
INTRODUCTION

1.1 DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

1.1.1 CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

The California Environmental Quality Act of 1970, as amended (CEQA) requires Environmental Impact Reports (EIRs) to be prepared for all projects which may have a significant impact on the environment. An EIR is an information document, the purposes of which, according to CEQA Guidelines, are "...to identify the significant effects of a project on the environment, to identify alternatives to the project, and to indicate the manner in which such significant effects can be mitigated or avoided." The information contained in this EIR is intended to be objective and impartial, to enable the reader to arrive at an independent judgment regarding the probable character and significance of the impacts resulting from the adoption and implementation of the 2005 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (2005 MTP), the 2005 Monterey County Regional Transportation Plan (2005 MC-RTP) and the 2005 Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan (2005 SCC-RTP), herein referenced as the "three plans".

Under CEQA, a Program EIR may be prepared in those instances where a series of actions are under consideration "in connection with (the) issuance of rules, regulations, plans or other general criteria to govern the conduct of a continuing program." CEQA Guidelines provide for preparation of a "program" EIR for "a series of actions that can be characterized as one large project and are related either (1) geographically; [or] (2) as logical parts in the chain of contemplated actions..." (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15168 (a) (1, 2)). The advantages of a "program" EIR cited by the CEQA Guidelines include its ability to: "(1) provide an occasion for a more exhaustive consideration of effects and alternatives than would be practical in an EIR on an individual action; (2) ensure consideration of cumulative impacts that might be slighted in a case-by-case analysis; (3) avoid duplicative reconsideration of basic policy considerations; (4) allow the Lead Agency to consider broad policy alternatives and program-wide mitigation measures at an early time when the agency has greater flexibility to deal with basic problems or cumulative impacts; and (5) allow reduction in paperwork." (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15168 (b) (1-5)).

CEQA also provides for the tiering of EIRs, to eliminate repetitive discussions of issues and "to focus the EIR on the actual issues ripe for decision at each level of environmental review" (CEQA

Guidelines Section 15152 (a)). An initial EIR for a particular plan or program can evaluate environmental impacts in a general sense, and can be followed by additional, project-specific environmental impact reports which refer to previous discussions presented in the initial EIR (which may be incorporated by reference). By using the Program EIR as the first tier under this approach, it may be possible to avoid duplication and eliminate repetition in the preparation of the project-specific EIRs, which should be focused on the site-specific issues related to each individual project (CEQA Guidelines, Article 10, Section 15152).

As transportation system improvement projects are proposed, additional site-specific environmental review will be required by those agencies responsible for actually implementing such projects. During site-specific environmental review, lead agencies responsible for the implementation of specific projects will make every effort to identify ways that environmental damage can be avoided or significantly reduced, consistent with the basic purposes of CEQA (CEQA Guidelines, Article 1, Section 15002). This would include efforts to identify appropriate site-specific mitigation designed to avoid or reduce potential environmental impacts, including possible environmental impacts that may ultimately be significant and unavoidable. These later EIRs (possibly including other Program EIRs) may not be required to repeat the broad analysis of environmental issues examined in the original Program EIR. Later EIRs which are tiered under this Program EIR must indicate such an intention, and must identify the location where this Program EIR may be reviewed by the public.

What the Three 2005 Transportation Plans Are

The three plans each represent minor revisions of the previous MTP and RTPs developed by the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG), the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) and the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC), respectively. The 2005 RTPs for Monterey County and Santa Cruz County are intended to establish a framework for providing a transportation system for the Monterey County and Santa Cruz County, respectively, which efficiently utilizes a variety of modes for the movement of people and freight, and which reduces energy consumption and air pollution. The MTP combines the RTPs for Santa Cruz, Monterey and San Benito Counties.

AMBAG, as the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), must prepare a triennially updated long-range (at least twenty-year) transportation plan for the Monterey Bay metropolitan region (Code of Federal Regulations, Part 450, Subpart C, Section 450.322). When adopted, the 2005 MTP will serve as the principal federal planning document guiding investment in improvements to roadways, transit, multi-modal and intermodal facilities and services that, together, constitute the Monterey Bay region's transportation system. The 2005 MTP will serve as a coordination document, which will enable the proposed transportation system improvement programs and projects to be viewed by local decision-makers within a regional context.

