FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Grant Applicant: San Bernardino County Transportation Authority (SBCTA)

Project: Ontario International Airport (ONT) Connector Project

Project Location: Cities of Rancho Cucamonga and Ontario, San Bernardino County, California

This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) hereby incorporates the Environmental Assessment (EA) by reference. The EA for the ONT Connector Project (Project or Build Alternative) was prepared in cooperation with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) (42 United States Code [U.S.C.] Section (§)4321 et seq.); the Federal Public Transportation Law (49 U.S.C Chapter 53); the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C 7401 et seq.); 49 U.S.C. §303 (formerly Department of Transportation Act of 1966, Section 4[f]); the Clean Water Act (33 USC 1250 et seq.); National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, Section 106 (54 U.S.C. §306108 and 36 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 800); the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531-1544); Executive Order (EO) 11988 (Floodplain Management); and EO 11990 (Protection of Wetlands). The EA included analysis under EO 14096 (Revitalizing Our Nation's Commitment to Environmental Justice for All), EO 12898 (Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations), and EO 13990 (Protecting Public Health and the Environment and Restoring Science to Tackle the Climate Crisis), which were revoked by EO 14173 (Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity) and EO 14148 (Initial Rescissions of Harmful Executive Orders and Actions) on January 21, 2025. The considerations under any of the rescinded EOs are no longer required. Accordingly, the analysis under rescinded EOs does not inform the determination reached in this FONSI.

Description

SBCTA proposes to construct a 4.2-mile-long transit service tunnel directly connecting the Southern California Regional Rail Authority Cucamonga Metrolink Station in the City of Rancho Cucamonga with ONT in the City of Ontario. Construction is projected as early as 2025 and is anticipated to be completed as early as 2031. The preconstruction work activities would include geotechnical, utility, hazardous materials and other field surveys to identify potential hazards and constraints related to the design and construction activities.

The Build Alternative would provide a direct airport connection to ONT from Cucamonga Metrolink Station to support ONT's projected growth. Transit facilities would be constructed, including stations to serve Cucamonga Metrolink Station, ONT Terminal 2, and ONT Terminal 4; a maintenance and storage facility (MSF) to store and maintain vehicles; and an emergency access and ventilation (vent) shaft to provide ventilation as well as a means of emergency passenger egress and first responder access. This new connection would increase mobility and connectivity for transit patrons; improve access to existing transportation services; provide a connection to future Brightline West service to/from ONT; and support the use of clean, emerging technology for transit opportunities between Cucamonga Metrolink Station and ONT.

Guideway

The proposed tunnel alignment would begin at the Cucamonga Metrolink Station, travel south underneath Milliken Avenue, and cross beneath 6th Street, 4th Street, Interstate 10 (I-10), and the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR), before traveling west beneath East Airport Drive to connect to

stations at Terminals 2 and 4 at ONT. The tunnel depth would be approximately 70 feet below the ground surface. The bi-directional tunnel would have a 24-foot inner diameter with a middle fire and impact-rated wall between each side of the tunnel and access doors at 800-foot intervals per National Fire Protection Association standards.

Each side of the tunnel would have a fixed guideway for autonomous electric transit vehicles. The vehicles would have rubber tires and travel on a dedicated asphalt guideway. The tunnel would include access ramps for the transit vehicles to surface to grade and provide access to the three proposed at--grade stations for passenger boarding and alighting.

Stations

Three stations would be constructed as part of the Build Alternative: Cucamonga Metrolink Station, ONT Terminal 2, and ONT Terminal 4. All three stations would be connected to the tunnel via a cut-and-cover structure and an at-grade guideway. The guideway would be enclosed by fencing, and the walls would be buffered with landscaping. A pedestrian walkway would be provided along the outside of the guideway. The stations would be at-grade within existing parking lots at Cucamonga Metrolink Station and ONT Terminals 2 and 4, and are proposed to be 1 to 2 stories, up to approximately 40 feet in height.

Vent Shaft

A vent shaft would be constructed to provide a means of emergency passenger egress and first responder access to and from the tunnel. Two locations are being considered west of Milliken Avenue on the north and south sides of I-10. A final decision about the location of the vent shaft would be made during final design.

Operations

The Build Alternative would operate rubber-tired autonomous electric vehicles between the Cucamonga Metrolink Station and ONT. Operations would be managed by Omnitrans, with on-demand service provided daily from roughly 4:00 a.m. to 11:30 p.m., including weekends and holidays. Based on the initial operating requirements and preliminary vehicle capacities, SBCTA anticipates initial fleet sizes of between 7 and 60 vehicles will be required.

