5 and under the railroad tracks but has height restrictions. 18th Street is one-way westbound north of Cleveland Avenue. South of Cleveland Avenue, 18th Street is two-way and extends one additional block. Curb, gutter, and sidewalk improvements are in place on the south side. Bike lanes are not provided and there is no posted speed limit. Parking is permitted.
- **West 19th Street (from Cleveland Avenue to Tidelands Avenue)** – 19th Street is a four-lane collector street. North of Cleveland Avenue, 19th Street is one-way eastbound. There are height restrictions on this route under I-5 and the railroad track bridge. Curb, gutter, and sidewalk improvements are in place. Bike lanes are not provided. The posted speed limit is 35 miles per hour (mph). Parking is not permitted.
- **Cleveland Avenue (from Civic Center Drive to Bay Marina Drive)** – Cleveland Avenue is a two-lane collector street with a two-way center left-turn lane. Curb, gutter, and sidewalk improvements are in place and the posted speed limit is 35 mph. Bike lanes are not provided. Parking is permitted on both sides of the street.

- **Tidelands Avenue (from West 19th Street to Civic Center Drive)** – Tidelands Avenue has two lanes and is a collector street. The roadway provides access to a number of Port of San Diego uses. The posted speed limit is 35 mph. The Bayshore Bikeway, a regional bike facility that circles the San Diego Bay extends as a Class IV facility for much of its length before transitioning to a buffered bike lane located on both sides of the street. On-street parking is provided on both sides of the street along the buffered bike lane portion of this road segment.
- **Civic Center Drive (from Tidelands Avenue to I-5)** – Civic Center Drive is a four-lane collector street. Ramp access to I-5 northbound and southbound is provided. Curb, gutter, and partial sidewalk improvements are in place and the posted speed limit is 30 mph. Bike lanes are not provided. Parking is permitted on both sides of the street east of the railroad tracks.

3.8.2.2 Truck Routes

The City's General Plan Transportation Element designated primary truck routes throughout the City to provide the most direct routes to freeways and regional delivery. Designated alternate routes are used to move trucks throughout the City to local destinations. Figure T-16 of the Transportation Element (included as Figure 6 in this EIR) shows the primary and alternate truck routes, including primary routes along portions of Tidelands Avenue, Harbor Drive, National City Boulevard, Roosevelt Avenue, Euclid Avenue, Bay Marina Drive, 24th Street, 30th Street/Sweetwater Road, Plaza Bonita Center Way/Reo Drive, and Plaza Boulevard/Paradise Valley Road and alternate routes along portions of Highland Avenue, Civic Center Drive, National City Boulevard, Roosevelt Avenue, and Plaza Boulevard (City of National City 2024). Tidelands Avenue, Civic Center Drive, and Harbor Drive are the designated primary truck routes that would be used by the Proposed Project.

3.8.2.3 Public Transportation Services

The City of National City is served by a regional transit system operated by the San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS). There are ten bus routes running through the City with a total of 205 bus stops. Two MTS Trolley stations are located within the City, located on the Blue Line Trolley running from University of California San Diego, Old Town and Downtown San Diego to the U.S.-Mexico border. The 8th Street Trolley Station is located near the intersection of 8th Street and Harbor Drive and the 24th Street Trolley Station is located near the intersection of 22nd Street and Wilson Avenue. Transit facilities and routes are not located in close proximity to the Project Area. The trolley line does have an at-grade gate crossing of Civic Center Drive under I-5 between Wilson Avenue and McKinley Avenue. Additionally, the Free Ride Around National City shuttle service provides free electric shuttle service to the City and serves as a first/last-mile solution to existing transit hubs (City of National City 2024).

3.8.2.4 Freight Rail

Rail lines within the City limits are primarily used to transport lumber, cars, and containers that have entered the country via the Port of San Diego at the National City Marine Terminal. The BNSF Railway and the San Diego and Imperial Valley Railway are the two companies currently operating on the rail lines within the City (City of National City 2024).

3.8.2.5 Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

From 2013 to 2019, the City constructed approximately 12 miles of new bicycle facilities and approximately 17 miles of new sidewalk (City of National City 2021). The Bayshore Bikeway is a 26-mile regional bicycle route that encircles San Diego Bay and passes through the City's planning area along Harbor Drive and Tidelands Avenue. It provides a link to the nearby cities of San Diego, Coronado, Imperial Beach, and Chula Vista. In the vicinity of the Project, the Bikeway is a separated bicycle facility that is located to the outside of the southbound lanes. The City's General Plan Transportation Element identifies future bikeway improvements in the vicinity of the Project Area, including planned Class I Bike Paths near the intersections of Civic Center Drive/McKinley Avenue and McKinley Avenue/West 19th Street and Class IV Cycle Tracks along Civic Center Drive, McKinley Avenue, and West 19th Street. Class I Bike Paths have paved ROWs separated from the street and Class IV Cycle Tracks are exclusive bikeways with a physical separation from motor vehicle travel lanes, parking lanes, and sidewalks (City of National City 2024).

3.8.3 Regulatory Setting

3.8.3.1 State

Senate Bill 743

Senate Bill 743, effective July 1, 2020, changed the method of traffic analysis required under CEQA. SB 743 requires local jurisdictions to use vehicle miles traveled (VMT), or the amount of driving and length of trips, to assess the transportation impacts to the environment. VMT uses the total number of miles generated by a project to determine if the traffic generated by a project will exceed an acceptable level. Level of service (LOS), which evaluates traffic by road congestion and delay, was previously the assessment standard. This method of analysis focused on the number of automobile trips generated by a project and whether it contributed to road congestion.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3

Section 15064.3 of the CEQA Guidelines describes specific considerations for evaluating a project's transportation impacts and identifies VMT as the most appropriate measure of transportation impacts. Section 15064.3(a) stipulates that except for roadway capacity projects (as described in 15064.3(b)), a project's effect on automobile delay shall not constitute a significant environmental impact.

Section 15064.3(b) lists the following criteria for analyzing transportation impacts:

- 1) **Land Use Projects.** Vehicle miles traveled exceeding an applicable threshold of significance may indicate a significant impact. Generally, projects within one-half mile of either an existing major transit stop or a stop along an existing high-quality transit corridor should be presumed to cause a less than significant transportation impact. Projects that decrease vehicle miles traveled in the project area compared to existing conditions should be presumed to have a less than significant transportation impact.
- 2) **Transportation Projects.** Transportation projects that reduce, or have no impact on, vehicle miles traveled should be presumed to cause a less than significant transportation impact. For roadway

capacity projects, agencies have discretion to determine the appropriate measure of transportation impact consistent with CEQA and other applicable requirements. To the extent that such impacts have already been adequately addressed at a programmatic level, such as in a regional transportation plan EIR, a lead agency may tier from that analysis as provided in Section 15152.

- 3) **Qualitative Analysis.** If existing models or methods are not available to estimate the vehicle miles traveled for the particular project being considered, a lead agency may analyze the project's vehicle miles traveled qualitatively. Such a qualitative analysis would evaluate factors such as the availability of transit, proximity to other destinations, etc. For many projects, a qualitative analysis of construction traffic may be appropriate.
- 4) **Methodology.** A lead agency has discretion to choose the most appropriate methodology to evaluate a project's vehicle miles traveled, including whether to express the change in absolute terms, per capita, per household or in any other measure. A lead agency may use models to estimate a project's vehicle miles traveled and may revise those estimates to reflect professional judgment based on substantial evidence. Any assumptions used to estimate vehicle miles traveled and any revisions to model outputs should be documented and explained in the environmental document prepared for the project. The standard of adequacy in Section 15151 shall apply to the analysis described in this section.

PRC Section 21064.3 defines a major transit stop as a site containing an existing rail or bus rapid transit station, a ferry terminal served by either a bus or rail transit service, or the intersection of two or more major bus routes with a frequency of service interval of 15 minutes or less during the morning and afternoon peak commute periods. Section 2115.2 defines a high-quality transit corridor as a corridor with fixed route bus service with service intervals no longer than 15 minutes during peak commute hours.

Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA

The Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) adopted the *Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA* in December 2018 to provide advice and recommendations regarding assessment of VMT, thresholds of significance, and mitigation measures. The recommendations in the OPR Technical Advisory are for agencies and other entities to use at their discretion.

OPR recommends using quantitative VMT thresholds linked to GHG reduction targets when methods exist to do so to ensure adequate analysis of transportation impacts. OPR recommends that a per capita or per employee VMT that is 15 percent below that of existing development may be a reasonable threshold.

The OPR Technical Advisory suggests that lead agencies may screen out VMT using project size, maps, transit availability, and provision of affordable housing. Many agencies use these screening thresholds to identify when a project should be expected to cause a less than significant impact without conducting a detailed study. These screening thresholds applicable to the Project are identified below:

- **Small Projects.** Projects that generate or attract fewer than 110 trips per day generally may be assumed to cause a less than significant transportation impact.

- **Presumption of Less than Significant Impact near Transit Stations.** Lead agencies generally should presume that certain projects (including residential, retail, and office projects, as well as projects that are a mix of these uses) proposed within 0.5 mile of an existing major transit stop or an existing stop along a high-quality transit corridor will have a less than significant impact on VMT, unless project-specific or location-specific information indicates that the project will still generate significant levels of VMT.

The OPR Technical Advisory also recommends numeric thresholds for residential, office, and retail projects. For mixed-use projects, a lead agency can evaluate each component independently and apply the significance threshold per project use or it may consider only the project's dominant use.

California Coastal Act of 1976

The California Coastal Act of 1976 established a set of policies, coastal zone boundary lines, and permitting procedures to promote the public safety, health, and welfare, and to protect public and private property, wildlife, marine fisheries, and other ocean resources.

Section 30232 requires protection against the spillage of crude oil, gas, petroleum products, or hazardous substances in relation to any development or transportation of such materials. Effective containment and cleanup facilities and procedures are required for any accidental spills that do occur.

Section 30252 requires new developments to maintain and enhance public access to the coast by (1) facilitating the provision or extension of transit service, (2) providing commercial facilities within or adjoining residential development or in other areas that will minimize the use of coastal access road, (3) providing non-automobile circulation within the development, (4) providing adequate parking facilities or a substitute means of serving the development with public transportation, (5) assuring the potential for public transit for high intensity uses such as high-rise office buildings, and by (6) assuring that the recreational needs of new residents will not overload nearby coastal recreation areas by correlating the amount of development with local park acquisition and development plans with the provision of onsite recreational facilities to serve the new development.

Section 30261 describes the permissible use and design of tanker facilities. New tanker terminals outside of existing terminal areas shall be situated to avoid risk to environmentally sensitive areas. Tanker facilities shall be designed to (1) minimize the total volume of oil spilled, (2) minimize the risk of collision from movement of other vessels, (3) have ready access to the most effective feasible containment and recovery equipment for oil spills, and (4) have onshore deballasting facilities to receive any fouled ballast water from tankers where operationally or legally required.

3.8.3.2 Local

San Diego Forward: The 2021 Regional Plan

SANDAG's San Diego Forward: The 2021 Regional Plan (2021 Regional Plan) provides a framework for meeting regional transportation goals with coordinated land use and transportation planning strategies. The 2021 Regional Plan is a 30-year plan that combines the Regional Transportation Plan, Sustainable Communities Strategy, and Regional Comprehensive Plan. The 2021 Regional Plan was developed in close

partnership with the region's 18 cities and the County of San Diego government. The plan aims to provide innovative mobility choices and planning to support a sustainable and healthy region. The County's transportation vision is composed of five strategies (complete corridors, transit leap, mobility hubs, flexible fleets, and next operating system) designed to promote the increased use of zero-emission vehicles and encourage walking, biking, and other forms of active transportation (SANDAG 2021).

The performance monitoring indicators for the 2021 Regional Plan follow the overall vision and goals of the 2021 Regional Plan and are grouped into five goal categories: healthy environment, energy and water, housing, quality of life, and transportation planning. The transportation planning performance indicators include the following:

- Fatalities/serious injuries (total and per vehicle mile traveled)
- Travel time to jobs
- Travel times and volumes for all modes
- Commute mode share
- Bike lane miles
- Annual transit ridership
- Annual transit boardings
- Border wait times
- Vehicle miles traveled

Riding to 2050: San Diego Regional Bicycle Plan

The *Riding to 2050: San Diego Regional Bicycle Plan* (San Diego Regional Bicycle Plan) provides a framework to guide the development of the County's bicycle system through 2050. The San Diego Regional Bicycle Plan outlines a range of recommendations to facilitate accomplishing the regional goals of increasing the number of people who bike and frequency of bicycle trips for all purposes, encouraging the development of Complete Streets, improving safety for bicyclists, and increasing public awareness and support for bicycling in the San Diego region. The recommendations include bicycle infrastructure improvements, bicycle-related programs, implementation strategies, and policy and design guidelines.

National City General Plan

The City's General Plan Transportation Element provides a transportation plan for the movement of people and goods and identifies the general location and extent of existing and proposed major roadways, transportation routes, terminals, air and water ports, and pedestrian and bikeway facilities. The City's circulation system is strongly correlated with to the Land Use Element, which supports increased densities and a mix of uses that reduce reliance on personal vehicles by making walking and bicycling more comfortable and convenient (City of National City 2024). The citywide goals and policies applicable to the Proposed Project include the following:

Land Use and Circulation Linkages

- **Policy T-4.5:** Exact fees on new development and redevelopment sufficient to cover the fair share portion of that development's impacts on the local and regional transportation system, including multi-modal facilities, and/or directly mitigate its impacts to the transportation system through construction of improvements.

Mobility Framework

- **Policy T-5.3:** Project transportation impacts shall be measured by VMT in accordance with CEQA and to assist the City in meeting their climate action goals.
- **Policy T-5.7:** Improve circulation for specific areas of the City such as the Harbor Drive/Tidelands Avenue/Civic Center Drive Intersection and the area west of National City Boulevard, south of 22nd Street, and north of Miles of Cars Way.

Vehicular Parking

- **Policy T-7.2:** Require new development and redevelopment to locate off-street parking facilities behind storefronts to create a more inviting environment adjacent to the street, where feasible.
- **Policy T-7.5:** Require the use of Universal Design standards in parking design and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility guidelines.
- **Policy T-7.10:** Ensure development does not overbuild parking by examining parking minimums and maximums by neighborhood and use, creating partnerships with shared mobility options, and utilizing transportation demand management programs where possible.

Goods Movement

- **Policy T-8.2:** Enforce the use of designated truck routes for both local and regional goods transport. Route truck traffic away from residential zones and promote safety at crossings.
- **Policy T-8.4:** Work with railroad operators to facilitate the transport of goods by rail through the community by coordinating schedules to minimize impacts during peak travel periods.

National City Code of Ordinance

The City's Code of Ordinance Chapter 4.52, Ordinance 2310 describes the Transportation Development Impact Fee (TDIF), which is applicable to, but not limited to, development for residential, commercial, and industrial land uses. The fees collected pursuant to this chapter are to fund identified transportation facilities, or portions thereof, that will provide increased road capacity necessitated by the cumulative impacts of future development. The TDIF shall be paid before the issuance of building permits for each development project within the City.

3.8.4 Impacts Analysis

3.8.4.1 Methodology

As stated above, Section 15064.3 of the State CEQA Guidelines describes specific considerations for evaluating a project's impacts on transportation and identifies VMT as the most appropriate metric for determining the significance of impacts. Except for roadway capacity projects, Section 15064.3 stipulates that a project's effect on automobile delay does not constitute a significant environmental impact under CEQA. As such, in accordance with SB 743, the transportation analysis only uses VMT to determine the significance of transportation and circulation impacts. Potential transportation and circulation impacts associated with the Proposed Project are summarized below.

The California Governor's OPR Technical Advisory provides guidance for setting screening thresholds and thresholds of significance that can be used to identify when a proposed land use project is anticipated to result in a less than significant impact without conducting a more detailed level analysis. The OPR Technical Advisory supporting SB 743 recommends referring to the leading regional agency and/or generally accepted guidelines for location-specific information, VMT thresholds, and other land use types besides residential, office, and retail projects which tend to have the greatest influence on VMT.

This Project will refer to the San Diego Traffic Engineers' Council (SANTEC) and the local chapter of the Institute of Traffic Engineers (ITE) *Guidelines for Traffic Impact Studies in the San Diego Region* (ITE 2000). The minimum project size methodology has been successfully used for over 23 years in the San Diego region and has received wide acceptance from transportation profession, decision makers, and the public. These guidelines state that it is recommended that projects be subjected to different levels of VMT analysis, depending on the size of the project and whether the project is consistent with the local jurisdiction's General Plan or Community Plan. Projects that are consistent with the General Plan or Community Plan are also considered to be consistent with the Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS). The determination of minimum project size for VMT analysis described below differs from the statewide guidance provided by OPR. It is based on regional standards for transportation analyses that were documented in the *Guidelines for Traffic Impact Studies in the San Diego Region* (ITE 2000) and have been in use for over 18 years. The following level of VMT analysis is recommended based on project size (expressed in terms of Average Daily Trips generated by the Project, also known as ADT) and zoning:

For projects inconsistent with the General Plan or a Community Plan:

- ADT level of analysis **0 – 500** or less than 50 peak hour trips - VMT analysis not needed/VMT impacts presumed insignificant

For projects consistent with the General Plan or a Community Plan:

- ADT level of analysis **0 – 1,000** or less than 110 peak hour trips - VMT analysis not needed/VMT impacts presumed insignificant

3.8.4.2 Thresholds of Significance

Thresholds used to evaluate impacts related to transportation are based on applicable criteria in Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines. A significant impact related to transportation would occur if the Project would:

- 1) conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities;
- 2) conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b);
- 3) substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment); or
- 4) result in inadequate emergency access.

3.8.4.3 Impact Discussion

Threshold 1: Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities?

Construction Impacts

The Proposed Project would generate short-term construction-related vehicle trips. However, traffic generated during construction of the Proposed Project would be temporary and would not conflict with the City's Transportation Element. The Project would not impede the implementation of City or County programs supporting walking, bicycling, and use of public transportation. Additionally, the Proposed Project is not near to and would not impact any public access points to the coast.

The Proposed Project shall pay the TDIF in accordance with General Plan Policy T-4.5 and the City's Ordinance 2310. The fees collected pursuant to this chapter are to fund identified transportation facilities, or portions thereof, that will provide increased road capacity necessitated by the cumulative impacts of future development.

Therefore, construction of the Proposed Project would not conflict with any of the applicable plans, programs, ordinances, or policies addressing the circulation system. Impacts would be less than significant.

Operational Impacts

Rail Facilities

Within the BNSF-owned property, the Proposed Project would reconfigure one existing rail spur, install new receiving and departure track for the facility, and add truck loading spots to transload clean renewable and biofuels (renewable diesel, ethanol, and potentially sustainable aviation fuels at a later date) directly from rail cars into trucks for more efficient delivery to local retailers than the current supply chain. A second rail line will be added within the rail ROW at the existing grade crossing on Civic Center Drive to facilitate rail car movements. The second rail line would be added to an existing crossing and

would not introduce a new rail crossing at Civic Center Drive. Additionally, two or more trains would not be running simultaneously.

The Proposed Project includes infrastructure improvements at the Civic Center Drive rail crossing, including improved rail crossing sign visibility, traffic direction control, and crosswalks which would enhance safety at the BNSF crossing for vehicles and pedestrians. The traffic direction control improvements align with General Plan Policy T-5.7 to improve circulation for the Harbor Drive/Tidelands Avenue/Civic Center Drive intersection.

The proposed alterations to rail facilities would not impede the implementation of the City's programs supporting walking, bicycling, and use of public transportation. Additionally, the rail facilities would not impede or impact public access to the coast.

Roadway Facilities

The proposed transloading facility will transload bio-diesel fuel, renewable diesel fuel, ethanol, and SAF directly from rail cars into trucks. The trucks will deliver fuel to local retailers within a 35-mile radius. Project access will follow a circulation route involving trucks entering the Project Area on West 18th Street and exiting the Project Area on West 19th Street and on to their retail client deliveries. Project trucks will be required to use the City's designated primary and alternate truck routes, which provide the most direct access routes to regional corridors such as I-5. Tidelands Avenue, Civic Center Drive, and Harbor Drive are the designated primary truck routes that would be used by the Proposed Project. Use of designated truck routes aligns with General Plan Policy T-8.2 which enforces the use of designated truck routes for both local and regional goods transport. This policy also requires routing truck traffic away from residential zones and promoting safety at crossings. The Project's circulation route is located within an industrial area with a medium and high manufacturing zoning designation. Additionally, as discussed above, the Project would include infrastructure improvements at the Civic Center Drive rail crossing to enhance safety for vehicles and pedestrians.

As shown in Table 3.8-1, the Project's AM and PM peak hour trips for each of the eight study intersections do not reach the 50-trip threshold during any hour of operation including the AM and PM peak period. The traffic impact to intersection operation can be considered to be minimal (KOA 2024).

Table 3.8-1. Trip Generation												
ITE Code	Variable	Intensity	Unit	Daily Rate	Daily Trips		AM Peak Hour			PM Peak Hour		
							Total	In	Out	Total	In	Out
140	Employees	10	Employee	2.51	25	Rate	0.32	73%	27%	0.31	37%	63%
						Trips	3	2	1	3	1	2
–	Truck Trips	13.8	1000 barrel	10.4	144	Rate	0.03	50%	50%	0.05	50%	50%
						Trips	4	2	2	8	4	4
Total:					169	Trips	7	4	3	11	5	6
Passenger Car Equivalent:					385	–	13	7	6	23	11	12

Source: *ITE Trip Generation Manual 11th Edition*

Under General Plan Policy T-5.3, a Project's transportation impacts shall be measured by VMT. The Proposed Project will generate 385 passenger car equivalent trips per day. A VMT analysis is not required for projects with 1,000 ADT or less that are consistent with the General Plan. The Project is screened out and further VMT analysis is not required and presumed insignificant.

Parking

Parking for the Proposed Project includes approximately four off-street parking spaces for employees in accordance with the City's Municipal Code. One space would be dedicated for ADA vehicles and designed using ADA accessibility guidelines. Parking would comply with General Plan Policies T-7.2, T-7.5, and T-7.10 which require off-street parking facilities behind storefronts, the use of Universal Design standards with ADA accessibility guidelines, and examination of parking minimums and maximums by neighborhood and use.

