

The following subsections evaluate and discuss 13 environmental analyses. The potential for the Proposed Project to impact resources, and recommended mitigation measures to avoid or reduce those impacts are described. The impact analyses are regional and broad in discussion but focus on issues and topics of relevance to the potential for impacts. For example, biological issues is a wide-reaching subject area because it encompasses all of San Francisco Bay's local environments, which can be varied. The evaluation does not include a complete inventory of biological resources present in the Bay but does provide information to characterize those resources. Regional types of habitats and species are described, and those that are of most concern to potential ferry system expansion are described and evaluated. Cumulative impacts are discussed in Section 4.3.

Based on California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines (Section 15125), assessment of potential impacts should be conducted against a baseline consisting of existing environmental conditions. The purpose of this comparison is to isolate and identify specific impacts that could occur as a result of the Proposed Project. For this EIR, the alternatives included a "No Project" Alternative that reflects future conditions if none of the other alternatives were implemented. For this alternative, although the WTA project would not be implemented, other ferry service expansion, as well as increases in other vessel traffic and vehicular traffic, would continue.

For the majority of the technical sections presented in this section, potential impacts are evaluated against the existing environmental conditions, which are equivalent to the No Project Alternative. For Air Quality (Section 3.6), Transportation (3.12), and Energy (Section 3.13), however, the analyses include projections for both the Proposed Project and the No Project Alternative. For these three issue areas, comparison of future (year 2025) levels of travel against existing conditions is not a useful evaluation as it would not show whether the project improves or impacts regional travel patterns, and consequently regional air quality emissions and energy consumption. (The study year 2025 was chosen because it is consistent with Bay Area planning horizon years used to represent "buildout" of the regional transportation system). Therefore, these sections include analysis of potential impacts compared to the No Project Alternative for the same study year.