

## 1 **3.17 Transportation**

### 2 **3.17.1 Introduction**

3 This section describes the regulatory and environmental setting for transportation in the vicinity of  
4 the Proposed Project and the Atwater Station Alternative. It also describes the impacts on  
5 transportation that would result from implementation of the Proposed Project and the Atwater  
6 Station Alternative, and mitigation measures that would reduce significant impacts, where feasible  
7 and appropriate.

8 Additional considerations of transportation are presented in Section 3.16, *Safety and Security*, which  
9 addresses impacts on emergency response. Cumulative impacts on transportation, in combination  
10 with planned, approved, and reasonably foreseeable projects, are discussed in Chapter 4, *Other*  
11 *CEQA-Required Analysis*.

### 12 **3.17.2 Regulatory Setting**

13 This section summarizes federal, state, regional, and local regulations related to transportation and  
14 applicable to the Proposed Project and the Atwater Station Alternative.

#### 15 **3.17.2.1 Federal**

16 The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is responsible for the development and enforcement of  
17 regulations governing the safety of freight and passenger rail systems, including the design,  
18 operation, and maintenance of railroads. Examples include issuing guidance on compliance with the  
19 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in the design of passenger station platforms and overseeing  
20 compliance with the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008 in the implementation of positive train  
21 control systems. The FRA also published a National Rail Plan in 2010 that describes a vision for a  
22 nationwide network of passenger and freight rail (Federal Railroad Association 2010).

23 At (highway–rail) grade crossings, the design of traffic control devices for traffic, transit, bicycle, and  
24 pedestrian activity are addressed by the Federal Highway Administration through the Manual on  
25 Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) (Federal Highway Administration 2012). The California  
26 Department of Transportation (Caltrans) issues a modified version of the MUTCD for use within  
27 California.

28 The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is primarily responsible for administering federal grant  
29 programs to create and enhance public transportation, as well as providing technical assistance and  
30 planning support for transit systems and conducting technology research. However, the FTA also  
31 has some regulatory roles in transit safety oversight, including publishing safety rules and guidance  
32 (directives, advisories, and bulletins). One example is the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan  
33 Final Rule, which generally requires all operators of public transportation systems that are  
34 recipients or sub-recipients of FTA grant funds to adopt safety plans. FTA also has some  
35 responsibilities for oversight regarding ADA compliance, including the provision of paratransit  
36 service. In general, a public entity operating a fixed-route transit system is required to provide  
37 comparable complementary paratransit service, but these requirements do not apply to commuter  
38 bus, commuter rail, or intercity rail systems (49 Code of Federal Regulations 37.121).

1 The Altamont Corridor Express (ACE) provides a service that has both commuter rail and intercity  
2 aspects to it. It is possible that the San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission (SJRRC) could obtain  
3 funding from FRA and/or FTA for the Project. Federal funding would trigger the need to comply  
4 with NEPA.

### 5 **3.17.2.2 State**

#### 6 **State Transportation Planning**

7 Caltrans is generally responsible for planning and oversight of the statewide transportation  
8 system within California and is also directly responsible for certain specific components of the  
9 system, including the design, construction, operation, and maintenance of the highway and  
10 freeway networks and the operation of intercity rail services. Caltrans publishes the California  
11 Transportation Plan, which establishes a vision for the statewide transportation system,  
12 comprised of six goals (and supporting policies): improving multimodal mobility and accessibility  
13 for all people; preserving the multimodal transportation system; supporting a vibrant economy;  
14 improving public safety and security; fostering livable and healthy communities and promoting  
15 social equity; and practicing environmental stewardship (California Department of  
16 Transportation 2016).

17 The California Transportation Plan also incorporates and references several detailed mode-  
18 specific plans, including the California State Rail Plan, which describes a vision for the state's  
19 passenger and freight rail system and identifies necessary improvements and investments. The  
20 State Rail Plan's short-term plan (2022) includes an extension of ACE service to Modesto and  
21 Ceres and its' mid-term plan (2027) includes an extension of ACE service to Merced. Other  
22 statewide mode-specific plans address elements such as freight mobility, public transit, and biking  
23 and walking.

24 The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) is responsible for rail safety in California,  
25 including safety for both passenger/freight railroads and urban rail transit systems (e.g., light rail,  
26 subways). One of the CPUC's key regulatory roles is in grade crossing safety, including issuance of  
27 general orders and rules governing grade crossings and reviewing requests to construct new  
28 crossings or modify existing crossings.

#### 29 **SB 375**

30 SB 375, also known as the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008, seeks to  
31 reduce carbon emissions from how land use is approached. SB 375 requires regional transportation  
32 plans (RTPs) developed by each of the state's 18 metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) to  
33 incorporate a sustainable communities strategy (SCS) in each RTP to achieve the GHG emissions  
34 reduction targets set by CARB. The SCS/RTPs within the project area are discussed below in section  
35 3.17.2.3

#### 36 **SB 743**

37 Senate Bill 743, codified in California Public Resources Code Section 21099, created a shift in  
38 transportation impact analysis under CEQA from a focus on automobile delay, as measured by level  
39 of service (LOS) and similar metrics, toward a focus on reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and  
40 greenhouse gas (GHG emissions). The Legislature required the Governor's Office of Planning and  
41 Research to propose new criteria for determining the significance of transportation. The statute

1 states that upon certification of the new criteria, automobile delay (as described solely by LOS or  
2 similar measures of vehicular capacity or traffic congestion) shall not be considered a significant  
3 impact on the environment under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) except in any  
4 locations specifically identified in the new criteria. Lead agencies are still required to analyze a  
5 project's potentially significant transportation impacts related to air quality, noise, safety, and other  
6 resource areas that may be associated with transportation. The statute states that the adequacy of  
7 parking for a project shall not support a finding of significance.

