

3.1 Introduction

This chapter defines the terminology used in this document and the NEPA and CEQA requirements relative to the alternatives analysis. The 11 sections contained within this chapter discuss the possible environmental effects of the proposed Project and alternatives for each specific environmental resource area identified by the USACE and LAHD. Sections 3.1 through 3.11 discuss both environmental issues found to be potentially significant and those found not to be significant.

To assist the reader in comparing information about the various environmental issues, Sections 3.1 through 3.11 each present the following information for their specific resource area:

- Environmental setting (the environmental setting and CEQA baseline for this Draft EIS/EIR is the physical condition that existed for the 12-month calendar year preceding the NOI/NOP [January 2013–December 2013]);
- Applicable regulations;
- Impact assessment methodology;
- Thresholds of significance (i.e., the criteria against which the significance of impacts is judged);
- Impact determinations;
- Mitigation measures;
- Residual impacts;
- Summary of impact determinations;
- Mitigation monitoring; and
- Significant unavoidable impacts.

Significant cumulative impacts for the proposed Project for each environmental resource area are summarized in Chapter 4, Cumulative Analysis, of this Draft EIS/EIR. Chapter 5, Environmental Justice, assesses the potential disproportionate environmental effects on low-income or minority populations consistent with the environmental justice guidelines for NEPA. The proposed Project’s alternatives are presented and analyzed in Chapter 6, Comparison of Alternatives. The alternatives are compared to the proposed Project and are ranked relative to each other based on anticipated impacts for each resource area to determine the environmentally preferred and environmentally superior alternatives. The

1 CEQA and NEPA baselines and their application to the analysis of potential impacts
2 from the proposed Project and alternatives are explained in detail in Sections 1.5.1 and
3 1.6.7 in Chapter 1, Introduction, and Section 2.7 in Chapter 2, Project Description of this
4 Draft EIS/EIR.

5 **3.2 Terminology Used in This Environmental** 6 **Analysis**

7 In evaluating the potential impacts of the proposed Project and its alternatives, the level
8 of significance is determined by applying the threshold of significance (significance
9 criteria) presented for each resource evaluation. The following terms are used to describe
10 each impact:

- 11 ▪ *No Impact.* A designation of no impact is given when no adverse changes in the
12 environment are expected.
- 13 ▪ *Less-Than-Significant Impact.* A less-than-significant impact would be identified
14 when the proposed Project or alternatives would cause no substantial adverse
15 change in the environment (i.e., the impact would not reach the threshold of
16 significance).
- 17 ▪ *Significant Impact.* A significant impact would create a substantial or potentially
18 substantial adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area
19 affected by the proposed Project or alternatives. Such an impact would exceed
20 the applicable significance threshold established by CEQA but would be reduced
21 to a less-than-significant level by the required application of mitigation.
- 22 ▪ *Significant Unavoidable Impact.* As required by Section 15126.2(b) of the State
23 CEQA Guidelines, this designation is given when a residual impact that would
24 cause a substantial adverse effect on the environment could not be reduced to a
25 less-than-significant level through any feasible mitigation measure(s).
- 26 ▪ *Mitigation.* Mitigation refers to measures that would be implemented to avoid or
27 lessen potentially significant impacts. Mitigation includes:
 - 28 ○ avoiding the impact completely by not taking a certain action or parts of an
29 action;
 - 30 ○ minimizing the impact by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and
31 its implementation;
 - 32 ○ rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected
33 environment;
 - 34 ○ reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and
35 maintenance operations during the life of the action; and
 - 36 ○ compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or
37 environments.

38 The mitigation measures would be proposed as a condition of project approval
39 and would be monitored to ensure compliance and implementation.

- 1 ▪ *Residual Impacts.* This is the level of impact after the implementation of
2 mitigation measures.

3 **3.3 Requirements to Evaluate Alternatives**

4 NEPA (40 CFR 1502.14[a]) and CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6 require that an EIS
5 and an EIR describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the proposed Project, or to the
6 location of the proposed Project that could feasibly attain most of the basic project
7 objectives but would avoid or substantially lessen any significant environmental impacts.

8 The EIR should compare merits of the alternatives and determine an environmentally
9 superior alternative. Section 2.9 (Chapter 2, Project Description) of this Draft EIS/EIR
10 sets forth potential alternatives to the proposed Project and evaluates their suitability, as
11 required by State CEQA Guidelines (Section 15126.6). Section 1.6.7 (in Chapter 1,
12 Introduction) and Chapter 6, Comparison of Alternatives of this Draft EIS/EIR describe
13 the detailed requirements for evaluating alternatives.

14 The information presented in the NEPA analysis of this Draft EIS/EIR is specific to
15 USACE's responsibility for permitting work and structures in navigable waters, and
16 discharges of dredged or fill material in waters of the U.S. It is anticipated that a DA
17 permit pursuant to Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act, and Section 103 of the
18 Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act would be required for the proposed
19 Project.

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