Alternatives Considered

The EA evaluated two alternatives: a No Build Alternative, which describes future transportation facilities and services if the Project were not built, and a Build Alternative (the Project), described above.

No Build Alternative

The No Build Alternative would have no new direct, last-mile transportation connections between nearby Metrolink stations and ONT. The No Build Alternative assumes planned roadway and transit projects would be implemented even if the Build Alternative is not implemented.

Build Alternative

The Build Alternative includes all of the components of the Build Alternative previously described in the project description above, including an approximately 4.2-mile tunnel alignment, three passenger stations, an MSF, and an access and vent shaft.

Public Opportunity to Comment

FTA and SBCTA released a Notice of Availability (NOA) of the EA on October 18, 2024 for public review. The EA was circulated for public review from October 18, 2024 to December 2,

2024. A summary of the outreach efforts is provided below and Attachment B includes additional details.

- Hard copies of the NOA and EA were made available at the following public libraries:
 - Law Library for San Bernardino County, 8409 Utica Ave, Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730
 - Rancho Cucamonga Public Library, 12505 Cultural Center Dr, Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91739
 - o Ovitt Family Community Library, 215 E C St, Ontario, CA 91764

The EA was also available for public review on the SBCTA website at: www.GoSBCTA.com/ONTconnector.

A total of 2,150 bilingual (English and Spanish) postcards were mailed on October 18, 2024 to residents and business owners within a quarter-mile radius of the proposed Project limits. The postcard shared in information about the EA for public review, opportunity for public comment, and the virtual public meeting held on Wednesday, November 13, 2024. A NOA letter was also mailed to 74 key stakeholders including elected officials and staff from municipal, county, regional, state and federal agencies; tribal groups; community organizations; resource groups; and transportation agencies.

Newspaper Public Notice

SBCTA posted the NOA of the EA in the following newspapers:

- San Bernardino Sun, October 25, 2024
- Press Enterprise, October 25, 2024
- The Inland Valley Daily Bulletin, October 25, 2024

E-blasts

SBCTA sent a series of electronic distribution emails (e-blasts) to the interested parties on the project distribution list. A total of seven e-blasts announcing the start of the public comment period, encouraging interested parties to attend the virtual public meeting, and reminding interested parties to submit comments on the project environmental documents(s) were sent between October 18, 2024 and December 2, 2024.

Virtual Public Meeting

A virtual public meeting was held on Wednesday, November 13, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. to inform the public of the Project and provide an opportunity for public input. The virtual public meeting included a moderated question and answer session where participants could utilize the chat feature on Zoom to receive clarification on information regarding the project and environmental process. A total of 23 questions were received during the meeting and are included in Attachment B. The project team responded to questions and directed attendees to where they can read more project-related information in the EA. A total of eight public comments were recorded by the court reporter and are included as part of Attachment A.

On Friday, November 15, 2024, a recording of the virtual public meeting was posted on the project webpage and shared in an e-blast that was sent to those who signed up to receive updates and registered for the virtual public meeting. The video link was also shared to SBCTA's Facebook account that same day.

Comments on the EA

The EA public review period was concurrent with the public circulation period for the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). During this public circulation period, FTA and SBCTA received 141 comments on the EA from members of the public and agency stakeholders. Attachment A provides the comment letters and responses to these comments. Of the comments received, three (3) of the comments were from public agency stakeholders. The Ontario International Airport Authority expressed their support for the Build Alternative. Additionally, the City of Rancho Cucamonga provided comments requesting clarification regarding project design, environmental impacts, and construction processes and requested consideration to launch the tunnel boring machine (TBM) in the City of Ontario. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) requested modifications to the CEQA mitigation measures addressing impacts to the California species of special concern, burrowing owl.

A total of 130 comment letters were received from the general public, including organizations. Of these, 8 comments expressed support for the project, 63 comments did not support the project, and 59 comments did not express if they were for or against the project. The topics raised by the group of commenters who did not express support or opposition of the project included project impacts on traffic and transportation, air quality, and hazards and hazardous materials. Questions related to alternatives analysis, preferred alternative selection, preference for another alternative, and funding sources were also raised.

Identification of the Preferred Alternative

As shown in Section 2.4, Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Consideration of the EA, several transit alternatives that could connect to ONT have been evaluated, screened, and refined since 2008 in planning studies. Based on these planning studies, technical analysis, cost considerations, environmental impacts, defined criteria and public input, previous alternatives have been considered but eliminated from further consideration as part of this Project. These previous studies also helped SBCTA define its proposed Project to evaluate further under NEPA and CEQA. Of the four planning studies, two primary studies evaluated potential transit connections to ONT.

