

4.12 Cultural Resources

4.12.1 Methodology for Impact Evaluation

The cultural resource investigations conducted for the WT Corridor were consistent with current cultural resource protocols for Section 106 Cultural Resource Assessment Surveys (Caltrans Draft Environmental Handbook, Volume 2, Cultural Resources, July 2001, an interim document). For the purposes of this analysis, all resources encountered (with the exception of isolates) were considered eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. While it is acknowledged that not all of the identified resources will be determined eligible, it is impossible to assess the eligibility of the resources with the data currently available. On selection of a preferred route alternative, Tier 2 studies will reevaluate resources within the selected alternative. Treatment of potential impacts to cultural resources will follow a three phased approach of avoidance, minimization, or mitigation of impacts, with avoidance receiving the highest priority.

Twenty-six resources were identified during the cultural resource work that appear, based on the data available through the records search, to be potentially significant sites. Table 4.12.A describes these resources, the alternative(s) on which they are located, and the potential for avoidance of impacts to the resource as determined by the project engineer.

4.12.2 Impacts

The WT Corridor alternatives may affect known and unknown prehistoric, historic, multi-component, and historic architectural sites in the CETAP study area. As discussed in Section 3.12, most cultural resources along the WT Corridor have not been evaluated for potential eligibility for either the National or California Register.

4.12.2.1 No Build Alternatives (General Plan Build Out)

The WT Corridor would not affect cultural resources under the No Build Alternative (General Plan Build Out). Other transportation projects that will be constructed in the No Build Alternative have the potential to impact cultural resources. Cultural resources will be evaluated as part of the environmental documents for those projects.

4.12.2.2 Alternative 1

Development of Alternative 1 may result in impacts to three historic sites, four prehistoric archaeological sites, and one historical architecture sites (these sites are located adjacent to the existing roadway). None of these sites have been evaluated for listing on the National or California Register.