Transit Facilities

There are no transit facilities and routes located in close proximity to the Project Area. The nearest trolley line has an at-grade gate crossing of Civic Center Drive under 1-5 between Wilson Avenue and McKinley Avenue (KOA 2024). The Project would not impact existing transit facilities.

Bicycle Facilities

The Bayshore Bikeway is a 26-mile regional bicycle route that encircles San Diego Bay and passes through the City's planning area along Harbor Drive and Tidelands Avenue. In the vicinity of the Project, the Bikeway is a separated bicycle facility that is located to the outside of the southbound lanes. The City's General Plan Transportation Element identifies future bikeway improvements in the vicinity of the Project Area, including planned Class I Bike Paths near the intersections of Civic Center Drive/McKinley Avenue and McKinley Avenue/West 19th Street and Class IV Cycle Tracks along Civic Center Drive, McKinley Avenue, and West 19th Street (City of National City 2024).

For the Project, outbound truck traffic will use the northbound lanes on Tidelands Avenue, therefore there will be no conflicting traffic movements between Project-generated truck traffic and bicycles on the Bayshore Bikeway (KOA 2024). The future bikeway facilities in the vicinity of the Project Area are classified as Class I Bike Paths and Class IV Cycle Tracks which are physically separated from the street. Therefore, there are no conflicting traffic movements between Project-generated truck traffic and bicyclists on these future bikeways.

Pedestrian Facilities

Walkability within the Project Area is provided by sidewalks located along West 18th Street, Cleveland Avenue and Civic Center Drive east of Cleveland Avenue. The Project will not impact the use of sidewalks by pedestrians (KOA 2024). The Proposed Project would also provide infrastructure improvements at the Civic Center Drive rail crossing, including improved rail crossing sign visibility, traffic direction control, and crosswalks which would improve safety at the BNSF crossing for vehicles and pedestrians.

As discussed above, the Proposed Project would not conflict with existing rail, roadway, transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities. Therefore, the Project would not conflict with any of the applicable plans, programs, ordinances, or policies addressing the circulation system. Impacts would be less than significant.

Threshold 2: Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?

CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b) details the use of VMT to assess the significance of transportation impacts. As detailed in CEQA Guidelines § 15064.3, subdivision (c), a lead agency may elect to be governed by the provisions of this section immediately. As of July 1, 2020, the provisions of this section apply statewide.

Trip generation has been estimated from both information provided by the Applicant related to truck operation and from the ITE Trip Generation 11th Edition for non-truck travel. The truck generation information is deemed more accurate than using ITE Trip Generation rates that are less specific to this use.

The Proposed Project will accommodate approximately 13,800 barrels or 579,600 gallons of fuel per day. Each truck is estimated to have a capacity for 8,000 gallons, which equates to 72 inbound and 72 outbound truck trips per day. There are a maximum of five employees that would be onsite at one time, therefore 10 employees were used to reflect a shift change. The trip generation for these employees was estimated using an industrial employment trip rate. The facility will be operated in three shifts for 24 hours per day, but 70 percent of the trips will occur between 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. The number of truck trips have been converted to passenger car equivalent trips using 2.5 vehicles per truck. Table 3.7-1 shows the trip generation.

As shown above, the Proposed Project is expected to generate 385 passenger car equivalent daily trips, including 13 weekday AM peak hour trips (7 inbound trips and 6 outbound trips) and 23 weekday PM peak hour trips (11 inbound trips and 12 outbound trips). There would be less than 50 passenger car equivalent trips during the AM and PM peak hours.

The Proposed Project will generate 385 passenger car equivalent trips per day which does not exceed the lower 500 ADT for projects consistent with the general plan. The Project is consistent with the City's General Plan and does not exceed the ADT threshold, thus the Project is screened out and no further analysis is required. Therefore, the Project would have a less than significant impact on VMT.

Threshold 3: Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?

The IS analyzed this topic and determined that the Project would not have any impacts.

Threshold 4: Result in inadequate emergency access?

The IS analyzed this topic and determined that the Project would result in a less than significant impact.

3.8.5 Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

3.8.6 *Level of Significance After Mitigation*

Impacts would be less than significant.

3.9 Tribal Cultural Resources

3.9.1 Introduction

This section describes the environmental setting for tribal cultural resources, including the existing site conditions and regulatory setting. This section also analyzes the Proposed Project's potential to impact tribal cultural resources during construction and operation. Impacts to tribal cultural resources are considered significant if the Proposed Project were to (1) cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource that is (i) listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historic Resources or in a local register of historical resources or (ii) a resource determined by the lead agency to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of PRC Section 5024.1.

The analysis is based on the following technical document which is confidential and therefore not included as an appendix to the DEIR:

- *Cultural Resources Inventory and Evaluation Report for the San Diego Clean Fuels Facility LLC Project* (Appendix J; ECORP 2022c).

3.9.2 Environmental Setting

3.9.2.1 Ethnography

The Kumeyaay (also known as Ipai and Tipai) are the Yuman-speaking native people of central and southern San Diego County and the northern Baja Peninsula in Mexico. Spanish missionaries and settlers used the collective term Diegueño for these people, which referred to people living near the presidio and mission of San Diego de Alcalá. Today, these people refer to themselves as Kumeyaay or as Ipai and Tipai, which are northern and southern subgroups of Kumeyaay language speakers, respectively (Luomala 1978). The ancestral lands of the Kumeyaay extend north from Todos Santos Bay near Ensenada, Mexico to Agua Hedionda Lagoon in north San Diego County, and east to the west side of the Imperial Valley.

The primary source of Kumeyaay subsistence was vegetal food. Seasonal travel followed the ripening of plants from the lowlands to higher elevations of the mountain slopes. Acorns, grass and sage seeds, cactus fruits, wild plums, pinyon nuts, and agave stalks were the principal plant foods. Women sometimes transplanted wild onion and tobacco plants to convenient locations and sowed wild tobacco seeds. Deer, rabbits, small rodents, and birds provided meat. Village locations were selected for seasonal use and were occupied by exogamous, patrilineal clans or bands. Three or four clans might winter together, then disperse into smaller bands during the spring and summer (Luomala 1978).

The Kumeyaay were loosely organized into exogamous patrilineal groups termed sibs, clans, gens, and tribelets by ethnographers. The Kumeyaay term was cimul. The cimul used certain areas for hunting and gathering, but apparently did not control a bounded and defended territory, as did the Luiseño and Cahuilla. In addition, members of several different cimul usually lived in the same residential base, unlike the Luiseño, where a single party or clan controlled a village and its territory. Kumeyaay lived in residential bases during the winter and subsisted on stored resources. No permanent houses were built.

Brush shelters were temporary and were not reused the next year. Ceremonies, including rites of passage and ceremonies to ensure an abundance of food, were held in the winter residential bases. The cimul leader directed the ceremonies and settled disputes (Christenson 1990). One of the most important ceremonies was the mourning ceremony. Upon death, the Kumeyaay cremated the body of the deceased. Ashes were placed in a ceramic urn and buried or hidden in a cluster of rocks. The family customarily held a mourning ceremony one year after the death of a family member. During this ceremony, the clothes of the deceased individual were burned to ensure that the spirit would not return for his or her possessions (Gifford 1931; Luomala 1978).

The Kumeyaay were geographically and linguistically divided into western and eastern Kumeyaay. The western and eastern Kumeyaay spoke two different dialects (Christenson 1990). The western Kumeyaay lived along the coast and in the valleys along the drainages west of the mountains. The eastern Kumeyaay lived in the canyons and desert east of the mountains. The western Kumeyaay spent the winter in residential bases in the lowland valleys and then broke into smaller cimul groups that moved gradually eastward toward the mountains, following ripening plants and occupying temporary residential bases along the way. Thus, each group occupied several different residential bases during the course of a year (Christenson 1990). The eastern Kumeyaay spent the winter in villages on the desert margin where water was available from springs at canyon mouths. They moved up the canyons toward the mountains during spring and summer. The eastern and western Kumeyaay met in the mountains in the fall where they gathered black oak acorns, traded, and held ceremonies (Christenson 1990). The large residential bases in the mountains appear archaeologically to be village sites (Gross and Sampson 1990).

The Kumeyaay population was estimated to be between 10,000 and 20,000 at the time of European contact, based on Spanish accounts and ethnographies (Gallegos 2002). Beginning in 1775, the semi-nomadic life of the Kumeyaay began to change as a result of contact with Euro-Americans, particularly from the influence of the Spanish missions. Through successive Spanish, Mexican, and Anglo-American control, the Kumeyaay were forced to adopt a sedentary lifestyle and accept Christianity (Luomala 1978).

3.9.2.2 Summary of AB 52 Consultation

In accordance with AB 52 and PRC Section 21080.3.1(d), during the scoping process, the City sent Project notification letters to the following California Native American tribes on March 21, 2023, which had previously submitted general consultation request letters:

- Barona Group of Capitan Grande
- Sycuan Band of the Kumeyaay Nation
- La Posta Band of Diegueno Mission Indians
- Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians
- Manzanita Band of Kumeyaay Nation
- Campo Band of Mission Indians
- San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians

- Jamul Indian Village
- Mesa Grande Band of Mission Indians
- Ewiiapaayp Band of Kumeyaay Indians
- Kwaaymii Laguna Band of Mission Indians
- Iipay Nation of Santa Ysabel
- Inaja Band of Mission Indians

Each recipient was provided a description of the Project and its location, the lead agency contact information, and a notification that the tribe has 30 days to request consultation. The 30-day response period concluded on April 20, 2023. As a result of the initial notification letters, the City of National City received the following responses:

- Mesa Grande Band of Mission Indians responded by mail on March 24, 2023, indicating that Michael Linton is no longer the tribal chairperson, and any future correspondence should be addressed to their current chairperson, Theresa Hernandez.

No response was received from the other contacted California Native American tribes.

In accordance with CEQA, the AB 52 consultation process was conducted by DTSC for the remediation area at 1700 Cleveland Avenue. DTSC proceeded with the tribal outreach and consultation process, consistent with the Tribal Consultation Policy of 2020. Based on inquiries sent to NAHC, the site is recognized to contain TRCs. The implementation of the IMW required the presence of a Native American Monitor and/or professional archaeologist, as selected by the tribe, to observe ground disturbing activities. This assured the identification and protection of any TRCs encountered at the site for the separate remediation project.

As part of the AB-52 consultation process for the EIR, the City sent notification letters on July 26, 2024 to the following California Native American tribes which had previously submitted general consultation request letters:

- Barona Group of Capitan Grande
- Sycuan Band of the Kumeyaay Nation
- La Posta Band of Diegueno Mission Indians
- Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians
- Manzanita Band of Kumeyaay Nation
- Campo Band of Mission Indians
- San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians
- Jamul Indian Village

- Mesa Grande Band of Mission Indians
- Ewiiapaayp Band of Kumeyaay Indians
- Kwaaymii Laguna Band of Mission Indians
- Iipay Nation of Santa Ysabel
- Inaja Band of Mission Indians

Each recipient was provided a description of the Project and its location, the lead agency contact information, and a notification that the tribe has 30 days to request consultation. The 30-day response period concluded on August 28, 2024. No response was received from the contacted California Native American tribes.

3.9.3 Regulatory Setting

3.9.3.1 State

Assembly Bill 52

Effective July 1, 2015, AB 52 amended CEQA to require that: 1) a lead agency provide notice to those California Native American tribes that requested notice of projects proposed by the lead agency; and 2) for any tribe that responded to the notice within 30 days of receipt with a request for consultation, the lead agency must consult with the tribe. Topics that may be addressed during consultation include Tribal Cultural Resources (TCRs), the potential significance of project impacts, the type of environmental document that should be prepared, and possible mitigation measures and project alternatives.

Pursuant to AB 52, Section 21073 of the Public Resources Code defines California Native American tribes as “a Native American tribe located in California that is on the contact list maintained by the NAHC for the purposes of Chapter 905 of the Statutes of 2004.” This includes both federally and non-federally recognized tribes.

Section 21074(a) of the Public Resource Code defines TCRs for the purpose of CEQA as:

Sites, features, places, cultural landscapes (geographically defined in terms of the size and scope), sacred places, and objects with cultural value to a California Native American tribe that are either of the following:

- included or determined to be eligible for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources; and/or
- included in a local register of historical resources as defined in subdivision (k) of Section 5020.1; and/or
- 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 Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Section 5024.1 for the purposes of this paragraph, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

Because criteria a and b also meet the definition of a historical resource under CEQA, a TCR may also require additional consideration as a historical resource. TCRs may or may not exhibit archaeological, cultural, or physical indicators.

Recognizing that California tribes are experts in their tribal cultural resources and heritage, AB 52 requires that CEQA lead agencies provide tribes that requested notification an opportunity to consult at the commencement of the CEQA process to identify TCRs. Furthermore, because a significant effect on a TCR is considered a significant impact on the environment under CEQA, consultation is used to develop appropriate avoidance, impact minimization, and mitigation measures.

3.9.3.2 Local

National City General Plan

The City's General Plan Open Space Element provides plans and measures for the preservation and conservation of open-space lands, including open space for the preservation of natural resources; outdoor recreation; public health and safety; in support of military installations; and for Native American historical, cultural, or sacred sites (City of National City 2011). The citywide goals and policies applicable to the Proposed Project include the following:

- **Goal OS-8:** The identification, preservation, and enhancement of the City's historic, cultural, and paleontological resources.
 - **Policy OS-8.9:** Engage in consultation with tribal governments prior to making decisions, taking actions, or implementing programs that may impact Native American cultural resources or sacred sites.

3.9.4 Impact Analysis

3.9.4.1 Thresholds of Significance

Thresholds used to evaluate impacts related to tribal cultural resources are based on applicable criteria in Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines. A significant impact related to tribal cultural resources would occur if the Project would:

- 1) cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code 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
 - i) 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
 - ii) 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.

3.9.4.2 Impact Discussion

Threshold 1: Would the Project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code 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

- (i) 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***
- (ii) 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?***

Two cultural resources have been previously identified within the Project Area: P-37-013073, the Coronado Railroad; and P-37-024739, the BNSF (formerly AT&SF) Railway. P-37-013073 was previously evaluated and found not eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) or California Register of Historic Places (CRHR). P-37-024739 was previously evaluated and found eligible for the NRHP and CRHR. The Proposed Project includes the construction and placement of a mechanical railroad switch (i.e., turnout) to bring rail cars from the railroad mainline to the Project Area along the segment of rail that is associated with the P-37-024739 feature. The installation of the railroad switch mechanism would be added on to the existing railroad and would not result in a significant impact to the segment of railroad associated with the P-37-024739 feature as it would not result in the diminishment in the integrity of the resource. These resources do not have tribal cultural significance.

A search of the Sacred Lands File by the California NAHC was requested on January 28, 2022. The search determines whether or not the California Native American tribes within the Project Area have recorded Sacred Lands, because the Sacred Lands File is populated by members of the Native American community with knowledge about the locations of tribal resources. The NAHC provided search results on March 23, 2022. The search of the Sacred Lands File as conducted by the NAHC was negative, indicating the absence of previously recorded Native American resources in the Project Area (ECORP 2022c).

The majority of the Project Area has been geologically mapped as artificial fill that was deposited from historic-period and modern activities. A small area located in the very southeastern portion of the Project Area is mapped as young alluvial flood-plain deposits dating from the Late Pleistocene to the Holocene (0.126 – 0 Ma). The Holocene surface sediments in the southeastern portion of the Project Area are consistent with strata that precontact archaeological deposits have been previously identified and documented in the region. Due to the presence of sediments contemporaneous with human occupation of the region and the presence of previously recorded precontact resources in the surrounding area and within the Project Area, the potential for subsurface resources in previously undisturbed soils is considered moderate. Therefore, ground-disturbing activities have the potential to result in the discovery

of, or inadvertent damage to, archaeological contexts, and this possibility cannot be eliminated. Consequently, there is a potential for significant impacts to TCRs. The implementation of Mitigation Measures CUL-1 through CUL-3 would reduce the potential impacts to less than significant.

3.9.5 Mitigation Measures

CUL-1: Archaeological Monitoring. A qualified professional archaeologist, meeting or working under the direction of someone meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards for prehistoric and historic archaeology should be retained to monitor all ground-disturbing activities associated with Project construction, including vegetation removal, clearing, grading, trenching, excavation, or other activities that will disturb original (pre-project) ground. The monitor must have the authority to temporarily pause activity at the location in the event of an unanticipated discovery, so that he or she can direct the procedures in section 6.3.3.

CUL-2: Native American Monitoring. A Native American monitor from a tribe that is traditionally and culturally affiliated with the Project Area should be retained to monitor all ground-disturbing activities associated with Project construction, including vegetation removal, clearing, grading, trenching, excavation, or other activities that will disturb original (pre-project) ground. The Native American monitor should have the authority to temporarily pause activity at the location in the event of an unanticipated discovery, so that he or she can coordinate with the Project archaeologist on the identification of a potential cultural resource and the Project archaeologist can direct the procedures in the following section.

CUL-3: Post-Review Discovery Procedures. If subsurface deposits believed to be cultural or human in origin are discovered during construction, all work must halt within a 100-foot radius of the discovery. A qualified professional archaeologist, meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards for pre-contact and historic archaeology, shall be retained to evaluate the significance of the find, and shall have the authority to modify the no-work radius as appropriate, using professional judgment. The following notifications shall apply, depending on the nature of the find:

- If the professional archaeologist determines that the find does not represent a cultural resource, work may resume immediately, and no agency notifications are required.
- If the professional archaeologist determines that the find does represent a cultural resource from any time period or cultural affiliation, he or she shall immediately notify the City, and applicable landowner. The agencies shall consult on a finding of eligibility and implement appropriate treatment measures if the find is determined to be a Historical Resource under CEQA, as defined in Section 15064.5(a) of the CEQA Guidelines, or a Historic Property, as defined in 36 CFR 60.4. Work may not resume within the no-work radius until the lead agencies, through consultation as appropriate, determine that the site either: 1) is not a Historical Resource under

CEQA or Section 106; or 2) that the treatment measures have been completed to their satisfaction.

- If the find includes human remains, or remains that are potentially human, he or she shall ensure reasonable protection measures are taken to protect the discovery from disturbance (AB 2641). The archaeologist shall notify the San Diego County Medical Examiner (per § 7050.5 of the Health and Safety Code). The provisions of § 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code, § 5097.98 of the California PRC, and AB 2641 will be implemented. If the Medical Examiner determines the remains are Native American and not the result of a crime scene, the Medical Examiner will notify the NAHC, which then will designate a Native American Most Likely Descendent (MLD) for the Project (§ 5097.98 of the PRC). The designated MLD will have 48 hours from the time access to the property is granted to make recommendations concerning treatment of the remains. If the landowner does not agree with the recommendations of the MLD, the NAHC may mediate (§ 5097.94 of the PRC). If no agreement is reached, the landowner must rebury the remains where they will not be further disturbed (§ 5097.98 of the PRC). This will also include either recording the site with the NAHC or the appropriate Information Center; using an open space or conservation zoning designation or easement; or recording a reinternment document with the county in which the property is located (AB 2641). Work may not resume within the no-work radius until the lead agencies, through consultation as appropriate, determine that the treatment measures have been completed to their satisfaction.

3.9.6 *Level of Significance After Mitigation*

Impacts would be less than significant.

4.0 OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

This section provides brief discussions of other topics specifically mandated by CEQA. These topics include the following:

- Unavoidable significant adverse impacts
- Significant irreversible environmental changes
- Growth-inducing impacts
- Cumulative impacts

4.1 Significant Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126(c) requires the discussion of any significant impacts, including impacts “which can be mitigated but not reduced to a level of insignificance.”

As discussed in Sections 3.1 through 3.9 of the DEIR, the Proposed Project would not result in any significant impact that cannot be avoided. All significant impacts resulting from the Proposed Project would be reduced to less than significant with the mitigation measures identified in each of the individual resource sections in Chapter 3.0 and the Executive Summary, Section ES.8, Summary of Impacts and Mitigation Measures of this DEIR.

4.2 Effects Found Not To Be Significant

Section 21100(c) of the Public Resources Code requires that an EIR contain a statement briefly explaining the reasons why various possible significant effects of a project were determined not to be significant and were, therefore, not discussed in detail in the DEIR. The CEQA Guidelines provide that the statement may be in the form of an attached copy of the Initial Study (Appendix A).

The City, as Lead Agency, prepared an IS/NOP for the Proposed Project. The IS/NOP was distributed for review and comment to the State Clearinghouse and interested parties for a 30-day comment period from May 10, 2024, to June 10, 2024.

As discussed in Chapter 1.0 Introduction of this DEIR, the following resource topics were determined to be less than significant or were sufficiently discussed in the Initial Study and were therefore not carried forward for further analysis in this DEIR:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ■ Aesthetics | ■ Mineral Resources |
| ■ Agriculture and Forestry Resources | ■ Population and Housing |
| ■ Cultural Resources | ■ Public Services |
| ■ Geology and Soils | ■ Recreation |
| ■ Hydrology and Water Quality | ■ Utilities and Service Systems |

■ Wildfire

The analysis in this DEIR determined that the Proposed Project would result in less than significant impacts to air quality, energy, hazards and hazardous materials, land use and planning, noise, transportation, and tribal cultural resources. Impacts to biological resources, GHG emissions, and tribal cultural resources would be reduced to less than significant with Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-3, GHG-1, and CUL-1 through CUL-3 which are included in this DEIR's Executive Summary, Section ES.8, Summary of Impacts and Mitigation Measures.

4.3 Significant Irreversible Environmental Changes

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126(d) requires the discussion of significant irreversible environmental changes that would be caused by the Proposed Project should it be implemented. In accordance with the CEQA Guidelines:

"... uses of nonrenewable resources during the initial and continued phases of the project may be irreversible since a large commitment of such resources makes removal or nonuse thereafter unlikely. Primary impacts and, particularly, secondary impacts (such as highway improvement which provides access to a previously inaccessible area) generally commit future generations to similar uses. Also, irreversible damages can result from environmental accidents associated with the project. Irrecoverable commitments of resources should be evaluated to assure that such current consumption is justified."

