

Executive Summary Table of Contents

ES	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	ES-1
	ES 1.0 Introduction.....	ES-1
	ES 2.0 Purpose and Need for Action	ES-1
	ES 3.0 Alternatives Considered in the Environmental Assessment.....	ES-2
	ES 4.0 Financial Considerations	ES-3
	ES 5.0 Environmental Consequences and Mitigation	ES-3
	ES 5.1 Land Use	ES-3
	ES 5.2 Socioeconomics.....	ES-4
	ES 5.3 Neighborhood, Community Services, and Community Cohesion...	ES-4
	ES 5.4 Acquisitions and Displacements/Relocations	ES-5
	ES 5.5 Visual and Aesthetic Conditions	ES-5
	ES 5.6 Cultural Resources	ES-6
	ES 5.7 Parklands.....	ES-7
	ES 5.8 Safety and Security.....	ES-7
	ES 5.9 Environmental Justice.....	ES-8
	ES 5.10 Utilities and Distribution Systems	ES-8
	ES 5.11 Geological Resources.....	ES-8
	ES 5.12 Water Resources	ES-8
	ES 5.13 Biota and Habitat	ES-9
	ES 5.14 Threatened and Endangered Species	ES-10
	ES 5.15 Farmlands.....	ES-10
	ES 5.16 Air Quality	ES-10
	ES 5.17 Noise.....	ES-11
	ES 5.18 Vibration.....	ES-11
	ES 5.19 Hazardous Materials.....	ES-11
	ES 5.20 Energy	ES-12
	ES 5.21 Economics	ES-12
	ES 5.22 Transportation.....	ES-13
	ES 6.0 Summary of Impacts and Mitigation	ES-14

List of Tables

Table ES 1.1	Summary of Direct Impacts, Benefits, and Mitigation Measures of the No-Build and the VIA Primo Alternatives on Fredericksburg Road Corridor.....	ES-15
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ES EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ES 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Environmental Assessment (EA) discusses the environmental effects of constructing and operating VIA Metropolitan Transit's (VIA) proposed VIA Primo - Fredericksburg Road Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project (hereafter referred to as the proposed VIA Primo) in San Antonio, Texas. This corridor is approximately nine miles long and extends from the South Texas Medical Center, southeast to the west side of downtown San Antonio via Fredericksburg Road and Interstate Highway (IH)-10. The proposed VIA Primo route has two extensions. However, this EA does not include these extensions of the route which run from the proposed South Texas Medical Center Transit Center (STMCTC) to the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) main campus and from the proposed Westside Multimodal Transit Center (WSMMTC) through downtown San Antonio, as there are no planned improvements for these extensions. The proposed VIA Primo is shown in Figure 1.2-1. This EA describes potential adverse and beneficial effects of the two project alternatives under consideration: the No-Build Alternative and the VIA Primo Alternative.

This EA was prepared by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in conjunction with VIA. The EA is in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). BRT is public transportation that combines the features of light rail travel with the flexibility of bus service. BRT uses specialized rubber-tired vehicles that operate similar to light rail and are faster and more efficient than traditional bus service. The proposed VIA Primo would support the need for enhanced transit service and accommodate anticipated future growth of the population and employment centers within the VIA Primo Study Area. The VIA Primo Study Area is defined as approximately one-half mile around the proposed VIA Primo alignment between the STMCTC and IH-10, one-quarter mile around the IH-10 portion and one-half mile around the proposed WSMMTC.

ES 2.0 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION

The purpose of the proposed VIA Primo is to improve bus travel time reliability and efficiency, improve mobility for the large transit-dependent population, and expand transit capacity.

The VIA Primo Corridor is a highly used transit corridor. Forty-six bus routes intersect the VIA Primo Study Area, and the total existing ridership of these routes exceeds 60 percent of VIA total system-wide ridership. However, these routes have the slowest travel times and poorest reliability in terms of on-time performance in the entire VIA system, and these travel times are expected to worsen.

Implementation of the proposed VIA Primo would increase the average speed of buses from 10-12 mph to 15 mph and decrease bus travel time by approximately 30 percent.

Currently, lengthy bus travel times and inefficient bus operations limit mobility options for those who rely solely on bus transport for transportation needs. The proportion of total population in the VIA Primo Study Area that is transit-dependent (27 percent) is considerably higher than the state average (19 percent).

The proposed VIA Primo would offer more efficient and reliable transit service, thereby improving mobility for riders with limited travel options.

Although the population within the VIA Primo Study Area is expected to experience minor growth over the next 30 years, approximately 78,970 people already live within the VIA Primo Study Area according to the 2000 Census. Moreover, although the VIA Primo Study Area comprises only about one percent of Bexar County's total geographic area, its population density is nearly five times that of Bexar County as a whole.

The San Antonio-Bexar County Metropolitan Planning Organization (SA-BC MPO) has determined that roadway expansion alone is not a viable option to handle future travel demand and there are currently no plans for major capacity expansion in the area. Given these constraints, it was determined that an alternative to auto travel would be required to increase trip capacity through the congested VIA Primo Corridor. As auto travel time increases and auto trip capacity becomes more constrained, alternative transportation options become more attractive, thus shifting travel modes from single-occupant vehicles (SOV) to VIA Primo, enabling greater trip capacity through the corridor. Furthermore, the proposed VIA Primo would improve transportation services to the numerous employment centers located within the VIA Primo Study Area.

ES 3.0 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

As a result of the alternatives analysis process, this EA evaluates the transportation benefits and environmental effects, as well as the social and financial implications of the No-Build and VIA Primo Alternatives.