The alternatives previously considered included various routes and modes consisting of: (1) new standalone commuter rail line connections from nearby existing Metrolink stations utilizing diesel multiple unit or zero-emission multiple unit trains; (2) light rail extension of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority Gold Line (now referred to as the A Line); and (3) a bus shuttle. However, these alternatives were eliminated due to impacts to intersections with poor level-of-service (LOS), right-of-way acquisition of residential and commercial properties, noise and vibration impacts to sensitive receivers, impacts to flood control facilities, conflicts with active freight service, and impacts to recreational uses and designated historic districts. Details of the alternatives considered but eliminated from further consideration are provided in Appendix C of the EA.

The screening process evaluated the project alternatives based on their capacity to achieve the project objectives. Each objective was given equal consideration. Based on the findings of the performance of alternatives, Alternative 1 consisting of a tunnel system, was recommended to be studied as the Build Alternative as part of the environmental analysis phase.

The Build Alternative was identified as the Preferred Alternative because it met the most performance criteria (including the capacity for growth) and would best meet the purpose and need of the proposed Project. Compared to Alternative 1, other alternatives previously considered but eliminated from consideration would result in additional environmental consequences, including:

- Acquisitions and Displacements: Other alternatives (Alternatives A-4, C-5, D-1, and others related to the LA Metro Gold Line Extension and Metrolink service) could result in more commercial and residential acquisitions and displacements.
- Community: Other alternatives (Alternatives A-4, C-5, D-1, and others related to the LA Metro Gold Line Extension and Metrolink service) would require the construction and operation of a new transportation facility placed within an established community;
- Transportation and Traffic: Aboveground alternatives (Alternatives A-3, A-4, A-7, B-2, C-5, D-1, and others related to the LA Metro Gold Line Extension and Metrolink service) would result in impacts to local streets, Interstate 10 (I-10), and Metrolink service during construction.
- Aesthetics and Visual: Aboveground alternatives (Alternatives A-3, A-4, A-7, C-5, D-1, and others related to the LA Metro Gold Line Extension and Metrolink service) would result in impacts related to new at-grade and elevated rail features and stations.
- Hydrology and Floodplain: Alternative 3 would result in the development of a new rail facility located within a 100-year flood zone.
- Air Quality: Other alternatives relying on DMUs (Alternatives A-3, A-4, A-7, and C-5) would result in increased emissions with operation of DMUs.
- Noise and Vibration: Other alternatives related to the LA Metro Gold Line extension would result in increased noise and vibration adjacent to residential units.
- Section 4(f): Alternative 3 would result in impact to bicycle path adjacent to the Deer Creek channel.
- Biological Resources: Aboveground alternatives (Alternatives A-3, A-4, A-7, C-5, D-1, and others related to the LA Metro Gold Line Extension and Metrolink service) would have the potential to impact special-status species and their habitats.
- Permits: Other alternatives (Alternatives A-3, A-4, A-7, C-5, D-1 and others related to Metrolink service) could impact aquatic resources, thereby requiring Sections 401, 404, and 1602 permits.
- In addition to less environmental consequences, Alternative 1's estimated capital cost of \$538 million is substantially lower and has a lower risk of cost increase compared to the other previously considered alternatives.

Additional background information on alternatives previously considered is available in Appendix C of the EA.

Upon completion of the public comment period for the EA and Draft EIR, SBCTA reviewed and considered public comments. SBCTA provided responses to those comments in the Final EIR and as an attachment to this FONSI. The Final EIR was published for public review on February 21, 2025, for a 10-day public review period. At the March 5, 2025 SBCTA Board of Directors meeting, staff presented the Final EIR, including the responses to public comments on the Draft EIR. The SBCTA Board of Directors certified the EIR and unanimously approved the

ONT Connector Project. A Notice of Determination (NOD) was filed with the San Bernardino County Clerk of the Board and was submitted to the State Clearinghouse on March 5, 2025.

Determinations and Findings

SBCTA, in cooperation with FTA, prepared an EA for the ONT Connector Project to evaluate the environmental effects of the Build Alternative pursuant to the requirements of NEPA, as codified in 23 CFR 771.119 and 23 U.S.C. 139. The EA concluded that construction and operation of the Build Alternative, with incorporated avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures, would not result in adverse effects to the environment. The following resources are either not present in the proposed Project area or would not be affected by the No Build or Build Alternative: coastal zones, farmland, federally listed species, invasive species, migratory birds, parkland and Section 6(f) properties, scenic highways, Section 4(f) properties, waters of the United States, and wild and scenic rivers. The topics with no adverse effects include community and socioeconomic effects, economic and fiscal, noise/vibration resources, and cumulative effects. Moreover, the topics with no adverse effects with the implementation of mitigation measures (described in Attachment C, Environmental Commitments Record [ECR]) include air quality, cultural resources, geology/soils/seismicity/paleontological, hazards and hazardous materials, transportation and traffic, and water quality/water resources/floodplains resources.