8 The new criteria, contained in the CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, were certified and adopted in  
9 December 2018. Section 15064.3 provides that VMT is the most appropriate metric to assess  
10 transportation impacts; with limited exceptions (applicable to roadway capacity projects, which this  
11 project is not), a project's effect on automobile delay does not constitute a significant environmental  
12 impact. Other relevant considerations may include a project's effects on transit and nonmotorized  
13 travel. Section 15064.3 further provides that transportation projects that reduce VMT should be  
14 presumed to cause a less-than-significant impact. Lead agencies were required to shift to a VMT  
15 metric by July 1, 2020.

16 The Office of Planning and Research has provided a technical advisory on evaluating transportation  
17 impacts in CEQA (Office of Planning and Research 2018a) and further information related to the  
18 change in the guidelines in its 2018 Statement of Reasons supporting the guideline change (Office of  
19 Planning and Research 2018b), and related to LOS and VMT on its CEQA Update website (Office of  
20 Planning and Research 2018c).

### 21 **3.17.2.3 Regional and Local**

22 The SJRRC, a state joint powers agency, proposes improvements inside and outside of the Union  
23 Pacific Railroad (UPRR) right-of-way (ROW). The Interstate Commerce Commission Termination Act  
24 (ICCTA) affords railroads engaged in interstate commerce considerable flexibility in making  
25 necessary improvements and modifications to rail infrastructure,<sup>1</sup> subject to the requirements of the  
26 Surface Transportation Board. ICCTA broadly preempts state and local regulation of railroads, and  
27 this preemption extends to the construction and operation of rail lines. As such, activities within the  
28 UPRR ROW are clearly exempt from local building and zoning codes and other land use ordinances.  
29 However, facilities located outside of the UPRR ROW, including proposed stations, the proposed  
30 Merced Layover & Maintenance Facility, and the Atwater Station Alternative would be subject to  
31 regional and local plans and regulations. Though ICCTA does broadly preempt state and local  
32 regulation of railroads, SJRRC intends to obtain local agency permits for construction of facilities  
33 that fall outside of the UPRR ROW even though SJRRC has not determined that such permits are  
34 legally necessary and such permits may not be required.

35 Appendix G of this EIR, *Regional Plans and Local General Plans*, provides a list of applicable goals,  
36 policies, and objectives from regional and local plans of the jurisdictions in which the Proposed  
37 Project and the Atwater Station Alternative are proposed. Section 15125(d) of the CEQA Guidelines  
38 requires an environmental impact report (EIR) to discuss "any inconsistencies between the  
39 proposed project and applicable general plans, specific plans, and regional plans." These plans were  
40 considered during the preparation of this analysis and were reviewed to assess whether the  
41 Proposed Project and the Atwater Station Alternative would be consistent with the plans of relevant

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<sup>1</sup> The Altamont Corridor Express (ACE) operates within a ROW and on tracks owned by the UPRR, which operates interstate freight rail service in the same ROW and on the same tracks.

1 jurisdictions.<sup>2</sup> The Proposed Project and the Atwater Station Alternative would be generally  
2 consistent with the applicable goals, policies, and objectives related to population and housing  
3 identified in Appendix G.

4 The Proposed Project traverses and is located in the jurisdiction of three regional planning agencies,  
5 two counties, and three incorporated cities. The Atwater Station Alternative is located in one  
6 incorporated city (the city of Atwater). The Proposed Project affects regional and local roadway  
7 facilities by way of intersections adjacent to existing crossings. Table 3.17-1 lists regional plans;  
8 county and city general plans; local bicycle, pedestrian, and transit plans; and county codes that  
9 have been reviewed and considered for the preparation of this analysis. Appendix G of this EIR  
10 contains a list of applicable transportation goals, policies, and objectives from these plans.

11 **Table 3.17-1. List of Regional and Local Transportation Plans**

<b>Policy Title</b>	<b>Summary</b>
<b>Regional and Countywide Transportation Plans</b>	
<i>Metropolitan Transportation Commission Resolution No. 3434</i> (Metropolitan Transportation Commission 2008)	Resolution 3434 (Bus, Rail and Ferry Network) includes increased ACE service.
<i>Valley Transportation Plan 2040: The Long-Range Transportation Plan for Santa Clara County</i> (Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority 2014)	Plan mentions funding for ACE rolling stock and track improvements.
<i>2020 Alameda Countywide Transportation Plan</i> (Alameda County Transportation Commission 2020)	Plan mentions the future transit expansions of ACE.
<i>Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy for San Joaquin County</i> (San Joaquin Council of Governments 2018)	Plan's funding investments and projects list includes support for expansion of ACE rail services to Modesto and Merced.
<i>2018 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy</i> (Stanislaus Council of Governments 2018)	Plan's funding investments and projects list includes support for the ACE Extension to Ceres and Merced.
<i>Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy for Merced County</i> (Merced County Association of Governments 2018)	Mentions need for a safe and reliable passenger rail transportation system, without specific reference to the ACE Extension to Ceres and Merced.
<b>County General Plans</b>	
<i>Santa Clara County General Plan</i> (Santa Clara County 1994)	Includes travel management strategies to reduce VMT.
<i>Alameda County General Plan, Community Climate Action Plan</i> (Alameda County 2014)	The Alameda County General Plan consists of series of plan documents for county-wide and unincorporated areas, including the Community Climate Action Plan Element. This element includes transportation and land use measures to assist the County in complying with VMT reduction targets set forth in Senate Bill 375.

<sup>2</sup> An inconsistency with regional or local plans is not necessarily considered a significant impact under CEQA, unless it is related to a physical impact on the environment that is significant in its own right.