4.3.1 Nonrenewable Resources

Nonrenewable resources generally include agricultural land, biological resources, archaeological resources, paleontological resources, mineral deposits, water bodies, and some energy sources. As discussed in the Executive Summary of this DEIR, the Initial Study determined that effects related to agriculture and forestry resources, geology and soils, hydrology and water quality, and mineral resources would have a less than significant impact or no impact. Therefore, no significant irreversible impacts to these resources would occur. Additionally, the Initial Study determined that effects related to cultural resources would have a less than significant impact with the implementation of Mitigation Measures CUL-1 through CUL-3 as identified in Section ES.8, Summary of Impacts and Mitigation Measures.

As evaluated in Section 3.2 Biological Resources of this DEIR, development of the Proposed Project could result in potentially significant impacts to Nuttall's acmispson, osprey and other special-status bird species, nesting bird and raptors, and bat species and maternal roosts; however, these impacts would be reduced to less than significant with the implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-3. Mitigation Measure BIO-1 requires the salvage of Nuttall's acmispson seed and donation of the seeds to a refuge or native plant nursery. Mitigation Measure BIO-2 requires pre-construction surveys for nesting birds and special-status avian species if activities with the potential to disrupt nesting birds or special-status avian species are scheduled to occur. Mitigation Measure BIO-3 requires compliance with Section 4150 of the California Fish and Game Code to implement a two-step process of tree removal conducted over two days to avoid impacts to bat species, if present.

As evaluated in Section 3.4 Greenhouse Gas Emissions of this DEIR, the Project would need to incorporate all applicable CAP actions to achieve consistency with the City's climate action planning efforts. Mitigation Measure GHG-1 ensures compatibility and consistency with the rest of the applicable GHG reduction plans, policies, and regulations. Mitigation Measure GHG-1 would reduce impacts to less than significant.

Implementation of the Proposed Project would require the irreversible consumption of natural resources and energy. Natural resource consumption would include lumber and other forest products, sand and gravel, asphalt, steel, copper, other metals, and water. Energy derived from nonrenewable sources, such as fossil and nuclear fuels, would be consumed due to the equipment fuel necessary for construction, operational lighting, and transportation uses.

4.3.2 Accidental Hazardous Release

As discussed in Section 3.5 Hazards and Hazardous Materials, some hazardous materials, such as diesel fuel, would be used in the Project Area during construction. However, the use of such materials for the construction of the Proposed Project would not create a significant hazard to the public because the release of any construction-related spills would be prevented through the implementation of BMPs listed in the SWPPP.

The proposed transloading facility would transload approximately 13,800 barrels (579,600 gallons) of biodiesel fuel and renewable diesel fuel per day directly from rail cars into trucks via a short above ground manifold. A second rail line would be added at the existing grade crossing on Civic Center Drive to facilitate rail car movements. Each truck loading spot provides a concrete pad and drain for the containment of potential spills, which would be piped to an onsite containment basin located on the southern portion of the site. The containment basin can contain the contents of 110 percent of an entire rail car volume until the material can be evacuated, transported, and disposed of. One rail car holds approximately 30,000 gallons of product. Total capacity is 21 rail cars that hold approximately 630,000 gallons of product.

The transportation of hazardous materials by rail is regulated by federal safety standards under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Railroad Administration, and transportation by truck is regulated by federal safety standards under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Fuel delivered to the Project Area via train will remain in the rail cars until it is transloaded to trucks for delivery. No stationary above- or below-ground fuel storage tanks are included as part of the Project. Lubricity, conductivity, and red dye would be stored onsite in three 330-gallon totes.

A Facility Response Plan (FRP) has been developed by the applicant as part of the Proposed Project that would be implemented to address or manage potential spills or emergency events onsite and minimize hazards to human health and the environment. Additionally, the FRP is designed to complement the Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure Plan (SPCC) prepared for the Proposed Project. The FRP incorporates the SPCC Plan by reference. The SPCC Plan would minimize the potential for a petroleum spill, prevent any spill from reaching navigable waterways, and ensure that the spill's causes are corrected. Other systems, procedures, and plans in the FRP include an onsite alarm system; communication plan;

emergency shutdown procedures; first aid and rescue procedures; training requirements; discharge prevention procedures; facility site plan; containment systems; security; and regular inspections.

With the implementation of the FRP, SPCC Plan, and SWPPP, the Proposed Project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

4.4 Growth-Inducing Impacts

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126(e) requires the EIR to discuss how the Proposed Project “could foster economic or population growth or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment” as well as:

... the characteristic of some projects which may encourage or facilitate other activities that could significantly affect the environment, either individually or cumulatively. It must not be assumed that growth in any area is necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment.

4.4.1 Economic Growth

In the short term, the Proposed Project would induce economic growth by introducing temporary employment opportunities associated with the construction of the Project.

In the long term, operation of the Project would create some long-term employment opportunities. The Proposed Project would employ a total of 21 full-time employees at the facility, with up to 10 operators onsite at any given time, which would generate employment opportunities for citizens of the City.

4.4.2 Population Growth and Housing

The City of National City is a centrally located community in the San Diego South Bay that is home to an estimated 61,121 residents as of 2019. In a span of five years from 2015 to 2019, National City’s population increased by approximately 1.8 percent. The growth in population will drive job growth and housing demand within the San Diego region, adding nearly 500,000 jobs and more than 330,000 housing units by 2050. National City faces the challenges of high regional housing costs, relatively low household incomes, and accommodating its share of the regional housing need given the limited availability of undeveloped, vacant land in a highly developed urban setting (City of National City 2021a).

The Proposed Project would construct a fuel transloading facility on an undeveloped parcel and does not propose to construct any housing. Residential uses are incompatible with the land use and zoning of the surrounding industrial area. The Proposed Project will employ a total of 21 full-time employees at the facility, which are anticipated to be drawn from the existing residents of the City and surrounding area. Because the City predicts population and job growth by 2050, the Project will not induce substantial unplanned growth in the area.

4.5 Cumulative Impacts

CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(a) requires an EIR to discuss cumulative impacts “when the project’s incremental effect is cumulatively considerable.” Cumulatively considerable, as defined in Section 15065(a)(3), means that “the incremental effects of an individual project are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.”

Under Section 15130(b), an adequate discussion of significant cumulative impacts should include:

- a list of past, present, and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts, including, if necessary, those projects outside the control of the agency, or
- a summary of projections contained in an adopted local, regional, or statewide plan, or related planning document that describes or evaluates conditions contributing to the cumulative effect. Any such document shall be referenced and made available to the public at a location specified by the lead agency;
- the nature of each environmental resource, project location, and project type should be considered when determining related projects;
- the lead agency should define the geographic scope of the area affected by the cumulative effect and provide a reasonable explanation for the geographic limitation; or
- reasonable, feasible options to mitigate or avoid the project’s contribution to any significant cumulative effects.

Table 4.0-1 lists currently planned and probable future projects within approximately 1-mile of the Project Area (Figure 10). This analysis used a 1-mile radius because, given the built-out nature of the surrounding area, this radius captures reasonably foreseeable development that would be likely to use or affect similar resources such as freeway and roadway capacity, biological resources, and public services and utilities. This DEIR generally used the list of projects in Table 4.0-1 for all cumulative impact discussions with the exception of those analyses that require more of a regional analysis such as air quality.

Table 4.0-1. Cumulative Projects List					
Project #	Project Name	Location	Description	Project Status	Distance from Project Area
1	Proposed Project	830 West 18th Street	New development of 6.5 acres for transloading facility that will transload bio-diesel fuel and renewable diesel fuel directly from rail cars into trucks.	Proposed	0 mile
2	Pacific Steel Incorporated Remediation Project	1700 Cleveland Avenue	Metal recycling facility used as an auto shredder waste storage area from 1981 to 1992. Remediation was required after finding heavy metals such as lead, zinc, copper, PCBs, and used oils in the soil.	Complete	0 mile

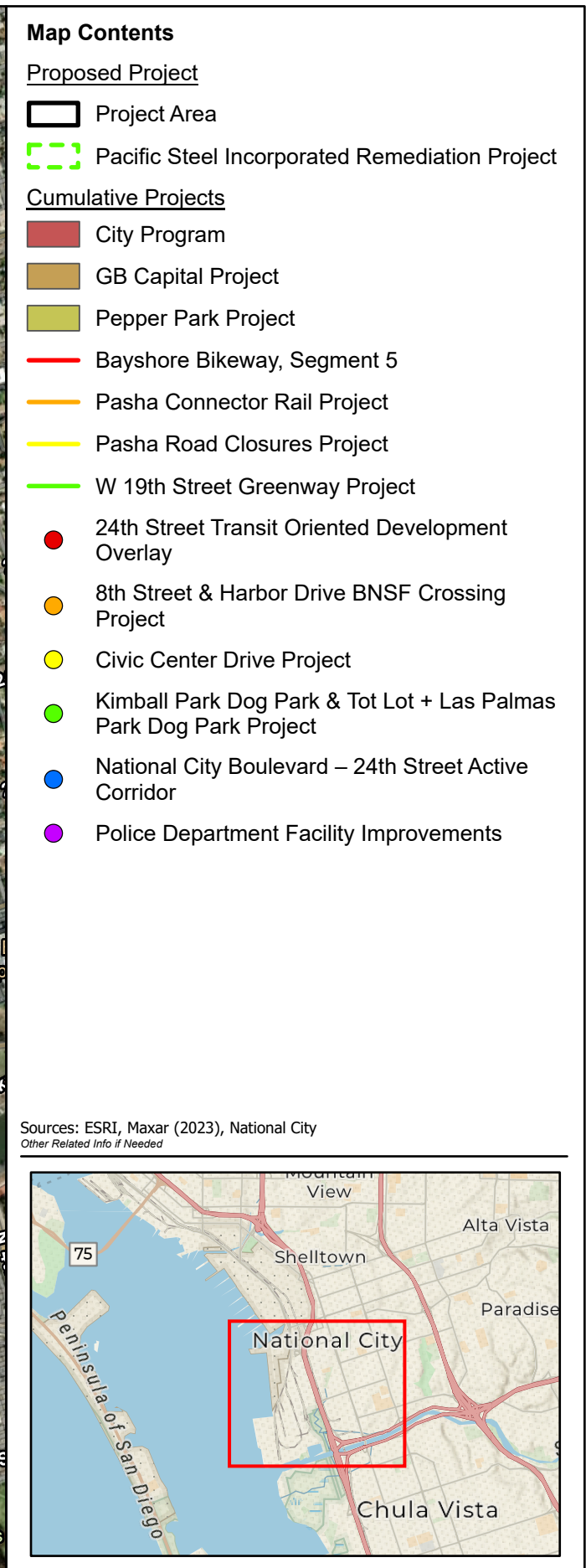
Table 4.0-1. Cumulative Projects List

Project #	Project Name	Location	Description	Project Status	Distance from Project Area
National City Bayfront Projects					
3	Bayshore Bikeway, Segment 5	Marina Way from 32nd Street to Bay Marina Drive, Bay Marina Drive from Marina Way to McKinley Avenue, McKinley Avenue from Bay Marina Drive to Civic Center Drive, and Harbor Drive	New Class I and Class IV protected bicycle facilities with enhanced intersection treatments for pedestrians and bicyclists.	Proposed	500 feet
4	City Program	Between West 23rd Street and Bay Marina Drive from Marina Way to I-5	Rezoning two vacant City-owned blocks for future retail and commercial uses.	Proposed	0.27 mile
5	Pasha Road Closures Project	Tidelands Avenue and West 28th Street	Closure of Tidelands Avenue between Bay Marina Drive and West 32nd Street, and West 28th Street between Tidelands Avenue and Quay Avenue.	Proposed	0.40 mile
6	Pasha Connector Rail Project	West of Marina Way, south and southwest of the National Distribution Center	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.	Proposed	0.58 mile
7	GB Capital Project	Commercial recreation area surrounding Pier 32 Marina	Development of a recreational vehicle (RV) park, modular cabins, and up to four hotels with 465 rooms.	Proposed	0.63 mile
8	Pepper Park Project	3299 Tidelands Avenue	Redesign of Pepper Park to include a new playground, splash pad, perched beach, waterfront deck, hillside play area, picnic area, entry plaza, and new landscaping and hardscaping.	Proposed	0.93 mile
Other Projects					
9	Civic Center Drive Project	Civic Center Drive between Wilson Avenue and Tidelands Avenue	Increase number of pedestrian crossings; calm traffic; improve the corridor for walking, biking, and driving; and add bicycle approaches on all legs. Improve Civic Center Drive and Harbor Drive.	Proposed	0 mile
10	W 19th Street Greenway Project	West 19th Street between Wilson Avenue and McKinley Avenue	Construction of Class IV bikeway and pedestrian path and closure of a portion of West 19th Street to vehicular traffic.	Proposed	0.11 mile

Table 4.0-1. Cumulative Projects List

Project #	Project Name	Location	Description	Project Status	Distance from Project Area
11	24th Street Transit Oriented Development Overlay	Area south of Plaza Boulevard, north of SR-54, east of I-5, and west of Highland Avenue	Study of land use and vision for 760 acres of existing developed land. Provides land use and mobility recommendations.	Proposed	0.19 mile
12	8th Street & Harbor Drive BNSF Crossing Project	8th Street from MTS Transit Station to Harbor Drive	Improvements along 8th Street from MTS Transit Station to Harbor Drive, including the BNSF Crossing.	Proposed	0.24 mile
13	National City Boulevard – 24th Street Active Corridor	National City Boulevard and 18th Street, 22nd Street, and 24th Street; 22nd Street from National City Boulevard to D Avenue; and 24th Street from D Avenue to L Avenue	Improve two crossings at National City Boulevard and 18th Street, and 22nd Street, and a pedestrian/bicycle corridor on 22nd Street from National City Boulevard to D Avenue and on 24th Street from D Avenue to L Avenue.	Proposed	0.58 mile
14	Police Department Facility Improvements	1200 National City Boulevard	Improvements include multifunctional room upgrades, firearm training range modifications, backflow preventer, 2nd floor flooring upgrades, generator and electrical upgrades, investigations division workspace upgrades, records management center, and parking deck waterproofing	Proposed	0.62 mile
15	Kimball Park Dog Park & Tot Lot + Las Palmas Park Dog Park Project	12th Street and D Avenue	Construction of dog parks with minor landscape grading, pathways, pavements, pedestrian safety, tree protection, children's play area, fencing, landscape drainage, ballfield lighting, irrigation adjustments, and park maintenance.	In Construction	0.67 mile

Location: N:\2021\2021-285 National City Renewable Diesel Facility\WAPs\CEQA\CEQA.aprx - NatCity_Cumulative_Projects_20240926 (trtelini) - 9/27/2024)



4.5.1 Air Quality

Potential cumulative air quality impacts would result if the cumulative projects' pollutant emissions combined to degrade air quality conditions to below acceptable levels. This could occur on a local, regional, or global level.

Neither the City nor SDAPCD have adopted quantitative thresholds to determine whether a project would make a cumulatively considerable contribution to air quality. The County of San Diego's *Guidelines for Determining Significance* (San Diego County 2007) are utilized in this analysis to determine the cumulatively considerable net increases in pollutants during the construction phase. Cumulatively considerable net increases during the construction phase would typically occur if two or more projects near each other are simultaneously constructed. The thresholds for a cumulatively considerable net increase include the following:

- A project that has a significant direct impact on air quality with regard to emissions of PM₁₀, PM_{2.5}, NO_x, and/or VOCs would also have a significant cumulatively considerable net increase.
- In the event that direct impacts from a proposed project are less than significant, a project may still have a cumulatively considerable impact on air quality if the emissions of concern from the proposed project, in combination with the emissions of concern from other proposed projects or reasonably foreseeable future projects within a proximity relevant to the pollutants of concern, are in excess of direct air quality impact thresholds.

The guidelines for the consideration of operational cumulatively considerable net increases are treated differently due to the mobile nature of the emissions. The following thresholds are used in this analysis to determine the cumulatively considerable net increase in emissions during the operational phase:

- A project that does not conform to the RAQS or has a significant direct impact on air quality with regard to operational emissions of PM₁₀, PM_{2.5}, NO_x, and/or VOCs would also have a significant cumulatively considerable net increase.
- Projects that cause road intersections to operate at or below a LOS E (analysis only required when the addition of peak-hour trips from the proposed project and the surrounding projects exceeds 2,000) and create a CO "hot spot" create a cumulatively considerable net increase of CO.

As shown in Table 3.1-5 in Section 3.1 Air Quality of this DEIR, emissions of ROG, NO_x, CO, SO₂, PM₁₀, and PM_{2.5} generated during Project construction would not exceed the SDAPCD's thresholds of significance. Therefore, under the first County of San Diego significance threshold, criteria pollutant emissions generated during Project construction would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the Project region is designated as nonattainment under an applicable federal or State ambient air quality standard.

The Pacific Steel Incorporated Remediation Project, a completed project, submitted a Remedial Action Completion Report in September 2023 identifying successful removal of impacted soils and restoration of the site. Site remediation involved the excavation and removal of approximately 8,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil that was then disposed of offsite at a permitted landfill. Approximately 600 truckloads

(between seven to eight trucks per day) were required over an approximate 3-month period. To return the site to level grade, approximately 20,370 cubic yards of fill was required which required approximately 2,037 truckloads (between 22 and 23 trucks per day) over the same 3-month period. The entire eastern side of the property fronting Cleveland Avenue was covered with a 25-foot-tall dust screen made of a fine wet mesh designed to collect fine particles. The dust screen reduced the windblown dust leaving the site. Soil excavation and stockpile management activities were conducted in accordance with the County of San Diego Air Pollution Control District Fugitive Dust Control, which restricts the discharge of visible dust emissions.

Of the planned projects listed in Table 4.0-1, the Pepper Park Project and the Kimball Park Dog Park & Tot Lot + Las Palmas Park Dog Park Project would increase trip generation. The Pepper Park Project would redesign the existing Pepper Park to upgrade and expand recreational amenities in the park's current footprint. Project components would include a new playground, splash pad, perched beach, waterfront deck, hillside play area, picnic area, entry plaza, and new landscaping and hardscaping. The Kimball Park Dog Park Project would construct dog parks within the existing Kimball Park. Project components would include minor landscape grading, pathways, pavements, pedestrian safety improvements, tree protection, a children's play area, fencing, landscape drainage, ballfield lighting, irrigation adjustments, and park maintenance. These park projects would expand park amenities and consequently the number of vehicle trips associated with additional park visitors and the operational emissions of criteria pollutants. The Proposed Project is estimated to result in approximately 144 truck trips and approximately 25 passenger car trips for employees per day. This would result in a total of 169 trips per day. The Proposed Project plus the two park projects would not exceed 2,000 peak-hour trips and would not create a cumulatively considerable net increase of CO.

4.5.2 Biological Resources

Cumulative impacts are those caused by the additive effect of multiple direct and indirect impacts to a biological resource over time. A project's direct and indirect impacts may not be individually significant, but the additive effect, when viewed in connection with the impacts of past, present, and probable future projects, may cause the significant loss or degradation of a resource. In addition, multiple different impacts to a resource may be cumulative (County of San Diego 2010).

A significant cumulative impact to biological resources would result if the Proposed Project would contribute to cumulative impacts related to sensitive habitat or species, sensitive habitat/natural communities, federally protected wetlands, or wildlife movement corridors.

The Project Area is located in a developed and disturbed area that is surrounded by mainly industrial and manufacturing uses. The disturbed classification includes areas where the native vegetation community has been heavily influenced by human actions such as grading, trash dumping, and dirt roads, but lacks development. Developed lands are those that are heavily affected by human use, including landscaping, residential homes, commercial or industrial buildings and associated infrastructure, and transportation corridors. Because the Project Area is located in a developed and disturbed area, the natural surrounding habitat is limited. Plant species in the area are characteristic of disturbed and ornamental vegetation communities, and wildlife species are typical of urban environments.

The Proposed Project would result in potential impacts to special-status plant and wildlife species, which would include migratory birds. However, these impacts would be fully mitigated in accordance with the previously discussed Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-3 and in consultation with State and federal wildlife agencies.

Present and reasonably foreseeable future projects that could contribute to cumulative impacts to biological resources include projects with grading, paving, landscaping, road, and/or building construction of undeveloped land or with habitat otherwise present.

The National City Bayfront Projects, as shown in Table 4.0-1, are located within one mile of the Project Area. Implementation of these projects could have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on species identified as candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by CDFW or USFWS. Impacts to biological resources are reduced with implementation of mitigation, thus reducing impacts to less than significant or avoiding altogether (National City Bayfront Projects & Plan Amendments 2021).

The roadway projects listed in Table 4.0-1 would be located within the ROW and would not impact any undeveloped land or habitat. There is no connecting habitat between these projects and the Proposed Project that would be affected. Furthermore, present and reasonably foreseeable future projects would also comply with the requirements of the federal ESA, MBTA, CWA, California ESA, NPPA, and Porter-Cologne Act and provide mitigation measures as necessary to reduce any impacts to less than significant.

Therefore, cumulative impacts would be less than significant.

4.5.3 Energy

Construction and operations associated with implementation of the Proposed Project would result in the consumption of fuel and energy, but not in a wasteful manner. The consumption of fuel and energy would not be substantial in comparison to statewide electricity and fuel demand (Tables 3.3-4 and Table 3.3-5). Additionally, the Proposed Project would be subject to compliance with all federal, State, and local requirements for energy efficiency.

Table 3.3-4 in Section 3.3 Energy shows that fuel consumption during construction of the Proposed Project would be 27,783 gallons, which would increase the annual construction-related fuel use in the County by 0.00179 percent. Therefore, Project construction would have a nominal effect on local and regional energy supplies. Project operation is estimated to result in the consumption of approximately 119,306 gallons of automotive fuel per year, which would increase the annual countywide automotive fuel consumption by 0.0077 percent. This analysis conservatively assumes that all of the automobile trips projected to arrive at the Project during operations would be new to San Diego County. Fuel consumption associated with vehicle trips generated by the Project would not be inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary in comparison to other similar developments in the region.

A cumulative energy consumption impact would occur if development associated with planned projects identified in Table 4.0-1 combined with the Proposed Project would increase energy consumption throughout the region. The cumulative projects listed above would also result in construction-related fuel consumption for equipment and vehicle use. It is unlikely that all of the projects in the cumulative projects

list would be under construction simultaneously; however, assuming that all of these projects would have similar fuel consumption as the Proposed Project, the combined fuel consumption during construction would be approximately 388,962 gallons, which would increase the annual construction-related fuel use in the County by 0.02511 percent. This is a nominal effect on local and regional energy supplies. Thus, cumulative energy impacts from related projects, in conjunction with Project-specific energy consumption, would not be cumulatively significant.