The findings requiring mitigation by federal environmental laws and EOs are outlined below.

Land Acquisition, Displacements, and Fiscal Impacts

The Build Alternative will not require full or partial acquisitions, and no relocations or displacements would occur. However, temporary construction easements may be needed during construction which may have some hardship, such as limited access, alternate access, reduction of parking, noise, dust, and paint odors.

The Build Alternative alignment would require right-of-way easements from 19 properties. This alignment includes the need for 12 permanent subsurface easements, two permanent surface easements, and five parcels that are both subsurface and surface easements. Of the 19 easements, seven would be for all three stations, totaling approximately 2 acres. Subsurface easements would be required where the tunnel begins curving east at Guasti Road east of the UPRR bridge.

The Build Alternative will reduce parking and temporarily affect accessibility to businesses within the Project Area during construction. In addition, commercial businesses such as gas stations may experience a temporary reduction in clientele due to the closure of one lane in each direction and temporary reconfiguration of access during construction. All construction effects will be temporary and will cease upon completion.

Air Quality Conformity

The Clean Air Act and its amendments require that federal agencies and Metropolitan Planning Organizations only approve a transportation project, program, or plan if it conforms to the approved State Implementation Plan. The Federal Transportation Conformity Rule requires that FTA projects must be found to conform before they are adopted, accepted, approved, or funded. The Build Alternative is included in the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) 2025 Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP). The 2025 FTIP includes the preliminary engineering for the project under FTIP ID 20192702, "ONT Loop – Zero-emission, rubber tire, direct transit connection between the Rancho Cucamonga Metrolink Station and ONT". Accordingly, the regional conformity requirement is satisfied. The 2025

FTIP was determined to meet transportation conformity requirements and was approved by FTA and the Federal Highway Administration on December 16, 2024.

SCAG's Transportation Conformity Working Group concurred with the determination that the project is not a Project of Air Quality Concern on December 3, 2024. There is no potential for a PM hot spot in the project area. Under the Build Alternative, there would be no adverse effect related to worsening existing or contributing to new localized PM hot spots. Thus, the PM hot-spot requirement is satisfied. The Build Alternative would reduce vehicle volumes on all analyzed segments. In addition, the Build Alternative has no potential to generate a new carbon monoxide (CO) hot-spot or worsen an existing CO hot-spot; the CO hot-spot requirement is satisfied.

The Build Alternative would not cause or contribute to any new air quality violations, increase the frequency or severity of existing violations, or delay the attainment of air quality standards, required emission reductions, or other milestones in the area. Construction of the Build Alternative would result in particulate matter (PM) (PM₁₀, PM_{2.5}), nitrogen oxides (NO_X), and volatile organic compound (VOC) emissions as well as fugitive dust emissions generated from earth disturbance during site grading for aboveground features and construction vehicles using dirt roadways within or adjacent to construction sites. Although construction of the Build Alternative would result in a temporary increase of local and regional air pollutant emissions, the increase in emissions would not exceed South Coast Air Quality Management District thresholds and would be minimal after construction. To avoid or minimize effects during construction, MM-AQ-1 would be implemented. The FTA finds that the Build Alternative would have no adverse effect on air quality.

National Historic Preservation Act Compliance

In accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act (54 U.S.C. 306108 et seq.), and its implementing regulations at 36 CFR Part 800, FTA, in coordination with SBCTA, initiated consultation with the California State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) on June 10, 2024. An area of potential effects (APE) was delineated to encompass potential project effects on cultural resources. SHPO indicated that the delineation of the APE appeared appropriate on July 23, 2024.

No archaeological or tribal cultural resources have been documented In the Build Alternative area (physical disturbance area within the APE), but two historic-period railroad routes and one pre-1981 commercial complex are in the APE. The railroad segments are part of the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad (0.25-mile segment) and the Southern Pacific Railroad (3.25-mile segment) and date to the 1800s. The commercial complex is located at 4265 East Guasti Road and dates to 1969. These resources were determined to not be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and are, therefore, not historic properties for purposes of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

Archaeological sensitivity (potential for buried resources) is considered higher in portions of the Build Alternative area close to previously documented resources and where Holocene-age soils are present that could contain buried cultural resources up to 10 feet below the surface. FTA sent an invitation letter to 18 Native American contacts provided by the California Native American Heritage Commission to consult under Section 106. Two Native American groups, the Yuhaaviatam of San Manuel Nation and the Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians – Kizh Nation,

requested consultation and meetings were scheduled with tribal representatives on September 6, 2024 and October 1, 2024, respectively.

