

4.13 Transportation and Traffic

This section evaluates the potential impacts to transportation during construction and operation of the proposed project.

4.13.1 Existing Setting

The following information discusses the transportation-related context in which the proposed project would be constructed and operated, including a description of the roadway network, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and public transit in the project area.

Roadways

New Navy Base Road is the primary roadway extending from State Route (SR) 255 southwest to the end of the Samoa Peninsula. New Navy Base Road turns into SR 255 just north of Samoa, which falls under the jurisdiction of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). SR 255 heads north then east to Arcata and southeast to Eureka from Samoa. The County identified New Navy Base Road as a Regionally Significant Street and Roadway (arterial) as part of the 2008 Regional Transportation Plan (Planwest Partners, Inc. 2008).

County roadways within the project area that may be encroached upon during construction include portions of Vance Avenue, Bendixsen Street, Lincoln Avenue, New Navy Base Road, and portions of adjoining streets. Each of these county roads are two-way roads with one travel lane in each direction.

Intersections within the project area were identified as operating at a level of service (LOS) C or better in 2006 (County of Humboldt 2006).

Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

As specified in the Humboldt County Regional Transportation Plan, all streets, roadways, and highways in Humboldt County are open to bicycle use (HCAOG 2018). Humboldt County's bikeways are generally classified according to Caltrans' definitions for Class I, II, and III bikeways, as defined below.

Class I "Bike Path": A separated, surfaced right-of-way designated exclusively for non-motorized use (can be solely for bicyclists, or can be shared with pedestrians and/or equestrians). The minimum width for each direction is 8 feet (1.5 meters), with a 5 feet (2.4 meter) minimum width for a bi-directional path.

Class II "Bike Lane": Within the roadway, a lane for preferential bicycle use, at least 4 feet wide or 5 feet when next to a gutter or parking. Established by a white stripe (on roadway) and "Bike Lane" signs. Adjacent vehicle parking and motorist crossflow is allowed. On a two-way road, a bike lane is required on both sides.

Class III "Bike Route": A roadway that does not have a Class I or II bikeway, where bicyclists share a travel lane with motorists. Sometimes created to connect other bikeways. Can be established by a "Bike Route" sign, but not required.

Unclassified bikeway: Streets, roadways, and highways without features to qualify as Class I, II, or III.

The Humboldt County Regional Bicycle Plan identifies New Navy Base Road through the project area as a proposed future Class I bike path. The proposed Class I bike path would continue north along SR 255 to the City of Arcata (HCAOG 2018).

Roadways in the project area do not include sidewalks, so pedestrians have to walk along the roadway shoulder or in the road right-of-way.

Public Transit

There are no commuter transit services or fixed-route public transit routes in the Samoa Peninsula. Dial-A-Ride (DAR) services are available in the project area through the Humboldt Transit Authority. Paratransit is a form of transportation service that is more flexible and personalized than fixed route or commuter transit service. Paratransit is tailored to the needs of disabled and elderly individuals. Paratransit services include DAR, Dial-A-Lift (DAL) and non-emergency medical transportation services (HCAOG 2017).

DAR and DAL are discount transportation services available to seniors and/or the disabled with a doctor's verification of disability. These services are also available to individuals over the age of 72, regardless of their medical condition. A reservation must be made to utilize either DAR or DAL.

Airports

Humboldt County includes nine public airports, the nearest to the project area is Samoa Field Airport, which is owned and managed by the City of Eureka. Samoa Field Airport is not included in the County's Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan; therefore, Samoa Field Airport does not include any Land Use Compatibility Zones.

4.13.2 Regulatory Framework

Federal

There are no federal regulations that apply to the proposed project related to transportation.

State

Caltrans issues encroachment permits and permits to operate the movement of oversized or excessive load vehicles on State roadways, such as SR 255. Caltrans also requires a Transportation Management Plan for any traffic restrictions and detours that could affect the highway system, which must be prepared in accordance with the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

Regional and Local

County of Humboldt General Plan

The following policy from the Humboldt County General Plan is applicable to the project with regard to transportation.

Policy C-P5. Level of Service Criteria. The County shall strive to maintain Level of Service C operation on all roadway segments and intersections, except for U.S. 101, where Level of Service D shall be acceptable. Level of Service improvements for automobiles should

not adversely affect Level of Service and/or Quality of Service for other modes of transportation, if possible.

Humboldt County Association of Governments

The Humboldt County Association of Governments (HCAOG) is a joint powers authority comprised of the County of Humboldt and the seven incorporated cities, each with a seat on the Board of Directors.