The 2005 MTP meets federal requirements for transportation and air quality planning (23 CFR, Part 450, Subpart C and 40 CFR, Part 51), through a plan which meets the specific needs and deficiencies of the regional transportation system. RTPs are state-mandated documents, required to access state

funds. Transportation projects and programs as proposed, evaluated and selected at the county-wide level through the RTPs, serve as the basis for the 2005 MTP. In receipt of each county's project list, AMBAG has been assured by the Regional Transportation Planning Agencies of each county that their RTP was developed taking into account transportation needs, an evaluation of alternatives to meet those needs, and the resultant plan and/or program selection to satisfy transportation need. Arguably most importantly, the RTPs reflect an extensive public involvement and participation process. The sum total is to reflect a transportation system for the region, based on public input, which embraces various modes of transportation in order to efficiently maximize the movement of people and goods within and through the region and to reduce energy consumption and air pollution through the year 2030.

The three plans each include a Policy Element, a proposed financially constrained Action Element, a Financial Element, and a Financially Unconstrained Project List. The financially constrained Action Element in each of the three plans identifies the specific transportation system improvement projects which have been proposed within the Counties of Monterey, San Benito and Santa Cruz, respectively, through the year 2030, and for which funding sources have been identified or are reasonably expected to be available. This financially constrained Action Element is regarded as the program of projects which can be implemented under financially constrained conditions. The Financial Elements in each of the three plans document the funding sources reasonably expected to be available to finance those projects identified in the financially constrained Action Elements. These sections of the three plans also address the use of transportation impact fees at a regional and local level as a possible means of generating the additional revenue for transportation system improvements where fair-share, per-unit fees for new development can be directly linked to mitigating the impacts associated with the additional vehicle trips coming from such development.

The three plans identify existing and future transportation-related needs, consider all modes of travel, analyze alternative solutions, and identify what can be completed with anticipated available funding for projects and programs. As mandated by federal law, the MTP specifically includes a discussion of the conformity of the 2005 MTP to the approved federal air quality plan and updated travel demand forecasts.

As part of the transportation planning process, planners must: determine the benefits to, and potential negative impacts on, minority populations and low-income populations from proposed investment or actions; quantify the expected effects (total, positive, and negative); and determine the appropriate course of action, whether avoidance, minimization, or mitigation. Through public noticing, the staff and boards of AMBAG, TAMC and SCCRTC have attempted to make contact with all residents of the three counties in their outreach and planning efforts. Transportation system improvement projects identified in the three plans are located in most of the settled areas of Monterey County, San Benito County and Santa Cruz County, most frequently in areas where transportation infrastructure already exists. Adoption of each of these three plans, in itself, would not result in disproportionately high adverse health or environmental effects on minority or low-income populations, as this action would not result in any direct physical changes in the environment. However, some individual transportation system improvement projects identified in

the transportation plans could have adverse effects on these populations, depending on the demographic characteristics of the area surrounding the proposed improvements at the time they are formally brought forward for environmental review. Potentially disproportionate adverse effects on minority or low-income populations would need to be evaluated on the project-by-project basis as appropriate during the environmental review process for each of the individual transportation system improvement projects identified in the three transportation plans.

What the Three 2005 Transportation Plans Are Not

The three plans do not provide project designs or a construction schedule, and adoption of these three comprehensive planning documents does not represent an approval action for any of the individual transportation programs and projects listed in their financially constrained Action Elements. Details relating to the site-specific alignment, location, design and scheduling of the transportation improvement projects which are identified in the three plans are not fixed in, or defined by, these documents. The adoption of the three plans represents an essential first step in qualifying for the receipt of the funding necessary to permit the implementation of the financially constrained Action Element of these three documents. However, the act of adopting the three documents, in itself, would not be sufficient to enable any of these programs or projects to proceed without additional actions on the part of the appropriate agencies responsible for the actual implementation of each individual program and project.

The Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments is the Lead Agency for the EIR

The Lead Agency in the development of the 2005 MTP and in the preparation of this Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG). AMBAG is responsible for ensuring that the regional transportation planning process is continuing, cooperative and comprehensive. The 2005 MTP has been prepared to meet requirements set forth in the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990, the metropolitan transportation planning regulations, and other applicable state and federal regulations. Although only one entity can represent the Lead Agency under CEQA for the preparation of an EIR, in the case of this document the EIR will serve as the CEQA environmental review document for three separate (but related) planning documents: the three plans. For this reason, AMBAG, as Lead Agency for the preparation of the EIR, has developed the EIR in close cooperation with TAMC and SCCRTC, with the understanding that TAMC will ultimately act as Lead Agency when this EIR is considered in conjunction with the 2005 MC-RTP, and that SCCRTC will act as Lead Agency when this EIR is considered in conjunction with the 2005 SCC-RTP. Before considering adoption of the 2005 MTP, the AMBAG Board of Directors will consider whether this EIR provides an adequate and complete analysis of the environmental effects associated with the implementation of the 2005 MTP. The EIR must be certified as adequate and complete by the Board prior to any action to adopt the 2005 MTP. **The Lead Agency for the preparation of the 2005 MC-RTP is the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC).** Before considering adoption of the 2005 MC-RTP, the TAMC Board of Directors will consider whether this EIR provides an adequate and complete analysis of the environmental effects associated with the implementation of the 2005 MC-RTP. The EIR must be

certified as adequate and complete by the Board prior to any action to adopt the 2005 MC-RTP. **The Lead Agency responsible for the preparation of the 2005 SCC-RTP is the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC).** Before considering adoption of the 2005 SCC-RTP, the SCCRTC Commissioners will consider whether this EIR provides an adequate and complete analysis of the environmental effects associated with the implementation of the 2005 SCC-RTP. The EIR must be certified as adequate and complete by the Board prior to any action to adopt the 2005 SCC-RTP.

1.2 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT REVIEW PROCESS

Within the context of the discussion above, this EIR has been prepared as a Program EIR (rather than a "project" EIR). The transportation system improvements proposed in the three plans can be regarded as a series of geographically-related projects, but for the majority of these projects, it would be premature to make final decisions on their implementation.

The Program EIR is intended to focus on those probable regional environmental effects associated with the implementation of the financially constrained Action Elements of the three plans that can be identified now, while deferring analysis of those site-specific impacts which cannot be predicted prior to the preparation of detailed design and/or construction plans for the individual transportation system improvement projects that are identified in the financially-constrained project lists incorporated within each of these three documents. Upon submittal of formal plans for the individual transportation system improvement projects, the Lead Agency for each proposed project would need to determine the extent of additional environmental review that would be required to define in detail how the site-specific impacts of that project might differ from those identified as resulting from the implementation of the three plans, as described in the Program EIR.

Because the act of adopting the three plans would not, in itself, result in the implementation of any transportation system improvement programs or projects identified in these documents, no environmental impacts would be directly associated with this action. By the same token, the adoption of the three plans would not, in itself, resolve any of the existing traffic deficiencies within the region or result in any transportation system improvements, since this action would be insufficient to enable any of the proposed transportation system improvement programs and projects to proceed. However, adoption of the three plans is necessary to achieve compliance with state and federal laws, and can be regarded as a critical first step in obtaining the funding which will be required to carry out many of the programs and projects identified in the respective financially constrained Action Elements.

The three plans express the priorities of the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments and its partner planning/programming agencies, for transportation system improvements and programs within the Monterey Bay region. This Program EIR describes, in general terms, the probable environmental effects which may be associated with those expressed priorities on a regional, system-wide basis, rather than on a project-by-project basis.