As a result of consultation, a Cultural Resources Monitoring and Treatment Plan (CRMTP) has been prepared and is provided in Attachment D. The CRMTP is a background document establishing protocols and procedures for archaeological and Native American monitoring and for the recordation/treatment of new finds inadvertently discovered during ground-disturbing activities.

On December 17, 2024, the Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians – Kizh Nation provided comments on the Draft EIR and EA. The comments consisted of changes to mitigation measures TCR-1, TCR-2, and TCR-3. SBCTA considered the measures proposed by Kizh Nation in developing mitigation measures included in Section 3.4 (Cultural Resources) and Section 3.15 (Tribal Cultural Resources) of the Draft EIR, and Section 3.4 (Cultural Resources) of the EA. The measures included in the Draft EIR and EA are sufficient to address:

- Identification of an appropriate Native American monitor, as included in a cultural resource Monitoring and Treatment Plan, should a significant tribal cultural resource be uncovered during construction and the appropriate Native American tribal groups elect to place a monitor on-site,
- Unanticipated discovery of Tribal Cultural Resource objects (non-funerary/ non-ceremonial),
- Unanticipated discovery of human remains and associated funerary or ceremonial objects.

Therefore, the Build Alternative would not result in an adverse effect related to archaeological and tribal cultural resources, with the implementation of Mitigation Measure (MM) MM-CUL-1, MM-CUL-2, and MM-CUL-3 described in Attachment C.

No property listed in or determined eligible for listing in the NRHP would be transferred, leased, or sold out of federal ownership or control as a result of the project. Accordingly, on December 2, 2024, SHPO concurred with FTA's finding of 'No Historic Properties Affected.'

Executive Orders 13609 and 11988 Floodplain Management

The Build Alternative falls within the Santa Ana River Watershed, specifically the Middle Santa Ana Watershed, and overlies the Upper Santa Ana Valley Groundwater Basin and the Chino Subbasin. No natural surface waters flow through the Project footprint, although storm drain systems convey surface runoff along roads and through developed areas. Cucamonga Creek flows under ONT through a concrete culvert and is part of the urban storm drain system in the area.

A section of the proposed tunnel near ONT would cross a 100-year floodplain at approximately the intersection of East Airport Drive and East Terminal Way. To ensure the Build Alternative design meets local floodplain requirements and does not increase flood risks, SBCTA will coordinate with City of Ontario Building Department on the design plans (MM-HWQ-2).

Construction at ONT could create a risk to workers and the work area in the event of a failure at the San Antonio Dam, which could flood the area. Although dam failure is considered remote, MM-HWQ-3 would require the preparation of an Emergency Operations Plan. The Emergency Operations Plan shall include provisions for an evacuation action plan to respond to a

notification of San Antonio Dam failure. The evacuation plan in the Emergency Operations Plan shall include action plans to evacuate all the people within the Project area during a San Antonio dam failure. The Emergency Operations Plan will ensure compliance with existing emergency action plans for the area (from United States Army Corps of Engineers, San Bernardino County, and the Local Hazard Mitigation Plans for the City of Rancho Cucamonga and City of Ontario), as required by the General Plans of each jurisdiction.

Endangered Species Act Compliance

United States Fish and Wildlife Service Information for Planning and Consultation database search was completed in June 2022 to identify the existence or potential occurrence of sensitive or special-status biological resources (e.g., plant and animal species). A threatened and endangered species list was initially obtained from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service in April 2024 and an updated list was obtained in January 2025. Since April 2024, the status of the Monarch butterfly, which had been a USFWS Candidate species, was updated to Proposed Threatened (refer to Attachment E). However, the potential for the Monarch butterfly to occur in the RSA is low given that there are no tree groves suitable for an overwintering population.

A general survey and habitat mapping were conducted on September 1 and 9, 2022, to characterize the biological resources of the Biological Study Area (BSA) and to ascertain the presence or absence of sensitive plants and animals or the likelihood of their occurrence in the BSA. The BSA includes the entire proposed ground disturbance area (temporary and permanent) associated with the project design and a 500-foot buffer. The field investigations focused on undeveloped habitats in the BSA. Field investigations of undeveloped habitat in the northern portion of the BSA were not conducted due to lack of legal rights to access. These areas were viewed in the field, as feasible, from adjacent areas using binoculars. In addition, these areas were assessed via desktop review of aerial photographs.