<b>Policy Title</b>	<b>Summary</b>
<i>San Joaquin County General Plan Policy Document</i> (San Joaquin County 2016)	Establishes a goal of 0.05% reduction in VMT based on percentage of streets with planned improvements.
<i>Stanislaus County General Plan</i> (Stanislaus County 2016)	Establishes policies and implementation measures to reduce VMT.
<i>2030 Merced County General Plan</i> (Merced County 2013)	Establishes policies that require higher-density land uses and incentives and programs to encourage use of public transit to decrease VMT.
<b>City General Plans</b>	
<i>Ceres General Plan 2035</i> (City of Ceres 2018)	Establishes a goals to support statewide efforts to reduce VMT from existing and new development by encouraging infill and mixed-use development, providing a multi-modal transportation network, and incorporating transportation and parking demand management measures into new development by design.
<i>Turlock General Plan</i> (City of Turlock 2012)	Includes a goal to reduce VMT through improved alternative travel modes and provision of more direct travel routes.
<i>City of Livingston General Plan</i> (City of Livingston 1999)	The plan does not contain VMT reduction targets, goals, or policies.
<i>City of Atwater General Plan</i> (City of Atwater 2000)	The plan does not contain VMT reduction targets, goals, or policies.
<i>Merced Vision 2030 General Plan</i> (City of Merced 2012)	Includes policy to expand programs to reduce vehicle miles traveled, stop and go traffic, and traffic congestion in order to improve traffic flow.
<b>County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans</b>	
<i>Stanislaus Council of Governments (StanCOG) Non-Motorized Transportation Master Plan</i> (Stanislaus Council of Governments 2013)	
<i>Merced County Regional Bicycle Transportation Plan</i> (Merced County Association of Governments 2008)	
<b>City Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans</b>	
<i>City of Merced 2013 Bicycle Transportation Plan</i> (City of Merced 2013)	

1 ACE = Altamont Corridor Express.  
2 VMT = vehicle miles traveled.

### 3 3.17.3 Environmental Setting

4 This section describes the environmental setting for the Proposed Project and the Atwater Station  
5 Alternative related to transportation. For the purposes of this analysis, the study area for  
6 transportation extends beyond the environmental footprints of the Proposed Project and the  
7 Atwater Station Alternative. The study area includes areas of indirect impacts, including areas of  
8 potential disturbance associated with construction, intersections, and transportation facilities  
9 within 1 mile of station locations.

### 1 **3.17.3.1 Public Transit**

2 There are 10 ACE stations along the existing route (from west to east): San Jose Diridon, Santa Clara,  
3 and Great America Stations in Santa Clara County; Fremont, Pleasanton, Livermore, and Vasco Road  
4 Stations in Alameda County; and Tracy, Lathrop/Manteca, and Stockton Stations in San Joaquin  
5 County.<sup>3</sup> Given the commuter-pattern of the current ACE service, all passengers board ACE trains to  
6 access destinations during the weekday AM peak period and conversely board ACE trains for the  
7 return weekday PM peak period ride to their home origin station.

#### 8 **Shuttles at Existing ACE Stations**

9 At the Great America Station, ACE, in partnership with the Santa Clara Valley Transportation  
10 Authority (Santa Clara VTA), provides free last-mile service via shuttles that connect to local  
11 employer offices and other area destinations. According to a 2014 ACE passenger survey, a high  
12 proportion of passengers at the Great America Station use ACE shuttles, and a small proportion of  
13 passengers at the Great America, Santa Clara, and San Jose Diridon Stations walk, bicycle, and take  
14 local Santa Clara VTA or Alameda–Contra Costa Transit (AC Transit) connecting bus and light rail  
15 services (San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission 2014). Some passengers, such as at Great America  
16 Station, additionally park personal vehicles at the station for driving to and from their workplace. As  
17 described in Section 2.4.4 of Chapter 2, *Project Description*, SJRRC would provide additional shuttles  
18 to accommodate additional ridership.

#### 19 **Public Transportation Serving ACE Existing Stations**

20 The following are the public transit connecting services in the vicinity of existing ACE stations. Due  
21 to the COVID-19 pandemic, some public transportation service has been adjusted. The section below  
22 identifies both the public transportation service that was provided prior to COVID-19 pandemic and  
23 where public transportation routes have been suspended, relative to service before the COVID-19  
24 pandemic.

- 25 • San Jose Diridon Station: This station is served by multiple rail lines, including Santa Clara VTA  
26 light rail transit (LRT) Blue Line-Baypointe-Santa Teresa, intercity passenger rail (Capitol  
27 Corridor and Amtrak Coast Starlight), and Caltrain commuter rail services. In addition, there are  
28 several connecting bus lines, including Santa Clara VTA bus routes 22, 64A, 64B, 68, Express  
29 168, Rapid 500, and Rapid 522. Santa Cruz METRO operates the Highway 17 Express providing  
30 express service to Santa Cruz. Prior the COVID-19 pandemic, Monterey–Salinas Transit Routes  
31 55 and 86 provided connecting services. As of March 2020, Monterey–Salinas Transit Routes 55  
32 and 86 have been suspended.
- 33 • Santa Clara Station: This station is served by Santa Clara VTA local bus routes 21, 22, 53, 59, 60  
34 and Rapid 522. In terms of connecting rail service, Caltrain commuter rail and Capitol Corridor  
35 intercity passenger rail serve this station.

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<sup>3</sup> The Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (PCJPB) owns the San Jose Diridon and Santa Clara Stations, and Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority (CCJPA) owns the Great America and Fremont Stations. SJRRC owns and maintains the parking areas and station platforms at Pleasanton, Vasco Road, Tracy, Lathrop/Manteca, and Stockton. Portions of ACE parking areas at Pleasanton, Livermore, and Vasco Road stations are owned by the Alameda County Fairgrounds (eastern portion of Pleasanton Station’s surface parking lot) and the City of Livermore (Livermore Station’s parking structure and Vasco Road Station’s surface parking lot); however, SJRRC maintains these facilities.

