

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Purpose of this Document**

This initial study (IS) assesses the environmental impacts of the Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District (AC Transit) proposed service changes in North Alameda and West Contra Costa County as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (California Public Resources Code [PRC] 21000 et seq.) and in compliance with the State CEQA Guidelines (14 California Code of Regulations [CCR] 15000 et seq.).

CEQA requires state and local government agencies to consider the environmental consequences of projects over which they have discretionary authority. An IS is a preliminary analysis prepared by the lead agency under CEQA to determine what type of environmental document must be prepared for the proposed project—a negative declaration (ND), mitigated negative declaration (MND), or environmental impact report (EIR). If the agency finds no substantial evidence that the proposed project would cause a significant impact on the environment, an ND may be prepared. If the agency finds that the proposed project would have a significant impact that would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with mitigation, an MND may be prepared. If the agency finds that the proposed project would have a significant impact that would not be reduced to a less-than-significant level with mitigation, an EIR must be prepared (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15074[b]). This IS does not identify any significant impacts that would result from the proposed project, therefore, a ND is proposed.

AC Transit, as the lead agency under CEQA, will consider the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project when it considers whether to approve the proposed project. This IS is an informational document to be used in the local planning and decision-making process. The IS does not recommend approval or denial of the proposed project.

### **1.2 Scope of this Document**

This IS describes the proposed project; environmental setting, including existing conditions and regulatory setting as necessary; and potential environmental impacts of the proposed project on the following resource topics:

- aesthetics,
- agricultural resources,
- air quality,
- biological resources,
- cultural resources,
- geology and soils,
- hazards and hazardous materials,
- hydrology and water quality,
- land use planning,
- mineral resources,
- noise,
- population and housing,
- public services,
- recreation,

- transportation/traffic, and
- utilities and service systems

### 1.3 Impact Terminology

The following terminology is used in this IS to describe the levels of significance of impacts that would result from the proposed project:

- The proposed project is considered to have *no impact* if the analysis concludes that it would not affect a particular resource topic.
- An impact is considered *less than significant* if the analysis concludes that the proposed project would cause no substantial adverse change to the environment and that impacts would not require mitigation.
- An impact is considered *less than significant with mitigation incorporated* if the analysis concludes that the proposed project would cause no substantial adverse change to the environment with the inclusion of mitigation measures to which the applicant has agreed.
- An impact is considered *potentially significant* if the analysis concludes that an impact of the proposed project exceeds applicable regulatory thresholds of significance and the impact could not be reduced to a less-than-significant level with mitigation. If a potentially significant impact were identified, an EIR would be prepared. No such impact has been identified for this project.

### 1.4 Organization of this Document

The content and format of this IS, described below, are designed to meet the requirements of CEQA.

- Chapter 1, “Introduction,” identifies the purpose, scope, terminology, and organization of the IS.
- Chapter 2, “Project Description,” identifies the location, background, and planning objectives of the proposed project; describes the proposed project in detail; identifies the permits and approvals required for the proposed project; and identifies public involvement procedures.
- Chapter 3, “Environmental Checklist,” presents the checklist responses for each resource topic. This chapter includes a brief environmental setting description for each resource topic and identifies the proposed project’s impacts on those resource topics.
- Chapter 4, “References Cited,” identifies all printed references and personal communications cited in this IS.
- Chapter 5, “List of Preparers,” identifies the individuals involved in preparing this IS and their areas of technical specialty.