

6. Alternatives

6.1. PRINCIPAL CONCLUSIONS

Alternatives to the proposed Glassboro-Camden Line (GCL) include all previously considered alternatives, which were evaluated prior to the selection and refinement of the proposed GCL, the No-Action Alternative, in which the GCL is not built, the 13 New Stations Alternative, in which the GCL is constructed with the omission of a station in the Borough of Wenonah, as well as the No Impact Alternative, which would be the proposed GCL itself since all potential impacts associated with the proposed GCL are anticipated to be fully mitigated. None of the alternatives to the proposed GCL would fully satisfy the purpose and need of the proposed project and, as such, are not acceptable as viable alternatives to the proposed project.

6.2. NO-ACTION ALTERNATIVE

This alternative consists of current transportation conditions plus any additional improvements to the roadway and transit systems that have already been authorized and would be completed by 2040, the ridership forecast year for the proposed project. It also includes any significant land development expected to occur along the GCL corridor before the 2040 forecast year.

6.2.1. Transit Services

Under the No-Action condition, no significant changes or expansion would occur related to existing transit services in the region, including the Port Authority Transit Corporation (PATCO) Speedline, and the New Jersey Transit (NJ TRANSIT) River LINE, Atlantic City Line, and Bus Services. These services would continue to operate, and modest improvements to rail and bus services would occur on an as-needed basis. Transit ridership in the region would be expected to grow moderately, reflecting the limited projected population and employment growth in Camden County and planned maintenance of current transit service levels. See Section 2.3.4.4, “Public Transit,” for further information on transit services in the future without the proposed GCL.

6.2.2. Evaluation

As discussed in Chapter 1, “Project Description,” existing transit services would generally be maintained and see stable ridership, while traffic and congestion levels would increase in the future without the proposed GCL. The No-Action Alternative would not provide increased mobility, reductions in congestion, or support for sustainable “Smart Growth” development. For these reasons, the No-Action Alternative would not meet the purpose and need of the proposed project and does not constitute a viable alternative to the proposed GCL.

6.3. NO IMPACT ALTERNATIVE

As described herein, all anticipated impacts resulting from the proposed GCL would be fully mitigated. As such, the proposed project comprises the No Impact Alternative.

As discussed in Chapter 3, “Environmental Consequences,” and Chapter 4, “Avoidance Measures and Mitigation,” some analyses related to Natural Resources, Hazardous Materials, Cultural Resources, and Traffic are pending further coordination with relevant agencies and further project refinement. As part of preliminary engineering, mitigation and avoidance measures would be devised as applicable to minimize these potential impacts. Currently, it is anticipated that all of these potential impacts would be mitigatable.

6.4. 13 NEW STATIONS ALTERNATIVE

As proposed herein, the GCL is comprised of 15 stations, including 14 proposed new stations, and use of one existing station – the Walter Rand Transportation Center (WRTC) (See Chapter 1, “Project Description”). The 13 New Stations Alternative would exclude the development of a station in the Borough of Wenonah (Wenonah Station), should that be desired by the local community. All other elements of the proposed GCL would be the same with the 13 New Stations Alternative. While this alternative would provide the same benefits including enhanced mobility, encouragement of economic development, and reduced congestion, to those communities served, the Borough of Wenonah would be excluded, and therefore this alternative would only partially meet the purpose and need of the proposed GCL.

Direct impacts resulting from the Wenonah Station, as described in Chapter 3, “Environmental Consequences,” would not occur with this alternative. However, corridor-wide impacts associated with the full implementation and operation of the proposed GCL would likely still be experienced in the Borough of Wenonah and its vicinity even without its proposed station.

6.5. PREVIOUSLY CONSIDERED ALTERNATIVES

Prior to the development of the proposed GCL, an Alternatives Analysis (AA) was conducted – the *Southern New Jersey to Philadelphia Mass Transit Expansion Alternative Analysis Study* – which considered and evaluated several alternatives. This study determined that the alternative comprised of diesel light rail located mainly within the Conrail freight rail right-of-way (ROW) from Camden to Glassboro would be advanced to environmental review and become the proposed GCL. Following the selection of this alternative, the design of the proposed GCL was refined through on-going community and stakeholder involvement, resulting in the proposed project presented herein. None of the previously considered alternatives would meet the purpose and need of the proposed project. See Section 1.3, “GCL Background,” for a summary of previously considered alternatives to the proposed GCL.

In addition, the proposed GCL was further refined as part of negotiations with Conrail, in order to minimize impacts to freight operations, and allow potential future expansion of freight operations and infrastructure along the corridor. Four particular elements, comprising improvements to Conrail infrastructure have been incorporated into the proposed GCL as presented in this environmental review:

- Woodbury Siding Extension
- Conrail Track Speed Upgrade
- Hunter Street Bridge Double Stack Clearance
- Glassboro to Woodbury Freight Access

For more information on these elements of the proposed project, see Section 1.3, “GCL Background,” and Section 1.5, “Project Relationship to Existing and Active Rail Right-of-Way.”