4.5.4 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The CEQA Guidelines clarify that the effects of GHG emissions are cumulative because an individual project of this size and nature is generally of insufficient magnitude by itself to influence climate change or result in a substantial contribution to the global GHG inventory. Additionally, per CEQA Guidelines Section 15064(h)(3), a project's incremental contribution to a cumulative impact can be found not to be cumulatively considerable if a project complies with adopted programs, plans, policies, or other regulatory strategies to reduce GHG emissions.

As shown in Tables 3.4-2 and 3.4-3 in Section 3.4 of this DEIR, Project emissions for construction (282 metric tons per year) and operation (1,525 metric tons per year) would not exceed the numeric bright-line threshold of 3,000 metric tons of CO₂e annually. SCAQMD developed this significance threshold based on substantial evidence that such thresholds represent quantitative levels of GHG emissions for which compliance means that the environmental impact of the GHG emissions would normally not be cumulatively considerable under CEQA. The 3,000 metric tons of CO₂e per year value represents less than one percent of future 2050 statewide GHG emissions target. Additionally, the Proposed Project would be consistent with the goals and policies in the City of National City General Plan and City of National City CAP. Under CEQA Guidelines Section 15064(h)(3), the Proposed Project would not be cumulatively considerable because the Project complies with adopted programs, plans, policies, or other regulatory strategies to reduce GHG emissions.

4.5.5 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Pacific Steel Incorporated was issued a Cleanup and Abatement Order in 1987 following discharges of contaminant water into the storm drain system. The completed PSI Remediation Project removed metals and PCB-impacted soils previously identified onsite to eliminate the risk to human health and the environment posed by impacted surface soils. Soils were removed until the detection of metals and PCBs were below the proposed cleanup levels and commercial risk screening level, respectively. Impacted soils on the site were successfully removed and restoration of the site to the final grade was completed as of September 2023. The site no longer poses a risk regarding hazards and hazardous materials and is not cumulatively considerable.

As described above, Project construction would involve the use of diesel fuel, and operation of the Project would involve transloading biodiesel fuel, ethanol, or SAF from rail cars to tanker trucks. The Project would properly handle, use, and dispose of these materials in accordance with applicable regulations and laws; would be designed in accordance with applicable safety standards; and would adhere to all National City Fire Department (NCFD) requirements. Although the Project would comply with applicable regulations and laws, hazardous materials could be accidentally released, and if discharge were to leave

the basin and property boundary, it would flow via the National City stormwater system into Paradise Creek, Paradise Marsh, Sweetwater Channel (Sweetwater River), and San Diego Bay. Procedures would be in place per the FRP and SPCC Plan for prevention and containment of accidental leaks and spills, routine equipment inspection, worker training, and visual hazardous materials monitoring that would ensure the reduction of hazards to the public or environment. As such, the Project's contribution to potential accidental releases of hazardous materials into the National City Stormwater system would not be cumulatively considerable.

4.5.6 Land Use and Planning

4.5.6.1 Land Use and Zoning

The Proposed Project is located within the Medium Manufacturing and Heavy Manufacturing Zones and has a land use designation of Industrial/Salt Production within the Coastal Zone overlay. The Proposed Project is designated as a conditional use under the Medium/Heavy Manufacturing zone; therefore, a CUP is required for the Project. Issuance of the CUP would align the Proposed Project with the City's land use regulations and would not constitute a significant environmental impact.

The Project Area is also located in the Coastal Zone of National City and is subject to the City's LCP under the CCA. The Proposed Project would acquire a CUP to align with the City's land use regulations and the LCP. Additionally, the Project would apply for a Coastal Development Permit. Table 3.6-2 in Section 3.6 Land Use and Planning provides a consistency analysis with the applicable policies of the City's General Plan and other applicable land use plans and policies. The Proposed Project is consistent with all applicable plans and policies; therefore, impacts to land use and planning would be less than significant.

The Proposed Project is located in a developed area characterized by industrial land uses. Due to the infill nature of the Proposed Project, it would not physically divide an established community and no impact would occur.

All projects within the City are subject to local regulations governing land use decisions. Therefore, the projects listed in Table 4.0-1 would also be subject to the City's land use and zoning policies and must be consistent prior to development. Additionally, the projects in the cumulative projects list would not physically divide an established community. Therefore, the impact of current and reasonably foreseeable future projects to land use and planning would be less than cumulatively significant.

4.5.6.2 Environmental Justice

The City has adopted a Health and Environmental Justice Element that acknowledges the relationship between pollution and negative health effects and identifies policies aimed at reducing adverse health effects within the community.

As discussed in Section 3.6 Land Use and Planning of this DEIR, the Proposed Project is consistent with all applicable plans and policies, which includes the City's General Plan Health and Environmental Justice Element. The Portside CERP is another applicable environmental justice plan that includes various strategies to ensure the health, safety, and environmental justice of the Portside Community, which surrounds the Project Area. Category 5 of the CERP addresses heavy-duty trucks and aims to reduce

emissions from diesel trucks in the community. Within the CERP's strategies, Action E3 encourages the enforcement of the Truck Route. According to the Traffic Study prepared for the Proposed Project, approximately 97 percent of the truck trip distribution would head directly towards I-5. The remaining three percent of the truck trip distribution would head east on 18th Street (KOA 2024). These trucks would travel on the nearest primary truck route or alternate truck route in the necessary direction.

Furthermore, the Proposed Project proposes to transload renewable fuels and SAF (non-petroleum-based) directly from rail cars into trucks for local deliveries. Renewable diesel and SAF can fully replace petroleum-based fuels with zero modification to storage facilities or combustion engine systems. Furthermore, according to calculations completed by US Compliance, included as Attachment A to the Project's Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Assessment, the Proposed Project's distribution of renewable diesel in the San Diego Area would result in reductions in local air pollutants from the replacement of combustion of regular diesel with renewable diesel. More specifically, the US Compliance calculations showed meaningful local reductions in NO_x, CO, and PM air pollutants from the introduction of renewable diesel from the Proposed Project. For every 1,000 gallons of conventional diesel replaced with renewable diesel, combustion emissions of NO_x, CO, and PM would be reduced by 43.5, 28.5, and 0.7 pounds, respectively. Additionally, all construction- and operation-generated emissions would not exceed the SDAPCD's thresholds of significance and would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the Project region is designated as nonattainment under an applicable federal or State ambient air quality standard. As such, the Proposed Project would not conflict with the CERP's goals to reduce diesel PM, would not impede progress towards the goals of establishing zero emission vehicle trucks within the Portside Community, and would not result in a substantial health risk. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

The projects listed in Table 4.0-1 within the Portside Community would also need to be consistent with the applicable land use and planning policies, which includes those in the City's General Plan Health and Environmental Justice Element and the Portside CERP. Therefore, the impact of current and reasonably foreseeable future projects to land use and planning would be less than cumulatively significant.

4.5.7 Noise

4.5.7.1 Construction

Construction noise impacts primarily affect the areas immediately adjacent to the construction site. The Project's compliance with the City's Municipal Code Section 12.10.160 would ensure noise levels associated with construction (mobile equipment) would not exceed the 75 dBA threshold. The maximum construction noise level at the nearest receptor would be 70.1 dBA, as shown in Table 3.4-9 of this DEIR, which is below the threshold for construction noise. Construction noise was modeled on a worst-case basis, and it is very unlikely that all pieces of construction equipment would be operating at the same time for the various phases of Project construction as well as at the point closest to the nearest noise-sensitive receptor. Furthermore, construction-related noise would be temporary and would cease upon Project completion.

Table 4.0-1 identifies current and probable future projects within a one-mile radius of the Project Area. Construction activities associated with the Proposed Project and the Bayshore Bikeway (Segment 5)

Project, Civic Center Drive Project, and the W 19th Street Greenway Project may overlap. The distance of the other projects on the cumulative projects list, along with the shielding provided by intervening buildings, would substantially reduce any construction noise such that these projects would not generate any cumulative impacts in the immediate vicinity of the Project Area.

When two identical sources each produce sound of the same loudness, the resulting sound level at a given distance would be three dBA higher than one source under the same conditions. A three dBA change is considered a just-perceivable difference (Caltrans 2013). Given that it is very unlikely that all equipment from the Proposed Project and other nearby projects would be operating at the same time, the noise resulting from construction would not exceed the applicable noise thresholds. Additionally, each of these projects would be required to comply with the applicable construction noise limitations to ensure that the contribution to cumulative noise impacts during construction would be less than significant.

4.5.7.2 Operation

Operational onsite stationary noise for the Proposed Project would include noise from rail activity, internal circulation of heavy-duty trucks, and unloading of the rail cars. The most significant noise in the Project Area would be generated by the adjacent BNSF railroad; this noise is part of the existing condition. The Project proposes to replace one existing rail turnout and install a new receiving and departure track for the facility. Two or more trains would not run simultaneously; therefore, the level of noise in the Project Area would not increase when compared to existing conditions. Operation of the Project would not contribute any noise sources that would exceed the existing condition in the Project Area and would not result in a significant noise-related impact associated with onsite sources.

Project construction and operations would result in additional traffic on adjacent roadways by generating 18 total construction worker trips during construction and 144 daily heavy-duty truck trips and 25 daily passenger car trips (equivalent to 385 daily passenger car trips) during operations. The addition of Project-related traffic to the Project vicinity would not result in a doubling of traffic and would not result in a 3 dB increase. The Project's contribution to existing traffic noise would not be perceptible and therefore its contribution to cumulative noise impacts would be less than cumulatively considerable. Given the nature of the projects in the cumulative projects list, the Proposed Project would contribute the most operational noise and traffic trips; however, this noise would not result in any significant noise-related impacts when compared to existing noise conditions and would not result in a doubling of traffic or traffic noise. Therefore, the cumulative noise impacts of current and reasonably foreseeable future projects would be less than cumulatively significant.

4.5.8 Transportation

The Proposed Project is not anticipated to result in impacts related to substantial increases in hazards due to geometric design features, incompatible uses, or inadequate emergency access. Therefore, cumulative impacts related to these issues are not evaluated below.

A project's impact on transportation is measured by the VMT it would generate. By its nature, VMT is inherently a cumulative issue, as it is not likely that any single project would be large enough to prevent

the region or state from meeting its VMT reduction targets, which correlate to the state's GHG reduction targets. Rather, a project's individual VMT contributes to cumulative VMT impacts.

Table 4.0-1 identifies current and probable future projects within a one-mile radius around the Project Area. VMT from current and probable future projects have contributed to, and will continue to contribute to, cumulative VMT impacts as well as similarly cumulative secondary physical environmental effects such as increased GHG emissions. The projects identified in Table 4.0-1 would be required to comply with SB 743 during project-specific environmental review.

The CEQA Guidelines recognize that mitigation for cumulative impacts may involve the adoption of ordinances or regulations (CEQA Guidelines Section 15130) such as the City's Transportation Development Impact Fee. The TDIF is applicable to, but not limited to, the development for residential, commercial, and industrial land uses. The fees collected pursuant to this chapter are to fund identified transportation facilities, or portions thereof, that will provide increased road capacity necessitated by the cumulative impacts of future development. The fee shall be paid before the issuance of building permits for each development project within the City. The Proposed Project as well as the any residential, commercial, or industrial projects in Table 4.0-1 are required to pay the TDIF to mitigate their contributions to traffic generation. As such, the Project's contribution to transportation impacts would not be cumulatively considerable.

5.0 ALTERNATIVES

5.1 Introduction

As required by CEQA, this chapter describes and analyzes a range of reasonable alternatives to the Proposed Project that could feasibly attain most of the basic Project objectives while avoiding or substantially lessening one or more of the significant effects of the Proposed Project. Although no significant impacts were identified for the Proposed Project in this DEIR, this chapter provides a comparative analysis with sufficient detail to foster informed decision making and public participation in the environmental process.

Three alternatives to the Proposed Project are analyzed in this chapter and discussed in terms of their merits relative to the Project:

- Alternative 1 – No Project Alternative
- Alternative 2 – Reduced Intensity Alternative
- Alternative 3 – Offsite Location within National City

5.2 Requirements for Alternatives Analysis

In order to fully evaluate the environmental effects of projects, CEQA mandates that an EIR identify ways to mitigate or avoid the significant effects that a project may have on the environment. In compliance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(a), this EIR must also describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the Project, or to the location of the Project that would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the Project but avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the Project. This EIR need not consider every conceivable alternative; rather, it must consider a reasonable range of potentially feasible alternatives to the Project that will foster informed decision making and public participation. The discussion of alternatives shall focus on alternatives to the Project or to the location of the Project, which would avoid or substantially lessen the significant effects of the Project, even if these alternatives would impede to some degree the attainment of the Project objectives or be more costly (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6[b]).

The City, acting as the CEQA Lead Agency, is responsible for selecting a range of Project alternatives for examination and must publicly disclose its reasoning for selecting those alternatives. The range of alternatives addressed in an EIR is governed by a “rule of reason,” which requires the EIR to set forth only those alternatives necessary to permit a reasoned choice. Of the alternatives considered, the EIR need examine in detail only those the lead agency determines could feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the Project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the Project. CEQA Guidelines Section 15364, define “feasible” as “capable of being accomplished in a successful manner within a reasonable period of time, taking into account economic, environmental, legal, social, and technological factors.” The discussion of Project alternatives must include sufficient information about each alternative to allow meaningful evaluation, analysis, and comparison with the Proposed Project.

This EIR should also identify any alternatives that were considered by the lead agency but were rejected as infeasible during the scoping process and explain the underlying reasons for the lead agency's determination. Under CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e)(1), an EIR must evaluate a "No Project" alternative in order to allow decision makers to compare the effect of approving the Project to the effect of not approving the Project. The "No Project" analysis shall discuss the existing conditions at the time that the notice of preparation is published, or, if no notice of preparation is published, at the time that environmental analysis is commenced as well as what would be reasonably expected to occur in the foreseeable future if the Project were not approved, based on current plans and consistent with available infrastructure and community services.

As required under Section 15126.6(e)(2) of the CEQA Guidelines, the EIR must identify the environmentally superior alternative. Pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines, if the No Project Alternative is determined to be the most environmentally superior project, then another alternative among those evaluated must be identified as the environmentally superior alternative.

5.2.1 Project Objectives

In developing the alternatives to be addressed in this chapter, the DEIR considers each alternative's ability to meet the basic objectives of the Project and eliminate or substantially reduce any identified environmental impacts.

The purpose of the Project is to provide a new transloading facility along the BNSF railroad to deliver renewable fuels to the San Diego market. Upon development, the Proposed Project would achieve the following objectives:

- facilitate the State's commitment to achieve a just and equitable transition to carbon neutrality by 2045 and reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030;
- expand the availability of renewable fuels to the region advancing the goal of the State's Low-Carbon Fuels Standard, which is a component of the 2022 CARB Scoping Plan, and solve geographic imbalances in the availability of cleaner, lower carbon fuels;
- deliver lower emissions to the San Diego market than the existing supply chain delivering to the current fuel delivery locations by significantly reducing fuel transit truck miles, and increase the availability of cleaner fuels sooner than the current supply chain;
- create employment-generating opportunities for the citizens of National City and its surrounding communities;
- encourage industrial development as compatible and productive uses within existing underutilized and previously contaminated property while minimizing conflicts with the surrounding existing uses;
- provide an appropriately sized facility that balances meeting business performance metrics and minimizing the total truck trips needed to deliver renewable fuels to the San Diego market;

- locate the facility in an appropriately zoned area of the City that would minimize conflicts with surrounding incompatible uses and utilize established City truck routes providing direct access to I-5;
- provide infrastructure improvements required to meet Project needs and improve safety conditions along the BNSF railroad; and
- provide additional firefighting capacity in the Project Area to address and provide quick response to hazards and emergencies within the City's core industrial area.

5.3 Alternatives Considered but Rejected

An EIR should identify any alternatives that were considered but rejected by the lead agency and briefly explain the reasons underlying the lead agency's determination. Among the factors used to eliminate alternatives from detailed consideration in the EIR is failure to meet most of the basic Project objectives or inability to avoid significant environmental effects (CEQA Guidelines 15126.6[c]). Another consideration for excluding an alternative from further study that is consistent with the requirement to address a "reasonable range" of alternatives is an alternative's similarity to others that are addressed in detail.

The following development scenario was considered and rejected as a potential alternative to implementation of the Proposed Project:

- Alternative Locations outside of National City

Based on Section 15126.6 of the CEQA Guidelines, the following alternative was rejected based on the criteria of not being reasonable or not feasibly attaining most of the basic objectives of the Project while reducing or avoiding any of the significant effects of the Proposed Project. No significant effects were determined for the Proposed Project. Alternative 3 (Off-Site Location within National City), which is described in greater detail below, is a viable alternative that is evaluated further. The reason or reasons for not selecting the rejected alternative is discussed below.

5.3.1 Alternative Location Outside of National City

The Project proponent considered alternative locations along both Union Pacific and BNSF rail lines. In addition to being in a location that would meet most of the basic Project objectives, the property requirements include being rail-owned, rail adjacent, adequately sized to accommodate the required throughput, and appropriately zoned to accommodate this type of project.

Along the Union Pacific line, the closest potential site would be east of San Diego near the City of El Centro in Imperial County. This site is owned by Union Pacific, is adjacent to the Union Pacific rail line, and is appropriately sized and zoned for this type of project. However, because this potential site is not located in the local San Diego market area, the fuel would need to be transported via rail to El Centro and then via trucks approximately 115 miles to the target San Diego market region. Currently, fuel is transported approximately 110 miles via trucks from the Los Angeles-Inland Empire region to serve the area. At the El Centro location, the trucking miles would be slightly more than the existing transit truck miles required to deliver fuel to the San Diego market and therefore would not meet the Project's

objective to significantly reduce fuel transit truck miles from the existing supply chain delivering to the current fuel delivery locations. Additionally, if the transloading facility were located in El Centro, the Project objectives to create employment opportunities in National City by providing infrastructure improvements and increased fire-fighting capacity in the City would not be met.

Despite a reasonable attempt, an alternative location outside of the City for the Proposed Project has not been identified. Alternative locations considered were either unavailable for development, would not feasibly accommodate a project such as the Proposed Project, or would not reduce the significant impacts because none are identified. Therefore, this alternative has been rejected and was not considered further.

5.4 Alternatives Carried Forward For Analysis

The following alternatives have been identified and evaluated to provide decision makers with a reasonable range of alternatives that would eliminate or reduce the impacts of the Project. Factors considered in selecting the alternatives include site suitability, availability of infrastructure, other plans or regulatory limitations, economic viability, and whether the Project proponent can reasonably acquire, control or otherwise access an alternative site. An EIR need not consider an alternative whose impact cannot be reasonably ascertained and whose implementation is remote or speculative. In accordance with CEQA Guidelines, the alternatives considered in this EIR include those that 1) could accomplish most of the basic objectives of the Project; 2) are reasonably feasible given the nature of the Project and surrounding land uses; and 3) could avoid or substantially lessen one or more of the significant effects of the Project.

5.4.1 Alternative 1 – No Project

CEQA requires that the No Project Alternative discuss and analyze potential impacts that would occur if the Project was not implemented. Under the No Project Alternative, the Project Area would operate in its current state and remain largely vacant and undeveloped.

5.4.2 Alternative 2 – Reduced Intensity

With the intent of reducing the amount of Project truck trips, the City has considered a Reduced Intensity Alternative. Under this alternative, the transloading facility would transfer approximately 25 percent fewer barrels of fuel per day than the Proposed Project.

5.4.3 Alternative 3 – Offsite Location Within National City

Locating the Proposed Project on another site within the City would most likely achieve the Project objectives stated above, including providing new employment opportunities, balancing business performance metrics while minimizing total truck trips, and locating the Project in an appropriately zoned area that would minimize conflicts with incompatible uses. The *CEQA Guidelines* (§15126.6[f](2)) state:

The key question and first step in analysis is whether any of the significant effects of the project would be avoided or substantially lessened by putting the project in another location. Only locations that would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project need be considered for inclusion in the EIR.

Because no significant impacts were identified for the Proposed Project, this analysis considers whether the offsite location within National City would lessen the magnitude of the impact identified for the Proposed Project. The analysis of alternative sites included 1) inquiries into the availability of the sites that could accommodate the proposed use; 2) an assessment of sites in the City that would also be suitable for the development as proposed; and 3) an identification of sites appropriately zoned/designated by the General Plan to accommodate the Proposed Project.

A potential offsite location for the transloading facility would be south of the Proposed Project on a 6.07-acre parcel east of I-5 and the BNSF rail line at 3202 Hoover Avenue within National City.

5.5 Analysis of Alternatives

The following discussion compares the impacts of each alternative with the impacts of the Proposed Project. As all Project impacts were determined to be less than significant, a conclusion is provided as to whether each alternative would result in one of the following:

- reduction or elimination of the impact;
- a greater impact than the Proposed Project;
- the same impact as the Proposed Project; or
- a new impact in addition to the impacts of the Proposed Project.

5.5.1 Alternative 1 – No Project

Pursuant to CEQA (§15126.6[e][3](B)(C)), the No Project Alternative should discuss what would reasonably be expected to occur, based on current plans and consistent with available infrastructure and community services, in the foreseeable future. Under the No Project Alternative, the Proposed Project would not be carried forward and the Project Area would remain vacant until the railroad or another developer brings a project to the City.

5.5.1.1 Impact Analysis

Under the No Project Alternative, the Proposed Project would not be developed, however it is reasonable to assume another use would be developed as the railroad has moved forward with a cleanup of a portion of the Project Area for the purpose of developing railroad-related business. Such other business is in the sole discretion of the railroad. If the railroad chooses to lease the property to a third-party developer, a permitted use or conditionally permitted use under the adopted Medium Manufacturing (MM) and Heavy Manufacturing (HM) zoning designation is reasonable to anticipate. Permitted uses in the MM zone include automotive; heavy equipment and machinery; light and medium manufacturing; off-street parking; public utilities; research and development; and wholesaling, warehousing, and distribution. Conditional uses in the MM zone include food processing, gasoline service stations, mineral resource extraction, and truck transportation facilities. Permitted uses in the HM zone include food processing, public protection facilities, public utilities, and scrap metal processing. Conditional uses in the HM zone include heavy manufacturing.