- 1       • Great America Station: This station is served by Santa Clara VTA LRT Green Line-Old Ironsides-  
2 Winchester, Orange Line-Mountain View-Alum Rock, and Capitol Corridor intercity passenger  
3 rail service. The following connecting ACE commuter shuttles operated by Santa Clara VTA  
4 circulate to local employers in Palo Alto, Mountain View, Sunnyvale, Santa Clara, San Jose and  
5 Milpitas: Orange, Red, Gray, Green, Yellow, Brown, Purple, and Violet. These shuttles are staged  
6 at the station during the morning to meet inbound ACE trains arriving at this station. Similarly,  
7 in the afternoon/evening, these same shuttles drop off passengers to meet outbound ACE trains  
8 departing the station. Lastly, several area private employers also provide shuttle services that  
9 connect employees between ACE trains and their workplaces.
- 10       • Fremont Station: This station is served by Capitol Corridor intercity passenger rail service.  
11 Connecting local bus service operated by AC Transit consists of routes 99, 210, and 251. AC  
12 Transit bus route 99 provides a crosstown connection to Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART)  
13 Hayward and Union City Stations, while bus routes 210 and 251 connect to the Ohlone College  
14 Main Campus or the Ohlone College Newark Campus. The Stanford Marguerite Shuttle "U" line  
15 provides service to Stanford University and Medical Center.
- 16       • Pleasanton Station: This station is served by the Livermore–Amador Valley Transportation  
17 Authority (LAVTA, or Wheels) bus routes 10R, 53, and 54, and Contra Costa Transportation  
18 Authority (CCTA) bus route 92X. Wheels bus routes 53 and 54 are ACE shuttles that are free for  
19 ACE passengers. Route 53 provides direct service to Stoneridge Mall, and the West  
20 Dublin/Pleasanton BART Station. Route 54 provides local connecting service to Bernal Business  
21 Park, the California Center, and the East Dublin/Pleasanton BART Station. CCTA bus route 92X  
22 connects ACE passengers to Bishop Ranch, Danville, and Walnut Creek. Prior the COVID-19  
23 pandemic, there were three private employer-run shuttle buses serving this station, operated by  
24 Polycom, Safeway, and Clorox Corporation.
- 25       • Livermore Station: This station is served by Wheels bus routes 14, 30R, as well as an Amtrak  
26 Thruway bus. Wheels bus route 14 provides crosstown connections to and from the BART  
27 Dublin/Pleasanton Station. Prior the COVID-19 pandemic, Wheels bus route 580X served this  
28 station. As of March 26, 2021, Wheels bus route 580X has been suspended due to low ridership.  
29 Alternative service is available using Wheels bus route 30R.
- 30       • Vasco Road Station: Prior the COVID-19 pandemic, Wheels bus route 20X served this station, as  
31 well as a connecting private shuttle service for Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory or  
32 Sandia National Laboratories employees. As of March 26, 2021, Wheels bus route 20X has been  
33 suspended due to low ridership. Alternative service is available using Wheels bus route 30R.
- 34       • Tracy Station: This station is served by Tracy Tracer Route D, a bus service that runs at  
35 approximate hourly headways during both weekday AM and PM peak periods. Generally, the  
36 schedules are arranged to match the existing ACE train arrivals and departures.
- 37       • Existing Lathrop/Manteca Station: The Modesto ACE Express bus, operated by Modesto Area  
38 Express (MAX), provides direct, non-stop connecting service between Modesto's Vintage Faire  
39 Mall park-and-ride lot and the Existing Lathrop/Manteca Station. This bus service provides  
40 connections during the afternoon/evening commute peak period. The Manteca Transit Shuttle  
41 also connects to this station.
- 42       • Stockton Station: San Joaquin Regional Transit District (San Joaquin RTD) bus line 44 provide  
43 connecting service to this station. Amtrak San Joaquins trains serving Sacramento stop at this  
44 station, as well as limited Amtrak San Joaquins bus service.

## Public Transportation in Turlock, Livingston, Merced, and Atwater

The following are the existing public transit connecting services in the vicinity of the proposed stations.

- Turlock: The Turlock Station would be located adjacent to the Turlock Transit Center. The Turlock Transit Center provides bus service to the City of Turlock and the community of Denair with six different routes (Turlock Transit 2020). In addition, the Turlock Transit Center provides intercity bus service from the T-Turlock Commuter route (Transit Joint Powers Authority for Merced County 2019).
- Livingston: The Livingston area is served by three different bus routes (Transit Joint Powers Authority for Merced County 2019). As a part of the Livingston Station, bus/shuttle drop off areas would be constructed.
- Merced: The Merced Station would be located in close proximity to Merced Transpo, which is a transit center in the City of Merced that provided bus service for within the City of Merced and to cities near Merced via 15 different route (Transit Joint Powers Authority for Merced County 2019).

The following are the existing public transit connecting services in the vicinity of the Atwater Station Alternative.

- Atwater: The Atwater Station Alternative would be located adjacent to Atwater Transpo, which provides bus service within Atwater via two different routes. In addition, the Atwater Transpo provides intercity bus service from the T-Turlock Commuter route (Transit Joint Powers Authority for Merced County 2019).

### 3.17.3.2 Bicycle/Pedestrian Facilities

#### Bicycle/Pedestrian Facilities at Existing ACE Stations

ACE provides train cars with onboard bicycle stalls to support riders who use their bicycles for “last-mile” connections on both ends of their train trip. Additionally, each ACE station includes the provision of bicycle lockers for ACE passenger use.

Bicycle and pedestrian facilities that provide access to existing ACE stations are as follows.

