

Chapter 3

Environmental Analysis

Introduction

This chapter defines the terminology used in this document and the NEPA and CEQA requirements relative to the alternatives analysis. The 14 sections contained within this chapter discuss the possible environmental effects of the Proposed Project and the alternatives for each specific environmental resource area identified by the USACE and LAHD. Sections 3.1 through 3.14 discuss both environmental issues found to be potentially significant and those found not to be less than significant.

To assist the reader in comparing information about the various environmental issues, Sections 3.1 through 3.14 each present the following information for their specific resource area:

- The environmental setting (as described in sections 1.6.5 and 2.7, the environmental setting, which is the CEQA baseline, for this Draft EIS/EIR is the physical conditions that existed for the 12-month calendar year 2019);
- applicable regulations;
- impact assessment methodology;
- thresholds of significance (i.e., the criteria against which the significance of impacts is judged);
- impact determination;
- mitigation measures;
- residual impacts;
- summary of impact determinations;
- mitigation monitoring; and
- significant unavoidable impacts.

Terminology Used in This Environmental Analysis

In evaluating the potential impacts of the Proposed Project and alternatives, the significance of an impact is determined by applying the appropriate threshold of significance (significance criterion). The thresholds of significance used to evaluate impacts are described in each of the 14 resource sections. The following terms are used to describe impacts:

- *No Impact*. A designation of no impact is given when no adverse changes in the environment are expected.

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- *Less-Than-Significant Impact.* A less-than-significant impact would be identified when the Proposed Project or alternatives would cause no substantial adverse change in the environment (i.e., the impact would not reach the threshold of significance).
 - *Significant Impact.* A significant impact would create a substantial or potentially substantial adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the Proposed Project or alternatives. Such an impact would exceed the applicable significance threshold established by CEQA or NEPA but would be reduced to less than significant by the application of mitigation.
 - *Significant Unavoidable Impact:* As required by Section 15126.2(b) of the CEQA Guidelines, this designation is given when a residual impact that would cause a substantial adverse effect on the environment could not be reduced to less than significant through any feasible mitigation measure(s).
 - *Mitigation.* Mitigation refers to measures that would be implemented to avoid or lessen potentially significant impacts. Mitigation includes:
 - avoiding the impact completely by not taking a certain action or parts of an action;
 - minimizing the impact by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation;
 - rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment;
 - reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action; and
 - compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.The mitigation measures would be proposed as a condition of project approval and would be monitored to ensure compliance and implementation.
 - *Residual Impacts.* This is the level of impact after the implementation of mitigation measures.