This analysis assumes that because the Project Area is adjacent to the existing BNSF mainline, the Project Area could be developed with a rail-dependent industrial use similar to the Proposed Project and existing surrounding development. Existing surrounding uses include warehouses, machinery rentals, metal and appliance recycling, automotive repair shops, and other similar manufacturing and industrial uses. Given the parcel size, site configuration, access points along 18th and 19th Streets, adjacency to mainline rail, and zoning permissions, the site could only be used for a limited number of uses such as warehousing and distribution, wholesale or medium manufacturing uses. Development of the site with a warehouse, wholesale or medium manufacturing use would require the construction of a structures to house the proposed use and would therefore require utilities to serve the project.

Aesthetics

The Project Area's current visual character and site quality is degraded as the vacant lot is littered with debris, contains no structures, and contains minimal vegetation. No scenic vistas are located within the Project Area or vicinity. Additionally, there are no officially designated state scenic highways in the City. The No Project Alternative would involve development of the site with a similar industrial/manufacturing use that would change existing views. However, similar to the Proposed Project, the No Project Alternative would be required to comply with design standards contained in the City of National City Zoning and Municipal Codes. Therefore, when compared to the Proposed Project, the No Project Alternative would have a similar magnitude of impacts associated with aesthetic resources and would be less than significant.

Agricultural and Forestry Resources

The Project Area is not located on land zoned for agricultural use or land designated for forest land, timberland, or land zoned timberland production. Development that would occur under the No Project Alternative would have no agricultural or forestry related impacts, which is similar to the Proposed Project.

Air Quality

Under Alternative 1 (No Project Alternative), land would still be graded for site development and construction emissions from the development of the alternative along with operational emissions from stationary and mobile sources would still occur. As the demand for fuel would not decrease, the region would continue to be served by fuel trucks with trips originating in the Los Angeles-Inland Empire region with an estimated average roundtrip distance of 200 miles and 70 truckloads daily. Because the anticipated development is assumed to remain rail-dependent, emissions from locomotive activities would still occur, which would be similar to the Proposed Project. Given the manufacturing zoning, it is reasonable to presume another development on the site, such as a warehouse, medium manufacturing, or wholesale use, would have some level of operational traffic, potentially including heavy-duty trucks. Therefore, emissions from vehicles would still occur under the No Project Alternative if the Project Area were developed with a different use. Emissions from the No Project Alternative would be less than significant when measured against applicable SDAPCD daily thresholds, which would be similar to the Proposed Project.

Biological Resources

Development that would occur under the No Project Alternative would result in similar impacts to biological resource when compared to the Proposed Project because this alternative would require similar disturbance of the Project Area. Adherence to Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-3 as identified for the Proposed Project would reduce impacts to a less than significant level. Compared with the Proposed Project, no greater impact would occur with Alternative 1.

Cultural Resources

Development that would occur under the No Project Alternative would result in extensive ground-disturbing activities affecting the Project Area and similar anticipated archaeological impacts when compared to the Proposed Project. Although no such resources have previously been detected within the Project Area, activities undertaken for the No Project Alternative (as with the Proposed Project) could encounter previously undetected cultural resources. Adherence to the archaeological mitigation measures identified for the Proposed Project in Section 3.9 of this EIR would reduce impacts to less than significant. Compared with the Proposed Project, no greater impact would occur with Alternative 1.

Energy

There are no established thresholds of significance, statewide or locally, for what constitutes a wasteful, inefficient, and unnecessary consumption of energy for a proposed land use project. The amount of electricity estimated to be consumed by the Project is quantified and compared to that consumed by all non-residential land uses in San Diego County. The amount of fuel necessary for Project construction is calculated and compared to fuel consumed in San Diego County. Similarly, the amount of fuel necessary for Project operations is calculated and compared to that consumed in San Diego County.

Under Alternative 1, land would still be graded for site development and construction emissions from the development of the alternative along with operational emissions from stationary and mobile sources would still occur. As noted above, it is reasonable to presume another development on the site, such as a warehouse, medium manufacturing or wholesale use, would have some level of operational traffic, potentially from heavy-duty trucks. Similar warehouse and/or manufacturing and/or wholesale uses would result in similar automotive fuel consumption associated with the No Project Alternative. Energy consumption would still occur under the No Project Alternative if the Project Area were developed with a different use and the magnitude of fuel consumption would be higher than that of the Proposed Project because new structures would be constructed that would consume natural gas and electricity.. However, similar to the Proposed Project, energy consumption from the No Project Alternative would be less than significant.

Geology and Soils

Like all of Southern California, the Project Area is located in a seismically active area and is subject to ground shaking resulting from activity on local and regional faults. Development that would occur under the No Project Alternative would have similar geologic and soil-related impacts when compared with the Proposed Project if the development intensity is similar. Under the Proposed Project, up to 10 operators would be onsite at any given time and the only proposed structure is an office trailer. Any manufacturing

use with greater development intensity and more onsite employees would have greater risks as it relates to effects from seismic activity. However, all structures constructed under the No Project Alternative would be required to conform to the Uniform Building Code (UBC) standards as well as the California Building Code (California Code of Regulations, Title 24), which establish engineering standards appropriate for Seismic Zone 4. Impacts associated with this issue would be considered less than significant. Compared with the Proposed Project, potential impacts related to risk could be increased under a more intense development scenario; however, impacts would remain less than significant..

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Under Alternative 1, land would still be graded for site development and construction emissions from the development of the alternative along with operational emissions from stationary and mobile sources would still occur. The region would continue to be served by fuel trucks with trips originating in the Los Angeles-Inland Empire region with an estimated average roundtrip distance of 200 miles and 70 truckloads daily. GHG emissions resulting from operation of the uses envisioned under the No Project Alternative would be similar as this alternative would result in a similar number of daily traffic trips and energy consumed. GHG emissions would still occur under the No Project Alternative if the Project Area were developed with a different use and the magnitude of emissions would be to be similar to that of the Proposed Project but slightly greater in magnitude to account for the GHG emissions from any proposed buildings. GHG emissions from the No Project Alternative would be less than significant when measured against applicable thresholds, which would be similar to the Proposed Project.

The City of National City prepared a CAP Update in 2023 to establish new GHG reduction goals and to align with new California regulations and targets to address climate change. Like the Proposed Project, the No Project Alternative would need to incorporate all applicable CAP Update actions to demonstrate consistency with the City's climate action planning efforts. Similar to the Proposed Project, mitigation measures identifying applicable reductions measures would be necessary to ensure a less than significant impact.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

The No Project Alternative would still result in the onsite handling of hazardous substances, both during construction and operation. This analysis assumes that these substances would continue to be applied in accordance with applicable local, state, and federal standards. The use of hazardous materials for the construction, such as diesel fuel, would not create a significant hazard to the public because the release of any construction-related spills would be prevented through the implementation of the BMPs listed in the SWPPP. However, development of the site with a warehouse, wholesale or manufacturing use would potentially reduce the volume of fuel present on the site; therefore, there would be a reduction in the magnitude of risks associated with this element of the Proposed Project. With adherence to existing hazardous materials regulations, construction and operational impacts associated with hazards and hazardous materials under Alternative 1 would remain less than significant.

Hydrology and Water Quality

As with the Proposed Project, development that would occur under the No Project Alternative would require the modification of the existing on-site pattern of drainage and the installation of drainage improvements that may include detention/retention basins, a connection to existing in-street drainage features, onsite storm drains, and other features. The extent of the impermeable surfaces (asphalt concrete areas) required under the No Project Alternative may be increased from that required for the Proposed Project if no additional rail tracks are proposed, the environmental impact of these improvements would be similar. All local, state, and federal policies and regulations pertaining to surface water and groundwater resources would remain in effect under Alternative 1. Sedimentation and erosion from any onsite development has the potential to affect water quality. Similar to the Proposed Project, the construction of any onsite use would be required to follow applicable NPDES requirements, including the preparation of and adherence to an SWPPP and BMPs. As with the Proposed Project, runoff from paved surfaces, especially during a "first-flush" event, may be contaminated by a mixture of sediment, debris, and other contaminants. A standard condition with any such development would be the preparation and implementation of a Water Quality Management Plan, which would effectively mitigate post-construction water quality impacts from the developed area. Similar to the Proposed Project, potential impacts related to hydrology and water quality would be less than significant.

Land Use and Planning

Like the Proposed Project, the No Project Alternative would comply with applicable provisions of local and regional plans (e.g., air quality management plan). Compliance with applicable City policies related to development within the Project Area would ensure that the No Project Alternative would be compatible with existing development in the Project Area. Therefore, land use impacts associated with Alternative 1 would be similar in magnitude when compared with the Proposed Project.

Development that would occur under Alternative 1 would have similar land use and planning impacts and would affect the same community as the Proposed Project; therefore, the consistency analysis in Section 3.6 Land Use and Planning of this EIR would be applicable for Alternative 1. Similar to the Proposed Project, the impacts of the No Project Alternative would be less than significant.

Mineral Resources

The Project Area is located in MRZ-3, which the California Geologic Society defines as an area where the significance of mineral deposits cannot be determined from the available data. The Proposed Project is located in an urban developed area characterized by industrial land uses. The Project Area includes vacant land and land used for a commercial business. The Project Area is not located on a known important mineral resource recovery site. Development that would occur under the No Project Alternative would not result in the loss of or reduce the availability of mineral resources or the resource base from which they would be derived. Compared with the Proposed Project, no greater impact would occur for Alternative 1.

Noise

As with the Proposed Project construction noise associated with development that would occur under the No Project Alternative would be temporary and vary depending on the nature of the activities being

performed. Noise generated would primarily be associated with the operation of off-road equipment for onsite construction activities as well as construction vehicle traffic on area roadways. The Project Area is located in a heavily developed industrial area and is located adjacent to the BNSF Railway railroad, which is one of the largest freight railroads in North America. Noise from rail activity along the BNSF mainline is part of the existing condition. The same nearby sensitive receptors would be affected by construction and operational noise. Similar to the Proposed Project, noise impacts from construction and operation, including groundborne vibration, would be less than significant for Alternative 1.

Population and Housing

The City's General Plan estimates a growth in the City's population and job growth by 2050. The No Project Alternative would involve development of the site with a similar industrial/manufacturing use. Population and employment forecasts are developed based upon land use designations identified in the City's General Plan. The Project Area is located within an area that is currently home to industrial and manufacturing uses and planned for industrial uses in accordance with the General Plan. Because of the nature of industrial and manufacturing uses and its inherent incompatibility with residential uses, It is reasonable to assume that the No Project Alternative would not result in the development of a residential use that would result in population growth not already accounted for in forecasts. Similar to the Proposed Project, no significant impact to population and housing would occur.

Public Services

As with the Proposed Project, the City of National City may charge an Emergency Response Cost Recovery Fee to recover the reasonable costs of services necessary to protect the public health and safety associated with motor vehicle incidents, hazardous materials spills or discharges, motor vehicle fires, motor vehicle extrications, pipeline or power line incidents, and fire cause and origin investigations. The City shall charge fees for the cost of services that the National City Fire Department provides related to emergency responses, such as hazardous materials spills or discharges for development that would occur under the No Project Alternative at this location.

Neither the Proposed Project nor the No Project Alternative includes a residential component that would result in a permanent increase in population. The nature of the Proposed Project and the No Project Alternative would not substantially increase permanent population growth nor create substantial additional demand for police services, schools, or park facilities. Impacts from Alternative 1 would be less than significant and no greater in magnitude than the Proposed Project.

Recreation

As with the Proposed Project, the No Project Alternative would not include a residential component and the development of this alternative would not cause a substantial increase in existing population or an increase in demand for park and recreation facilities. Because no increase in demand for recreational facilities would occur, impacts associated with recreation for the NO Project Alternative would be similar in magnitude as the Proposed Project. Like the Proposed Project, impacts from Alternative 1 would be less than significant.

Transportation

Similar to the Proposed Project, short-term construction-related vehicle trips would occur, but these conditions would be temporary and would not impede the implementation of City programs supporting walking, bicycling, and use of public transportation. The Proposed Project's a.m. and p.m. peak hour trips for each of the eight study intersections do not reach the 50-trip threshold during any hour of operation including the a.m. and p.m. peak period (13 weekday AM peak hour trips and 23 weekday PM peak hour trips); therefore, it is reasonable to assume that trips resulting from the No Project Alternative would also not reach the 50-trip threshold. Similar to the Proposed Project, the No Project Alternative would not affect transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities; would not increase hazards due to a geometric design feature; and would not result in inadequate emergency access.

A VMT review was conducted for the Proposed Project, and the Project is presumed to have a less than significant impact on VMT as it meets the small project exemption. Because the No Project Alternative would have a similar amount trips when compared to the Proposed Project, it would also meet the small project exemption.

While vehicle trips would still occur under the No Project Alternative if the Project Area were developed with a different use, the number of trips would be similar to that of the Proposed Project under the assumption that the site would be developed with a wholesale or medium manufacturing use. Transportation impacts would be less than significant, which would be similar to the Proposed Project.

Tribal Cultural Resources

Like the Proposed Project, the No Project Alternative would require ground disturbance and would have the potential to result in the discovery of, or inadvertent damage to, archaeological contexts. Like the Proposed Project, implementation of Mitigation Measure CUL-2 would reduce the potential impacts to less than significant. The impacts of the No Project Alternative would be the same as the Proposed Project.

Utilities and Service Systems

As with the Proposed Project, no new or expanded water or wastewater treatment facilities would be required for the No Project Alternative. The Project Area is located in a developed area of the City and existing utilities are available to serve the site. Further, neither the Proposed Project nor the No Project Alternative would result in impacts to natural gas, electric power, or telecommunications facilities from relocation or new construction. A similar demand for utilities during construction and a slight increase in demand during operation is expected for the No Project Alternative.

Wildfire

The Project Area has generally flat topography and has been developed since at least 1904. As with the Proposed Project, development that would occur under the No Project Alternative would not substantially alter the slope, wind patterns, or other factors that could exacerbate wildfire risks. Furthermore, the Project Area is not located in a VHFHSZ. The impacts of the No Project Alternative would be the same as the Proposed Project.

5.5.1.2 Conclusion

Under Alternative 1 (No Project Alternative), impacts related to short-term construction-related air quality, energy, GHGs, and noise would be similar to the Proposed Project because the same amount of land would be disturbed, and the same types and numbers of equipment would be utilized during construction.

Under Alternative 1 (No Project Alternative), impacts related to long-term operational air quality emissions, GHGs, and traffic would be similar to the Proposed Project because potential warehouse, wholesale or manufacturing uses on the site would result in similar trip generation estimates and corresponding mobile source emissions. Therefore, operational impacts to air quality, GHGs, and transportation would be similar to what was identified for the Proposed Project. Because this alternative would result in the construction of structures on the site to accommodate the proposed wholesale or manufacturing use, it is expected that there would be a slight increase in the demand for energy and for utilities such as electricity and water. Compared to the Proposed Project, there would be an increase in the magnitude of impacts resulting from the demand, but would remain less than significant. All other remaining environmental topics with the exception of geology and soils would have the same impacts as the Proposed Project and would be less than significant. Compared with the Proposed Project, potential impacts related to risk could be increased under a more intense development scenario; however, impacts would remain less than significant. However, Alternative 1 would not meet most of the Project objectives.

5.5.2 Alternative 2 – Reduced Intensity

With the intent of reducing the Project's air quality, GHG, noise, and traffic impacts, the City has considered a Reduced Intensity Alternative (Alternative 2). Under this alternative, the transloading facility would transfer approximately 25 percent less barrels of fuel per day than the Proposed Project.

This alternative includes the development of the Project Area as planned in the Proposed Project; however, the facility would process 10,350 barrels of fuel per day, resulting in a 25 percent reduction from the 13,800 barrels of fuel per day that would be processed under the Proposed Project.

5.5.2.1 Impact Analysis

Under Alternative 2, the overall intensity would be reduced by approximately 25 percent by reducing the number of barrels of fuel transloaded per day. All other Project impacts would be the same as under the Project, including the following:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| ■ Aesthetics | ■ Land Use and Planning |
| ■ Agricultural Resources | ■ Mineral Resources |
| ■ Biological Resources | ■ Noise |
| ■ Cultural Resources | ■ Population and Housing |
| ■ Geology and Soils | ■ Public Services |
| ■ Hydrology and Water Quality | ■ Recreation |

-
- Tribal Cultural Resources
 - Wildfire
 - Utilities and Service Systems

The remaining environmental issues would, in some cases, result in similar impacts but would be different enough to be discussed separately.

Air Quality

Because the amount of land to be graded with Alternative 2 would be equal to that of the Proposed Project, a similar mixture of equipment as the Proposed Project would operate during earthmoving activities. Therefore, construction emissions from the development of Alternative 2 would be similar to the Proposed Project. Under this alternative, average daily traffic volumes during operation would be reduced by 25 percent compared with the Proposed Project, which does not exceed SDAPCD thresholds. Therefore, the volume of each operational pollutant emitted during the operation of this alternative would be correspondingly reduced and would not exceed any SDAPCD thresholds for any criteria air pollutants. Similar to the Proposed Project, impacts to air quality would be less than significant, however, air quality emissions under Alternative 2 would be incrementally reduced compared to the Proposed Project.

Energy

Construction of Alternative 2 would use a similar mixture of equipment as construction for the Proposed Project, therefore, this alternative would require a similar amount of construction-related automotive fuel. Fuel necessary for Project construction would be required for the operation and maintenance of construction equipment and the transportation of materials to the Project Area. Fuel consumption during the construction period is estimated in this analysis to be 27,783 gallons. This would increase the annual construction-related fuel use in the county by 0.00179 percent. As such and similar to the Proposed Project, construction of Alternative 2 would have a nominal effect on local and regional energy supplies.

Operation of the Proposed Project would include electricity for lighting and space and water heating for the small building onsite. The annual electricity consumption due to Project operations would be 2,180 kWh resulting in a negligible increase (0.00002 percent) in the typical annual electricity consumption attributable to all non-residential uses in San Diego County. As Alternative 2 would not reduce electricity use for lighting and space and water heating, electricity consumption would be the same as that of the Proposed Project.

Automotive fuel consumption during operation of the Proposed Project is estimated to be 119,306 gallons of automotive fuel per year, which would increase the annual countywide automotive fuel consumption by 0.0077 percent. This analysis conservatively assumes that all of the automobile trips projected to arrive at the Project during operations would be new to San Diego County. Because Alternative 2 would reduce the daily number of barrels of fuel transferred from 13,800 to 10,350 barrels of fuel per day, there would be a reduced number of trucks and therefore fuel consumption would be reduced.

Similar to the Proposed Project, energy consumption impacts as a result of Alternative 2 would be less than significant. However, energy consumption under Alternative 2 would be incrementally reduced compared to the Proposed Project.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Construction activities associated with the Proposed Project would include the addition of new receiving and departure rail spurs and 4 fixed truck loading spots with the required secondary containment infrastructure. Construction of Alternative 2 would be the same as construction of the Proposed Project; therefore, the generation of CO₂e would be the same. Project construction would generate approximately 282 metric tons of CO₂e over the course of construction. Once construction is complete, the generation of these GHG emissions would cease. Under Alternative 2, construction related emissions would not exceed the numeric bright-line threshold of 3,000 metric tons of CO₂e annually; therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Operation of the transloading facility would result in GHG emissions predominantly associated with motor vehicle use. Operational emissions for the Proposed Project would total approximately 1,633 metric tons of CO₂e, which would not exceed the numeric bright-line threshold of 3,000 metric tons of CO₂e annually. Alternative 2 proposes a 25 percent reduction in daily barrels of fuel transferred, which would reduce the number of trucks needed. Therefore, the total amount of CO₂e generated during operations under Alternative 2 would be reduced below that generated by the Proposed Project. Alternative 2 would also not exceed the numeric bright-line threshold of 3,000 metric tons of CO₂e annually; therefore, its impact would be less than significant.

Due to the reduced throughput of Alternative 2, the Project would likely not meet the operational efficiency requirements necessary to meet the Project objectives to deliver lower emissions to the San Diego market by reducing fuel transit truck miles more than the existing supply chain; facilitate the State's commitment to achieve its stated goal of carbon neutrality by 2045, and reduce GHG emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030; or expand the availability of renewable fuels to the region to advance the State's Low-Carbon Fuels Standard goal.

Transportation

The Reduced Intensity Alternative would transload approximately 10,350 barrels of fuel, which represents a 25 percent reduction in intensity. A maximum of 5 employees would be onsite at one time; therefore, 10 employees were used in the analysis to reflect a shift change. The trip generation for these employees was estimated using an industrial employment trip rate. The facility will be operated in three shifts for 24 hours per day, but 70 percent of the trips will occur between 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. The number of truck trips have been converted to passenger car equivalent trips using 2.5 vehicles per truck. Table 5.6-1 below demonstrates the reduced traffic associated with Alternative 2.

Table 5.6-1. Trip Generation – Reduced Intensity Alternative					
ITE Code	Variable	Intensity	Unit	Daily Rate	Daily Trips
140	Employees	10	Employee	2.51	25

Table 5.6-1. Trip Generation – Reduced Intensity Alternative					
ITE Code	Variable	Intensity	Unit	Daily Rate	Daily Trips
–	Truck Trips	10.35	1000 barrel	10.4	108
Total					133
Passenger Car Equivalent					270

Source: ITE Trip Generation Manual 11th Edition

As shown above, Alternative 2 is expected to generate approximately 270 passenger car equivalent daily trips. This does not exceed the lower 500 ADT for projects inconsistent with the General Plan or the 1000 ADT threshold for projects consistent with the General Plan. This alternative is consistent with the City's General Plan and does not exceed the ADT threshold; therefore, it is screened out. Similar to the Proposed Project, Alternative 2 is presumed to have a less than significant impact on VMT. However, VMT under Alternative 2 would be incrementally reduced compared to the Proposed Project.

5.5.2.2 Conclusion

Under Alternative 2 (Reduced Intensity Alternative), impacts related to short-term construction-related air quality, energy, GHGs, and noise impacts would be less than significant, which would be similar to the Proposed Project because the same amount of land would be disturbed, and the same types and numbers of equipment would be utilized during construction.