- San Jose Diridon Station: Class II bicycle lanes are provided along West San Fernando Street, with direct access to the San Jose Diridon Station. Pedestrian facilities include walkways from the parking lot to the station entrance, as well as striped crosswalks approaching the station from West San Fernando Street. There are sidewalks on West San Fernando Street, Crandall Street, and Stover Street in the vicinity of the station.
- Santa Clara Station: There are no designated bicycle lanes approaching Santa Clara Station. Pedestrian facilities include sidewalks along Benton Street and Railroad Avenue, as well as striped crosswalks across Railroad Avenue leading to the station. There are also direct pedestrian connections to Santa Clara University, located directly across El Camino Real from the station.
- Great America Station: Class II bicycle lanes are provided along Stars and Stripes Drive leading to Great America Station. In addition, there are Class II bicycle lanes along Lafayette Street, located to the east side of the UPRR ROW approaching the station. Sidewalks are provided along



- 1 both Stars and Stripes Drive and Tasman Drive approaching the stations, as well as a pedestrian  
2 stairway connecting the adjacent Tasman Drive overcrossing to the station.
- 3 ● Fremont Station: There are no designated bicycle lanes in the vicinity of Fremont Station.  
4 Sidewalks and striped crosswalks are provided on Fremont Boulevard approaching the station.
  - 5 ● Pleasanton Station: There are no designated bicycle lanes in the vicinity of Pleasanton Station.  
6 Sidewalks are provided along Bernal Avenue and Pleasanton Avenue leading to the station, as  
7 well as pedestrian crosswalks provided across the parking lot and Bernal Avenue leading into  
8 the station.
  - 9 ● Livermore Station: There are no designated bicycle lanes that provide a direct connection to the  
10 Livermore Station. Pedestrian access is provided via pedestrian bridge across North Livermore  
11 Avenue leading into the station.
  - 12 ● Vasco Road Station: There are Class II bicycle lanes provided along South Vasco Road and Brisa  
13 Street that connect to the station entrance. There are also striped crosswalks leading from the  
14 parking lot to the station platform, but no external sidewalk connections from the nearby Vasco  
15 Road/Brisa Street intersection.
  - 16 ● Tracy Station: A Class II bike lane is available on South Tracy Boulevard in the vicinity of the  
17 station. Near and adjacent to the station, existing sidewalks are provided along both sides of  
18 South Tracy Boulevard. Crosswalks are located at the South Tracy Boulevard/Whispering Wind  
19 Drive intersection to the north and also across the station driveway entrance off South Tracy  
20 Boulevard.
  - 21 ● Existing Lathrop/Manteca Station: There are no designated bicycle lanes provided in the  
22 immediate vicinity of the Existing Lathrop/Manteca Station, nor are continuous sidewalks  
23 provided in the station vicinity.
  - 24 ● Stockton Station: A Class II bicycle lane is available on East Miner Avenue serving the station  
25 vicinity. Sidewalk connections and crosswalks are also provided along North Aurora Street,  
26 Channel Street, East Weber Avenue, and East Miner Avenue on the approaches to the station.

## 27 **Bicycle/Pedestrian Facilities in Turlock, Merced, and Atwater**

28 There are existing facilities in the vicinity of the proposed stations. The following is a summary of  
29 existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the vicinity of proposed stations.

- 30 ● At the Turlock Station, there are existing sidewalks along both sides of Hawkeye Avenue north  
31 of the station, Dels Lane east of the station, and on one side of Golden State Boulevard southwest  
32 of the station. There are no designated bike lanes connecting to the station.
- 33 ● At the Livingston Station, there are existing sidewalks along both sides of 16th Street to the  
34 northeast of the station, M Street to the southeast, and O Street to the northwest. There are no  
35 designated bike lanes connecting to the station.
- 36 ● At the Merced Station, there are existing sidewalks along both sides of Main Street. There are no  
37 designated bike lanes connecting to the station.

38 The following is a summary of existing pedestrian facilities in the vicinity of the Atwater Station  
39 Alternative.

- 40 ● At the Atwater Station Alternative, there are existing sidewalks along both sides of Atwater  
41 Boulevard northeast of the station. There are no designated bike lanes connecting to the station.

### 1    **3.17.3.3            Passenger and Freight Rail Movements**

2           Currently, ACE trains share the existing route between Stockton and San Jose with freight trains  
3           operated by UPRR, the owner of the railroad ROW. With the Proposed Project, ACE trains would  
4           operate within the UPRR Fresno Subdivision between Ceres and Merced, where currently no ACE or  
5           other passenger train services are operating. Existing current freight train and passenger train  
6           traffic in the Fresno Subdivision is as follows.<sup>4</sup>

- 7           ● **Stockton to Lathrop:** Approximately 22 daily freight trains are estimated to operate on this  
8           portion of the subdivision as of 2016, including three AM peak hour trains and one PM peak  
9           hour train. Passenger train traffic is limited to ACE (8 weekday trains, including four AM peak  
10          hour trains and four PM peak hour trains). There are an estimated 30 total daily trains (freight  
11          plus passenger).
- 12          ● **Lathrop to Merced:** Approximately 22 daily freight trains are estimated to operate on this  
13          portion of the subdivision at present, including three AM peak hour trains and one PM peak  
14          hour train.

### 15   **3.17.3.4            Railroad-Roadway Collisions**

16          There were 6 railroad–roadway collisions in Stanislaus County and 2 railroad–roadway collisions in  
17          Merced County between January 2015 and July 2020 (Federal Railroad Administration 2020).

## 18   **3.17.4            Impact Analysis**

19          This section describes the environmental impacts of the Proposed Project and the Atwater Station  
20          Alternative on transportation. It describes the methods used to evaluate the impacts and the  
21          thresholds used to determine whether an impact would be significant. Measures to mitigate (i.e.,  
22          avoid, minimize, rectify, reduce, eliminate, or compensate for) significant impacts are provided,  
23          where appropriate.

### 24   **3.17.4.1            Thresholds of Significance**

25          CEQA Guidelines Appendix G (14 Cal. Code of Regs. 15000 et seq) has identified significance criteria  
26          to be considered for determining whether a project could have significant impacts on  
27          transportation.

28          An impact would be considered significant if construction or operation of the project would have  
29          any of the following consequences.

- 30          ● Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including  
31          transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities.
- 32          ● Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b).
- 33          ● Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or  
34          dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment).
- 35          ● Result in inadequate emergency access.

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<sup>4</sup> The 2018 California State Rail Plan (California Department of Transportation 2018) presents estimates of freight train volumes.

