

2.2 COMMUNITY IMPACTS

The information below is summarized from the Community Impact Assessment Report (January 2004) prepared by CirclePoint. The community socioeconomic characteristics which are analyzed for the region and project area include population, income and poverty, employment and economic trends, and City and County fiscal trends. The data presented are primarily from the 2000 U.S. Census and the Association of Bay Area Government's (ABAG) Projections 2003, the basis for regional planning activities by Caltrans. The Community Impact Assessment is available for public review at Caltrans District 4, 111 Grand Avenue, Oakland, CA 94610, and the Solano Transportation Authority, One Harbor Center, Suite 130, Suisun City, CA 94585 during normal business hours.

Regulatory Setting

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 as amended (NEPA), established that the federal government use all practicable means to ensure for all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings [42 U.S.C. 4331(b)(2)]. The Federal Highway Administration in its implementation of NEPA [23 U.S.C. 109(h)] directs that final decisions regarding projects are to be made in the best overall public interest. This requires taking into account adverse environmental impacts, such as, destruction or disruption of human-made resources, community cohesion and the availability of public facilities and services.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act, an economic or social change by itself is not to be considered a significant effect on the environment. However, if a social or economic change is related to a physical change, then social or economic change may be considered in determining whether the physical change is significant. Since this project would result in physical change to the environment, it is appropriate to consider changes to community character and cohesion in assessing the significance of the project's effects.

Affected Environment

Study Area

The study area includes unincorporated and incorporated parts of Solano County and the City of Fairfield north of I-80 between the Red Top Road/I-80 intersection and Abernathy Road. For purposes of this analysis, the project area was broken down into census tracts.

Population Characteristics

Table 2.2-1 illustrates the demographic characteristics of Fairfield and Solano County and the three census tract blocks that cover the project area (see Figure 2.2-1). As shown in the table, the overall racial composition of the project area is primarily White, with lower percentages of Black, Asian, Native American, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. There is less diversity in the project area than in the City of Fairfield or in Solano County as a whole. Table 2.2-1 also shows that there are lower percentages of Hispanic/Latino residents in the project area than in the city and county, although this percentage varies between block groups. Overall, none of the block groups contain a minority population of greater than 50 percent or contain a minority population that is more than 10 percentage points higher than the City or County average. Table 2.2-1 describes income and poverty levels for the project area, City of Fairfield and Solano County. The data show that a lower percentage of people living in poverty exist in the project area and census tracts affected than in the City of Fairfield as a whole.

Table 2.2-1: Population by Race and Ethnicity in 2000

Race	CT 2522.01 BG 1	CT 2522.01 BG 4	CT 2523.05 BG 1	CT/BG Combined	City of Fairfield	Solano County
Total Number	1,035	2,838	469	4,342	96,178	394,542
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
White	80.5%	68.2%	71.2%	73.3%	56.2%	56.4%
Black or African American alone	4.3%	9.8%	1.3%	5.1%	15.0%	14.9%
American Indian/ Alaska Native	0.7%	0.4%	0.4%	0.5%	0.8%	0.8%
Asian alone	5.8%	12.5%	8.7%	9%	10.9%	12.7%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0.3%	0.1%	0.4%	0.3%	0.9%	0.8%
Other	5.0%	2.6%	7.7%	5.1%	8.8%	8.0%
Two or more races ¹	3.4%	6.4%	10.2%	6.7%	7.4%	6.4%
Ethnicity						
Non-Hispanic/ Latino ²	85.7%	91.4%	78.3%	85.1%	81.2%	82.4%
Hispanic/Latino	14.3%	8.6%	21.7%	14.9%	18.8%	17.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000 Census, Summary File 1, Tables P7 and P8.

Note: No data meet the criteria for an Environmental Justice community.

1. The 2000 Census was the first that enabled people to state that they were of more than one race.
2. The Census Bureau considers Hispanic or Latino to be an ethnicity and not a race.
3. CT = census tract. BG = block group

Table 2.2-2 shows the income and poverty characteristics of the nearby neighborhoods, entire project area, City of Fairfield and Solano County. The project area has a substantially higher per capita income than that within the City of Fairfield and Solano County. Poverty levels are similar between geographic areas.

