Environmentally Superior Alternative

The EIR compares the Streetcar Project Alternative with the No-Project Alternative to determine which would be the Environmentally Superior Alternative. As indicated in Chapter 4 and Sections 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3, the Streetcar Project Alternative is the Environmentally Superior Alternative for the following reasons:

- **Land Use:** The Streetcar Project Alternative supports the City of West Sacramento's redevelopment goals of promoting transit-oriented development.

- **Employment:** The Streetcar Project Alternative would create construction and operations jobs without creating added demand for housing, because the regional labor pool could fulfill the employment requirements of the proposed project.

- **Transportation:** In contrast to the No-Project Alternative, which produces cumulative traffic impacts on study area roads, particularly on the approach roads to Tower Bridge, the Streetcar Project Alternative would reduce automobile trips over Tower Bridge over the long term and, as a result, help the cities overcome cumulative traffic congestion and circulation problems on the approach roads to Tower Bridge.

- **Parks and Recreation:** The Streetcar Project Alternative would improve access to parklands along the Sacramento River and in the area surrounding the Capitol and connect them with neighborhoods along the alignment.

- **Air Quality:** By shifting some automobile trips to transit, the Streetcar Project Alternative would support regional air quality goals to reduce vehicle miles traveled.

- **Noise:** Noise levels along the proposed alignment are forecasted to exceed local thresholds over the planning horizon under the No-Project Alternative. Sensitive receptors along the alignment may be subjected to unacceptable future ambient noise levels due to the increased traffic volumes on the major streets that contain the alignment. Unlike the No-Project Alternative, the Streetcar Project Alternative does not make a considerable contribution to unacceptable cumulative noise levels. Mitigations are identified to reduce project-related noise and vibrations impacts to a less than significant level.

- **Energy:** The streetcar is a non-polluting, electric-powered vehicle that lessens reliance on fossil fuels. If the proposed project were in operation, an additional 3,134 kWh of annual energy usage, or a 4 percent increase, would be required. This is not considered a substantial increase in energy consumption and represents a very small percentage of electric power generated by SMUD. In addition, trips made on buses and cars between West Sacramento and downtown Sacramento that may be diverted to the streetcar would balance the additional electrical power required for streetcar operation.