Because of the decrease in vehicle trips achieved under this alternative, operational impacts to air quality, energy, GHGs, and transportation would be proportionally reduced from what was identified for the Proposed Project. However, the 25 percent reduction would decrease the throughput such that Alternative 2 would not meet the Project's objectives. Alternative 2 would reduce throughput from 13,800 barrels of fuel per day to 10,350 barrels of fuel per day, which would not increase the availability of renewable fuels to the region or increase the availability of cleaner fuels sooner than the existing supply chain at a level that would meet business performance metrics.

This alternative does not fully meet the Project objectives to deliver lower emissions to the San Diego market by reducing fuel transit truck miles more than the existing supply chain; facilitate the State's commitment to achieve its stated goal of carbon neutrality by 2045 and reduce GHG emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030; or expand the availability of renewable fuels to the region to advance the State's Low-Carbon Fuels Standard goal. and would not meet business performance metrics.

5.5.3 Alternative 3 – Offsite Location within National City

With the intent of avoiding impacts at the Proposed Project's current location, the City has considered an offsite location for the transloading facility on a parcel at 3202 Hoover Avenue. The gross acreage is 6.07 acres; however, the developable acreage is 5.16 acres. The development site acreage of the Alternative 3

site represents approximately 70 percent of developable area when compared to the Proposed Project. Because the Alternative 3 site is shaped more uniformly and is not long and relatively narrow like the Proposed Project site, the ability to stack rail cars within the site is reduced. Alternative 3 would be on a smaller site and the nearby rail track lead would only accommodate 3 railcars, the daily number of barrels of fuel transferred would be reduced. For the purposes of this analysis, the daily throughput is assumed to be reduced by 50 percent resulting in 6,900 barrels per day being processed at this facility under this scenario.

This parcel is east of I-5 and the BNSF rail line and includes an active rail spur available for use on the eastern boundary as well as Paradise Marsh wetland on the northern boundary. This location is not under railroad ownership. Surrounding land uses include a self-storage facility, packaging supply store, and construction business to the north; a truck rental facility, motorcycle dealership, and recycling center to the east; SR-54 and Sweetwater River to the south; and I-5 and a rail line to the west.

5.5.3.1 Impact Analysis

Under Alternative 3, an offsite location would be used for the proposed transloading facility. The following environmental issues would, in some cases, result in impacts similar to the Proposed Project, but would be different enough to be discussed separately.

Aesthetics

The Alternative 3 site largely contains pieces of construction equipment and railroad materials. The site is bordered to the north by Paradise Marsh; to the east by a truck rental facility and a motorcycle dealership; to the south by an equipment supplier, SR-54 and Sweetwater River; and to the west by a railroad and I-5. The character of the area is industrial. The Alternative 3 site is visible from public vantage points including SR-54, I-5, and the Sweetwater Bikeway.

Short-term construction activities could potentially temporarily degrade the existing visual character and quality of the surroundings. During the construction phase, various equipment, vehicles, building materials, stockpiles, disposal receptacles, and related activities would be visible in the Project Area. However, construction-related activities would be short-term and temporary in nature. Once completed, all general construction activities would cease along with any construction-related aesthetic impacts. As the existing Alternative 3 site was previously used for industrial purposes, Alternative 3 would result in a transloading facility on an industrial site consistent with surrounding commercial and industrial uses. Potential viewers within the viewshed of the Alternative 3 site would be motorists traveling along SR-54 and I-5 as well as bicyclists using the Sweetwater Bikeway and surrounding bike lanes. Motorists passing through an area typically view the landscape from their motor vehicles and do not tend to stop along their travel routes. Additionally, travelers generally have a narrow field of view because they are focused on road and traffic conditions. Passengers of these vehicles and bicyclists would have greater opportunities for prolonged offroad views toward landscape features, however, the visual impact of Alternative 3 would be consistent with existing surrounding uses.

No state scenic highways or scenic vistas are located within the site or vicinity. Therefore, implementation of Alternative 3 would not result in a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista or conflict with scenic quality regulations, which would be similar to the Proposed Project.

Agriculture and Forestry Resources

The City of National City is almost completely developed and does not have any designated Prime or Unique Agricultural Land. According to the California Department of Conservation Important Farmland Finder, the Alternative 3 site is on land classified as Urban and Built-Up Land (DOC 2024). The site is not located on or near Prime Farmland and is not under a Williamson Act Contract.

Similar to the Proposed Project, implementation of Alternative 3 would not convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance; would not conflict with any zoning for agriculture, forest land, or timberland; and would not result in the conversion of forest land to non-forest land. No impact to agriculture and forestry resources would occur from Alternative 3.

Air Quality

The location of Alternative 3, like the Proposed Project, is in National City within the SDAB and under the regulatory authority of the SDAPCD. The ambient air quality in this area can be inferred from ambient air quality measurements conducted at nearby air quality monitoring stations. The Chula Vista (80 East J Street, Chula Vista) monitoring station, which is located approximately 3 miles south of the Alternative 3 site, is the closest station to the site and monitors ambient concentrations of O₃, PM₁₀, and PM_{2.5}. Table 5.6-2 summarizes the published data from the Chula Vista monitoring station for each year that the monitoring data is provided.

Table 5.6-2. Summary of Ambient Air Quality Data – Chula Vista Monitoring Site			
Pollutant Scenario	2020	2021	2022
O₃			
Max 1-hour concentration (ppm)	0.106	0.084	0.078
Max 8-hour concentration (ppm) (state/federal)	0.086/0.086	0.067/0.066	0.067/0.066
Number of days above 1-hour standard (state)	1	0	0
Number of days above 8-hour standard (state/federal)	4/4	0/0	0/0
PM₁₀			
Max 24-hour concentration (µg/m ³) (state/federal)	*	*	*
Annual Average (federal)	*	*	*
Number of days above 24-hour standard (state/federal)	*	*	*
PM_{2.5}			

Table 5.6-2. Summary of Ambient Air Quality Data – Chula Vista Monitoring Site			
Pollutant Scenario	2020	2021	2022
Max 24-hour concentration ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) (state/federal)	* /46.7	* /24.9	* /16.2
Number of days above federal 24-hour standard	6.1	0.0	*

Notes: * = Insufficient data available; $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ = micrograms per cubic meter; O_3 = ozone; $\text{PM}_{2.5}$ = Particulate Matter Less than 2.5 Microns in Diameter; PM_{10} = Particulate Matter Less than 10 Microns in Diameter; ppm = parts per million
Source: California Air Resources Board 2023a

As the Alternative 3 location is in the same air basin as the Proposed Project, the attainment status of the SDAB remains the same. The region is designated as a nonattainment area for the federal O_3 standard and is also a nonattainment area for the state standards for O_3 , PM_{10} , and $\text{PM}_{2.5}$ (CARB 2022a). The SDAPCD recommends the usage of San Diego County thresholds of significance (San Diego County 2007) for air quality for construction and operational activities of land use development projects, which is shown in Table 3.1-4 in Section 3.1 Air Quality of this EIR.

The nearest sensitive receptor is the Mariner's Landing Apartments, which is located approximately 0.28 mile east of the Alternative 3 site.

As the Alternative 3 site is smaller than that of the Proposed Project, its predicted maximum daily construction-generated emissions would be lower. The Proposed Project's construction-related emissions would not exceed the SDAPCD's thresholds of significance, therefore, neither would the construction emissions for Alternative 3.

Predicted maximum daily operational-generated emissions of criteria air pollutants such as PM_{10} , $\text{PM}_{2.5}$, CO, and SO_2 and O_3 precursors such as ROG and NO_x would be lower for Alternative 3 than the Proposed Project. Operational emissions were estimated using the Project's daily throughput, truck tanker capacity, and trip distances. As the Alternative 3 site is smaller and can only accommodate development on 5.16 acres, the daily throughput and truck tanker capacity would be less than that of the Proposed Project and is assumed to be reduced by approximately 50 percent. Since the Proposed Project's emissions would not exceed any SDAPCD thresholds for any criteria air pollutants during operations, neither would the operational emissions for Alternative 3.

The emissions associated with Alternative 3 would not exceed any SDAPCD thresholds for criteria air pollutants during construction or operations; therefore, sensitive receptors would not be exposed to substantial pollutant concentrations. Additionally, this site is in a similar industrial area that would require a CUP. Although the Alternative 3 site is located in the City, it is not located in a neighborhood designated as a Portside Environmental Justice Community under the CARB Community Air Protection Program.

The Proposed Project's air quality analysis included a health risk assessment to evaluate health risks from construction and operation and the potential for emissions to expose nearby sensitive receptors to diesel particulate matter from heavy duty truck activity and rail activity. The health risk assessment demonstrated that neither Project operation nor construction would result in a significant contribution to cancer risk in the community or for the onsite workforce. Additionally, impacts related to non-cancer risk (chronic and

acute hazard index) are less than significant. Proposed Project emissions are below applicable adopted thresholds that ensure air quality standards are attained and public health is protected. Because the predicted daily throughput would be 50 percent less than that identified for the Proposed Project, the emissions of Alternative 3 would be less than that of the Proposed Project, Alternative 3 would also not result in a significant contribution to cancer and non-cancer risk in the community.

Due to the smaller site size and consequently reduced throughput of Alternative 3, the Project would likely not meet the operational efficiency requirements that are necessary to meet the Project objectives to deliver lower emissions to the San Diego market by reducing fuel transit truck miles more than the existing supply chain; facilitate the State's commitment to achieve its stated goal of carbon neutrality by 2045 and reduce GHG emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030; or expand the availability of renewable fuels to the region to advance the State's Low-Carbon Fuels Standard goal and would not meet business performance metrics.

Biological Resources

The Alternative 3 site is mainly disturbed and developed/urban lands; however, the northern part of the parcel includes approximately 1 acre of the adjacent 2.2-acre Paradise Marsh, which is designated by the National Wetlands Inventory as an estuarine and marine wetland (USFWS 2024). Paradise Marsh is located within an identified priority area of the South San Diego Bay as identified in the report entitled "Acquisition Priorities for the Coastal Wetlands of California." Paradise Marsh would be impacted under Alternative 3 to accommodate the Project components. Additional measures would be necessary to reduce the impacts of Alternative 3 to less than significant.

Allowed uses within wetlands within the coastal zone are governed by Section 30233 of the Coastal Act, which includes a three-part test. The first test requires that the proposed wetland fill activity fit within one of the enumerated use categories described in Coastal Act Section 30233(a)(1)-(7). The second test requires that no feasible, less environmentally damaging alternative exists. The third test mandates that feasible mitigation measures be provided to minimize any of a project's adverse environmental effects.

The potential encroachment of Alternative 3 into the wetland would require further evaluation and permitting. For impacts to CCA areas, the Project would require consistency with the Local Coastal Program (LCP) and concurrence with the City, who presides over the LCP. Additionally, a connection of the wetland to TNW or to Interstate Waters, as determined by the USACE, would subject the aquatic resources to regulation under the CWA.

The USFWS Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) database was reviewed in this analysis to determine the federal special-status plant and wildlife species with potential to occur in the vicinity of the Alternative 3 site. Table 5.6-3 shows the results of the IPaC database search.

Table 5.6-3. IPaC Special-Status Plant and Wildlife Species		
Scientific Name	Common Name	Federal Status
Plants		

Table 5.6-3. IPaC Special-Status Plant and Wildlife Species		
Scientific Name	Common Name	Federal Status
<i>Acanthomintha ilicifolia</i>	San Diego thorn-mint	Threatened
<i>Ambrosia pumila</i>	San Diego ambrosia	Endangered
<i>Cordylanthus maritimus</i> ssp. <i>maritimus</i>	salt marsh bird's-beak	Endangered
<i>Deinandra conjugens</i>	Otay tarplant	Threatened
<i>Eryngium aristulatum</i> var. <i>parishii</i>	San Diego button-celery	Endangered
<i>Orcuttia californica</i>	California orcutt Grass	Endangered
Wildlife		
Insects		
<i>Danaus plexippus</i>	monarch butterfly	Candidate
<i>Euphydryas editha quino</i>	quino checkerspot butterfly	Endangered
Crustaceans		
<i>Branchinecta sandiegonensis</i>	San Diego fairy shrimp	Endangered
<i>Streptocephalus woottoni</i>	Riverside fairy shrimp	Endangered
Amphibians		
<i>Spea hammondi</i>	western spadefoot	Proposed Threatened
Reptiles		
<i>Actinemys pallida</i>	southwestern pond turtle	Proposed Threatened
Birds		
<i>Charadrius nivosus nivosus</i>	western snowy plover	Threatened
<i>Empidonax traillii extimus</i>	southwestern willow flycatcher	Endangered
<i>Polioptila californica californica</i>	coastal California gnatcatcher	Threatened
<i>Rallus obsoletus levipes</i>	light-footed Ridgway's rail	Endangered
<i>Sternula antillarum browni</i>	California least tern	Endangered
<i>Vireo bellii pusillus</i>	least Bell's vireo	Endangered
Mammals		
<i>Perognathus longimembris pacificus</i>	pacific pocket mouse	Endangered

CDFW's CNDDB database BIOS viewer was also reviewed to determine plant and wildlife species with known current or historical occurrences on the Alternative 3 site and within a 1-mile buffer.

Plant species with recent (within 20 years) occurrences include the following:

- **Beach goldenaster (*Heterotheca sessiliflora* ssp. *sessiliflora*)**. California Rare Plant Rank (CRPR) 1B.1. Habitat includes coastal dunes, coastal scrub, and chaparral (coastal). Last seen June 2005 near the D Street fill, Sweetwater Marsh National Wildlife Refuge at Southeast San Diego Bay near the disturbed land at the edge of a salt marsh.
- **Coast woolly-heads (*Nemacaulis denudata* var. *denudata*)**. CRPR 1B.2. Habitat includes coastal dunes. Last seen August 2004 just west of the junction of I-5 and CA-54 in Paradise Marsh near the D Street Fill, southeast San Diego Bay.
- **Estuary seablite (*Suaeda esteroa*)**. CRPR 1B.2. Habitat includes marshes and swamps. Last seen in August 2004 near the D Street fill, between the Chula Vista Nature Center and Port of San Diego Marine Terminal, San Diego Bay.
- **Nuttall's acmispon (*Acmispon prostrates*)**. CRPR 1B.1. Habitat includes coastal dunes and coastal scrub. Last seen in May 2001 in USFWS Habitat Restoration Area west of I-5, north of the Chula Vista Nature Center.
- **Palmer's frankenia (*Frankenia palmeri*)**. CRPR 2B.1. Habitat includes coastal dunes, marshes (coastal salt), and playas. Last seen in 2015 in Sweetwater Marsh near Gunpower Point Drive in Chula Vista.
- **Salt marsh bird's beak**. Federal Endangered, State Endangered. CRPR 1B.2. Habitat includes marshes and swamps and coastal dunes. Last seen in May 2019 in Sweetwater Marsh, west of I-5 in Chula Vista.

Wildlife species with recent (within 20 years) occurrences include the following:

- **Crotch's bumble bee (*Bombus crotchii*)**. State Candidate Endangered. Habitat includes coastal California east to the Sierra-Cascade crest and south into Mexico. Last seen in June 2017 near the western end of Gunpowder Point Drive, San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge in Chula Vista.
- **Least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*)**. Federal Endangered, State Endangered. Habitat includes Southern California in low riparian areas in vicinity of water or in dry river bottoms. Nests placed along margins of bushes or on twigs. Last seen in 2010 on Sweetwater River, from 2nd Avenue to about 2 miles east between National City and Chula Vista, west of Sweetwater Reservoir.
- **Light-footed Ridgway's rail (*Rallus obsoletus levipes*)**. CDFW Fully Protected. Habitat includes salt marshes traversed by tidal sloughs, where cordgrass and pickleweed are the dominant vegetation. Last seen in June 2007 near mouth of Sweetwater River, including Paradise Slough and remnant marshes at E, F, and G Streets in Chula Vista and National City.
- **Monarch (*Danaus plexippus plexippus* pop. 1)**. Federal Candidate Endangered. California overwintering population. Habitat for winter roost sites extends along the coast from northern Mendocino to Baja California, Mexico. Last seen in November 2012 near Roca Park between 4th Avenue and 5th Avenue, south of C Street in Chula Vista.

- **Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*).** CDFW Watch List. Habitat includes ocean shores, bays, freshwater lakes, and larger streams. Last seen in June 2019 west of I-5 on the Sweetwater Reservoir Channel and south of E 24th Street in National City. Nests observed on manmade structures (light poles, nesting platforms) above parking lots and shipping yards adjacent to San Diego Bay.

Due to the database search results showing potential for special-status plant and wildlife species to occur on the Alternative 3 site, it is reasonable to assume that these species could be impacted by Alternative 3. If present, direct impacts to rare or special-status wildlife species may occur as a result of this alternative in the form of mortality or injury due to ground-disturbing and vegetation removal activities within the Alternative 3 Project Area. Indirect impacts to rare or special-status wildlife species may occur due to habitat degradation, edge effects, construction noise, and other associated construction activities if present in the areas adjacent to the Project Area. Similar to the Proposed Project, the Alternative 3 site includes habitat for Nuttall's acmispson, osprey, and other special-status bird species. Therefore, at a minimum, mitigation measures similar to Mitigation Measures BIO-1 and BIO-2, which are prescribed for the Proposed Project in Section 3.2 Biological Resources, would be necessary to reduce impacts to these species.

Cultural Resources

The City's General Plan Open Space and Agriculture Element identifies cultural and paleontological resources located within the City. Thirty cultural resources were identified within the City, 9 of which are prehistoric and 21 of which are historical resources. None of the City's four structures on the NRHP are located within the Alternative 3 site.

A California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) records search for the property would be needed to determine the existence of previous surveys near the Alternative 3 site and whether previously documented precontact or historic-period archeological sites, architectural resources, or traditional cultural properties exist within the area. A review of additional sources such as the National Register Information System, California Historical Landmarks, General Land Office land patent records, and the Caltrans Bridge Local and State Inventories would also be required to complete a cultural resources inventory for Alternative 3.

Similar to the Proposed Project, ground disturbance associated with the implementation of Alternative 3 has the potential to impact surface and previously unknown subsurface historic or cultural resources should any be present. Additionally, although no formal cemeteries are located or near the Alternative 3 Project Area and no impacts to human remains are anticipated by the City, existing regulations (§7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code, §5097.98 of the California PRC, and Assembly Bill [AB] 2641) are in place that detail the actions that must be taken if such discoveries are made. Mitigation measures for archeological monitoring, Native American monitoring, and post-review discovery measures would be expected to reduce the impacts of Alternative 3 to less than significant. These mitigation measures would be similar to CUL-1 through CUL-3 for the Proposed Project.

Energy

Although the Alternative 3 site is smaller than that of the Proposed Project, construction would be similar and would require a similar amount of equipment and construction-related automotive fuel. Fuel necessary for Project construction would be required for the operation and maintenance of construction equipment and the transportation of materials to the Project Area.

Operation of the Proposed Project would include electricity for lighting and space and water heating for the small building onsite. The annual electricity consumption due to Project operations would be 2,180 kWh resulting in a negligible increase (0.00002 percent) in the typical annual electricity consumption attributable to all non-residential uses in San Diego County. As Alternative 3 would not reduce electricity use for lighting and space and water heating, electricity consumption would be the same as that of the Proposed Project.

The Alternative 3 site is smaller and may require a reduced number of rail cars due to the site configuration. This may result in reduced daily throughput and number of truck loads; therefore, fuel consumption would be reduced compared with the Proposed Project.

Similar to the Proposed Project, energy consumption impacts as a result of Alternative 3 would be less than significant. Due to the reduction in throughput, Alternative 3 does not fully address the Project's objective to expand the availability of renewable fuels to the region to advance the State's Low-Carbon Fuels Standard goal.

Geology and Soils

The California Geological Survey does not include the City on its list of cities affected by Alquist Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones. No known active faults run through the City or the Alternative 3 site limits; however, the City is located within a seismically active region where earthquakes have the potential to cause ground shaking of significant magnitude (City of National City 2011c). Similar to the Proposed Project, the strong ground shaking hazard may be managed by structural design per the governing edition of the CBC. Structures should be designed in general accordance with the seismic provisions of the CBC Seismic Design Category D to reduce the risk of loss, injury, or death resulting from strong ground-shaking to less than significant.

National City has a low liquefaction risk; however, there are areas in the western and southern portions of the City that have a slight risk of liquefaction due to the presence of hydric soils or soils that are often saturated or characteristic of wetlands. A soils analysis search was conducted using the Web Soil Survey data and two soil types occur on the Alternative 3 site, made land (Md) and tidal flats (Tf) (NRCS 2024). The site contains tidal flats, which is a hydric soil type that can amplify the risk of liquefaction. Additionally, the Alternative 3 site is located in an area of the City with the potential for soft soil types that may amplify effects of earthquakes to liquefaction. A liquefaction analysis would be able to indicate potential settlement due to proposed improvements.

The risk of landslides in the City is relatively low because it is generally level with few areas of steep slopes. Additionally, soils in San Diego County are generally granitic, and there have been no documented incidents of subsidence in the County or near the City (City 2011c). The Alternative 3 site is not located

adjacent to a hillside area with unstable slopes. The potential for a landslide, lateral spreading, liquefaction, or collapse on the site is very low. The site is relatively flat and does not have landslide potential. Impacts from Alternative 3 would be less than significant.

Similar to the Proposed Project, ground-disturbing activities such as trenching could potentially result in soil erosion or loss of topsoil. Construction of Alternative 3 would be required to comply with the Construction General Permit, either through a waiver or through the preparation and implementation of an SWPPP.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Construction activities associated with the Proposed Project would include the addition of new receiving and departure rail spurs and 4 fixed truck loading spots with the required secondary containment infrastructure. The size of the Alternative 3 site would require reconfiguration that may reduce the number of truck loading spots; however, because construction equipment would be similar to the Proposed Project, Alternative 3's generation of CO₂e would be the same. Construction of the Proposed Project would result in the generation of approximately 282 metric tons of CO₂e over the course of construction. Once construction is complete, the generation of these GHG emissions would cease. Construction related emissions would not exceed the numeric bright-line threshold of 3,000 metric tons of CO₂e annually; therefore, similar to the Proposed Project, impacts from Alternative 3 would be less than significant.