Much of the BSA consists of urban development and ornamental landscaping. Undeveloped areas within the BSA contain a mixture of coastal sage scrub (CSS), nonnative annual grassland, and ornamental vegetation along Milliken Avenue and East Airport Drive and surrounding the residential and commercial developments that are affected by regular vehicular traffic, noise and anthropogenic uses. Mapped vegetation communities in the BSA include nonnative annual grassland, CSS, and developed/disturbed. There are two concrete lined drainage channels, one cobble ditch, and two earthen channels that are potentially jurisdictional features within the BSA.

The Delhi Sands Flower-Loving Fly is federally listed as endangered and is a CDFW Special Animal. This species lives in Delhi-series soil. Although mapped Delhi soils occur throughout the majority of the BSA, they are almost entirely developed. No suitable habitat occurs within the Build Alternative footprint due to existing roadways, and other infrastructure, which have resulted in degraded soils and a dominance of nonnative vegetation. Focused surveys for the Delhi Sands Flower-Loving Fly were conducted in 2021 and were not detected within the survey areas. No other listed special-status wildlife species were observed in the BSA during a general survey and habitat mapping in 2022.

A natural community of special concern within the BSA is CSS. Approximately 0.85 acre of CSS habitat is located along the western slope of Milliken Avenue, south of I-10 and north of the intersection of Milliken Avenue and Guasti Road. No vegetation removal, grubbing, and/or grading of CSS would occur during construction. The Build Alternative would result in temporary indirect effects to 0.17 acre of CSS during construction activities associated with the

tunnel and vent shaft design option 4. Indirect effects may include an increase in noise and vibration. However, effects would not be new to the area since CSS is already affected by the operation of the existing freeway off-ramp and Milliken Avenue. No special-status species were observed in the area of CSS during field surveys.

The Build Alternative is not located within a significant ecological area as defined in the County of San Bernardino General Plan, and the City of Rancho Cucamonga and City of Ontario General Plans state that no forest resources, coastal or marine species, or shorelines are present within the cities. Therefore, the FTA finds that the Build Alternative would not result in an adverse effect related to endangered and/or threatened plant and animal species.

Geology, Soils, Seismicity, and Paleontological Resources

Construction activities would involve ground-disturbing activities that would expose soils to wind and water erosion, create potentially unstable slopes, and expose or damage fossil resources. With most activities taking place in previously developed areas and based on the soil types in the area, minimal erosion concerns are anticipated. Standard best management practices would help stabilize and protect exposed soils during construction. In addition, a site-specific stormwater urban mitigation plan would be prepared for the Build Alternative and implemented during construction to comply with the San Bernardino County Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System Permit (Order Number R8-2010-0036) (MM-HWQ-1). Some excavation activities may take place in unstable soils, and the risk of slope failure is considered higher for temporary slopes due to generally steeper gradients versus permanent, manufactured slopes. To address the risks of potential slope failure, temporary slopes would be designed to meet the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health requirements for stabilization, which establish acceptable and safe horizontal and vertical dimensions for constructed slopes (California Code of Regulations, Title 8, Section 1541.1) (MM-GEO-2). Therefore, the Build Alternative would result in no adverse effects related to erosion or slope failure.

Shallow excavation activities in previously disturbed areas, such as at the stations, are unlikely to expose or disturb fossil resources. Deeper excavations at the proposed stations and during the cut-and-cover activities associated with the tunnel and vent shaft and the relocation of affected utilities could disturb or damage fossil resources. In addition, use of the tunnel boring machine would likely prevent the discovery of fossil resources, and some may be damaged during tunnel construction. Inadvertent discovery protocols and fossil recovery measures would help preserve the scientific value of fossils that may be present in these areas (MM-PAL-1 through MM-PAL-4). With implementation of MM-PAL-1 through MM-PAL-4 and given the vertical and horizontal extent of the affected geologic unit where tunneling would occur, the intensity of potential adverse effects on paleontological resources would not be adverse.