The No-Build Alternative is included in the EA to provide a basis for comparison with the VIA Primo Alternative. This alternative undertakes no major transit system investments in the VIA Primo Study Area, but rather maintains the existing transportation system. The No-Build Alternative consists of all projects underway or planned within the VIA Primo Study Area and are programmed in the FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program. The No-Build Alternative also includes projects underway or planned by the Cities of San Antonio and Balcones Heights, South Texas Medical Center (STMC), and UTSA. There are no projects included in the No-Build Alternative that would be constructed by VIA; all environmental impacts and mitigation would be the responsibility of the project owner.

The VIA Primo Alternative includes operation of VIA Primo buses in mixed-flow traffic. The proposed VIA Primo would include the construction of the STMCTC adjacent to the South Texas Medical Center, as well as conversion of the historic International & Great Northern Railroad Depot (IGN Depot) (currently used as Generations Federal Credit Union [FCU]) into the WSMBTC on the west side of downtown San Antonio. This alternative also includes the construction of eight proposed VIA Primo stations along the corridor at the general locations listed below.

Proposed VIA Primo Stations:

- Station 1: University Hospital – Medical Drive near Wurzbach Road
- Station 2: Ewing Halsell Drive – Medical Drive at Ewing Halsell Drive
- Station 3: Callaghan Road – Fredericksburg Road at Callaghan Road
- Station 4: Crossroads Boulevard – Fredericksburg Road at Crossroads Boulevard
- Station 5: De Chantle Road – Fredericksburg Road at De Chantle Road

- Station 6: Babcock Road – Fredericksburg Road at Babcock Road
- Station 7: Mary Louise Drive – Fredericksburg Road at Mary Louise Drive
- Station 8: Huisache Avenue – Fredericksburg Road at Huisache Avenue

ES 4.0 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Construction of the proposed VIA Primo is tentatively scheduled to take place between 2010 and 2012, with regular operation of the new VIA Primo anticipated to begin by late 2012. Based on the proposed construction schedule, VIA estimates that the capital cost for the proposed VIA Primo would be approximately \$57.2 million. This estimate includes the cost to design and construct eight VIA Primo stations and two transit centers and purchase VIA Primo vehicles. The funding strategy includes a mix of Federal and local funds. FTA contribution would be \$45.76 million and VIA contribution would be \$11.44 million.

ES 5.0 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES AND MITIGATION

This EA discusses the potential environmental effects associated with the No-Build and VIA Primo Alternatives. Each of the resources and issues included in this EA is summarized below. A summary of environmental effects and possible mitigation measures are also included in Table ES-1.1.

ES 5.1 Land Use

The No-Build Alternative undertakes no major transit system investments in the VIA Primo Study Area. Therefore, no impacts related to land use under the No-Build Alternative are anticipated.

As previously stated, the VIA Primo Alternative would include the construction of the STMCTC, the eight proposed VIA Primo stations, and the WSMMTC within the VIA Primo Study Area.

The proposed STMCTC would involve the conversion of land from open space/undeveloped land to an active transit facility on a 7.5-acre VIA owned property. No displacements or relocations would be required for the proposed STMCTC.

The eight proposed VIA Primo stations would result in the following land use impacts:

- Station 1: University Hospital. This station would convert existing sidewalks, landscaping, and parking spaces to an active transit facility.
- Station 2: Ewing Halsell Drive. This station would convert existing sidewalks and landscaping to an active transit facility.
- Station 3: Callaghan Road. This station would convert existing sidewalks and landscaping to an active transit facility.
- Station 4: Crossroads Boulevard. This station would convert landscaped vegetation, sidewalks, parking spaces, and a business driveway to an active transit facility.
- Station 5: De Chantle Road. This station would convert landscaped vegetation, sidewalks, parking spaces, and a business driveway to an active transit facility.

- Station 6: Babcock Road. This station would convert existing facilities, such as sidewalks, a business driveway, parking spaces, and landscaping to an active transit facility.
- Station 7: Mary Louise Drive. This station would convert existing sidewalks and landscaping to an active transit facility.
- Station 8: Huisache Avenue. This station would convert sidewalks, a business driveway, and landscaping to an active transit facility.

The proposed WSMMTC would convert the 3.6-acre parcel containing the IGN Depot from the Generations FCU and associated parking to an active transit facility. Development of the proposed WSMMTC would result in the displacement and relocation of the Generations FCU.

The VIA Primo Alternative could result in changes to land use and development patterns near the two transit centers and eight proposed VIA Primo stations. This alternative would enhance the image of the area and would likely result in increased development/redevelopment, such as potential Transit Oriented Development (TOD) adjacent to the proposed VIA Primo stations. However, the VIA Primo Alternative is not likely to generate substantial new growth within the VIA Primo Study Area; therefore, no substantial adverse impacts to existing land use conditions are anticipated (See Section 3.1).

ES 5.2 Socioeconomics

The No-Build Alternative undertakes no major transit system investments in the VIA Primo Study Area. Therefore, no impacts related to socioeconomics under the No-Build Alternative are anticipated.

The VIA Primo Alternative includes construction of the proposed STMCTC, eight proposed VIA Primo stations, and proposed WSMMTC. These two transit centers and eight stations would not impact the socioeconomic composition of the VIA Primo Study Area.

The SA-BC MPO predicts slow population growth and substantial employment growth for the VIA Primo Study Area from 2005 to 2015. Since no substantial influx of people would be attributed to the proposed VIA Primo, a regional population shift is not expected.

Therefore, no substantial adverse impacts to socioeconomics under the VIA Primo Alternative are anticipated. (See Section 3.1).

ES 5.3 Neighborhood, Community Services, and Community Cohesion

The No-Build Alternative undertakes no major transit system investments in the VIA Primo Study Area. Therefore, no impacts related to neighborhoods, neighborhood integrity, community resources, or community cohesion under the No-Build Alternative are anticipated.