### 3.17.4.2 Impacts and Mitigation Measures

<b>Impact TR-1</b>	Construction and operation of the Proposed Project could conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadways, bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
<b>Level of Impact</b>	<b>Potentially significant impact</b>
<b>Mitigation Measures</b>	TR-1.1: Implement construction railway disruption control plan
<b>Level of Impact after Mitigation</b>	<b>Less than significant impact</b>

#### Impact Characterization

Table 3.17-1 above provides a summary of the applicable plans, ordinances, and policies establishing performance of the circulation system for the regional, county, and city jurisdictions where the Proposed Project and the Atwater Station Alternative would be located.

#### Proposed Project

##### *Roadways and VMT*

On the regional level, the Proposed Project is consistent with the regional transportation plans for the Stanislaus County Association of Governments (StanCOG) and Merced County Association of Governments. The Proposed Project is one of the major projects included in these documents, which serve as the sustainable communities strategies/regional transportation plans (SCS/RTP) for the respective areas, integrating transportation and land-use strategies to manage GHG emissions and plan for future population growth. On the state level, the Proposed Project is consistent with the state's blueprint for meeting future mobility needs.

Overall, one of the main policies identified in the regional and local plans of the jurisdictions where the Proposed Project would be located and of the jurisdictions where ACE service is currently provided is the reduction of VMT on roadways. As described in greater detail in Impact TR-2, operation of the Proposed Project is expected to result in the beneficial impact of reducing VMT. As such, implementation of the Proposed Project would not conflict with policies related to VMT reduction and would result in a less-than-significant (beneficial) impact.

##### *Transit, Bicycle, and Pedestrian Facilities*

The Proposed Project would be constructed and operated in conformance with policies addressing transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities and would not conflict with such policies. The Proposed Project would not reduce or minimize the access to any transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities. In fact, existing or proposed transit, bicycle, and pedestrian infrastructure would serve the expanded ACE service. The expanded ACE service would enhance or create new multimodal connectivity to existing and proposed ACE stations and would result in a less-than-significant (beneficial) impact.

The increase in ridership from the Proposed Project is expected to increase the demand for the shuttle services at the Great America and Pleasanton Stations. As described in Section 2.4.4 of Chapter 2, *Project Description*, the increased demand for these shuttles would be accommodated by providing additional shuttle service. The Proposed Project would meet anticipated transit demand. As a result, the impact of Proposed Project relative to transit planning would be less than significant.

## 1        **Impacts on Freight Rail**

2        Construction of the Proposed Project involving installation of new or upgraded tracks would occur  
3        within the existing UPRR ROW, where freight trains currently operate. Construction of Proposed  
4        Project could affect freight rail service, which would be a potentially significant impact.

5        The Proposed Project would operate within the UPRR ROW, where freight service currently  
6        operates. The Proposed Project includes the installation of additional tracks in order to  
7        accommodate the demand from operating the extended ACE service between Ceres and Merced.  
8        SJRRC is working with UPRR on the accommodation of new ACE rail service between Ceres and  
9        Merced, where a combination of track upgrades and new track would result in a second mainline on  
10       the Fresno Subdivision. The additional track would also allow continued accommodation of current  
11       and future planned UPRR freight service with minimal disruption. With this continued  
12       accommodation of freight service, no indirect impacts, such as diversions of truck freight traffic,  
13       would result; therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

## 14       **Atwater Station Alternative**

15       For the same reasons as the Proposed Project, operation of the Atwater Station Alternative would  
16       result in a less-than-significant (beneficial) impact related to conflicts with policies related to  
17       transit, roadways, bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Similarly, construction of the Atwater Station  
18       Alternative could result in a potentially significant impact on freight rail service. There would be no  
19       difference in impact between the implementation of the Atwater Station Alternative and the  
20       proposed Livingston Station.

## 21       **Mitigation Measures**

22       Mitigation Measure TR-1.1 would apply to the construction of the Proposed Project and would also  
23       apply to the Atwater Station Alternative, if selected.

### 24       **Mitigation Measure TR-1.1: Implement construction railway disruption control plan**

25       The San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission (SJRRC) will make efforts to contain and minimize  
26       disruption to the Altamont Corridor Express (ACE) and freight services during construction.  
27       Measures that will be implemented throughout the course of construction will include the  
28       following.

- 29       ● The overall goal of this plan should be to minimize the overall duration of disruption of ACE  
30       and freight operations and maintain reasonable freight and passenger service while  
31       allowing for an expeditious completion of construction.
- 32       ● Limit number of simultaneous track closures within each immediate vicinity, with closure  
33       timeframe limited as much as feasible for each closure, unless bypass tracks are available.
- 34       ● Provide safety measures for rail services to transit through construction zones safely.
- 35       ● Require contractors to coordinate with rail dispatch to minimize disruption of rail service in  
36       the corridor.
- 37       ● Where feasible, limit closure of any tracks for construction activities to off-peak periods and  
38       weekends, when service is less frequent or late night, when no passenger service is  
39       scheduled.

- 1           • Where feasible, maintain acceptable service access for passenger and freight service.
- 2           • Where one open track cannot be maintained for passenger or freight use, limit multitrack
- 3           closures to one location at a time, as much as feasible.
- 4           • Where multitrack closures result in temporary elimination of transit rail service, work with
- 5           local and regional transit providers to provide alternative transit service around the closure
- 6           area including increased bus and shuttle service.
- 7           • Where multitrack closures result in temporary elimination of freight rail service, work with
- 8           UPRR and freight users to schedule alternative freight service timing to minimize disruption
- 9           to freight customers.
- 10          • Provide advance notice of all construction-related track closures to all affected parties.
- 11          • Provide advance notice to transit riders of any temporary disruption in transit service.
- 12          • Where temporary cessation of freight rail service is necessary due to multitrack closures
- 13          and will result in substantial diversion to truck modes, SJRRC and/or its construction
- 14          contractor will coordinate with local jurisdictions and freight operations to determine
- 15          preferred truck routes to minimize the effect on local traffic conditions.
- 16          • SJRRC and/or its construction contractor will coordinate with Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR)
- 17          in advance and during any potential disruption to freight operations and/or UPRR facilities.
- 18          UPRR’s emergency access will be maintained throughout construction.