Seismically induced ground-shaking could result in risks from loss, injury, or death due to damage to or failure of built structures. As discussed in Section 3.7.3, MM-GEO-3 requires the preparation of a geotechnical investigation to evaluate soils and foundation types. With the proximity of several faults, the design of foundations and structures associated with the Build Alternative must comply with California Building Code Seismic Zone 4 requirements to reduce the potential for seismic-related ground failure damaging the stations and other facilities (MM-GEO-1). In addition, underlying unsuitable and expansive soils could damage structures, utility lines, and paved surfaces. To ensure the proposed infrastructure and stations are designed with consideration of site-specific soil conditions, a geotechnical investigation to evaluate soils and foundation types would be required for the Build Alternative with recommendations for

ground preparation and earthwork specific to the Build Alternative area to achieve an acceptable level of soil stability (MM-GEO-3). Therefore, the Build Alternative would result in no adverse effects related to seismic-related ground failure or unstable and expansive soils.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

All hazardous materials used for construction and hazardous waste generated from construction activities would be handled, transported, and disposed in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local regulations to reduce the risk of exposure or contamination during construction. In addition, a risk management plan will be prepared and implemented to address potential contamination concerns during construction (MM-HAZ-1), and all known utilities, including pipelines, would be located and marked before construction begins, with a response plan implemented in the event of a leak (MM-HAZ-2). The Build Alternative would not result in adverse effects related to accidental release of hazardous materials during construction.

Operation of new stations, a tunnel, and the proposed MSF at the proposed Cucamonga Station would involve the use of small amounts of hazardous substances such as oil, grease, solvents, paints, common household-type cleaning materials, and pesticides/herbicides. None of these substances would be acutely hazardous (they would not pose a threat to human health and the environment when properly managed). Compliance with existing regulations would ensure proper transportation, use, and storage of hazardous materials during operation. Therefore, the Build Alternative would not result in adverse effects related to the use or discharge of unregulated hazardous materials during operation.

Transportation and Traffic

As discussed in Section 3.10, Transportation and Traffic, of the EA and Appendix Q, Transportation, of the EIR, construction of the Build Alternative would result in temporary traffic increases in and around the Build Alternative area as workers drive to the work area, materials are transported to staging and work areas, and haul trucks remove materials from the work area. These temporary increases would be periodic throughout the work week, with no effects on days when work is not conducted. Additionally, construction of the Build Alternative may result in temporary lane closures adjacent to or directly on the I-10 on- and off-ramps at Milliken Avenue to allow safe access for construction vehicles entering and exiting the vent shaft construction site. During construction, access for users of transit, roadway, parking, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities within project construction zones at the Rancho Cucamonga Station and ONT would be temporarily affected. To address potential construction-related traffic effects (including transit, roadway, parking, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities), a Transportation Management Plan will be prepared to facilitate the flow of traffic in and around construction zones (MM-TRA-1). It should be noted that MM-TRA-1 was amended in response to the City of Rancho Cucamonga's comments on the EA. A clause has been added to MM-TRA-1 indicating that the Transportation Management Plan will be provided to the City of Rancho Cucamonga, the City of Ontario, San Bernardino County, and the Ontario International Airport Authority for review and comment. During operation, the Build Alternative is expected to attract new transit riders, encouraging a shift from automobile use to public transit, and improved regional connectivity and local transit access. The Build Alternative would be a new service for passengers accessing ONT and it would benefit the community. Further, the Build Alternative would connect to other transit services at Cucamonga Station, thereby increasing demand for other connecting transit services. These transit services could serve as an additional travel option for accessing the ONT Connector at Cucamonga Station without having to drive. Therefore, the Build Alternative would result in a beneficial effect to transportation and traffic during operation.

The use of parking lots at the Cucamonga Metrolink Station and ONT Terminals 2 and 4 for construction staging areas would temporarily reduce available parking at these locations. During construction, approximately 170 parking stalls at the Cucamonga Metrolink Station would not be available, leaving 810 parking stalls for transit users to park at the station. This loss constitutes a 17 percent reduction in parking capacity. It has been observed that the peak parking demand at the Rancho Cucamonga Station is 255 occupied parking stalls, which is approximately 26 percent of all available parking among both east and west lots. It is not anticipated that either parking lot at Rancho Cucamonga will exceed parking capacity during project construction.

At ONT, approximately 300 stalls (24 percent of available stalls) in Lot 2 General and 300 stalls (21 percent of available stalls) in Lot 4 General would not be available, leaving approximately 934 and 1,130 stalls respectively for airport users. It is anticipated that Lot 2 General and Lot 4 General will exceed maximum capacity by 124 stalls and 171 stalls, respectively, during parking peak hours during project construction. In such cases, vehicles may be redirected to other available parking stalls at Lots 3, 5, and 6 during construction. Other parking available at the Cucamonga Metrolink Station and in Lots 3, 5, and 6 at ONT would continue to be available without affecting access to the station and airport. Given the remaining parking available at the Cucamonga Metrolink Station and the remaining parking in Lots 3, 5, and 6 at ONT, the Build Alternative would not result in an adverse effect to parking during construction.