Operation of the transloading facility would result in GHG emissions predominantly associated with motor vehicle use. Operational emissions for the Proposed Project would total approximately 1,525 metric tons of CO₂e, which would not exceed the numeric bright-line threshold of 3,000 metric tons of CO₂e annually. Because Alternative 3 would be on a smaller site and the nearby rail track lead would only accommodate 3 railcars, the daily number of barrels of fuel transferred would be reduced. Therefore, the total amount of CO₂e generated during operations under Alternative 3 would be reduced below that generated by the Proposed Project. The Proposed Project would not exceed the numeric bright-line threshold of 3,000 metric tons of CO₂e annually; therefore, it is reasonable to determine that Alternative 3 would not exceed the threshold and would have less than significant impacts.

Because the demand for renewable fuel would not decrease and Alternative 3 would result in a reduction in fuel throughput, this alternative would not fully address the Project's objective to expand the availability of renewable fuels to the region to advance the State's Low-Carbon Fuels Standard goal, facilitate the State's commitment to achieve carbon neutrality by 2045 and reduce GHG emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030, or increase the availability of cleaner fuels sooner than the current supply chain.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Development of Alternative 3 would still result in the onsite handling of hazardous substances, both during Project construction and operation. These substances would continue to be applied in accordance with applicable local, state, and federal standards. The use of hazardous materials for the construction of the Project at the alternative location, such as diesel fuel, would not create a significant hazard to the

public because the release of any construction-related spills would be prevented through the implementation of the BMPs listed in the SWPPP.

Similar to the Proposed Project, each truck loading spot at the Alternative 3 site will consist of a pump skid, controls, and above ground piping between the belly of the rail cars and the bottom loading port of the truck. Each spot would also include a concrete containment pad and drain for the containment of potential spills that would be piped to an onsite concrete containment basin. As this site is smaller than that of the Proposed Project, the size of the containment basin would be resized to fit the site plan while still providing adequate containment capabilities. The rail car and truck unloading area will be equipped with a containment system capable of containing the contents of 110 percent of an entire rail car volume until the material can be evacuated, transported, and disposed of. A spill kit would be located in the filling station area. An Aqueous Film Forming Foam Fluorine Free Firefighting platform with additional fire hydrants would be located onsite. Additionally, the release of hazardous materials into the environment would be prevented or managed through an FRP, SPCC Plan, and SWPPP that would be prepared for the alternative site.

As described above, the Alternative 3 site is located adjacent to a portion of the Paradise Marsh wetland on the northern boundary. Like the Proposed Project the greatest risk of release is from rail cars and fuels would impact the same receiving water bodies and include Paradise Creek, Paradise Marsh, Sweetwater Channel (Sweetwater River), and San Diego Bay. The potential for either a large or medium accidental spill is relatively low because of the adequate secondary containment, ongoing maintenance, and training and procedures outlined in the FRP in place. Therefore, potential impacts would be similar.

With adherence to existing hazardous materials regulations, construction and operational impacts associated with hazards and hazardous materials under Alternative 3 would remain less than significant.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Similar to the Proposed Project, potential water quality impacts associated with Alternative 3 include short-term, construction-related erosion/sedimentation from ground-disturbing activities, such as excavation, trenching, and paving and construction-related hazardous material discharge. Adherence to mandated SWPPP requirements would ensure that potential impacts that could cause a violation of any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements would be less than significant.

Neither the Proposed Project nor Alternative 3 include withdrawal of groundwater and the sites are not identified as a groundwater recharge area. No impacts to groundwater supplies or recharge are anticipated and no mitigation is required.

Two storm drains along Hoover Avenue front the Alternative 3 site. The drains convey stormwater and urban runoff underneath local roads, the railroad, and surrounding developed areas and are likely associated with municipal storm sewer systems. SWPPP listing BMPs to prevent construction pollutants and products from violating any water quality standard or waste discharge requirements would be prepared for Alternative 3. This alternative would not change the quality and quantity of runoff water in the Project Area.

The Alternative 3 site is located within FEMA's Zone X or an area with reduced flood risk due to a levee (FEMA 2024). Additionally, the site is not located within a tsunami or seiche zone. The risk of release of pollutants due to Project inundation is less than significant.

Land Use and Planning

Land Use Designation and Zoning

The Proposed Project is located in an urban developed area characterized by industrial land uses. Surrounding land uses include a self-storage facility, packaging supply store, and construction business to the north; a truck rental facility, motorcycle dealership, and recycling center to the east; SR-54 and Sweetwater River to the south; and I-5 and a rail line to the west.

The Alternative 3 site is designated in the City's General Plan as Industrial and has a zoning designation of Light Manufacturing (ML). A CUP would also be required for Alternative 3. Issuance of the CUP would align Alternative 3 with the City's land use regulations and would not constitute a significant environmental impact. Additionally, the site is located in the Coastal Zone. The City's Coastal Zone includes approximately 575 acres and is divided into four districts. Subarea I covers the industrial area west of I-5, Subarea II covers the Paradise Marsh wetlands area, Subarea III covers the Sweetwater industrial area east of I-5 and south of 30th Street, and Subarea IV covers I-5 and the San Diego Trolley ROW. Alternative 3 is located in Subarea II. Similar to the Proposed Project, under Alternative 3 the Project would apply for a Coastal Development Permit. With these measures, impacts from Alternative 3 would be less than significant.

Table 3.6-2 in Section 3.6 Land Use and Planning of this DEIR provides a consistency analysis of the Proposed Project with the applicable policies of the City's General Plan and other applicable land use plans and policies. Since the Proposed Project and Alternative 3 have the same Project features and only differ in geographical location, the consistency analysis provided in Table 5.6-4 below analyzes the consistency of Alternative 3 with only the location-based General Plan policies.

Health and Environmental Justice

The City's General Plan includes a Health and Environmental Justice Element to identify public health risks and environmental justice concerns to improve living conditions, physical health, and the well-being of the City's residents. This element acknowledges the relationship between pollution and negative health effects and identifies policies aimed at reducing adverse health effects within the community.

Although the Alternative 3 site is located in the City, it is not located in a neighborhood designated as a Portside Environmental Justice Community under the CARB Community Air Protection Program. The Project Area is not considered to experience disproportionate effects from exposure to air pollutants and therefore has no established environmental justice strategies to incorporate into Alternative 3. Table 5.6-4 below provides a consistency analysis of Alternative 3 with the applicable General Plan policies, including those in the Health and Environmental Justice Element.

Table 5.6-4. Summary of Consistency with Environmental Policies of the General Plan and Other Applicable Land Use Plans – Proposed Project and Alternative 3

National City General Plan		
Applicable Policies	Applicability and Consistency	
	Proposed Project	Alternative 3
Land Use Element		
Policy LU-5.4: Encourage and incentivize strategic adaptive reuse and infill development of vacant land in commercial and mixed-use areas.	Consistent. While not a commercial or mixed-use development, the Proposed Project is located within a vacant and underutilized parcel that previously had site contamination. Site remediation has occurred and cleared the area for infill development on a parcel previously not suitable for development.	Consistent. Although not a commercial or mixed-use development, Alternative 3 is located within a vacant and underutilized parcel that previously had site contamination due to its use as a steel storage and staging yard. Site remediation has occurred, and no further action is required.
Policy LU-6.1: Prevent the intrusion of new incompatible land uses and environmental hazards, such as industrial and automotive uses, into existing residential areas, and continue to phase out non-conforming land uses.	Consistent. The Proposed Project is located on private property and within the BNSF ROW. The Project Area is within the Medium/High Industrial zones and has a land use designation of Industrial. The Project is surrounded to the north, east, and south by Industrial land use designations and by Marine Related Industrial to the west. The Project is a compatible use within the appropriate land use and zoning designation established by the City. The Project is not located within an existing residential area. The Proposed Project does not result in incompatible land use conflicts and no mitigation is required.	Consistent. Alternative 3 is located on private property and within the BNSF ROW. The site is within the Light Manufacturing zone and has a land use designation of Industrial/Salt Production. The Alternative 3 site is surrounded to the north and east by Industrial land use designations, SR-54 to the south, and I-5 to the west. Alternative 3 would require a CUP. Alternative 3 does not result in incompatible land use conflicts and no mitigation is required.
Policy LU-6.2: Ensure that development is consistent with the Zoning Code, General Plan, and applicable specific plans.		
Circulation Element		
Policy C-6.2: Enforce the use of designated truck routes for both local and regional goods transport.	Consistent. The City has identified designated primary and secondary truck routes throughout the circulation network. Project trucks are required to utilize those routes to access regional corridors such as I-5. The City has designated these trucks routes with the primary intent of identifying routes that avoid, to the greatest extent possible, travel along roads that include sensitive land uses such as schools and residences.	Consistent. The City has identified designated primary and secondary truck routes throughout the circulation network. Project trucks are required to utilize these routes to access regional corridors. Primary truck routes near the Alternative 3 site include along Bay Marina Drive/Miles of Cars Way and National City Boulevard, which connect to I-5 and SR-54, respectively. The City has designated these trucks routes with the primary intent of identifying routes that avoid, to the greatest extent

Table 5.6-4. Summary of Consistency with Environmental Policies of the General Plan and Other Applicable Land Use Plans – Proposed Project and Alternative 3

National City General Plan		
Applicable Policies	Applicability and Consistency	
	Proposed Project	Alternative 3
		possible, travel along roads that include sensitive land uses such as schools and residences.
Safety Element		
Policy S-1.1: Rely on the most current and comprehensive geologic hazard mapping available to assist in the evaluation of potential seismic hazards (including, but not limited to, surface rupture, ground shaking, ground failure, and seiche) associated with new development and redevelopment.	Consistent. The Geotechnical Evaluation prepared for the Project determined that there are no known active faults crossing the Project Area, and the Project Area is not located within an earthquake fault zone as defined by the State of California. Furthermore, compliance with City regulations, the CBC, and adherence to the grading and site preparation recommendations presented in the Geotechnical Evaluation would reduce impacts associated with ground shaking and ground failure to a level less than significant.	Consistent. No known active faults run through the City or the Alternative 3 site limits; however, the City is located within a seismically active region where earthquakes have the potential to cause ground shaking of significant magnitude. Compliance with City regulations and the CBC would reduce impacts associated with ground shaking and ground failure to a level less than significant.
Policy S-1.2: Enforce development standards and building restrictions as a means to limit seismic-related risks to acceptable levels.	Consistent. Compliance with City regulations, the CBC, and adherence to the grading and site preparation recommendations presented in the Geotechnical Evaluation would reduce impacts associated with seismic-related risks to a level less than significant.	Consistent. Compliance with City regulations and the CBC would reduce impacts associated with seismic-related risks to a level less than significant.
Policy S-1.3: Require new development and redevelopment to comply with recognized standards for geologic hazards, soils (including but not limited to subsidence and liquefaction), and seismic hazards to ensure public safety.	Consistent. Compliance with City regulations, the CBC, and adherence to the grading and site preparation recommendations presented in the Geotechnical Evaluation would reduce impacts associated with seismic-related risks to a level less than significant.	Consistent. The Alternative 3 site contains tidal flats, which is a hydric soil type that can amplify the risk of liquefaction. The site is located in an area of the City with the potential for soft soil types that may amplify effects of earthquakes to liquefaction. A liquefaction analysis would be able to indicate potential settlement due to proposed improvements. Compliance with City regulations and the CBC would reduce impacts associated with seismic-related risks to a level less than significant.

Table 5.6-4. Summary of Consistency with Environmental Policies of the General Plan and Other Applicable Land Use Plans – Proposed Project and Alternative 3

National City General Plan		
Applicable Policies	Applicability and Consistency	
	Proposed Project	Alternative 3
Policy S-2.2: Ensure that new development adequately provides for on- and off-site mitigation of potential flood hazards and drainage problems.	Consistent. Construction of the transloading facility and associated improvements would not increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner that would substantially increase the risk of flooding, locally impede flow, or transfer flood risk to downstream areas.	Consistent. The Alternative 3 site is located within an area with reduced flood risk due to a levee (FEMA 2024). Additionally, the site is not located within a tsunami or seiche zone. Construction of the transloading facility and associated improvements would not increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner that would substantially increase the risk of flooding, locally impede flow, or transfer flood risk to downstream areas.
Policy S-2.7: Require new development and significant redevelopment projects to assess stormwater runoff impacts on the local and regional storm drain and flood control system, and to develop detention and drainage facilities to ensure that increased risks of flooding do not result from development.		Consistent. Construction of the transloading facility and associated improvements would not increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner that would substantially increase the risk of flooding, locally impede flow, or transfer flood risk to downstream areas.
Policy S-7.7: Work with property owners and lead agencies to reduce soil contamination from industrial operations and other activities that use, produce, or dispose of hazardous or toxic substances.	Consistent. The Proposed Project is located within a vacant and underutilized parcel that previously had site contamination. Site remediation has occurred and cleared the area for infill development on a parcel previously not suitable	Consistent. Alternative 3 is located within a vacant and underutilized parcel that previously had site contamination (lead, zinc, and copper) due to its use as a steel storage and staging yard. Site remediation has occurred, and no further action is required as of March 2007. The adjacent parcel to the south previously had soil contamination due to fuel release. Site remediation has occurred, and no further action is required as of May 2006.
Policy S-8.1: Promote the clean-up and reuse of contaminated sites and prioritize remediation and redevelopment of brownfield sites within and adjacent to residential and mixed-use areas.		
Policy S-8.2: Require owners of contaminated sites to develop a remediation plan, as required by State and Federal law.		
Noise and Nuisance Element		
Policy NN-1.9: Work with responsible agencies and the railways to reduce noise and vibration impacts from the	Consistent. Noise from rail activity along the BNSF mainline currently exists and is part of the existing	Consistent. Noise from rail activity along the existing BNSF line is part of the existing condition.

Table 5.6-4. Summary of Consistency with Environmental Policies of the General Plan and Other Applicable Land Use Plans – Proposed Project and Alternative 3

National City General Plan		
Applicable Policies	Applicability and Consistency	
	Proposed Project	Alternative 3
BNSF and San Diego and Imperial Valley Railroads to nearby land uses.	condition. The Project proposes replacing one existing rail turnout and installing new receiving and departure track for the facility; however, two or more trains would not be running simultaneously and therefore would not increase the amount of noise in the Project Area when compared to existing conditions. Operation of the Project would not contribute any noise sources beyond what is currently experienced in the Project Area and would not result in a significant noise-related impact associated with onsite sources.	Alternative 3 would be reconfigured from the Proposed Project but would still involve a rail turnout and installation of a new receiving and departure track. The nearest sensitive receptor is the Mariner's Landing Apartments, located approximately 0.28 mile east. Two or more trains would not be running simultaneously and therefore would not increase the amount of noise in the Project Area when compared to existing conditions. Operation of Alternative 3 would not contribute any noise sources beyond what is currently experienced in the area and would not result in a significant noise-related impact associated with onsite sources.
Policy NN-1.10: Require a study to demonstrate that ground borne vibration issues associated with rail operations are adequately addressed for new development within 100 feet from the centerline of the railroad tracks.	Consistent. Vibration as a result of onsite construction activities on the Project Area would not exceed 0.2 peak particle velocity (PPV) at the nearest structure. Thus, onsite Project construction would not exceed the recommended threshold. Project operations would not include the use of any stationary equipment that would result in excessive vibration levels. While the Project would accommodate heavy-duty trucks, these vehicles can only generate groundborne vibration velocity levels of 0.006 PPV at 50 feet under typical circumstances. The additional rail line would not increase the vibration levels from the existing rail line as no simultaneous train trips would occur. Existing rail noise and associated vibration with rail activity is an existing condition. Two or more trains would not be running simultaneously and therefore would not increase the amount of vibration in the Project Area when compared to existing conditions. Therefore,	Consistent. Vibration as a result of onsite construction activities on the Alternative 3 site would not exceed 0.2 PPV at the nearest structure. Thus, onsite Project construction would not exceed the recommended threshold. Project operations would not include the use of any stationary equipment that would result in excessive vibration levels. While the Project would accommodate heavy-duty trucks, these vehicles can only generate groundborne vibration velocity levels of 0.006 PPV at 50 feet under typical circumstances. The additional rail line would not increase the vibration levels from the existing rail line as no simultaneous train trips would occur. Existing rail noise and associated vibration with rail activity is an existing condition. Two or more trains would not be running simultaneously and therefore would not increase the amount of vibration in the Project Area when compared to existing conditions. Therefore, Alternative 3 would result in

Table 5.6-4. Summary of Consistency with Environmental Policies of the General Plan and Other Applicable Land Use Plans – Proposed Project and Alternative 3

National City General Plan		
Applicable Policies	Applicability and Consistency	
	Proposed Project	Alternative 3
	the Project would result in negligible groundborne vibration impacts during operations.	negligible groundborne vibration impacts during operations.
Policy NN-2.5: Require development to minimize the exposure of neighboring properties to excessive noise levels from construction-related activity during all phases of construction.	Consistent. As shown in Table 4.13-2, during construction activities no individual or cumulative pieces of mobile construction equipment would exceed the City's threshold of 75 A-weighted decibel (dBA) at the nearest noise-sensitive land use.	Consistent. The nearest noise-sensitive land use is the Mariner's Landing Apartments, located approximately 0.28 mile east. During construction activities no individual or cumulative pieces of mobile construction equipment would exceed the City's threshold of 75 A-weighted decibel (dBA) at the nearest noise-sensitive land use.
Policy NN-3.1: Work with responsible agencies and City departments to address potential noise issues associated with land use proposals or projects.	Consistent. A Noise Analysis was prepared for the Proposed Project that evaluated potential impacts consistent with the requirements of Title 24 California Code of Regulations (California Building Code) and the City's Noise Ordinance. The Noise Analysis determined that all impacts would be less than significant.	Consistent. Alternative 3 would not exceed the City's threshold of 75 A-weighted decibel (dBA) and would comply with the requirements of the CBC and the City's Noise Ordinance. A noise analysis would be required for this alternative.
Policy NN-3.3: Assure the appropriateness of proposed developments relative to existing and future noise levels by consulting the guidelines for noise-compatible land use (shown on Table NN-5) and the Noise Contour Exhibits (shown on Figures NN-1 and NN-3) to minimize the effects on noise-sensitive land uses.		
Policy NN-3.4: Require an acoustical study when required by Title 24 California Code of Regulations (California Building Code) for proposed developments, so that noise mitigation measures can be included in the project design.		
Open Space Element		
Policy OS-1.1: Protect and conserve the landforms and open spaces that define the city's urban form, provide	Consistent. The Project has been designed to avoid impacts to sensitive natural communities to the	Potentially Inconsistent. The northern portion Alternative 3 site contains Paradise Marsh, which is

Table 5.6-4. Summary of Consistency with Environmental Policies of the General Plan and Other Applicable Land Use Plans – Proposed Project and Alternative 3

National City General Plan		
Applicable Policies	Applicability and Consistency	
	Proposed Project	Alternative 3
public views/vistas, serve as core biological areas and wildlife linkages, or are wetland habitats.	maximum extent practicable. Further evaluation of the potential for the Project to impact sensitive biological resources will be included in the EIR. Where required; feasible mitigation measures will be identified to reduce impacts to the maximum extent.	a wetland habitat. Alternative 3 would be designed to avoid impacts to the wetlands and other sensitive communities to the maximum extent possible; however, this alternative would likely impact the wetland to accommodate the Project components and achieve the same throughput. An additional mitigation measure would be needed to reduce impacts to less than significant.
Policy OS-1.2: Minimize or avoid impacts to environmentally sensitive lands by minimizing construction of infrastructure or access roads into these areas.		
Policy OS-1.4: Apply appropriate land use and development regulations to limit development of open spaces such as floodplains, sensitive biological areas including wetlands, steep hillsides, canyons, and coastal lands.		
Policy OS-2.1: Preserve significant habitat and environmentally sensitive areas, including hillsides, streams, and marshes.		
Policy OS-2.2: Preserve the ecological integrity of creek corridors, canals, and drainage ditches that support riparian resources by working with California Department of Fish and Game to establish a plant palette that is satisfactory and providing for up to 100-foot buffers that protect against development impacts but allow for existing uses and limited future recreational uses		
Policy OS-2.3: Preserve and enhance wetland resources including creeks, rivers, ponds, marshes, vernal pools, and other seasonal wetlands to the extent feasible		
Policy OS-2.5: Protect rivers, watersheds, and groundwater as a resource for wildlife through flood		Consistent. SWPPP listing BMPs to prevent construction pollutants and products from violating

Table 5.6-4. Summary of Consistency with Environmental Policies of the General Plan and Other Applicable Land Use Plans – Proposed Project and Alternative 3

National City General Plan		
Applicable Policies	Applicability and Consistency	
	Proposed Project	Alternative 3
control measures and the use of stormwater infiltration BMPs that protect groundwater quality.		any water quality standard or waste discharge requirements would be prepared for Alternative 3.
Policy OS-2.7: Ensure that potential impacts to biological resources are carefully evaluated prior to approval of development projects.		Consistent. Database search results show the potential for special-status plant and wildlife species to occur on the Alternative 3 site; it is reasonable to assume that these species could be affected by Alternative 3. Prior to the development of Alternative 3, further evaluation of the potential impact to sensitive biological resources and any necessary mitigation measures would be required.
Policy OS-2.8: Ensure that development is consistent with all federal, State, and regional regulations for habitat and species protection.		
Policy OS-8.4: Consult with property owners and land developers early in the development review process to minimize potential impacts to historic and cultural resources.	Consistent. The Cultural Resources Inventory Report determined that the Project would not impact any historic resources or known cultural resources. In the event that earthwork activities inadvertently unearthed unknown archaeological resources, tribal cultural resources, or human remains during construction, implementation of mitigation measure CUL-1 through CUL-3 would reduce impacts to a level less than significant.	Consistent. Ground disturbance associated with implementation of Alternative 3 has the potential to impact surface and previously unknown subsurface historic or cultural resources should any be present. In the event that earthwork activities inadvertently unearthed unknown archaeological resources, tribal cultural resources, or human remains during construction, implementation of mitigation measures for archeological monitoring, Native American monitoring, and post-review discovery measures would be expected to reduce impacts to less than significant. These mitigation measures would be similar to CUL-1 through CUL-3 for the Proposed Project.
Policy OS-8.8: Require monitoring for sub-surface cultural and paleontological resources during grading and construction activities for all development projects.		
Health and Environmental Justice Element		
Policy HEJ-1.2: Consider environmental justice issues as they are related to potential health impacts associated with land use decisions, including enforcement actions, to reduce the adverse health effects of hazardous materials, industrial activities, and other undesirable land uses, on residents regardless of	Consistent. The Proposed Project is located on private property and within the BNSF ROW. The Project Area is within the Medium/High Manufacturing zones and has a land use designation of Industrial/Salt Production. The Project is surrounded to the north, east, and south by	Consistent. Alternative 3 is located within the Light Manufacturing zone and has a land use designation of Industrial/Salt Production. The Project is surrounded to the north and east by other industrial land uses, by SR-54 to the south, and by I-5 and the BNSF rail line to the west. This alternative would

Table 5.6-4. Summary of Consistency with Environmental Policies of the General Plan and Other Applicable Land Use Plans – Proposed Project and Alternative 3

National City General Plan		
Applicable Policies	Applicability and Consistency	
	Proposed Project	Alternative 3
age, culture, ethnicity, gender, race, socioeconomic status, or geographic location.	Industrial land use designations and by Marine Related Industrial to the west. The Project is a compatible use within the appropriate land use and zoning designation established by the City. The Project is not located within an existing residential area. The Proposed Project does not result in incompatible land use conflicts and no mitigation is required. The nearest sensitive receptor is McKinley Apartments, approximately 380 feet east of the Project. The nearest school is Kimball Elementary School located approximately 0.3 mile east of the Project Area and across I-5. McKinley Apartments is within the Medium Manufacturing zone, has a land use designation of Industrial, and is a non-conforming use. The Project's air quality analysis included an evaluation of Project-related emissions of criteria pollutants during construction and operation. The analysis demonstrates that Project-related emissions would not exceed applicable daily thresholds of significance established by the SDAPCD. These thresholds are used to determine if a project's emissions would result in either 1) interference or impediment with attainment of State or federal ambient air quality standards; or, 2) increased risk to human health. The Project's air quality analysis included a health risk assessment to evaluate health risks from construction and operation and the potential for emissions to expose nearby sensitive receptors to diesel particulate matter from heavy duty truck activity and rail activity. The results of the health risk assessment demonstrated that neither	require a CUP and a Coastal Development Permit. Alternative 3 is not located within an existing residential area and does not result in incompatible land use conflicts. The nearest sensitive receptor is the Mariner's Landing Apartments, located approximately 0.28 mile east of the Alternative 3 site. The nearest school is Sweetwater High School located approximately 0.47 mile northeast of the site. Mariner's Landing Apartments is within the Residential Single-Family Extendable (RS-3) zone and has a land use designation of Single Family Detached. Project-related emissions of criteria pollutants during construction and operation would not exceed applicable daily thresholds of significance established by the SDAPCD. These thresholds are used to determine if a project's emissions would result in either 1) interference or impediment with attainment of State or federal ambient air quality standards; or, 2) increased risk to human health. Neither operation nor construction of Alternative 3 would result in a significant contribution to cancer risk in the community. Additionally, impacts related to non-cancer risk (chronic and acute hazard index) are less than significant. Project emissions would be below applicable thresholds that were adopted to ensure air quality standards are attained and for the protection of public health.