Humboldt County Regional Transportation Plan

Under its authority as the Regional Transportation Planning Agency for Humboldt County, HCAOG adopts and submits an updated Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) to the California Transportation Commission and Caltrans every five years. The RTP is a long-range (20-year) transportation planning document for Humboldt County. The most recent five-year update of the RTP was adopted in 2017. The RTP does not currently establish vehicular level of service criteria for County roadways in the project area.

Humboldt County Regional Bicycle Plan

The Humboldt Regional Bicycle Plan is a 20-year planning document that is updated every five years. The primary goal stated in the 2018 Regional Bicycle Plan is to create the safest conditions for bicyclists by providing bikeways and improving roadways to eliminate barriers to bicycle travel (HCAOG 2018). Projects identified as priorities in the current Regional Bicycle Plan are anticipated to be implemented over a five-year period.

4.13.3 Evaluation Criteria and Thresholds of Significance

For the purpose of this EIR, the evaluation criteria and significance thresholds summarized below are used to determine if the project would have a significant effect related to transportation and traffic. The following questions are from CEQA Guidelines' Appendix G Environmental Checklist Section XVI. Would the project:

- a. Conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation including mass transit and non-motorized travel and relevant components of the circulation system, including but not limited to intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit?
 - Conflict with the 2017 Regional Transportation Plan
- b. Conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to level of service standards and travel demand measures, or other standards established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?
 - Degrade the Level of Service of project-affected roadways to LOS D or worse.
- c. Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?
 - Modify air traffic patterns resulting in safety risks.

- d. Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?
 - Modify roadway, intersection, or driveway configurations without conforming to design standards
 - Operate off-road equipment on roadways
- e. Result in inadequate emergency access?
 - Block or substantially obstruct roadways
- f. Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities?
 - Block or substantially obstruct public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities.

4.13.4 Methodology

The impact analysis below evaluates the potential for the project to conflict with the County's adopted plans and policies related to circulation, including the General Plan, Regional Transportation Plan, and Regional Bicycle Plan. The analysis also evaluates the potential for the project to have short-term or long-term impacts on roadways, emergency access, or on the safety or performance of vehicular traffic, bicyclists, pedestrians, or public transit.

4.13.5 Impact Analysis

Impact TRA-1: Would the project conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation including mass transit and non-motorized travel and relevant components of the circulation system, including but not limited to intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit?

This impact analysis addresses CEQA Guidelines Appendix G checklist item XVI.a) identified in Section 4.13.3.

The Humboldt County General Plan strives to maintain LOS C operation on all roadway segments and intersections, except for U.S. 101, where LOS D is acceptable.

Construction

Construction traffic associated with the project would result in a short-term increase in construction-related vehicle trips on New Navy Base Road and SR 255, as well as other local roadways in the project area. Construction would require vehicle trips by construction workers and haul-truck trips for delivery and disposal of construction materials and spoils to and from construction areas. Construction of the proposed collection system and disposal system would also require temporary encroachments for trenching, laying pipe, backfilling, compacting, and repaving within the County right-of-way in project area roadways.

Because construction activities related to the pipelines would temporarily alter the normal functionality of several roadways, including the need for temporary partial lane closures along the roadways, the potential exists for a short-term decrease in the performance and safety of local roads during construction. This temporary impact would be **less than significant**.

Please refer to Impact TRA-4 below for an evaluation of potential construction-related impacts to pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities.

Operation

Operation and maintenance of the project would result in less than one maintenance visit per day and approximately four treated solids hauling trips per year. The timing of maintenance visits and haul trips would vary, and may or may not occur during a peak hour. Operation and maintenance of the project would, therefore, result in less than one peak hour trip to local roadways. This minimal increase in project trips would not substantially affect the roadway capacity or degrade the flow of traffic or LOS along local roadways. Therefore, operation of the project would not conflict with the performance standards outlined in the Humboldt County General Plan. The impact would be **less than significant**.

Please refer to Impact TRA-4 below for an evaluation of potential operational related impacts to pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities.

Summary

Construction traffic associated with the project would result in a short-term increase in construction-related vehicle trips on local roadways in the project area. The impact would be **less than significant**.

Project operation would contribute nominal vehicle trips, which are not anticipated to have a significant effect on the local roadways and therefore would not conflict with performance standards outlined in the Humboldt County General Plan. Therefore, the impact from project operation would be **less than significant**.

Significance *Less than Significant*

Mitigation **None Required**

Impact TRA-2: Would the project conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to level of service standards and travel demand measures, or other standards established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?

This impact analysis addresses CEQA Guidelines Appendix G checklist item XVI.b) identified in Section 4.13.3.

Humboldt County does not have a Congestion Management Agency or an adopted Congestion Management Program. Therefore, the project would not conflict with an applicable congestion management program. The project would result in **no impact**.