The EIR will enable decision-makers and interested citizens to evaluate the broad environmental issues associated with the overall character and concept of the three plans. Although very few of the transportation system improvements identified in these three documents have either been proposed in detailed design form or been formally presented for specific approval at this time, a Program EIR can serve as the first tier in a sequence of environmental evaluations by providing a framework for the subsequent and more detailed site-specific environmental analyses which will be required as individual transportation system improvement projects are presented for review and approval in the future.

In accordance with California law, the EIR on the three plans must be certified before any of these three documents can be formally adopted by the each agency's governing board. During the review period for the Draft EIR, interested individuals, organizations and agencies may offer their comments on its evaluation of program-level impacts and alternatives. The comments received during this public review period will be compiled and presented together with responses to these comments. The Draft EIR and the Final EIR (Responses to Comments document) together will constitute the Program EIR on the three plans. The Board of Directors of the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments, the Transportation Agency for Monterey County and the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission will review the EIR documents, and will determine whether or not the EIR provides a full and adequate appraisal of the three plans, the alternatives and their effects at the program (rather than "project") level.

A Notice of Preparation (NOP) was issued on May 28, 2004, to solicit comments from public agencies and the public regarding the scope of the environmental evaluation for the three plans. Public scoping sessions were held in Santa Cruz on June 22, 2004, and in Salinas on June 24, 2004. The NOP, all written responses to the NOP, and summaries of comments received at both EIR scoping sessions are presented in **Appendix A**. These comments were taken into consideration during the preparation of the Draft EIR. The comments raised several areas of controversy, including:

- *Concern regarding the selection of alternatives to be evaluated in the Draft EIR.* In comments received at the Scoping Session in Santa Cruz and in the California Coastal Commission response to the NOP, it was suggested that the EIR evaluate additional alternatives beyond the CEQA-mandated "No Project" alternative, the "Financially Unconstrained" alternative and the "Financially Constrained - No New Revenues" alternative, including an alternative that would be expected to reduce environmental impacts associated with implementation of the transportation system improvement projects included in the financially constrained Action Elements of the three plans. The three agencies' staff discussed this concern at length, and determined that development of a hypothetical "environmentally sensitive" alternative for evaluation in the Draft EIR that would eliminate some of the projects listed in the financially constrained Action Elements of the three plans based on assumptions regarding possible future environmental effects associated with such projects would be too subjective in the absence of project-specific environmental analysis. Rather than speculate on the environmental effects that might be associated with such an alternative developed in this

manner, Lead Agency staff decided to focus the evaluation of alternatives in the Draft EIR on the CEQA-mandated “No Project” alternative, the “Financially Unconstrained” alternative and the “Financially Constrained - No New Revenues” alternative.

- *Concern regarding the consistency of future transportation system improvement projects that may be proposed within the coastal zone (particularly the widening of Highway 1 in the Moss Landing area) with the policies of the Coastal Act.* As discussed in Section 2.7, in some instances, the Coastal Act specifically limits future improvements to roadways within the coastal zone, which could limit future improvements along SR 1 in rural areas (e.g., the widening of Highway 1 between Salinas Road and Castroville, which is not a project currently identified in the financially constrained Action Elements of the three plans). Since the three plans each provide a program identifying future transportation system improvement projects (rather than specific plans for the construction of any such projects), these documents would not be inconsistent with the provisions of the Coastal Act. However, as individual transportation system improvement projects identified in the financially constrained Action Elements of the three plans are formally submitted to the appropriate lead agencies for environmental review, each lead agency will be required to determine whether such projects are consistent with policies of the Coastal Act, and the Coastal Commission will be responsible for reviewing such projects within its jurisdiction prior to issuing any required coastal development permit.
- *Concern regarding the evaluation of alternatives to highway widening.* The Draft EIR provides a program-level evaluation of the types of environmental effects that might be associated with implementation of all transportation system improvement projects identified in the financially constrained Action Elements of the three plans, including listed roadway widening projects. It is beyond the scope of the Draft EIR to evaluate alternatives to each of the hundreds of transportation system improvement projects identified in the financially constrained Action Elements of the three plans. However, as individual roadway widening projects listed in the financially constrained Action Elements of the three plans are brought forward to the responsible Lead Agency for project-specific environmental review, if potentially significant environmental impacts are anticipated with such projects, an evaluation of feasible alternatives to such projects will be necessary as part of the environmental review in each instance.
- *Concern regarding possible adverse effects on biological resources resulting from transportation system improvements identified in the MTP/RTPs.* A program-level evaluation of the types of adverse effects on biological resources that may be anticipated with implementation of the transportation system improvement projects identified in the financially constrained Action Elements of the three plans is presented in Section 3.4.2 of the Draft EIR. As individual transportation system improvement project identified in the financially constrained Action Elements of the three plans are brought forward to the responsible Lead Agencies for environmental review, evaluation of project-specific effects on biological resources will be required in each instance.
- *Concern regarding adverse air quality impacts associated with highway widening.* A program-level evaluation of the types of adverse effects on air quality that may be anticipated with