Under the VIA Primo Alternative, negative impacts would not occur, but positive impacts to neighborhoods, neighborhood integrity, community resources, and community cohesion could occur. Therefore, no substantial adverse impacts to neighborhoods, neighborhood integrity, community resources, or community cohesion under the VIA Primo Alternative are anticipated.

The proposed VIA Primo would present new mobility options for patrons of schools, community facilities, and places of worship within the VIA Primo Study Area. Each of the 77 community

resources would benefit from the new transportation options. Therefore, no substantial adverse impacts to community resources under the VIA Primo Alternative are anticipated (See Section 3.2).

ES 5.4 Acquisitions and Displacements/Relocations

The No-Build Alternative undertakes no major transit system investments in the VIA Primo Study Area. Therefore, no impacts related to acquisitions and displacements/relocations under the No-Build Alternative are anticipated.

The proposed STMCTC has been designed to minimize temporary and permanent impact areas. Construction of the STMCTC would require 239,087 square feet (approximately 5.5-acres) of additional right-of-way (ROW), not including the portion reserved for a TOD. No property acquisition would be required for the proposed STMCTC because the site is currently owned by VIA. Therefore, there would be no relocations or displacements associated with this transit center.

The eight proposed VIA Primo stations would require acquisition of private properties (e.g., vacant lots, residences, businesses) as well as the closure of public ROW. These stations have been designed to minimize temporary and permanent impact areas by constructing primarily within existing roadway ROW. Construction of the eight stations would affect 19 parcels within the VIA Primo Study Area and require 14,037 square feet (0.32-acre) of additional ROW. The eight proposed VIA Primo stations would require two business relocations.

The proposed WSMMTC has also been designed to minimize temporary and permanent impact areas. Construction of the WSMMTC would require 158,472 square feet (approximately 3.8-acres) of additional ROW, as well as the closure of approximately 23,000 square feet (0.53-acre) of Commerce Street.

The proposed WSMMTC site would require acquisition of property. Parcel 103537 is currently occupied by the Generations FCU, and relocation of the existing credit union would be required. Additionally, the proposed WSMMTC would require the closure and use of City of San Antonio (COSA) ROW at the at-grade Commerce Street roadway.

Because the VIA Primo Alternative would require acquisition of private properties (e.g., vacant lots, residences, businesses), VIA is required to mitigate for these impacts under the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (49 CFR Part 24), as amended. (See Section 3.3).

ES 5.5 Visual and Aesthetic Conditions

The No-Build Alternative undertakes no major transit system investments in the VIA Primo Study Area. Therefore, no impacts related to visual and aesthetic conditions under the No-Build Alternative are anticipated.

Construction of the STMCTC would have a potentially substantial impact on the visual and aesthetic quality of the surrounding area. New amenities would be constructed and would likely result in enhanced visual quality at the STMCTC location. On the other hand, construction of the STMCTC could also result in adverse visual intrusion or privacy impacts, as the proposed STMCTC could be viewed as a substantial visual intrusion into the neighborhood. However,

mitigation in the form of a noise barrier would address noise issues and also visually screen the proposed STMCTC from the closest apartment complex.

Construction of the eight proposed VIA Primo stations would have a potentially substantial impact on the visual resources within the VIA Primo Study Area as well, specifically at the Crossroads Boulevard, De Chantle Road, Babcock Road, Mary Louise Drive, and Huisache Avenue Stations. These stations would include the addition of new canopies to the existing views from adjacent businesses and would affect motorists' views of the businesses. These new features would be located on the existing sidewalk or adjacent property. However, the proposed corridor is an already-disturbed, urban setting that would most likely benefit aesthetically from the attractive, newly-constructed visual elements at the proposed VIA Primo stations. Additionally, VIA has been and would continue to coordinate with the City of Balcones Heights (COBH) and COSA, as well as the surrounding community, in order to design features to complement the area's existing visual character.

Construction of the WSMMTC would have a potentially substantial impact on the visual and aesthetic quality of the surrounding area. Visual impacts would be related to the construction of the bus bays adjacent to the existing credit union. VIA has been and would continue to coordinate with the COSA, Texas Historical Commission (THC) and the surrounding community in order to design features to complement the area's existing visual character. New amenities would be constructed and would likely result in enhanced visual quality at the WSMMTC location.

Because the VIA Primo Alternative alignment would be within an existing transportation corridor and would mostly utilize existing roadway ROW, there would be no additional visual intrusions into previously private spaces (other than those already mentioned for the proposed STMCTC). Therefore, no substantial adverse impacts to visual and aesthetic conditions under the VIA Primo Alternative are anticipated. (See Section 3.4).

ES 5.6 Cultural Resources

The No-Build Alternative undertakes no major transit system investments in the VIA Primo Study Area. Therefore, no impacts related to cultural resources under the No-Build Alternative are anticipated.

The VIA Primo Alternative includes construction of the proposed STMCTC, eight proposed VIA Primo stations, and proposed WSMMTC. Potential impacts would be limited to the acquisition and rehabilitation of the IGN Depot, a National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) listed property. Coordination with the THC resulted in a finding that there would be no adverse effects from the VIA Primo if the following conditions are met at the WSMMTC.

- The proposed work will be in keeping with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation*;
- Plans, specifications and construction drawings of the proposed work to the building will be reviewed and approved by THC at the 35%, 95%, and final stages of development prior to the start of any physical work on the building;
- Any interior finishes will be reviewed and approved by THC prior to the start of any physical work to the building; and

- Plans and elevations of the proposed site modifications will be reviewed and approved by THC prior to the start of any construction work to the site.