Significance *No Impact*

Mitigation **None Required**

Impact TRA-3: **Would the project result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?**

This impact analysis addresses CEQA Guidelines Appendix G checklist item XVI.c) identified in Section 4.13.3.

The proposed project is not located within an airport land use plan; however, it is within two miles of the Samoa Field Airport. Project construction and operation would include only ground-based travel, primarily associated with construction, and would have no impact to Samoa Field Airport operations. Therefore, the project would result in **no impact**.

Significance *No Impact*

Mitigation **None Required**

Impact TRA-4: **Would the project substantially increase hazards due to a design feature or incompatible use?**

This impact analysis addresses CEQA Guidelines Appendix G checklist item XVI.d) identified in Section 4.13.3.

Construction

As detailed in Impact TRA-5, project construction would require temporary encroachment easements within County maintained roads, which would require construction-affected roads be repaved to pre-project conditions.

Furthermore, the encroachment permit would include the development and implementation of a Traffic Control Plan for work that would block the public right-of-way, including plans for re-routing of vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians, as needed. Traffic controls would be required in accordance with County standards, and contractors would be required to comply with the general conditions of the encroachment permit. All construction zones would be returned to similar to existing conditions once work is completed. Project construction activities would not increase hazards due to a design feature or incompatible use and the impact is considered **less than significant**.

Operation

The project would not alter roadway or intersection configurations, add driveways, or construct any features that would affect access or use of transportation infrastructure. During the operational phase the proposed facilities would be located underground or away from transportation infrastructure. Roadways would operate similar to existing conditions. Approximately four haul trips per year would occur for treated solids disposal. The Approved Samoa WWTF driveway would be constructed to Humboldt County standards, and it is

not anticipated that line of sight hazards would be present. It is not anticipated that the project would result in an impact due to the creation of a hazard or exacerbation of an existing hazard. **No impact** during operation would occur.

Summary

During project construction a Traffic Control Plan would be implemented, which would ensure that the vehicles traveling within the project area can still access the roadways impacted by construction. The project’s construction-related impact would be **less than significant**. During project operations, roadways would operate similar to existing conditions; no new hazards or exacerbation of existing hazards would occur. Project operations would result in **no impact**.

Significance *Less than Significant*

Mitigation **None required**

Impact TRA-5: Would the project result in inadequate emergency access?

This impact analysis addresses CEQA Guidelines Appendix G checklist item XVI.e) identified in Section 4.13.3.

Construction

Project construction would require partial lane closures along several local roadways within the project area. An encroachment permit would be required for work completed within the County road right-of-way. The encroachment permit application for Humboldt County would require preparation of a Traffic Control Plan for construction work that would block the public right-of-way, and plans for re-routing of vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians, as needed. Implementation of traffic controls would be required in accordance with County standards, and contractors would be required to comply with the general conditions of the encroachment permit. Contractors would be required to adhere to an approved Traffic Control Plan, which would require that access be maintained to all properties adjacent to roads at all times. Implementation of a Traffic Control Plan would also minimize conflict and confusion related to emergency access and circulation. Contractors would be required to accommodate access by emergency vehicles, such as plating over excavations, and travel lane closures would be managed such that one travel lane would be kept open at all times to allow alternating traffic flow in both directions along affected roadways. Through compliance with County requirements, the potential for project construction activities to result in inadequate emergency access would be **less than significant**.

Operation

Operation and maintenance of the project would result in less than one additional vehicle trip per day. Such a minimal increase in traffic along local roadways would not affect emergency services or response times to the area. The operational impact on emergency access would be **less than significant**.

Summary

During project construction, a Traffic Control Plan would be implemented to ensure adequate emergency access is provided. Implementation of the Traffic Control Plan, as required by the County, would reduce the project’s construction-period impact to **less than significant**. During operation the project would generate less than one vehicle trip per day which is not anticipated to negatively affect emergency access through the area. The impact of project operations would be **less than significant**.

Significance *Less than Significant*

Mitigation **None required**

Impact TRA-6: **Would the project conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities?**

This impact analysis addresses CEQA Guidelines Appendix G checklist item XVI.f) identified in Section 4.13.3.

Construction

There are no commuter transit services or fixed-route public transit routes in the project area. The construction of the collection system would not impact the performance and safety of public transit in the project area. **No impact** would occur.

The Humboldt County Regional Bicycle Plan identifies New Navy Base Road through a portion of the project area as a proposed future Class I bike path. The proposed Class I bike path would continue north along SR 255 to the City of Arcata (HCAOG 2018). Roadways in the project area do not include sidewalks, so pedestrians have to walk along the roadway shoulder or in the road right-of-way. The Traffic Control Plan would provide for alternative routes for pedestrians, if necessary. Construction of the proposed collection system and disposal system is anticipated to occur in the road right-of-way on one side of the road and require temporary, partial lane closures.