implementation of the transportation system improvement projects identified in the financially constrained Action Elements of the three plans is presented in Section 3.3.2 of the Draft EIR. As individual transportation system improvement project identified in the financially constrained Action Elements of the three plans are brought forward to the responsible Lead Agencies for environmental review, evaluation of project-specific effects on air quality will be required in each instance.

- *Concern regarding adverse noise/vibration effects and sound walls associated with highway widening.* A program-level evaluation of the types of adverse effects on the existing noise environment that may be anticipated with implementation of the transportation system improvement projects identified in the financially constrained Action Elements of the three plans is presented in Section 3.11.2 of the Draft EIR. As individual transportation system improvement project identified in the financially constrained Action Elements of the three plans are brought forward to the responsible Lead Agencies for environmental review, evaluation of project-specific noise/vibration effects will be required. If such effects are found to be potentially significant, project-specific mitigation measures would need to be identified, where feasible. These measures might or might not include the installation of sound walls, depending on their feasibility as mitigation in each instance.
- *Concern regarding adverse water quality impacts associated with highway widening.* A program-level evaluation of the types of adverse effects on water quality that may be anticipated with implementation of the transportation system improvement projects identified in the financially constrained Action Elements of the three plans is presented in Section 3.8.2 of the Draft EIR. As individual transportation system improvement project identified in the financially constrained Action Elements of the three plans (including roadway widening projects) are brought forward to the responsible Lead Agencies for environmental review, evaluation of project-specific effects on water quality will be required in each instance.
- *Concern regarding increased congestion resulting from transportation system improvements.* A program-level evaluation of the types of traffic-related that may be anticipated with implementation of the transportation system improvement projects identified in the financially constrained Action Elements of the three plans is presented in Section 3.15.2 of the Draft EIR (Traffic Congestion During Construction). As individual transportation system improvement projects identified in the financially constrained Action Elements of the three plans are brought forward to the responsible Lead Agencies for environmental review, evaluation of project-specific traffic congestion impacts will be required in each instance.
- *Concern regarding environmental justice issues.* The Draft EIR addresses environmental justice issues in Section 5.6.
- *Concern regarding financial aspects associated with implementation of the MTP/RTPs.* Under CEQA, the Draft EIR is tasked with the program-level evaluation of the environmental effects that may be associated with implementation of the three plans. It is beyond the scope of the EIR to provide an evaluation of the fiscal or financial aspects of transportation plan implementation. Funding sources for those transportation system improvement projects

identified in the financially constrained Action Elements of the three plans are discussed at length in the each of the respective transportation plans.