19           **Significance with Application of Mitigation**

20           Implementation of Mitigation Measure TR-1.1 would reduce the temporary construction impact  
 21           from the Proposed Project on freight service disruption to a less-than-significant level by  
 22           implementing a railway disruption control plan during construction.

23           For the same reasons listed above, implementation of Mitigation Measure TR-1.1 would reduce the  
 24           temporary construction impact from the Atwater Station Alternative to a less-than-significant level.

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<b>Impact TR-2</b>	The Proposed Project would not conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b)(2).
<b>Level of Impact</b>	<b>Less than significant impact (beneficial)</b>

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25           **Impact Characterization and Significance Conclusion**

26           CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b) specifies applicable criteria for analyzing  
 27           transportation impacts. Specifically, it states the following:

28           Transportation projects that reduce, or have no impact on, vehicle miles traveled should be  
 29           presumed to cause a less than significant transportation impact. For roadway capacity projects,  
 30           agencies have discretion to determine the appropriate measure of transportation impact consistent  
 31           with CEQA and other applicable requirements.

32           **Proposed Project**

33           The Proposed Project is a transportation project (specifically a transit project) and would reduce  
 34           VMT by inducing a mode shift from automobiles to public transit. While there would be localized  
 35           vehicle traffic (and associated VMT) traveling to/from the proposed stations, the Proposed Project  
 36           would remove vehicle traffic on the regional roadway network, resulting in a net reduction in VMT.

1 Estimates of annual ridership in 2030 and 2040 were developed based on the conditions with and  
 2 without the Proposed Project. As summarized in Table 3.17-2, implementation of the Proposed  
 3 Project (with the Livingston Station) is expected to reduce VMT annually by 24.0 million miles in  
 4 2030 and 30.7 million miles in 2040. Consistent with the provisions of CEQA Guidelines Section  
 5 15064.3, subdivision (b), the Proposed Project is presumed to have a less-than-significant impact  
 6 and would have a beneficial effect by reducing VMT.

7 **Table 3.17-2. System Ridership and Vehicle Miles Travelled with Operations of the Project**

Year	No Project Conditions Ridership <sup>a</sup>	Proposed Project (with Livingston Station) <sup>b</sup>		Atwater Station Alternative <sup>b</sup>	
		Forecasted Annual Riders	Net New Annual Riders	Forecasted Annual Riders	Net New Annual Riders
2030	3,735,500	4,176,800	441,300	4,180,900	445,400
2040	4,797,100	5,364,100	567,000	5,367,500	570,400
Year	No Project Conditions VMT Avoided	Forecasted Annual VMT Avoided	Net Change in Annual VMT Avoided	Forecasted Annual VMT Avoided	Net change in Annual VMT Avoided
2030	162,088,300	186,054,500	23,966,200	186,054,500	24,375,000
2040	209,644,300	240,315,300	30,671,000	240,767,100	31,122,800

Source: Appendix D, *ACE Extension Ridership, Revenue, and Benefits Report*.

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> The No Project conditions include ACE service, with the addition of the approved Sacramento Extension and Ceres Extension. Service includes the following: two direct trains between Stockton and San Jose; one direct train between Ceres and San Jose with connecting bus service between Ceres and Merced; one direct train between Natomas and San Jose; one direct train between Natomas and Stockton; three trains between Ceres and Natomas via the Natomas Extension with connecting bus service between Ceres and Merced, these three trains also connect at North Lathrop to other inbound ACE trains with service to San Jose; and four buses between Ceres and Merced, connecting to the trains at Ceres.

<sup>b</sup> The scenario for the Proposed Project with the Livingston Station or the Atwater Station Alternative consists of converting the Ceres–Merced bus connection under the No Project conditions to rail.

8 **Atwater Station Alternative**

9 As summarized in Table 3.17-2, implementation of the Atwater Station Alternative is expected to  
 10 reduce VMT annually by 24.4 million miles in 2030 and 31.1 million miles in 2040. Implementation  
 11 of the Atwater Station Alternative would result in a slightly greater reduction of VMT than  
 12 implementation of the Livingston Station. Like the Proposed Project and consistent with the  
 13 provisions of CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b), implementation of the Atwater  
 14 Station Alternative is presumed to have a less-than-significant impact and a beneficial effect by  
 15 reducing VMT.

<b>Impact TR-3</b>	The Proposed Project would not substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment).
<b>Level of Impact</b>	<b>Less than significant impact</b>

## 1 **Impact Characterization and Significance Conclusion**

### 2 **Proposed Project**

3 The Proposed Project consists of extending ACE passenger rail service from Ceres to Merced by way  
4 of upgraded or new tracks within the existing UPRR Fresno. During construction, all work associated  
5 with the Proposed Project would comply with all construction standard provisions, including  
6 federal, state, and local railroad and roadway safety standards, established by FRA, Caltrans, and all  
7 applicable city and county agencies responsible for maintenance of train and vehicle traffic. As a  
8 result, the Proposed Project would not substantially increase hazards due to design features or  
9 incompatible uses, and impacts would be less than significant.

### 10 **Atwater Station Alternative**

11 For the same reasons listed above, implementation of the Atwater Station Alternative would not  
12 substantially increase hazards due to design features or incompatible uses, and impacts would be  
13 less than significant. There would be no difference in impact between the implementation of the  
14 Atwater Station Alternative and the proposed Livingston Station.