Project construction is not anticipated to require the closure of New Navy Base Road or any other local road. The project would not alter the configuration of New Navy Base Road, SR 255, or other roadway. The project would not preclude the future construction of a Class I bicycle facility north along SR 255 to the City of Arcata as listed in the Humboldt County Regional Bicycle Plan. The project would not conflict with an adopted plan regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities. **No impact** from construction activities on existing bicycle or pedestrian facilities is expected to occur during construction.

Operation

Once the project is constructed, all project facilities would be located underground, off existing roads, or at the Approved Samoa WWTF. Operation and maintenance of the project would result in less than one additional vehicle

trip per day, would not result in increases to motor vehicle speeds or queuing of traffic, and would not substantially increase exposure of bicyclists and pedestrians to vehicle conflict areas. The project’s Long-Term Phase would allow future infill development, consistent with the HBAP and zoning, to connect to the project’s infrastructure. However, the population of future infill development, and the associated demands on public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, have been included and assessed within the County’s certified General Plan EIR. Therefore, the project’s potential conflict with adopted plans for pedestrian, bicycle and public transit facilities, or the performance of such facilities, would **be less than significant**.

Summary

Project construction would not affect the infrastructure for or performance of public transit, bicycle or pedestrian facilities, and would result in **no impact**. Project operations would add less than one additional vehicle trip per day; the increase in trips would not substantially affect infrastructure for or performance of public transit, bicycle or pedestrian facilities. Operational impact would be **less than significant**.

Significance *Less than Significant*

Mitigation **None Required**

4.13.6 Cumulative Impacts

Impact TRA-C-1: Would the project result in cumulatively considerable contributions to cumulative impacts related to transportation?

The geographic scope for the analysis of cumulative impacts on transportation and traffic consists of the areas that use the same roadways as the project. Construction of the project may overlap with the STMP projects that would be under construction or would be reasonably foreseeable in the project area. Operation of the project may overlap with operation of the STMP, Manila Community Service District Modernization, and Coast Seafoods Project. The Samoa Airfield Onsite Wastewater Treatment System would not contribute to operational impacts.

As summarized in Impacts TRA-2, TRA-3, and TR-6, project construction and operational activities would have less-than-significant impacts with regard to conflicting with a congestion management plan, change in air traffic patterns, or conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities. Therefore, the project would not substantially contribute to a cumulative impact.

Under Impact TRA-1, project construction traffic would be temporary, and project operation traffic would contribute less than one trip per day to surrounding streets. Other cumulative projects listed in Table 4-1 would also contribute trips to the surrounding roadways. However, the project-affected intersections

currently operate at an acceptable LOS, and one additional trip would not be a considerable contribution to the cumulative impact for the surrounding roadways.

Under Impact TRA-4 and TRA-5, a less than significant impact was identified relative to increased hazards and emergency access during construction of the conveyance system within the roadways. The only cumulative project, from Table 4-1 Projects Considered for Cumulative Impacts, which would overlap during construction with the project is the Approved Samoa WWTF. However, the construction area for the Approved Samoa WWTF does not geographically overlap with the project's proposed in-road collection system and effluent disposal system. While it would overlap with the improvements at the Approved Samoa WWTF, these improvements would not block travel lanes and, redirect bicyclists and pedestrians, and therefore require a Traffic Control Plan as the conveyance improvements would. The project construction would not contribute to a cumulative impact relative to increasing hazards or emergency access. There would be no impact from project operation under Impact TRA-4, therefore project operation could not contribute to a cumulative impact. Under TRA-5, project operation traffic would contribute less than one trip per day to surrounding streets. Other cumulative projects listed in Table 4-1 would also contribute trips to the surrounding roadways. However, one additional trip would not be a considerable contribution to the cumulative impact.

The project's contribution to a cumulative transportation impacts would be **less than significant**.

Significance *Less than Cumulatively Considerable (Less than Significant)*

Mitigation **None Required**

4.13.7 References

- Humboldt County Association of Governments (HCAOG) 2018. Humboldt Regional Bicycle Plan. July.
- HCAOG. 2017. Regional Transportation Plan for Humboldt County (VROOM – Variety in Rural Options of Mobility), 2017 Update. December.
- Humboldt County. 2006. Samoa Town Master Plan Draft Master Environmental Impact Report. January.
- Planwest Partners, Inc. 2008. Humboldt County Regional Transportation Plan, prepared for HCAOG.