Table 2.2-2: Income and Poverty in 2000

	CT 2522.01 BG 1	CT 2522.01 BG 4	CT 2523.05 BG 1	CT/BG Combined	City of Fairfield	Solano County
Per Capita Income	\$33,019	\$34,762	\$23,724	\$30,501	\$20,617	\$21,731
Total Population ¹	969	2,967	526	4,462	96,178	394,542
People in Poverty	32	259	46	337	8,496	31,344
Percentage in Poverty	3.3%	8.7%	8.7%	6.9%	9.3%	8.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000 Census, Summary File 1, Tables P7 and P8.

Note: No data meet the criteria for an Environmental Justice community.

- ¹ There are discrepancies in total population figures between the 2000 Census Summary Files 1 and 3. Because poverty figures are from Summary File 3, the total population figures shown for the block groups are not consistent with the population figures shown on Table 2.2-1.

Economic Setting

Employment and Economic Trends

Although the Bay Area witnessed a small decrease in employment from 1990 to 1995 in parallel with the state recession, employment and economic growth have been very strong during the overall period from 1980 to the recession of the late 1990s and early part of the next decade. On November 14, 2003, the State Employment Development Department reported job gains for the Bay Area which showed a partial reversal of job losses that have occurred in the Bay Area and the state as a whole since 2001. The Bay Area added almost 11,000 jobs in October 2003 with about half of the gains occurring in the East Bay (Contra Costa and Alameda Counties). The increase in jobs generated indicates that the Bay Area and California are emerging from the economic recession at this time. The Bay Area and the state are still suffering the results of the recession of the late 1990s; however, the Bay Area job totals in October 2003 were still 61,000 less than those of October 2002.

The economy of the Bay Area is increasingly dominated by the service sector. In 1980, services accounted for approximately 710,000 jobs, which represented 28 percent of regional jobs. This grew by more than 300,000 jobs from 1980 to 1990, and represented 33 percent of all jobs in 1990. In 2000, services accounted for 1,450,430 jobs, 38 percent of regional jobs. The ABAG projections for the year 2015 anticipate a further increase of almost 317,000 jobs in this sector, which would amount to a total of approximately 1.77 million service jobs and account for 39 percent of all regional jobs. Wholesale employment is also expected to grow rapidly, but its increase from 115,000 jobs in 1980 to 227,250 jobs in 2015 would only account for .05 percent of the labor force. Retail trade is expected to account for 702,050 jobs in 2015, which represents 16 percent of all regional employment. No other industrial category of employment is expected to grow significantly. Manufacturing employment is expected to grow to 635,200 jobs in 2015.¹

The County of Solano, Fiscal Year 2004/2005 Final Budget describes the distribution of the 129,465 jobs projected in various industries in Solano County in 2003. Of the 125,305 jobs, 24 percent were in services, 21 percent in retail, 22 percent in government, 9 percent in manufacturing, 5 percent in transportation, 4 percent in financial/real estate, 3 percent in wholesale trade, and 2 percent in agriculture. The budget lists the top 5 major private employers in Fairfield as being Kaiser Permanente (Health Services), Six Flags Marine Vallejo (Entertainment), North Bay Medical Center (Health Services), ALZA Corporation (Biotech Manufacturing), and Albertson's Distribution Center (Distribution). Revenues from the sale of agricultural products contributed an estimated value of \$212 million to the County's economy in 2003.

According to the State of California, Employment Development Department, as of June 2004 there were about 44,320 employed residents in the City of Fairfield and 203,100 in Solano County. Fairfield's unemployment rate was 6.3 percent, as compared to the unemployment rate of Solano County, which was 5.3 percent.

As stated in the County Budget, about 40 percent of the workforce in Solano County works outside of the county. The job growth in the county did not increase significantly from 1990 to 2000. ABAG projects that through 2005, the county's job growth rate will be at less than 2 percent per year. The results indicate that very few new residents will be able to find jobs

¹ ABAG Projections 2003.

in the county in the coming years, leading to more people commuting to work out of the county.

