

## 2.3.3 Invasive Species

### 2.3.3.1 Regulatory Setting

On February 3, 1999, President William J. Clinton signed Executive Order (EO) 13112 requiring federal agencies to combat the introduction or spread of invasive species in the United States. The order defines invasive species as “any species, including its seeds, eggs, spores, or other biological material capable of propagating that species, that is not native to that ecosystem whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health.” Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) guidance issued August 10, 1999 directs the use of the State’s invasive species list, maintained by the California Invasive Species Council to define the invasive species that must be considered as part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis for a proposed project.

### 2.3.3.2 Affected Environment

The *Natural Environment Study (Minimal Impacts)* (NES-MI) and associated Errata prepared for the project analyzes impacts to sensitive animal species.

The California Invasive Plant Council (Cal-IPC) 2006 Invasive Plant Inventory highlights non-native plants that are serious problems in wildlands (i.e., natural areas that support native ecosystems, including national, State, and local parks, ecological reserves, wildlife areas, national forests, Bureau of Land Management lands). The inventory categorizes plants as High, Moderate, or Limited based on each species’ negative ecological impact in California. Plants categorized as High have severe ecological impacts. Plants categorized as Moderate have substantial and apparent, but not severe, ecological impacts. Plants categorized as Limited are invasive, but their ecological impacts are minor on a statewide level.

As shown in Table 2.3.3-1, Invasive Plant Species in the Biological Study Area, a total of eight non-native plant species occurring on the Cal-IPC Invasive Plant Inventory (2 High, 5 Moderate, and 1 Limited) were identified in the Biological Study Area (BSA).

**Table 2.3.3-1: Invasive Plant Species in the Biological Study Area**

Scientific Name	Common Name	Rating
<i>Carpobrotus edulis</i>	Iceplant (or Hottentot fig)	High
<i>Cortaderia jubata</i>	Pampas grass	High
<i>Pennisetum setaceum</i>	Fountaingrass (or Crimson fountaingrass)	Moderate
<i>Washingtonia robusta</i>	Mexican fan palm	Moderate
<i>Schinus terebinthifolius</i>	Brazilian peppertree	Limited
<i>Avena fatua</i>	Wild oat	Moderate
<i>Bromus diandrus</i>	Rippgut brome	Moderate
<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	Bull thistle	Moderate

No invasive animal species were observed in the BSA.

### 2.3.3.3 Environmental Consequences

Noxious weeds can have a destructive impact on landscape by displacing native plant species, increasing soil erosion, and decreasing wildlife habitat. Thus, it is important to control or eradicate the invasive species.

### **2.3.3.3.1 Temporary Impacts**

#### ***Alternative 1 (No-Build Alternative)***

The No-Build Alternative would not include the construction of any of the proposed project improvements. As a result, as described under permanent impacts, the No-Build Alternative would not result in new impacts related to invasive species. Locations within the BSA where invasive species currently occur would not be modified under the No-Build Alternative.

#### ***Alternatives 2 and 3 (Build Alternatives)***

Potential impacts from invasive species associated with construction and operation of transportation projects are considered permanent. Refer to Section 2.3.3.3.2, Permanent Impacts, for discussion regarding invasive species.

### **2.3.3.3.2 Permanent Impacts**

#### ***Alternative 1 (No-Build Alternative)***

Project improvements would not occur under the No-Build Alternative. As such, the No-Build Alternative would not result in impacts related to invasive species.

#### ***Alternatives 2 and 3 (Build Alternatives)***

Invasive plant species are present in the BSA; however, the BSA is fully developed and not located adjacent to any native or open space areas. It should be noted that Coyote Creek, a concrete lined trapezoidal channel, is located west of the I-605/Katella Avenue interchange that eventually flows into the San Gabriel River. Since no impacts to Coyote Creek would occur from project implementation, no increases to the threat of invasive species are expected to occur downstream. Additionally, operation and maintenance of both Build Alternatives 2 and 3, would not increase the threat of invasive species beyond the existing threat associated with vehicle and pedestrian use on I-605 and Katella Avenue. No new invasive species would be introduced into the project site and no invasive, exotic plant species would be used in any proposed landscaping (PF-IS-1).

**PF-IS-1 Inspection and Clearing of Invasive Species.** In compliance with the Executive Order on Invasive Species, EO 13112, and guidance from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the landscaping and erosion control included in the project will not use species listed as invasive. None of the species on the California list of invasive species is used by Caltrans for erosion control or landscaping. All equipment and materials will be inspected for the presence of invasive species and cleaned if necessary. In areas of particular sensitivity, extra precautions will be taken if invasive species are found in or next to the construction areas. These include the inspection and cleaning of construction equipment and eradication strategies to be implemented should an invasion occur.

### **2.3.3.4 Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures**

No avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures are required with adherence to the project feature described above.