

Section 3.13 Safety and Security

Introduction

This section discusses the environmental setting and effects of the alternatives analyzed in this Supplemental DEIS with regard to safety and security. The assessment of adverse effects and mitigation measures of the alternatives related to safety and security are also described.

Affected Environment

Information on the regulatory setting and existing conditions can be found in the Capitol Expressway Corridor Background Report, which is available from VTA Environmental Programs upon request.

Environmental Consequences

APPROACH AND METHODS

The analysis of effects related to safety and security was based on a qualitative assessment of whether the police and fire protection coverage necessary for the build alternatives would be sufficient to comply with federal, state, and local safety regulations pertaining to system operations and passenger security. An evaluation of whether these conditions would be restricted by particular facilities, features, or aspects of service is also provided. Mitigation measures are provided to minimize those effects identified as adverse effects.

EFFECTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

No-Build Alternative

The No-Build Alternative is not anticipated to result in any impacts to safety or security.

Light Rail Alternative

A summary of construction impacts related to safety and security (risks during construction) is included in Section 3.18 *Construction*.

Impact: **Pedestrian and/or Bicycle Safety Risks at At-Grade Crossings**

Light rail trains would operate along Capitol Expressway and would make two at-grade crossings of Ocala and Cunningham Avenue under the Light Rail Alternative. Accidents can occur when other vehicles

(i.e., autos, buses, trucks, motorcycles, bicycles) or people crossing the light rail tracks are struck by moving light rail trains. This is especially a concern of residents along the Capitol Expressway Corridor since children cross at Ocala Avenue to get to and from local schools.

The types of accidents that occur under existing light rail operations may occur with the same frequency under the proposed Light Rail Alternative. Other than the normal precautions taken to prevent these accidents (use of train horns and bells, flashing signs, pavement markings at crossings, fencing, posting of no-trespassing signs, etc.), it is unlikely that these accidents could be entirely prevented or avoided. Since VTA will design and operate the Light Rail Alternative in accordance with applicable CPUC regulations to minimize the frequency and severity of accidents, there is no adverse effect. However, given residents concerns about safety at the Ocala Avenue intersection, VTA will incorporate the following additional measures at at-grade crossings.

Mitigation: SAF-1 – Minimize Accident Risks by Incorporating Additional Pedestrian-Friendly Features

In addition to complying with all CPUC regulations regarding highway-rail crossings, pedestrian signal-activation push buttons will be added to the median for all at-grade station access points. Pedestrian crosswalks along Capitol Expressway will be designed to provide suitable places of refuge for pedestrians where they cross the light rail track. Any walls that will be replaced will also be constructed so that pedestrian views of oncoming trains and autos will not be compromised.

Impact: Inadequate Lighting or Visual Obstructions at Park-and-Ride Lots

There are two existing park-and-rail lots along the project alignment, Alum Rock and Eastridge Transit stations. Alum Rock station is the northern most station. The Eastridge Transit Center is the southernmost station. The Light Rail Alternative proposes to construct 135 new parking spaces at the Eastridge Transit Center. The creation of new parking spaces at Eastridge Center would create activity centers with increased pedestrian activity and Park-and-Ride traffic. Similar to other public facilities, transit facilities such as trains, buses, stations, or Park-and-Ride lots may be potential targets for crime. The most common type of crime at such facilities is vandalism, including the defacement of property with graffiti. Automobile vandalism and theft from vehicles left in Park-and-Ride-lots also occasionally occurs. Finally more serious crimes, such as robbery and assault, are rarely committed at such facilities. This effect is considered adverse;

however, implementation of the following mitigation measures would minimize the effect.

Mitigation: SAF-2 – Implement Safety and Security Measures to Deter Crime

VTA shall solicit public participation regarding station design during the final design phase to address safety and security concerns. Design features will include adequate lighting, minimal landscaping in outlying or secluded areas, and the avoidance of poorly lit, visually obscured public waiting areas. VTA will design and operate the Light Rail Alternative in accordance with applicable CPUC regulations to minimize the frequency and severity of criminal activities.

Mitigation: SAF-3 – Use Lighting, Cameras, and Security Patrols to Enhance Safety

VTA shall design and locate station platforms so they are visible from adjacent roadways. All platforms and Park-and-Ride lots will be lighted during the evening and at night to enhance security. Close-circuit television (CCTV) cameras may be employed at specific locations to enhance security. VTA will extend coverage provided by its Protective Services unit to any new light rail transit operations. The additional police protection service needs associated with new light rail service will be supported by the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Department and SJPD. VTA security personnel will patrol all facilities on a regular basis to maintain passenger security.

Mitigation: SAF-4 – Define Fire and Life Safety Procedures and Develop Evacuation Plans

VTA will work with the local fire and police departments during preliminary engineering and final design of the Light Rail Alternative to ensure that fire and life safety issues are adequately addressed. VTA will also coordinate development of evacuation plans for the tunnel and aerial options of the Light Rail Alternative, if selected, to ensure the safety of light rail patrons and operators.

Proposed Options

The above discussion is inclusive of the Light Rail Alternative options.

CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

No-Build Alternative

The No-Build Alternative would not contribute to cumulative impacts on safety and security.

Light Rail Alternative

The Light Rail Alternative in combination with other reasonably foreseeable projects could potentially result in cumulative impacts on safety and security. However, implementation of Mitigation Measures SAF-1 through SAF-4 (also refer to 3.18 *Construction*, CON-11) would minimize the Light Rail Alternative's contribution to adverse cumulative safety and security impacts.