Table 5.6-4. Summary of Consistency with Environmental Policies of the General Plan and Other Applicable Land Use Plans – Proposed Project and Alternative 3

National City General Plan		
Applicable Policies	Applicability and Consistency	
	Proposed Project	Alternative 3
	Project operation nor construction would result in a significant contribution to cancer risk in the community. Additionally, impacts related to non-cancer risk (chronic and acute hazard index) are less than significant. Project emissions would be below applicable thresholds that were adopted to ensure air quality standards are attained and for the protection of public health.	
Policy HEJ-2.1: Avoid land use conflicts by ensuring residential, public assembly, and other sensitive land uses are adequately buffered from industrial land uses that may pose a threat to human health, where feasible.	Consistent. The Proposed Project is located on private property and within the BNSF ROW. The Project Area is within the Medium/High Manufacturing zones and has a land use designation of Industrial/Salt Production. The Project is surrounded to the north, east, and south by Industrial land use designations and by Marine Related Industrial to the west. The Project is a compatible use within the appropriate land use and zoning designation established by the City. The Project is not located within an existing residential area. The Proposed Project does not result in incompatible land use conflicts and no mitigation is required. The nearest sensitive receptor is McKinley Apartments, approximately 380 feet east of the Project. The nearest school is Kimball Elementary School located approximately 0.3 mile east of the Project Area and across I-5. McKinley Apartments are within the Medium Manufacturing zone and has a land use designation of Industrial/Salt Production and is a non-conforming use. Several businesses are located between the Proposed Project and the McKinley Apartments	Consistent. Alternative 3 is located within the Light Manufacturing zone and has a land use designation of Industrial/Salt Production. The Project is surrounded to the north and east by other industrial land uses, by SR-54 to the south, and by I-5 and the BNSF rail line to the west. This alternative would require a CUP and a Coastal Development Permit. Alternative 3 is not located within an existing residential area and does not result in incompatible land use conflicts. The nearest sensitive receptor is the Mariner's Landing Apartments, which is located approximately 0.28 mile east of the Alternative 3 site. The nearest school is Sweetwater High School, which is located approximately 0.47 mile northeast of the site. Mariner's Landing Apartments is within the Residential Single-Family Extendable (RS-3) zone and has a land use designation of Single Family Detached. Several businesses are located between the Alternative 3 site and the Mariner's Landing Apartments, which provides a buffer between the Project and the residences.

Table 5.6-4. Summary of Consistency with Environmental Policies of the General Plan and Other Applicable Land Use Plans – Proposed Project and Alternative 3

National City General Plan		
Applicable Policies	Applicability and Consistency	
	Proposed Project	Alternative 3
	providing a buffer between the Project and the residences.	
Policy HEJ-2.6: Consider air quality impacts, including cumulative impacts, from existing and new development when making land use decisions and limit the number of industrial facilities or uses to prevent cumulative air pollution impacts.	Consistent. The Project's air quality analysis included an evaluation of Project-related emissions of criteria pollutants during construction and operation. The analysis demonstrates that Project-related emissions would not exceed applicable daily thresholds of significance established by the SDAPCD. These thresholds are used to determine if a project's emissions would result in either 1) interference or impediment with attainment of State or federal ambient air quality standards; or, 2) increased risk to human health. Criteria pollutant emissions generated during Project construction would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the Project region is designated nonattainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard. The Project's air quality analysis included a health risk assessment to evaluate health risks from construction and operation and the potential for emissions to expose nearby sensitive receptors to diesel particulate matter from heavy duty truck activity and rail activity. The results of the health risk assessment demonstrated that neither Project operation nor construction would result in a significant contribution to cancer risk in the community. Additionally, impacts related to non-cancer risk (chronic and acute hazard index) are less than significant. Project emissions would be below applicable thresholds that were adopted to ensure air quality standards are attained and for the protection of public health	Consistent. Project-related emissions of criteria pollutants during construction and operation would not exceed applicable daily thresholds of significance established by the SDAPCD. These thresholds are used to determine if a project's emissions would result in either 1) interference or impediment with attainment of State or federal ambient air quality standards; or, 2) increased risk to human health. Criteria pollutant emissions generated during Project construction would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the Project region is nonattainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard. Neither operation nor construction of Alternative 3 would result in a significant contribution to cancer risk in the community. Additionally, impacts related to non-cancer risk (chronic and acute hazard index) are less than significant. Project emissions would be below applicable thresholds that were adopted to ensure air quality standards are attained and for the protection of public health.

Table 5.6-4. Summary of Consistency with Environmental Policies of the General Plan and Other Applicable Land Use Plans – Proposed Project and Alternative 3

National City General Plan		
Applicable Policies	Applicability and Consistency	
	Proposed Project	Alternative 3
Policy HEJ-2.7: Designate truck routes that avoid sensitive land uses, where feasible.	Consistent. The City has identified designated primary and secondary truck routes throughout the circulation network. Project trucks are required to utilize those routes to access regional corridors such as I-5. The City has designated these trucks routes with the primary intent of identifying routes that avoid, to the greatest extent possible, travel along roads that include sensitive land uses such as schools and residences.	Consistent. The City has identified designated primary and secondary truck routes throughout the circulation network. Project trucks are required to utilize those routes to access regional corridors. Primary truck routes near the Alternative 3 site include along Bay Marina Drive/Miles of Cars Way and National City Boulevard, which connect to I-5 and SR-54, respectively. The City has designated these trucks routes with the primary intent of identifying routes that avoid, to the greatest extent possible, travel along roads that include sensitive land uses such as schools and residences.

Source: City of National City 2011

Mineral Resources

The Alternative 3 site is located in MRZ-3. This mineral resource zone is defined by the California Geologic Society as an area where the significance of mineral deposits cannot be determined from the available data (City 2011c). This site is located in an urban developed area characterized by industrial land uses. Similar to the Proposed Project, the Alternative 3 site is not located on a known important mineral resource recovery site and therefore no impacts are anticipated.

Noise

The most significant noise in the area near the Alternative 3 site is generated by the adjacent railroad, which would remain a significant noise source under Alternative 3. The nearest noise-sensitive land use to the Project Area is the Mariner's Landing Apartments, which is located approximately 0.28 mile east.

Noise generated would primarily be associated with the operation of off-road equipment for onsite construction activities and construction vehicle traffic on area roadways. Similar to the Proposed Project, exterior noise levels generated during construction could negatively affect sensitive land uses in the vicinity of the construction site. The nearest receptor to the Proposed Project is the McKinley Apartments complex, which is located approximately 380 feet east of the Alternative 3 boundary. For both the Proposed Project and Alternative 3, no individual or cumulative pieces of mobile construction equipment used during Project construction would exceed the City's threshold of 75 dBA at the nearest noise-sensitive land use. It is very unlikely that all pieces of construction equipment would be operating at the same time for the various phases of Project construction as well as at the point closest to the nearest noise-sensitive receptor.

Construction of Alternative 3 would result in additional traffic on adjacent roadways over the period that construction occurs. According to Caltrans' *Technical Noise Supplement to the Traffic Noise Analysis Protocol*, doubling of traffic on a roadway is required to result in an increase of 3 dBA. A traffic study would be required to evaluate the existing traffic counts near the site. If construction does not result in a doubling of traffic, then its contribution to existing traffic noise would not be considered perceptible. Additionally, construction is temporary, and any construction-related trips would cease upon completion of the Project. As construction activities associated with Alternative 3 would be similar to that of the Proposed Project, noise levels generated during construction would be the same.

Potential stationary noise sources related to long-term operation on the Alternative 3 site would include railway activity, internal circulation of heavy-duty trucks, and unloading of the rail cars. Alternative 3 proposes to replace one existing rail turnout and install a new receiving and departure track for the facility. Due to the size of the Alternative 3 site, switching would be limited to 3 railcars per move. Under both the Proposed Project and Alternative 3, 2 or more trains would not be running simultaneously and therefore the level of noise in the Project Area would not increase when compared to existing conditions.

Project operations would also result in additional traffic on adjacent roadways, thereby increasing vehicular noise in the Project vicinity. Because the same proposal would be submitted for the Alternative 3 location, operational noise impacts would be the same as with the Proposed Project. Impacts would be less than significant.

Construction-related ground vibration is normally associated with impact equipment such as pile drivers, jackhammers, and the operation of some heavy-duty construction equipment such as dozers and trucks. The nearest structure of concern for the Proposed Project is approximately 175 feet east of the center of the Alternative 3 site. Vibration as a result of onsite construction activities for the Proposed Project would not exceed 0.2 PPV at the nearest structure, which does not exceed the Caltrans recommended threshold. Vibration decreases rapidly with distance, and the City acknowledges that construction activities would occur throughout the Alternative 3 site and would not be concentrated at the point closest to sensitive receptors. The nearest structure of concern measured from the center of the Alternative 3 site is a building located approximately 340 feet south. Since vibration decreases with distance and the nearest receptor is further away than the nearest receptor for the Proposed Project, vibration as a result of onsite construction activities for Alternative 3 would also not exceed 0.2 PPV.

Population and Housing

Alternative 3 would employ a similar number of employees as the Proposed Project and would not induce substantial unplanned population growth in the area. Additionally, the site is located in a primarily industrial area and would not displace substantial numbers of people or existing housing. Therefore, Alternative 3 would have no impact.

Public Services

Components of Alternative 3 include truck loading spots that provide a concrete pad and drain for the containment of potential spills, which would be piped to a containment basin onsite. The rail car and truck unloading area would be equipped with a containment system. In addition, an FRP would be developed and implemented to address or manage potential spills or emergency events onsite. Impacts from Alternative 3 to fire protection would be less than significant.

Alternative 3, like the Proposed Project, would not substantially increase permanent population growth. Therefore, it would not create substantial additional demand for police services, schools, parks, or other public facilities. Public services impacts from Alternative 3 would be less than significant.

Recreation

Alternative 3, like the Proposed Project, would not create a substantial increase in new residents that would increase park use to the extent that substantial physical deterioration of a facility would occur. Therefore, impacts from Alternative 3 would be less than significant.

Alternative 3, like the Proposed Project, would construct a transloading facility and would not affect recreational facilities. As such, the Proposed Project would not require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment. Therefore, no impact from Alternative 3 would occur.

Transportation

Due to its site size, Alternative 3 would not be able to accommodate a unit train as part of the commercial plan considering the required storage and service design. Due to the lack of track lead space, switching would be limited to 3 railcars. Therefore, Alternative 3 could transload approximately 2,000 barrels of fuel.

Like the Proposed Project, a maximum of 5 employees would be onsite at one time, therefore 10 employees were used in this analysis to reflect a shift change. The trip generation for these employees was estimated using an industrial employment trip rate. The facility will be operated in 3 shifts for 24 hours per day, but 70 percent of the trips will occur between 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. The number of truck trips has been converted to passenger car equivalent trips using 2.5 vehicles per truck. Table 5.6-5 below demonstrates traffic associated with Alternative 3.

Table 5.6-5. Trip Generation – Reduced Intensity Alternative					
ITE Code	Variable	Intensity	Unit	Daily Rate	Daily Trips
140	Employees	10	Employee	2.51	25
–	Truck Trips	2	1000 barrel	10.4	21
Total					46
Passenger Car Equivalent					78

Source: ITE Trip Generation Manual 11th Edition

As shown above, Alternative 3 is expected to generate approximately 78 passenger car equivalent daily trips. This does not exceed the lower 500 ADT for projects inconsistent with the General Plan or the 1000 ADT threshold for projects consistent with the General Plan. The Project is consistent with the City's General Plan and does not exceed the ADT threshold; thus, the Project is screened out. Therefore, similar to the Proposed Project, Alternative 3 is presumed to have a less than significant impact on VMT.

Tribal Cultural Resources

A records request and Sacred Lands File search would be needed to determine if any cultural resources were previously recorded on the Alternative 3 site and whether the California Native American tribes have recorded any Sacred Lands. Like the Proposed Project, ground-disturbing activities have the potential to result in the discovery of, or inadvertent damage to, archaeological contexts, and this possibility cannot be eliminated. Consequently, there is a potential for significant impacts to TCRs. A mitigation measure for Native American monitoring, like that described in CUL-2 for the Proposed Project, would reduce impacts to TCRs to less than significant.

Utilities and Service Systems

Alternative 3, like the Proposed Project, involves the construction of a transloading facility to transload bio-diesel fuel and renewable diesel fuel directly from rail cars into trucks. No new or expanded water or wastewater treatment facilities would be required. Further, this alternative would not impact natural gas, electric power, or telecommunications facilities. Impacts from Alternative 3 would be less than significant.

Alternative 3 would also not require the withdrawal of groundwater. It would only require minimal water during construction for compaction and dust control purposes. During operation it would not require water. Impacts from Alternative 3 to water supplies would be less than significant.

This alternative would also include a mobile office building with restroom facilities for driver use. The Project components do not include any connection to the sewer system, and no septic tank will be required. A vendor will be utilized to dispose of waste from the restroom facilities. No impact to the wastewater system would occur from Alternative 3.

Minimal waste would be generated by Alternative 3 during construction. Solid waste during operation would come from garbage receptacles in the mobile office building. A similar number of employees as the Proposed Project would be expected; therefore, total commercial waste generation (approximately 126 pounds per day) would be similar. The Proposed Project would not generate solid waste in excess of state or local standards. Impacts from Alternative 3 would be less than significant.

Wildfire

According to the Fire Hazard Severity Zones map viewer, the Alternative 3 site is not located within a VHFHSZ (CAL FIRE 2024).

Construction of Alternative 3, like the Proposed Project, would result in temporary construction truck traffic; however, this would not interfere with current evacuation routes. During operations, truck access would follow an internal site circulation route involving trucks entering and exiting on Hoover Avenue. Hoover Avenue is not identified as a main arterial in the City's General Plan and would not be used as a primary evacuation route. No impact to an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan would occur with Alternative 3.

The topography of the Alternative 3 site is flat. The Project would not substantially alter the slope, wind patterns, or other factors that could exacerbate wildfire risks. Thus, the Proposed Project would not expose Project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or uncontrolled spread of a wildfire. Furthermore, the Project Area is not located in a VHFHSZ (CAL FIRE 2024). No impact from Alternative 3 would occur.

5.5.3.2 Conclusion

Under Alternative 3, impacts related to short-term construction-related air quality, energy, noise and GHGs would be the same as the Proposed Project. Additionally, this site is in a similar industrial area that may require a CUP; however, unlike the Proposed Project, there is no nearby Portside Community.

Because of the decrease in vehicle trips achieved under this alternative, operational impacts to air quality, energy, GHGs, and transportation would be proportionally reduced from what was identified for the Proposed Project. Impacts related to aesthetics and biological resources would be increased in magnitude due to the offsite location being located near public vantage points including SR-54, I-5, and the Sweetwater Bikeway and from being adjacent to Paradise Marsh.

However, the size of the site and nearby track lead space would only be able to accommodate 3 railcars, which would decrease the throughput such that Alternative 3 would not meet the Project's objectives.

Alternative 3 would reduce throughput such that it would not meaningfully increase the availability of renewable fuels to the region and would not increase the availability of cleaner fuels sooner than the supply chain.. This alternative does not fully meet the Project objectives to deliver lower emissions to the San Diego market by reducing fuel transit truck miles more than the existing supply chain; facilitate the State's commitment to achieve its stated goal of carbon neutrality by 2045 and reduce GHG emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030; or expand the availability of renewable fuels to the region to advance the State's Low-Carbon Fuels Standard goal. and would not meet business performance metrics.

5.6 Comparison of Project Alternatives

The following discussion compares the impacts of each alternative with the impacts of the Proposed Project, which is detailed in this section. Table 5.7-1 compares the impacts of the alternatives with those of the Proposed Project. This table identifies whether the alternative results in (1) a reduction of the impact; (2) a greater impact than the Project; or (3) the same impact as the Project.

Table 5.7-1. Comparison of Alternatives to the Proposed Project				
Environmental Issue	Proposed Project	Alternative 1: No Project	Alternative 2: Reduced Intensity	Alternative 3: Offsite Location within National City
Aesthetics	LTS	=	=	^
Agriculture and Forestry Resources	NI	=	=	=
Air Quality	LTS	=	v	v
Biological Resources	LTS/MIT	=	=	+
Cultural Resources	LTS/MIT	=	=	=
Energy	LTS	=	v	v
Geology and Soils	LTS	^	=	=
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	LTS	^	v	v
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	LTS	v	=	=
Hydrology and Water Quality	LTS	=	=	=
Land Use and Planning	LTS	=	=	v
Mineral Resources	NI	=	=	=

Table 5.7-1. Comparison of Alternatives to the Proposed Project

Environmental Issue	Proposed Project	Alternative 1: No Project	Alternative 2: Reduced Intensity	Alternative 3: Offsite Location within National City
Noise	LTS	=	=	=
Population and Housing	NI	=	=	=
Public Services	LTS	=	=	=
Recreation	LTS	=	=	=
Transportation	LTS	=	=	=
Tribal Cultural Resources	LTS/MIT	=	=	=
Utilities and Service Systems	LTS	^	=	=
Wildfire	NI	=	=	=

Notes:

Proposed Project

NI No Impact

LTS Less than Significant

LTS/MIT Less than Significant with Mitigation

SIG Significant Impact with or without Mitigation

Project Alternatives

= Compared with the Proposed Project, no change in significance of impact.

^ Compared with the Proposed Project, the magnitude of the impact is increased.

v Compared with the Proposed Project, the magnitude of the impact is reduced.

+ Compared with the Proposed Project, a new impact has been identified.

- Compared with the Proposed Project, an impact has been eliminated.

5.7 Environmentally Superior Alternative

The environmentally superior alternative is generally defined as the alternative that would result in the least adverse environmental impacts in the Project Area and surrounding area. The Proposed Project would not result in any significant and unavoidable environmental impacts. Alternative 2 (Reduced Intensity Alternative) would be environmentally superior because it would decrease the magnitude of impacts associated with air quality, energy, and GHG resources compared to the Proposed Project. Although Alternative 2 (Reduced Intensity Alternative) would reduce some air quality, energy, and GHG

impacts, these reductions are not significant in magnitude and would not eliminate any impacts. However, Alternative 2 would not completely meet all the Project objectives. Alternative 2 would reduce throughput from 13,800 barrels of fuel per day to 10,350 barrels of fuel per day, which would not increase the availability of renewable fuels to the region, would not increase the availability of cleaner fuels sooner than the supply chain, and would not meet business performance metrics.

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6.0 LIST OF PREPARERS AND PERSONS CONSULTED

6.1 City of National City

David Welch, Associate Planner

Martin Reeder, Assistant Community Development Director

6.2 ECORP Consulting, Inc.

David Atwater, Senior Environmental Planner/Project Manager

Samantha Alfaro, Associate Environmental Planner

Jesus "Freddie" Olmos, Principal Environmental Planner

Seth Myers, Senior Air Quality/Greenhouse Gas/Noise Analyst

Devin Keogh, Technical Editor

Grady Lynch, Technical Editor

Laura Hesse, Technical Editor

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