Given the extent of disturbances within the VIA Primo Study Area and based on the field survey, it is highly unlikely that the proposed VIA Primo would encounter or impact intact and significant archeological deposits in this mostly disturbed setting. However, through coordination with THC, VIA has agreed to conduct archeological monitoring during initial excavation activities on the 1.5-acre tract south of the IGN Depot at the WSMMTC. Therefore, no substantial adverse impacts to cultural resources under the VIA Primo Alternative are anticipated.

VIA would consult with THC to seek ways of avoiding impacts and/or proposed measures to resolve adverse effects. If archaeological deposits are encountered during construction, work in the immediate area would cease and the appropriate authorities would be contacted (See Section 3.5).

ES 5.7 Parklands

Eight COSA and one COBH public parks were identified in the VIA Primo Study Area. Two of the nine parks are adjacent to the alignment. However, these parks are adjacent to a portion of the project alignment along Martin Street and the IH-10 service road where no construction would occur. Therefore, there would be no direct impacts to these parks, and a Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966 statement is not anticipated.

The No-Build Alternative undertakes no major transit system investments in the VIA Primo Study Area. Therefore, no impacts related to parklands under the No-Build Alternative are anticipated.

Under the VIA Primo Alternative, no parkland would be acquired for the proposed VIA Primo, and no parkland is adjacent to the alignment where disturbance or construction would occur. Therefore, no substantial adverse impacts to parkland under the VIA Primo Alternative are anticipated (See Section 3.6).

ES 5.8 Safety and Security

The No-Build Alternative undertakes no major transit system investments in the VIA Primo Study Area. Therefore, no impacts related to safety and security under the No-Build Alternative are anticipated.

As part of the VIA Primo Alternative, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles would be incorporated into the planning and design of the proposed STMCTC, eight proposed VIA Primo stations, and proposed WSMMTC. Fire safety would be achieved through a composite of facility design, operating equipment, hardware, procedures, and software subsystems that are integrated to provide protection of life and property from the effects of fire. Additionally, all key intersections would have signage and lighted pedestrian signals; safety outreach to the schools would start before any construction. Therefore, no substantial adverse impacts to safety and security under the VIA Primo Alternative are anticipated (See Section 3.7).

ES 5.9 Environmental Justice

The No-Build Alternative undertakes no major transit system investments in the VIA Primo Study Area. Therefore, no impacts related to environmental justice under the No-Build Alternative are anticipated.

The VIA Primo Alternative would not create a disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effect on minority and low-income populations, limited English proficiency (LEP), or transit-dependent populations. The VIA Primo Alternative would result in major transportation access and mobility improvements for area residents that would lead to higher levels of transit service and accessibility to VIA Primo Study Area activity centers. Increased transit access to these activity centers would benefit all VIA Primo Study Area populations, regardless of socioeconomic status (See Section 3.8).

ES 5.10 Utilities and Distribution Systems

The No-Build Alternative undertakes no major transit system investments in the VIA Primo Study Area. Therefore, no impacts related to utilities and distribution systems under the No-Build Alternative are anticipated.

Manholes, inlets, and utility lines running parallel to and in direct conflict with the construction of the VIA Primo Alternative would be relocated, and overhead electric and communications lines would be adjusted as necessary to provide adequate horizontal and vertical clearance for the proposed STMCTC, eight proposed VIA Primo Stations, proposed WSMTC, and VIA Primo vehicles. Underground utilities that cross the proposed transit center and station sites would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. No substantial adverse impacts to utilities under the VIA Primo Alternative are anticipated.

To mitigate any possible impacts of the VIA Primo Alternative, utility relocation plans will be developed to identify and potentially relocate known utilities in direct conflict with proposed VIA Primo construction during final design (See Section 3.9).

ES 5.11 Geological Resources

The No-Build Alternative undertakes no major transit system investments in the VIA Primo Study Area. Therefore, no impacts related to geological resources under the No-Build Alternative are anticipated.

Impacts on geological resources associated with the VIA Primo Alternative would be primarily limited to minor amounts of fill used in construction of the proposed transit centers and associated with preparing the proposed station building pads. Direct impacts to soils would include the removal of vegetation, exposure of the soil, mixing of soil horizons, and loss of topsoil productivity in areas which are not currently paved. These impacts would be minimal and would not be considered a substantial impact. Therefore, no substantial adverse impacts to geological resources under the VIA Primo Alternative are anticipated (See Section 4.1).

ES 5.12 Water Resources

The No-Build Alternative undertakes no major transit system investments in the VIA Primo Study Area. Therefore, no impacts related to water resources under the No-Build Alternative are anticipated.

Under the VIA Primo Alternative, no construction would occur within the floodplain located at the southeast part of the proposed STMCTC, and all floodplains along the proposed VIA Primo route would be spanned by VIA Primo buses using existing roadways and bridges. The only construction activities that would occur within the 100-year floodplain would occur at Station 8, where the proposed design of the station would encroach onto 0.004 acres of the current effective 100-year floodplain. However, long-term effects to floodplains include effects due to increased impervious cover. The VIA Primo Alternative would add 6.21-acres of impervious surface. These impervious surfaces would increase the quantity of storm water runoff and could increase downstream flooding impacts. These effects will be mitigated through participation in the Regional Storm Water Management Program (RSWMP). Based on this, no substantial adverse impacts to floodplains under the VIA Primo Alternative are anticipated.

As there are no navigable waterways within the VIA Primo Study Area, the VIA Primo Alternative would have no effect on navigable waterways. The VIA Primo Alternative also would have no effect on waters of the U.S. Since the VIA Primo Alternative is not located within any of the Edwards Aquifer Zones, there would be no effects to the Edwards Aquifer.