- *Concern regarding effects on property values and other economic effects associated with implementation of the MTP/RTPs.* Under CEQA, the Draft EIR is tasked with the program-level evaluation of the environmental effects that may be associated with implementation of the three plans. It is beyond the scope of the EIR to provide an evaluation of the extent to which implementation of these transportation plans might affect property values or generate other economic effects (either positive or negative).
- *Concern regarding the inclusion of new intermodal freight facilities within the MTP/RTPs.* The Draft EIR provides a program-level evaluation of the type of environmental effects that may be associated with implementation of the three plans. None of these transportation plans include any transportation system improvement projects that would provide for the development of any intermodal freight facilities, and as a result, the environmental effects that might be associated with the establishment of such facilities is not addressed in the Draft EIR.
- *Concern regarding the use of public funding to support local transit systems.* Under CEQA, the Draft EIR is tasked with the program-level evaluation of the environmental effects that may be associated with implementation of the three plans. It is beyond the scope of the EIR to provide an evaluation of funding sources for the listed transportation system improvement projects identified in the financially constrained Action Elements of the three plans, including the sources of funding for local transit operations.
- *Concern regarding adverse effects on aviation facilities that might be associated with implementing the MTP/RTPs.* In the program-level Draft EIR evaluation of the environmental effects that may be associated with the implementation of the three plans, no potentially significant adverse effects on existing aviation facilities have been identified. However, as individual transportation system improvement projects are brought forward to the responsible Lead Agencies for environmental review, those projects proposed in the vicinity of aviation facilities will need to be evaluated for potentially significant project-specific impacts that may adversely affect the continued safe operation of those facilities.

In reviewing the Draft EIR, readers should focus on the sufficiency of the document in identifying and analyzing the possible impacts that adoption of the three plans may have on the environment, and on ways in which the significant impacts associated with the implementation of these three transportation plans might be avoided or mitigated. As indicated in CEQA Guidelines, Section 15151:

“An Environmental Impact report should be prepared with a sufficient degree of analysis to provide decision-makers with information which enables them to make a decision which intelligently takes account of environmental consequences. An evaluation of the environmental effects of a proposed project need not be exhaustive, but the sufficiency of an EIR is to be reviewed in light of what is reasonably feasible. Disagreement among experts does not make an EIR inadequate, but the EIR should summarize the main

points of disagreement among experts. The courts have looked not for perfection; but for adequacy, completeness, and a good faith effort at full disclosure.”

Public Review

The Draft EIR will be circulated for a public review period of at least 45 days. During that period, public hearings will be held to obtain public comment on the adequacy and completeness of the Draft EIR. Comments are most helpful when they suggest additional specific alternatives or mitigation measures that would provide better ways to avoid or mitigate significant environmental impacts. Reviewers should explain the basis for their comments and, whenever possible, should submit data or references in support of their comments.

The Draft EIR will be available for review at the offices of the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (445 Reservation Road, Suite G, Marina, California), the offices of the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (55-B Plaza Circle, Salinas, CA) and the offices of the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (1523 Pacific Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA), and at many local libraries within Monterey County, San Benito County and Santa Cruz County. Copies of the Draft EIR may be obtained through AMBAG at the address below.

Comments on the Draft EIR may be submitted in writing until 5:00 P.M. PST on the last day of the public review period (April 1, 2005) to:

Kathy Urlie, Principal Planner
Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments
445 Reservation Road, Suite G
P.O. Box 809
Marina, CA 93933-0809

Telephone: (831) 883-3750 FAX: (831) 883-3755 e-mail: KUrlie@ambag.org

Comments on the contents of the MTP or the RTP documents (but not directly related to the content of the Draft EIR) should be submitted directly to the appropriate agency.

At the close of the public review period, all comments received will be compiled, and responses to these comments will be prepared and presented in a Final EIR. The Final EIR may also incorporate any necessary revisions to the Draft EIR made in response to comments received. The Boards of Directors of AMBAG, TAMC and SCCRTC will each review the EIR (comprised of the Draft EIR and Final EIR), and independently consider whether or not to certify the EIR as adequate and complete.

After reviewing the Draft EIR and the Final EIR, and following action to certify the EIR as adequate and complete, the Boards of Directors of the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments, Transportation Agency for Monterey County and Santa Cruz County Regional

Transportation Commission will each be in a position to determine whether each of the three documents should be adopted as proposed, revised, or rejected. This determination will be based upon information presented on the three transportation plans, impacts and probable consequences, and the possible alternatives and mitigation measures available.