Fiscal Conditions

City of Fairfield

The City's total budget for the 2003/2005 Fiscal Year is \$212.5 million, an increase of 6.3 percent over the prior year's budget. The General Fund is \$56.2 million of this amount. Fairfield's recent sales tax growth, while lower than Vacaville and Vallejo, is well above growth rates statewide and in other cities in the Bay Area. Property tax growth has been even stronger as local real estate values have continued to rise and new construction has remained active. The property tax growth was 9.1 percent in 2003/2005 and is projected to be 5.0 percent in 2005/2011. Due to the state government's budget shortfalls, Fairfield, like other California cities, faces financial challenges. The latest projections, as described in the city's 2003/2005 two-year budget, show a General Fund shortfall that starts at \$10 million in 2003/2004 and grows to \$36 million by 2010/2011.²

Solano County

The Fiscal Year 2004/2005 Final Budget for the Solano County was \$721.8 million which is comprised of 13 percent General Fund Transfers, ten percent Contingencies and Reserves, 20 percent Public Assistance, 11 percent General Government, 22 percent Public Protection, two percent Public Ways and Facilities, 16 percent Health and Sanitation, and six percent Other.

Environmental Consequences

Methodology

Data used to characterize this were obtained primarily through the County General Plan, the City of Fairfield General Plan and U.S. Census data. Personal interviews with staff at the Department of Environmental Management, Solano County, and the City of Fairfield Planning and Development Department were also conducted.

Environmental Justice

This section addresses requirements contained in Executive Order 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations*, as well as the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) *Interim Region 9 Guidance on Addressing Environmental Justice in the Environmental Impact Statement*, dated February 11, 1994. Executive Order 12898 requires that federal agencies identify and address any disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of federal programs, policies, and activities on minority and low-income populations to the greatest extent practicable and permitted by law. The DOT's interim guidance defines key terms and provides direction for identifying and addressing disproportionately high and adverse impacts to minority and low-income populations. If disproportionately high and adverse impacts would result from the proposed action, mitigation measures or alternatives must be developed to avoid or reduce the impacts, unless the agency finds that such measures are not practicable. In addition to complying with the Executive Order, the DOT is committed to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, which provides that no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity of receiving Federal assistance. The Executive Order requires that:

² www.ci.fairfield.ca.us/finance/budget

To the greatest extent practicable and permitted by law...each Federal agency shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse health or environmental effects of its program, policies and activities on minority populations and low-income populations (Subsection 1-101).

Each Federal agency shall conduct its programs, policies, and activities that substantially affect human health or the environment, in a manner that ensures that such programs, policies, and activities do not have the effect of excluding persons (including populations) from participation in, denying persons (including populations) the benefits of, or subjecting persons (including populations) to discrimination under such programs, policies, and activities, because of their race, color, or national origin (Subsection 2-2).

Each Federal agency shall work to ensure that public documents, notices, and hearings relating to human health or the environment are concise, understandable, and readily accessible to the public [Subsection 5-5 (c)].

A Presidential Memorandum that accompanied the Executive Order emphasized that the order was “intended to promote nondiscrimination in federal programs substantially affecting human health and the environment, and to provide minority communities and low-income community’s access to public information on, and an opportunity for public participation in, matters relating to human health or the environment.”³ It also underscored the application of certain provisions of existing law, such as the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Specifically, the memorandum notes that a NEPA analysis must include “effects on minority communities and low-income communities.” In addition, “each Federal agency shall provide opportunities for community input in the NEPA process, including identifying potential effects and mitigation measures in consultation with affected communities and improving the accessibility of meetings, crucial documents and notices” (Subsection 5-5c).

Thus, the memorandum as well as the FHWA guidance encourage, wherever possible, the use of existing requirements and procedures to accomplish the goals of the Executive Order. Accordingly, this section uses the NEPA framework to assess whether the project meets the goals and requirements of the order and memorandum, first by determining if the project meets the community participation goals and then by analyzing impacts on minority and low-income communities.

Disproportionately high and adverse impacts on minority and low-income populations means that an adverse effect:

- is predominately borne by a minority population and/or a low-income population; or
- will be suffered by the minority population and/or low-income population and is appreciably more severe or greater in magnitude than the adverse effect that will be suffered by the non-minority population and/or non-low-income population.

Environmental Justice communities are those communities which meet at least one of the following criteria:

³ Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents at 279, February 11, 1994.

- The low-income population that is greater than 25 percent of the total population of the community, or minority population that is greater than 50 percent of the total population of the community.
- The low-income or minority population is more than 10 percentage points higher than the City or County average.