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<b>Impact TR-4</b>	Construction of the Proposed Project could result in inadequate emergency access and operations of the Proposed Project would not result in inadequate emergency access.
<b>Level of Impact</b>	<b>Potentially significant impact</b>
<b>Mitigation Measures</b>	TR-4.1: Implement construction road traffic control plan
<b>Level of Impact after Mitigation</b>	<b>Less than significant impact</b>

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## 15 **Impact Characterization**

### 16 **Proposed Project**

17 Construction of the Proposed Project could impact emergency vehicle access if an emergency occurs  
18 at the same time and locations when construction activities would result in temporary access or  
19 egress limitations. This would be considered a potentially significant impact.

20 In regard to operations of the Proposed Project, the existing roadway networks surrounding existing  
21 and proposed ACE stations enable emergency vehicle responses to all areas. Emergency vehicles  
22 often identify and use multiple routes dependent on time of day and traffic conditions. Peak period  
23 traffic congestion generally does not result in delay for emergency vehicles, which have the roadway  
24 priority by utilizing sirens and signals so that other vehicles pull over to the side, and often utilize  
25 multilane major arterials for access. Emergency vehicles also are permitted to use transit-only lanes  
26 or other vehicle-restricted lanes, if necessary.

27 Emergency vehicles traveling on streets that cross the at-grade crossings would potentially  
28 experience additional delay from Proposed Project operations. These at-grade crossings are located  
29 along the extension alignment from Ceres to Merced. Unlike at intersections with traffic signals  
30 where emergency vehicles can pass through the intersection at reduced speeds even when receiving  
31 a red signal indication, emergency vehicles would not be able to proceed through the at-grade  
32 crossings when the railroad gates are down. This may cause some minor delay to emergency  
33 vehicles because typical gate-down time would be approximately one minute for ACE passenger  
34 train services.

1 Despite these localized traffic delay impacts, emergency vehicle response times are a function of  
2 travel along the entire path from their base to the incident location. As described in Impact TR-2, the  
3 Proposed Project would substantially reduce overall VMT in the ACE corridor, which would  
4 generally reduce congestion. Most of the VMT reductions would be during peak hours, which is  
5 especially important in reducing congestion. This broad-based congestion improvement is expected  
6 to more than offset the localized effects at individual at-grade crossings and near ACE stations,  
7 resulting in a net improvement in emergency response times. As a result of these changes associated  
8 with Proposed Project operations, impacts related to emergency vehicle access and emergency  
9 response times would be less than significant.

### 10 **Atwater Station Alternative**

11 Construction of Atwater Station Alternative could impact emergency vehicle access if an emergency  
12 occurs at the same time and locations when construction activities would result in temporary access  
13 or egress limitations. This would be considered a potentially significant impact. For the same  
14 reasons listed above, operation of the Atwater Station Alternative would result in a less-than-  
15 significant impact related to emergency vehicle access and emergency response times. There would  
16 be no difference in impact between the Atwater Station Alternative and the proposed Livingston  
17 Station.

### 18 **Mitigation Measures**

19 Mitigation Measure TR-4.1 would apply for construction of the Proposed Project. In addition,  
20 Mitigation Measure TR-4.1 would apply for construction of the Atwater Station Alternative.

#### 21 **Mitigation Measure TR-4.1: Implement construction road traffic control plan**

22 SJRRC and/or its contractor will coordinate with the public works and traffic departments of  
23 local jurisdictions and with all corridor emergency service providers to develop a traffic control  
24 plan that will mitigate construction impacts on transit service, roadway operations, emergency  
25 responses, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and public safety. Measures that will be  
26 implemented throughout the course of construction will include the following.

- 27 • Maintain acceptable response times and performance objectives for emergency response  
28 services.
- 29 • Limit number of simultaneous street closures and consequent detours of transit and  
30 vehicular traffic within each immediate vicinity, with closure time frame limited as much as  
31 feasible for each closure, unless alternative traffic routings are available.
- 32 • Implement traffic control measures to minimize traffic conflicts and delays to users of all  
33 modes traveling local roadways where lane closures and restricted travel speeds will be  
34 required for longer periods.
- 35 • Provide advance notice of all construction-related street closures, durations, and detours to  
36 local jurisdictions, emergency service providers, and motorists.
- 37 • Provide safety measures for vehicles, bicyclists and pedestrians to ensure safe travel  
38 through construction zones to transit.
- 39 • Limit sidewalk, bicycle, and pedestrian walkway closures to one location within each  
40 vicinity at a time, with a closure time frame limited as much as feasible for each closure  
41 unless alternative routings for pedestrian and bicycle transit are available.



- 1           • Provide designated areas for construction worker parking wherever feasible to minimize  
2           use of parking in residential or business areas.

### 3           **Significant with Application of Mitigation**

4           Mitigation Measure TR-4.1 will require the preparation of a traffic control plan to ensure continued  
5           emergency access to at-grade crossings, and all nearby properties. ACE will coordinate with local  
6           public works departments, local emergency access providers, and Caltrans in the development of the  
7           traffic control plan to specifically address emergency response concerns. Thus, with mitigation,  
8           impacts related to emergency access during construction of Proposed Project would be less than  
9           significant.

10          Likewise, with implementation of Mitigation Measure TR-4.1, impacts related to emergency access  
11          during construction of Atwater Station Alternative would be less than significant.

### 12       **3.17.4.1           Overall Comparison of the Proposed Livingston Station and** 13       **Atwater Station Alternative**

14          The Atwater Station Alternative would have slightly higher ridership and associated VMT reductions  
15          than the proposed Livingston Station. As shown in Table 3.17-2, implementation of the Atwater  
16          Station Alternative is expected to reduce VMT annually by 24.4 million miles in 2030 (compared to  
17          24.0 million with the proposed Livingston Station) and 31.1 million miles in 2040 (compared to 30.7  
18          million with the proposed Livingston Station).

19          Overall, the Atwater Station Alternative and the proposed Livingston Station would have similar  
20          impacts on transportation. The Station Alternative would result in slightly greater benefits due to  
21          reduced VMT.

22