

30. Adverse Impacts Which Cannot be Avoided

Certain adverse impacts are anticipated to occur regardless of the various mitigation measures employed. Adverse physical impacts to wetlands in the study area are possible under the Build Alternatives. The Build Alternatives are expected to require the acquisition of 4.30 to 4.73 acres of wetlands, depending on Build Alternative (refer to Chapter 15: Wetlands for additional details). The mitigation plan for wetlands cannot replace the wetlands in their existing location; as a consequence, the impact to the actual wetland features cannot be avoided or mitigated on-site. However, the function of the wetland within the watershed can be mitigated through the improvement of the Kane tract. Purchase of wetland mitigation credits in the Kane tract will serve to enhance this tract of land that provides water quality benefits to the entire Hackensack-Pascack Watershed (Watershed Area 5). Consequently, the acquisition of the wetlands along the Northern Branch Corridor is unavoidable; however, the impact to water quality that might otherwise arise as a result of the loss of these resources can be mitigated.

Noise impacts are associated with both the proposed passenger rail service and overnight freight service. Horn noise can be mitigated through the implementation of Quiet Zones. Although the application for Quiet Zones must be initiated by the municipality, the implementation of Quiet Zones would effectively eliminate all horn noise impacts. As such, although NJ TRANSIT cannot compel a municipality to implement Quiet Zones, they represent a viable solution to avoid the adverse noise impacts associated with both Light Rail and freight train horns.

Quiet Zones will not mitigate wayside noise, which is associated exclusively with the movement of freight trains during the overnight hours. It is important to note that while noise modeling (See Chapter 12: Noise) assumed a worst-case-scenario of two freight train pass-bys per night, the reality at the time of the development of the DEIS is that freight service currently operates on the Northern Branch once or twice *per week*. With two freight train pass-bys per night, the project would result in moderate noise impacts to 211 residences and severe impacts to 1 residence. These impacts are identical in both Build Alternatives as the impacts are associated with freight service which operates from North Bergen to Northvale, regardless of the terminus of the Build Alternative.

Without intersection improvements recommended in Chapter 9: Traffic and Parking, 26 intersections reflect failing conditions in Light Rail to Tenafly (Preferred Alternative) and 12 in Light Rail to Englewood Route 4, as compared with 8 in the No Build Alternative. With mitigation, the number of failing intersections is reduced to 4 in Light Rail to Tenafly (Preferred Alternative) and 2 in Light Rail to Englewood Route 4. Mitigation measures require coordination between NJ TRANSIT and the municipal government in the location where the mitigation is proposed.

Interference with normal traffic operating conditions along the corridor will occur during the construction of all Build Alternatives, as emergency vehicles, construction equipment, and trucks will traverse streets adjacent to the construction staging areas. Short-term unavoidable air quality and noise impacts will be anticipated at the various construction staging locations due to the emissions from excavation, grading, construction equipment operation, and potential short-term traffic effects related to construction activity. Construction, maintenance, and operation of the proposed project will result in the use of energy resources. Proper mitigation measures to alleviate adverse impacts will be determined once final design plans are formalized.