Storm water runoff from the parking and road surfaces associated with the VIA Primo Alternative is not expected to affect downstream bacteria levels in the Upper San Antonio River. However, operation of the proposed transit centers could affect downstream water quality and fish communities through storm water runoff from parking and road surfaces due to leakage of small amounts of oils or grease from vehicle engines. These effects will be mitigated through participation in the RSWMP; therefore, no substantial adverse impacts to water quality under the VIA Primo Alternative are anticipated.

The proposed VIA Primo would be permitted through the COSA's Planning and Development Service Department. Since the proposed WSMTC and STMCTC would not have storm water detention basins, storm water issues are expected to be mitigated through participation in the RSWMP. Additionally, storm water best management practices would be used during construction to avoid the discharge of pollutants resulting from erosion during rain events (See Section 4.2).

ES 5.13 Biota and Habitat

The No-Build Alternative undertakes no major transit system investments in the VIA Primo Study Area. Therefore, no impacts related to biota and habitat resources under the No-Build Alternative are anticipated.

With the VIA Primo Alternative, 6.32-acres of vegetation would be removed. Development of the proposed STMCTC would require removal of several oak trees, mixed brush, and maintained grass. Station development along the proposed VIA Primo route would result in loss of landscaped vegetation, including maintained grass and several trees. Development of the proposed WSMTC would result in loss of landscaped vegetation, including maintained grass and several trees. Mitigation measures for the loss of trees are incorporated into a Tree Preservation Plan for the proposed transit centers and stations, which is included as Appendix D. This plan includes a detailed tree survey according to the COSA Tree Preservation Ordinance. Landscaping included with the proposed VIA Primo would comply with the Executive Memorandum on Beneficial Landscaping Practices and guidelines for environmentally and economically beneficial landscape practices. Native plant species would be used in the landscaping and in seed mixes where practicable.

Effects to wildlife from the VIA Primo Alternative would include the loss of potential avian nesting habitat through removal of vegetation. However, no new barriers to wildlife movement would be introduced. Wildlife in the proposed VIA Primo Study Area would continue to be dominated by species that are able to adapt to a disturbed physical environment. Measures would be taken to avoid causing adverse effects to migratory birds, their occupied nests, young, and eggs during construction.

No substantial adverse impacts to wildlife or vegetation under the VIA Primo Alternative are anticipated (See Section 4.3).

ES 5.14 Threatened and Endangered Species

The No-Build Alternative undertakes no major transit system investments in the VIA Primo Study Area. Therefore, no impacts related to state or Federally listed species or non-listed, rare species under the No-Build Alternative are anticipated.

No state or Federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitat for these species are anticipated to occur within or near the construction limits of the VIA Primo Alternative. Therefore, the VIA Primo Alternative would have no effect on Federally listed species and would have no impact on state-listed species.

Potential habitat for non-listed, rare species (Arctic peregrine falcon, mountain plover, cave myotis bat, ghost-faced bat, plains spotted skunk, and spot-tailed earless lizard) will be replaced with components of the proposed STMCTC. However, these species are not threatened or endangered, and less than five acres of habitat would be lost at the STMCTC site. No new barriers to these species would be introduced, and the VIA Primo Study Area would continue to be dominated by species that are able to adapt to a disturbed physical environment. Therefore, the VIA Primo Alternative would have no substantial impact to non-listed, rare species (See Section 4.4).

ES 5.15 Farmlands

The land within the VIA Primo Study Area is considered urban. According to the Natural Resources Conservation Service, there are no prime farmlands within the project limits. Neither the No-Build Alternative nor the VIA Primo Alternative would affect prime farmlands.

ES 5.16 Air Quality

It is expected that there would be higher vehicle emissions in the VIA Primo Study Area under the No-Build Alternative due to localized, increased vehicular traffic. However, on a regional basis, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) vehicle and fuel regulations, coupled with future vehicle and fleet turnover, would cause region-wide emissions to be substantially lower than today in almost all cases. Therefore, there would be no long-term air quality impacts from increased air emissions associated with the No-Build Alternative.

For the VIA Primo Alternative, increased air emissions could be expected at the two proposed transit centers as VIA Primo and other transit vehicles enter and exit each facility. Vehicle emissions would also occur at the VIA Primo and local bus bays, within the commuter parking lot, and along local access roads. Within the VIA Primo Study Area, VIA Primo vehicle emissions would occur near the eight proposed VIA Primo stations as vehicles idle during passenger loading operations and then accelerate from each bus stop.

Although the proposed VIA Primo would increase air emissions locally, as detailed above, air emissions at other locations within the VIA Primo Study Area would be expected to decrease, thus improving air quality. The proposed VIA Primo would help to improve regional air quality by incorporating efficient hybrid vehicles within the regional transportation network, while at the same time removing an existing diesel-only bus service. Therefore, there would be no long-term air quality impacts from air emissions associated with the VIA Primo Alternative.

Air quality impacts caused by construction activity would be addressed with the use of appropriate best management practices throughout the construction phase (See Section 4.6).

ES 5.17 Noise

The No-Build Alternative would add no new noise sources to the environment. The VIA Primo Alternative with proposed transit centers would add new noise sources to the environment. With the VIA Primo Alternative, 28 residential units would be moderately impacted by noise in the vicinity of the proposed STMCTC and along Fredericksburg Road. One additional moderate impact occurs at an outdoor use area associated with the Texas Neurosciences Institute. However, project noise contribution levels at each location are generally near the existing ambient noise level. No severe impacts from noise would occur under the VIA Primo Alternative. The VIA Primo Alternative includes a proposed noise barrier at the southeastern property boundary of the proposed STMCTC. The barrier would reduce sound levels at 10 residential units (See Section 4.7).