To ascertain the existing population in the project area, and to determine if Environmental Justice communities are present, an assessment of the existing population in the project area was undertaken. The best source for population data is the US Census Bureau's decennial census. To protect privacy, the Census Bureau does not publish house-by-house data, but instead compiles the information into larger geographic units. The smallest geographic unit for which the Census Bureau publishes both demographic data (e.g., age, race) and socioeconomic data (e.g., income, poverty levels) is the "Block Group". Block Groups are generally the size of several city blocks, and are therefore useful for representing the characteristics of a "community".

For the 2000 Census, the North Connector project area is contained within three Block Groups in Solano (See Figure 2.2-1). These are:

- Census Tract 2522.01 Block Group 1
- Census Tract 2522.01 Block Group 4
- Census Tract 2523.05 Block Group 1

In summary, the population in the project area in 2000 has a lower percentage of minorities and a higher per capita income level than the surrounding areas; therefore there are no Environmental Justice communities within the project area.

Overall the racial composition of the project area is primarily white, with lower percentages of Black, Asian, Native American, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. There is less diversity than in the City of Fairfield or in Solano County as a whole. There are lower percentages of Hispanic/Latino residents in the project area than in the City and County, although this percentage varies between Block Groups. Overall, none of the Block Groups contain a minority population of greater than 50 percent or contain a minority population that is more than 10 percentage points higher than the City or County average.

As shown in Table 5, found in Section 4.2.2 Population and Household Trends, there is a substantially higher per capita income within the project area than within the City of Fairfield and Solano County as a whole. Poverty levels are lower in the project area and census tracts affected by the project than in the City of Fairfield. Overall, none of the Block Groups contain a poverty level of greater than 25 percent or contain poverty levels that are more than 10 percentage points higher than the City or County average.

Comparing the changes in census data over time is an important way to ascertain demographic trends. However, the geographies of all the Block Groups which comprise the project area have changed substantially since 1990.⁴ Therefore, direct comparison between 1990 and 2000 is impossible.

⁴ The Census Bureau often changes the way it designates Census Tracts and Block Groups between decennial censuses, e.g. to compensate for growth.

As analyzed in the Community characteristics above, no racial/ethnic minority or low income populations were found to exist in the project's study area; therefore, no environmental justice issues are present.

Community Character and Cohesion Regulatory Setting

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 as amended (NEPA), established that the federal government use all practicable means to ensure for all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings [42 U.S.C. 4331(b)(2)]. The Federal Highway Administration in its implementation of NEPA [23 U.S.C. 109(h)] directs that final decisions regarding projects are to be made in the best overall public interest. This requires taking into account adverse environmental impacts, such as, destruction or disruption of human-made resources, community cohesion and the availability of public facilities and services.

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Neighborhoods

Construction of the Project and any of the alignment alternatives is not expected to have any neighborhood impacts in Fairfield or unincorporated Solano County. Construction of temporary detours which could occur at night and on some weekends has the potential to cause temporary impacts to a limited number of residents in the area of the Project. Neighborhoods are located a sufficient distance from the project to not be affected by noise or construction-period potential effects such as noise and dust. A small number of farm residences are located near the Project and any construction-period impacts which would occur would be addressed through best management practice required of the construction contractors.

Community Services

No impacts were identified to community services under any of the categories: utilities, fire protection, police services, parks, and schools. Utility service would not be disrupted by the project; police and fire protection services would not change as a result of the project and access to the Green Valley Middle School, the Nelda Mundy Elementary School and Solano Community College would not be affected by the Project. Coordination would be required between the STA and the police and fire providers to make sure that any lane or road closures were communicated. The project would not result in either a direct or proximity-related use of the Ridge Trail in Rockville Hill Regional Park because the park is well outside the project area. The project would not result in a 4(f) use of the proposed Ridge Trail segment because it is still in the planning stage and it is not anticipated that the segment would be completed prior to completion of the North Connector project. The project would affect a small portion of the Fairfield Linear Park which is located along the west bank of the Suisun Creek. In the area, the project would involve realigning the existing multi-use path through the park to pass under the new bridge.

Residential Displacements

No displacements of existing uses would occur in the project area.