Where potentially significant and unavoidable environmental impacts have been identified in the EIR, each Lead Agency will be required to make a written statement of overriding considerations. In accordance with CEQA Guidelines, Section 15093 [a], a decision-making agency must balance, as applicable, the economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits of a proposed project against its unavoidable environmental risks when determining whether to approve the project. If the specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits of a proposed project outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental effects, the adverse environmental effects may be considered “acceptable”.

1.3 ORGANIZATION AND ANALYSIS APPROACH

The Draft EIR incorporates and adds to the information provided in the previous EIRs prepared on earlier MTPs and RTPs, but reflects changes which have been made in the development of the three plans. These changes include slight revisions to policy statements; the deletion of some projects which appeared on previous financially constrained Action Element lists (but which have since been completed or have been dropped from consideration); the addition of new projects to the financially constrained Action Element lists and the Financially Unconstrained Project Lists; revisions of the Financial Element to reflect changes in the three financially constrained Action Elements; and a new air quality Conformity Analysis on the 2005 MTP.

Brief descriptions of the three plans are presented in **Chapter 2**. **Chapter 3** presents a “program-level” environmental analysis of the three plans. In each section, the existing conditions are briefly discussed ("Setting"), followed by a “program-level” evaluation of potentially significant impacts which may be associated with the implementation of the programs or projects identified in the financially constrained Action Elements of each of the three proposed transportation plans. Where potentially significant impacts are identified, appropriate mitigation measures (where feasible) are presented.

Chapter 4 presents an evaluation of the environmental effects which may be associated with the three project alternatives which were evaluated, the "No Build" Alternative, the “Financially Constrained - No New Revenues” alternative, and the "Financially Unconstrained" Alternative.

Chapter 5 presents an overview of the potentially significant environmental impacts which may be associated with implementation of the programs and projects identified in the financially constrained Action Elements of the three plans, including a discussion of those impacts which would be unavoidable/irreversible, growth-inducing impacts, cumulative impacts, environmental impacts identified as "less than significant" and environmental impact which would be expected to remain

significant despite mitigation. Environmental justice issues are also addressed in this chapter of the Draft EIR.

Chapter 6 lists the persons who prepared the Draft EIR, identifies those persons and organizations contacted during the preparation of the document, and lists the reference materials used.

Appendix A includes the Notice of Preparation and the responses received. **Appendix B** presents the list of transportation system improvement projects identified in the financially constrained Action Elements of the three plans. **Appendix C** presents the list of transportation system improvement projects identified in the Financially Unconstrained Project Lists of the three plans.

1.4 MITIGATION MONITORING PROGRAM

Under California law, public agencies are required to adopt a report or monitoring program for the changes to a project which it has adopted or made a condition of project approval in order to mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment. A monitoring and reporting program must be established for each of the three plans to ensure that mitigation measures are incorporated in their implementation to reduce or avoid anticipated significant environmental impacts. To the extent that AMBAG, TAMC or the SCCRTC is identified as an appropriate agency with respect to identified mitigation measures, the mitigation monitoring program, as applicable, is to be adopted at the same time that the Lead Agency (in this case, the Board of Directors of the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments, the Transportation Agency for Monterey County or the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission) formally adopts their respective 2005 transportation plans.

A mitigation monitoring program would include a description of the respective transportation plan, a list of the mitigation measures identified in the EIR, a program schedule for implementation of the 2005 transportation plan, delegation of responsibilities and authority in the monitoring process, and procedures for monitoring the implementation of mitigation measures, enforcement, and handling of disputes, appeals and modifications.

This Draft EIR identifies measures which appear to be available for, and effective in, mitigating the significant environmental effects associated with the implementation of the programs and projects identified in the financially constrained Action Elements of the three plans. These mitigation measures, as identified, are recommendations to the appropriate agency responsible for the actual implementation of the projects. The identified mitigation measures may be subject to change based on comments received on the Draft EIR during the review period, and on the determination made by the respective Board of Directors in reviewing the EIR. These decision-making bodies will select the actual mitigation measures to be employed if the 2005 transportation plans are to be adopted, and those measures would then be incorporated in a mitigation monitoring program, as applicable, to the Responsible Agencies.