ES 5.18 Vibration

The No-Build Alternative would add no new vibration sources to the environment. The VIA Primo Alternative would add new vibratory sources to the environment. The new vibration sources include the VIA Primo vehicles along the proposed VIA Primo corridor and operations at the proposed STMCTC and WSMMTC. With the VIA Primo Alternative, vibration impacts are unlikely to exist and no further detailed vibration assessments are necessary or required. No substantial adverse impacts to vibration under the No-Build and VIA Primo Alternatives are anticipated (See Section 4.8).

ES 5.19 Hazardous Materials

The No-Build Alternative would not result in impacts to hazardous materials.

Potential hazardous material impacts associated with the VIA Primo Alternative include soil and groundwater contamination, the existence of asbestos and lead-based paint, hazardous spills during construction, and potential contamination associated with both underground and above ground utilities. Of the 354 sites identified near the proposed VIA Primo corridor, over 20 are considered high risk for environmental effects during ROW acquisition and/or construction of the VIA Primo Alternative. The sites considered high risk to the VIA Primo Alternative would be further addressed by VIA through the following:

- A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) following the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) E 1527-05 Standard is currently being completed for the VIA Primo project. This effort will further define and describe the sites considered high risk for environmental effects to the VIA Primo Alternative.

- The sampling of soil or groundwater in the vicinity of proposed excavations. These investigations would focus specifically on areas where construction activities involve soil excavation. In addition, areas that will be renovated at the WSMBTC, the only existing structure affected by the proposed VIA Primo, would be surveyed for the presence of hazardous/regulated materials, such as asbestos-containing materials.
- If warranted, remediation/abatement activities would be completed prior to construction to address hazardous materials.
- Waste management plans would be in-place to address contamination during construction activities, if remediation is not complete prior to construction.

Locating existing utilities during design of improvements and having existing utilities marked prior to construction would reduce the threat of rupture during field construction activities. Utilities containing suspect asbestos-containing materials and paint containing hazardous concentrations of heavy metals would be investigated. If testing determines hazards to be present, VIA or the utility operator would abate the hazard prior to or during construction activities. The contractor would respond appropriately to prevent, minimize, and control the spill of hazardous materials in the construction staging area. Any unanticipated hazardous materials and/or petroleum contamination encountered during construction would be handled according to applicable Federal, state, and local regulations.

No long-term effects from hazardous materials are anticipated due to the nature of both the contamination and the construction activities. Therefore, no substantial adverse impacts to hazardous materials under the VIA Primo Alternative are anticipated (See Section 4.9).

ES 5.20 Energy

No long-term impacts related to energy resources under the No-Build Alternative are anticipated. As a result of implementation of the VIA Primo Alternative, the existing fixed route operating plan would include service modifications that would affect routes near the VIA Primo Corridor. A substantial increase beyond the FY 2007 fuel consumption is not anticipated. In fact, the VIA Primo Alternative is expected to reduce vehicle miles traveled. No impact is anticipated regarding an increase in fuel consumption. In addition, no impacts are anticipated regarding an increase in electrical power. Therefore, no substantial adverse impacts to energy under the VIA Primo Alternative are anticipated (See Section 4.10).

ES 5.21 Economics

The No-Build Alternative undertakes no major transit system investments in the VIA Primo Study Area. Therefore, no economic impacts under the No-Build Alternative are anticipated.

Construction and operation of the proposed STMCTC would require an increase in operation and maintenance spending. Therefore, there could possibly be a minor increase in local annual wages and salaries. Thus, a positive economic impact to the local economy is anticipated. Construction of the proposed STMCTC would not affect existing driveway access points or existing parking.

As with the STMCTC above, construction of the eight proposed VIA Primo stations would result in an increase in local annual wages and salaries in order to support the stations. These increased earnings would result in positive economic impacts to the local economy.

Of the parcels impacted by the construction of the eight proposed VIA Primo stations, it is anticipated that approximately eight access points would be eliminated. However, access points would still be available to all of the parcels; therefore, eliminating these driveway access points under the VIA Primo Alternative is not considered to be an adverse economic impact.

No parking would be constructed at the eight proposed VIA Primo stations. Implementation of the stations would affect existing parking within the VIA Primo Corridor. Of the parcels impacted by the eight stations, it is anticipated that 46 parking spaces would be eliminated. However, an adequate number of parking spaces would still be available at these parcels; therefore, eliminating these parking spaces under the VIA Primo Alternative is not considered to be an adverse economic impact.

Construction and operation of the WSMMTC would require an increase in operation and maintenance spending. Therefore, there could possibly be a minor increase in local annual wages and salaries. Thus, a positive economic impact to the local economy is anticipated.

Construction of the proposed WSMMTC would eliminate two of four driveway access points and would eliminate 85 of 120 parking spaces at the proposed WSMMTC site. Elimination of these two access points and 85 parking spaces is necessary to accommodate the proposed transit center layout and avoid vehicular conflicts. However, no adverse economic impacts are anticipated.

The VIA Primo Alternative is anticipated to have a positive effect on commercial and residential development located near proposed transit centers and stations. This alternative would contribute economic benefits by encouraging and supporting higher-density residential and commercial land uses around proposed transit centers and stations (See Chapter 5.0).

ES 5.22 Transportation

Transit

The No-Build Alternative would only include the implementation of the software upgrades to the VIA Fleet for TSP. TSP provides priority to transit vehicles and/or emergency vehicles at signalized intersections by giving the priority vehicle additional green time or less red time to eliminate or lessen the delay experienced at signalized intersections. TSP also works within set parameters that are typically determined by the transit agency and the traffic signal operators to balance impacts to vehicles also traveling on the roadway. These upgrades to the traffic signals and associated traffic mitigation would be the responsibility of COSA, the project owner. Therefore, no long-term impacts related to transit service under the No-Build Alternative are anticipated.