Business Displacements

In the East End Alignment a concrete installation company would be displaced. The business is located on a 1.2 acre parcel at 4974 Russell Road. Buildings which would be displaced by the Project include an 8,800 square foot warehouse and a 5,300 square foot pole barn. The assessed value for the property is: land value of \$75,626, improvement value of \$98,793 with a total assessed value of \$174,419. Relocation of a business can result in unemployment and associated financial impacts. If the company can relocate within the same area and remain viable, the effects of unemployment would be temporary. Caltrans Environmental Handbook Volume 4, Community Impact Assessment, states that "The physical removal of a city's major employer could well be a significant impact under CEQA, and it could result in multiplier effects to related businesses. The loss of a small business, however, is likely to have a lesser effect on employment in the community because of the fewer numbers of households affected." The business which would be displaced by the Project is not a major employer in the Fairfield area. It is expected that the business would be able to relocate within the area.

The Caltrans Relocation Assistance Program was developed to help eligible displaced individuals or businesses move with as little inconvenience as possible. All rights and services provided under Public Law 91-646, the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended, would be strictly adhered to. The rights of non-tenured occupants of displaced properties would be preserved. It is Caltrans policy that persons displaced as a result of Caltrans sponsored transportation programs shall receive fair and humane treatment and shall not suffer unnecessarily as a result of project designed for the benefit of the public. No occupants would be required to relocate until comparable replacement housing has been made available to them.

GROWTH

Regulatory Setting

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations, which implement the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, require evaluation of the potential environmental consequences of all proposed federal activities and programs. This provision includes a requirement to examine indirect consequences, which may occur in areas beyond the immediate influence of a proposed action and at some time in the future. The CEQ regulations, 40 CFR 1508.8, refer to these consequences as secondary impacts. Secondary impacts may include changes in land use, economic vitality, and population density, which are all elements of growth.

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) also requires the analysis of a project's potential to induce growth. CEQA guidelines, Section 15126.2(d), require that environmental documents "...discuss the ways in which the proposed project could foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment..."

Impacts

In the West end, the project would indirectly cause growth inducement because it would add capacity north of I-80 in the Red Top Road/ SR 12 area. However, there are environmental constraints in this area including steep slopes, unstable soils and close proximity to the Green Valley Fault. These factors could make development in this area difficult. In addition,

most of the land in the West End consists of Grazing Land. Any change to the land use designation to a more intensive use would require a general plan amendment and rezoning.

In the East End, the project would cause indirect growth inducement because it would add capacity to certain portions for the road network north of I-80. The land in this area is currently undeveloped agricultural land owned by the County. The North Connector project could create pressure for future land use changes to convert prime farmland to a more intensive use. However, the land is zoned agriculture and any change to the land use designation would require a general plan amendment, rezoning, and would trigger CEQA review. The area is also subject to the Orderly Growth Initiative and any proposal to change Agricultural land use designation to another land use would be required to be put to a countywide vote of people under the provisions of the initiative.

The project, overall, is not in conflict with local plans or policies. The project is not expected to accelerate the schedule for any development, nor would it lead to the increase of sewer, water supply, or drainage capacity. By reducing travel time during peak hours between the residential areas along Green Valley and Suisun Valley Roads and Fairfield, the project could decrease commute times; however, this is not considered to be growth inducing. The project is intended to decrease local trips on I-80, thereby reducing local traffic on that segment of the freeway system.

Avoidance, Minimization and Mitigation Measures

East End

Impact COM 1: The alignment in the East End would result in the displacement of one business – a concrete installation company, located in the Del Monte Warehouse, on a 1.2-acre parcel at 4974 Russell Road, which includes an 8,800-square-foot warehouse and a 5,300-square-foot pole barn. Relocation of a business can result in unemployment and associated financial impacts.

The proposed action would not have a substantial affect on the local economy because the business that would be displaced is not a major employer in Solano County. If the company can relocate within the same area and remain viable, the effects of unemployment would be temporary. It is expected that the business would be able to relocate within the area.

Mitigation Measure COM 1: Under Public Law 91-646, the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended, displaced individuals and businesses must receive fair and humane treatment and shall not suffer unnecessarily as a result of project designed for the benefit of the public. Property owners must be compensated at fair market value for the land and structure. The property owners in the East End would be entitled to full market land and structure value as a result of the proposed take.

West End and Central Section

There is no residential or business displacement for the West, Central or East End of the project.



Figure 2.2-1. Census Tracts and Block Groups in the Project Area

