Chapter 4
Other CEQA Considerations

This section presents other environmental issues that are of particular significance to CEQA. It includes a discussion of significant and irreversible environmental changes, cumulative effects, and growth-inducing impacts.

4.1 Significant and Irreversible Environmental Changes

A commitment of a resource is considered irreversible when its use limits the future options for its use. Irreversible changes may include current or future uses of non-renewable resources, and secondary or growth-inducing impacts that commit future generations to similar uses. In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(c), this section evalutes the effect of the proposed changes to the approved project associated with three distinct categories of significant irreversible changes: changes in land use that would commit future generations to specific uses, consumption of nonrenewable resources, and irreversible changes from environmental actions.

The approved project and the proposed changes to the approved project would commit a similar amount of land resources due to the right-of-way needs within the corridor. The commitment of long-term land resources for the light rail system is consistent with Envision San José 2040 General Plan, as discussed in Section 3.11, *Land Use*, of the Second Subsequent IS. The proposed changes would not commit future generations to or introduce changes in land use that would vary from the existing conditions or planned development by the City of San Jose.

Non-renewable energy is the primary resource that would be irreversibly affected by the proposed changes. As discussed in Section 3.7, *Energy*, of the Second Subsequent IS, it is anticipated that the proposed replacement of the at-grade track alignment with an aerial guideway would result in slightly less energy consumption compared to the approved project because the elevated guideway would allow light rail vehicles to avoid traffic signal delay that would occur at intersections for an at-grade alignment. By avoiding traffic signal delay, this proposed change to the project would eliminate the need for additional energy required for light rail vehicle acceleration at intersections. Thus, the system would operate more efficiently, which would lead to lower energy consumption. Although the acceleration effect is anticipated to be minor, this proposed change to the approved project would result in lower energy consumption compared to the impacts previously identified and analyzed for the approved project.

Similar to the approved project, the construction and operation of the proposed changes would entail the irreversible and irretrievable commitment of energy and human resources, including labor required for planning, design, construction, and operations.

The use of these resources would be irrecoverable; however, they are not in short supply, and their use would not affect the continued availability and supply of these resources.

Based on the analysis above, no new significant and irreversible effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant and irreversible effects would occur.

4.2 Cumulative Effects

This section evaluates the incremental effect of the project on the environment when considered in conjunction with closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects. Cumulative impacts related to transportation, noise, and air quality and climate change (during construction and operation) are described and evaluated in Section 5.1, *Transportation*; Section 5.3, *Noise and Vibration*; and Section 5.4, *Air Quality and Climate Change*, of the SEIR-2, respectively. It was determined that the proposed changes to the approved project would result in new significant impacts or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant cumulative impacts related to:

- Level of Service (LOS) at the Capitol Expressway and Story Road intersection under year 2043 conditions due to the proposed removal of the HOV lanes and the addition of HOV lane traffic into the remaining mixed-flow lanes (see Section 5.1, *Transportation*, of the SEIR-2).
- LOS at the Capitol Expressway and Ocala Avenue intersection under year 2043 conditions due to the proposed removal of the HOV lanes and the addition of HOV lane traffic into the remaining mixed-flow lanes (see Section 5.1, *Transportation*, of the SEIR-2).
- Pollutant concentration exposure on sensitive receptors during construction (see Section 5.4, *Air Quality and Climate Change*, of the SEIR-2).

No new significant cumulative effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant cumulative impacts related to noise and vibration or air quality and climate change (during operation) would occur.

4.3 Growth-Inducing Impacts

Similar to the approved project, the proposed changes to the approved project are consistent with the projected and planned growth in the vicinity of the project corridor. The proposed changes would not directly or indirectly induce economic, population, or housing growth in the surrounding environment. As a result, no new significant growth-inducing impacts or increase in the severity of previously identified significant growth-inducing impacts would occur as a result of the proposed changes to the approved project.