No roadway improvements are proposed for the VIA Primo Alternative, as the VIA Primo buses would travel in mixed-flow to share travel lanes with other vehicles. Bus service modifications are proposed with the VIA Primo Alternative to utilize existing and future transit ridership more effectively. Major proposed changes include the elimination of Route 91 and Route 302, as well as modifications to the service on Route 92. In addition, 40-foot diesel/electric hybrid vehicles would be used as the VIA Primo buses. Enhanced fare collection and level boarding are proposed at the transit stations.

The VIA Primo Alternative would provide commuters between the STMC and downtown San Antonio with a more efficient transit option between these two activity centers. However, the net

effect of the VIA Primo Alternative on the remaining fixed-route services would be to maintain the status quo with existing level of access to employment opportunities and local destinations. The two extensions would provide a one-seat ride to downtown San Antonio and the UTSA main campus, providing new direct service to these locations from the proposed VIA Primo. No adverse impacts are anticipated.

Roadway

The No-Build Alternative undertakes no major transit system investments in the VIA Primo Study Area, but rather maintains the existing transportation system. Therefore, no long-term impacts related to roadways under the No-Build Alternative are anticipated.

In order to analyze the effects of the VIA Primo Alternative on traffic, 49 intersections were analyzed within the VIA Primo Study Area. Of these intersections, nine have a level of service (LOS) of D, one has a LOS of E, and five have a LOS of F for 2008 existing AM peak conditions. For existing PM peak conditions, seven intersections have a LOS of D, four intersections have a LOS of E, and seven intersections have a LOS of F. (See Section 6.3.2)

The VIA Primo Alternative would use existing lanes along Fredericksburg Road for VIA Primo vehicles, with the proposed VIA Primo stations placed at the roadway edge. Since no roadway improvements would occur on Fredericksburg Road, and VIA Primo buses would travel with other vehicles, no substantial impacts on future traffic conditions resulting from the VIA Primo Alternative are anticipated.

Other Transportation

The No-Build Alternative would have no long-term effects on the existing, proposed, or potential pedestrian/bicycle network or multi-modal mobility, nor would it be supportive of providing greater opportunities for meeting regional air quality goals. No adverse impacts are anticipated and no mitigation is required.

The VIA Primo Alternative would add additional transit facilities and new sidewalks at the proposed STMCTC, eight proposed VIA Primo stations, and the WSMBTC. The additional multi-modal mobility options (particularly around the proposed VIA Primo stations, where the greatest opportunity for TOD exists) would create an environment that is supportive of an improved pedestrian and bicycle environment. Increased multi-modal mobility would help to meet regional air quality goals. No adverse impacts are anticipated and no mitigation is required (See Chapter 6.0).

ES 6.0 SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

Table ES 1.1 summarizes impacts, benefits, and possible mitigation measures associated with the No-Build and VIA Primo Alternatives under consideration for the proposed VIA Primo.

Table ES 1.1 Summary of Direct Impacts, Benefits, and Mitigation Measures of the No-Build and the VIA Primo Alternatives			
Resource Topic	Potential Impacts		Possible Mitigation
	Adverse	Beneficial	
Land Use			
No-Build	None	None	None Required
VIA Primo	Conversion of existing sidewalks, landscaping, parking, driveways, and utilities to an active transit facility.	Could enhance image of area and result in new development.	None Required
Socioeconomics			
No-Build	None	None	None Required
VIA Primo	None	Would provide improved transportation options to the surrounding community.	None Required
Neighborhood, Community Services, and Community Cohesion			
No-Build	None	None	None Required
VIA Primo	None	Addition of new mobility options for residents and employees within the corridor, as well as potential increased and strengthened community interaction.	None Required
Acquisitions and Displacements/Relocations			
No-Build	None	None	None Required
VIA Primo	Acquisition of 3.8-acres for proposed WSMBTC. One business displacement (Generations FCU) required for proposed WSMBTC. No residential displacements required. The eight proposed stations would require the relocation of two businesses.	None	Mitigation for property acquisition guided by Uniform Relocation and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970

Table ES 1.1 Summary of Direct Impacts, Benefits, and Mitigation Measures of the No-Build and the VIA Primo Alternatives (Continued)			
Resource Topic	Potential Impacts		Possible Mitigation
	Adverse	Beneficial	
Visual and Aesthetic Conditions			
No-Build	None	None	
VIA Primo	Visual impact at proposed STMCTC from removal of existing open space, vegetation and mature trees. Visual impacts as result of project elements including VIA Primo vehicles and station area elements associated with the eight proposed stations. Visual impacts at proposed WSMMTC related to construction of bus bays adjacent to existing credit union.	New amenities would be constructed and would likely result in enhanced visual quality at the transit center locations. Additionally, the corridor would benefit aesthetically from attractive elements of the VIA Primo stations and transit centers.	Construction of noise barrier at proposed STMCTC also serves as visual screen. Additionally, stations and transit centers would be designed for compatibility with surroundings.
Cultural Resources			
No-Build	None	None	None Required
VIA Primo	Acquisition and rehabilitation of IGN Depot, a NRHP-listed property, as a result of the proposed WSMMTC. Unlikely that any significant cultural resources would be impacted. Development forecast in the VIA Primo Study Area could result in adverse effects to historic properties.	IGN Depot would be returned to its original transportation use	For historic structures: consult with THC and consulting parties to seek ways of avoiding impacts and/or propose measures to resolve adverse effects. If archeological deposits encountered, work to cease.
Parklands			
No-Build	None	None	None Required
VIA Primo	None	None	None Required
Safety and Security			
No-Build	None	None	None Required
VIA Primo	None	Key intersections to have signage and lighted pedestrian signals. CPTED principals would be incorporated into the planning and design of the proposed STMCTC, eight stations, and the proposed WSMMTC. Additionally, VIA police would patrol the STMCTC, stations, and the WSMMTC and night-time security	None Required

