Chapter 3
Environmental Analysis

3.1 Introduction

This chapter defines the terminology used in this document and the NEPA and CEQA requirements related to the alternatives analysis. The 14 sections contained within this chapter discuss the possible environmental effects of the proposed Project and alternatives for a specific environmental issue (or 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 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:

- Environmental setting (the environmental setting or baseline for this Draft EIS/EIR is the physical condition that existed for the 12-month period preceding the NOI/NOP date [July 2008 to June 2009]);
- 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.

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, is an assessment of potential disproportionate environmental effects to low-income or minority populations consistent with the environmental justice guidelines for NEPA. The proposed Project alternatives are presented and analyzed in Chapter 6, Analysis of Alternatives. The Project 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 NEPA and CEQA baseline and their application to the analysis of potential impacts from the proposed Project and alternatives is explained in detail in Section 1.6.5 (Chapter 1, Introduction) and Section 2.6 (Chapter 2, Project Description) in this Draft EIS/EIR.

3.2 Terminology Used in This Environmental Analysis

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

- *No Impact:* A designation of no impact is given when no adverse changes in the environment are expected.
- *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 but would be reduced to a less-than-significant level by the required application of a mitigation measure.
- *Significant Unavoidable Impact*: As required by Section 15126.2(b) of the CEQA Guidelines, this is used when a residual impact that would cause a substantial adverse effect on the environment could not be reduced to a less-than-significant level 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.

3.3 Requirements to Evaluate Alternatives

NEPA (40 CFR 1502.14[a]) and CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6 requires that an EIS and an EIR describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the proposed Project, or to the location of the proposed Project that could feasibly attain most of the basic project objectives but would avoid or substantially lessen any significant environmental impacts. The EIR should compare merits of the alternatives and determine an environmentally superior alternative. Section 2.8 of this Draft EIS/EIR sets forth potential alternatives to the proposed Project and evaluates their suitability, as required by CEQA Guidelines (Section 15126.6). Section 1.6.7 (in Chapter 1, Introduction) and Section 6.2 and 6.3 (in Chapter 6, Analysis of Alternatives), of this Draft EIS/EIR describe the detailed requirements to evaluate alternatives.

The information presented in this Draft EIS/EIR specific to the USACE's responsibility for permitting work and structures in navigable waters, and discharges of dredged or fill material in waters of the U.S. It is anticipated a USACE permit pursuant to Section 10 of the River and Harbor Act, and Section 103 of the Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act would be required for the proposed Project.

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