At ONT, the Build Alternative during operation (in Opening Year [2031] and Design Year [2051]) would result in a permanent loss of 85 parking stalls in Lot 2 General associated with operation of the Build Alternative at the proposed Terminal 2 station, and a permanent loss of 115 parking stalls in Lot 4 General associated with operation of the Build Alternative at the proposed Terminal 4 station, leaving approximately 1,149 and 1,315 stalls respectively. This constitutes a permanent 7 percent loss in parking capacity for Lot 2 General and a permanent 8 percent loss in parking capacity for Lot 4 General. Given the remaining parking available in Lots 3, 5, and 6 at ONT, the Build Alternative during operation would have a minimal effect to parking at ONT under opening year and design year conditions.

Metrolink issues quarterly fact sheets detailing ridership on each system line. As reflected in the data gathered from Metrolink on their quarterly fact sheets, there has been a gradual increase in ridership on the San Bernardino Line since the pandemic, and ridership numbers have been increasing from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024. The Quarter 4 2023-2024 (April 1, 2024 – June 30, 2024) fact sheet presented the ridership on the San Bernardino Line, on which the Cucamonga Metrolink Station is located, and included an average weekday ridership of 6,305 and a total weekend ridership of 73,062. Given that Metrolink ridership on the San Bernardino Line increased each quarter during 2023-2024 and that counts were taken during Quarter 4 (the highest ridership), a time when some students were on summer break and others were in summer session, the parking count surveys taken during June 2024 would reflect typical average ridership.

The Build Alternative during operation (in Opening Year [2031] and Design Year [2051]) would result in the permanent loss of 180 parking stalls at the west lot of Cucamonga Metrolink Station, leaving 150 parking stalls available at this lot. Based on parking surveys conducted for the project, the peak daily demand at the west lot would be up to approximately 88 parking stalls

during a typical weekday and approximately 14 parking stalls during a typical weekend day, which would result in approximately 62 unused parking stalls on a typical weekday and approximately 136 unused parking stalls on a typical weekend day. Therefore, the number of available parking stalls for the west lot is sufficient to service the parking demand at this parking lot on a typical weekday and weekend day under opening year and design year conditions.

During operation (in Opening Year [2031] and Design Year [2051]), the Build Alternative would not change the supply of and would not generate demand for parking stalls at the Cucamonga Metrolink Station east lot. The east lot is forecasted to operate with approximately 137 unused parking stalls on a typical weekday and approximately 211 unused parking stalls on a typical weekend day. Therefore, the number of available parking stalls for the east lot is sufficient to service the parking demand at this parking lot on a typical weekday and weekend day under opening year and design year conditions. No parking avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures are recommended at Cucamonga Metrolink Station during operation of the Build Alternative.

The Build Alternative would provide a connection from Cucamonga Metrolink Station to and from ONT, which would be a transportation improvement for the RSA. Improvements to first/last-mile access encourage mode shift from automobiles to other modes, such as transit and non-motorized travel. Therefore, the Build Alternative would encourage the use of transit for the airport trips, thereby stimulating a mode shift from automobile to transit. As such, the Build Alternative would reduce the overall regional vehicle miles traveled compared to the No Build Alternative. Therefore, the Build Alternative would have a beneficial effect on transportation and traffic during operation.

Section 4(f) Compliance

The USDOT of 1966, 49 U.S.C. 303 and/or regulations in 23 CFR Part 774, includes a special provision, Section 4(f), which stipulates that federal agencies cannot approve the use of land from publicly owned parks, recreational areas, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and public or private historical sites unless (1) there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of such lands, and (2) such projects include all possible planning to minimize harm to those properties resulting from such use.

No Section 4(f) properties are in the Build Alternative area, and the Build Alternative would not result in use of any Section 4(f) properties.

Environmental Finding

In accordance with 23 CFR Part 771.121, FTA finds, on the basis of the analysis, reviews, and mitigation measures identified in the EA, that there are no significant or adverse impacts on the environment associated with implementation of the project. SBCTA has incorporated mitigation measures into the project to reduce or eliminate potentially significant or adverse environmental impacts. SBCTA shall implement the mitigation measures and measures to avoid and minimize environmental impacts located in Attachment C.

Approved:

Ray Tellis Regional Administrator Federal Transit Administration, Region IX

Attachments:

Attachment A: Public Comment and Responses Attachment B: Public Outreach Summary Attachment C: Environmental Commitments Record (ECR) Attachment D: Cultural Resources Monitoring and Treatment Plan (CRMTP) Attachment E: USFWS IPaC Database Search (Updated)