Table ES 1.1 Summary of Direct Impacts, Benefits, and Mitigation Measures of the No-Build and the VIA Primo Alternatives (Continued)			
Resource Topic	Potential Impacts		Possible Mitigation
	Adverse	Beneficial	
		would also be present at the two transit centers.	
Environmental Justice			
No-Build	None	None	None Required
VIA Primo	No disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effect on minority, low-income, LEP, or transit-dependent populations.	Improved transit options between STMC and downtown San Antonio.	None Required
Utilities and Distribution Systems			
No-Build	None	None	None Required
VIA Primo	TBD	TBD	Utility relocation plans would be developed to identify and potentially relocate known utilities in direct conflict with proposed STMCTC, eight stations, and WSMMTC construction during final design
Geological Resources			
No-Build	None	None	None Required
VIA Primo	None	None	None Required
Water Resources			
No-Build	None	None	None
VIA Primo	Direct impacts to flood storage since Station 8 encroaches onto 0.004 acres. Would add 6.21-acres of impervious surface which could lead to downstream flooding impacts and impacts on water quality. Ground-disturbing	None	Participation in Regional Storm Water Management Program. On-site detention basin at STMCTC. Use of storm water best

Table ES 1.1 Summary of Direct Impacts, Benefits, and Mitigation Measures of the No-Build and the VIA Primo Alternatives (Continued)			
Resource Topic	Potential Impacts		Possible Mitigation
	Adverse	Beneficial	
	activities may increase sedimentation in downstream waters. No impact on navigable waterways, waters of the U.S., or Edwards Aquifer.		management practices during construction.
Biota and Habitat			
No-Build	None	None	None
VIA Primo	Removal of 6.32-acres of vegetation, including several oak trees, mixed brush, maintained grass, and landscaped vegetation. No riparian vegetation impacts. Loss of potential avian nesting habitat.	Implementation of landscape design for transit centers and stations.	Tree Preservation Plan and landscape design for proposed transit centers and stations. Landscaping would comply with Executive Memorandum on Beneficial Landscaping Practices and guidelines for environmentally and economically beneficial landscaping practices. Measures taken to avoid adverse effects to migratory birds, including vegetation clearing outside nesting season.
Threatened and Endangered Species			
No-Build	None	None	None Required
VIA Primo	No effect on Federally listed species and no impact on state-listed species. Loss of potential habitat for non-listed, rare species at proposed STMCTC.	None	None Required
Farmlands			
No-Build	None	None	None Required
VIA Primo	None	None	None Required
Air Quality			
No-Build	None	None	None
VIA Primo	VIA Primo vehicle emissions would occur	Air emissions at locations other than VIA	Use of air quality best

Table ES 1.1 Summary of Direct Impacts, Benefits, and Mitigation Measures of the No-Build and the VIA Primo Alternatives (Continued)			
Resource Topic	Potential Impacts		Possible Mitigation
	Adverse	Beneficial	
	near proposed stations and transit centers as vehicles idle and accelerate during passenger loading operations.	Primo stations and transit centers would be expected to decrease, thus improving quality throughout the corridor.	management practices during construction.
Noise			
No-Build	None	None	None
VIA Primo	29 moderate impacts; zero severe impacts	None	Inclusion of noise barrier at the southeastern property boundary of the proposed STMCTC.
Vibration			
No-Build	None	None	None Required
VIA Primo	None	None	None Required
Hazardous Materials			
No-Build	None	None	None
VIA Primo	Potential impacts include existing soil and groundwater contamination, existence of asbestos and lead-based paint, hazardous spills during construction, and potential contamination associated with utilities. Over 20 identified sites are considered high risk for environmental effects to project.	If contaminants are found in any construction area, clean up would occur.	High risk sites would be addressed through, sampling, asbestos surveys, remediation/ abatement, or waste management plans. Utilities would be identified to reduce threat of rupture. Utilities would be investigated for asbestos and heavy metals. Contractor would prevent, minimize, and control spills. Unanticipated contamination encountered would be handled according

Table ES 1.1 Summary of Direct Impacts, Benefits, and Mitigation Measures of the No-Build and the VIA Primo Alternatives (Continued)			
Resource Topic	Potential Impacts		Possible Mitigation
	Adverse	Beneficial	
			to applicable regulations.
Energy			
No-Build	None	None	None Required
VIA Primo	None	The VIA Primo Alternative is expected to reduce vehicle miles traveled. Additionally, a fuel savings may be realized. Transit Centers would be powered by CPS Energy's windtricity program and supplemented with solar power generation.	None Required
Economics			
No-Build	None	None	None Required
VIA Primo	Elimination of eight access points and elimination of 46 parking spaces for construction of the eight proposed stations. Also, elimination of two of four access points and 85 of 120 parking spaces at the proposed WSMBTC.	Positive effects on commercial and residential development and redevelopment potential near proposed transit centers and stations. Potential joint development opportunities.	None Required
Transportation			
No-Build	None	None	None Required
VIA Primo	Minimal	New transit centers would benefit existing bus patrons within the VIA Primo Study Area. New mode of transit available to public. Support for creating improved pedestrian and bicycle environment in VIA Primo Study Area and multimodal mobility.	Coordination with COSA through Traffic Impact Analysis at each transit center location. Further Coordination as needed.

Source: URS, 2010.