

3.0

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

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2 3.0.1 Introduction

3 This chapter defines the terminology used in this document and the CEQA
4 requirements related to the alternatives analysis. The 14 sections contained within
5 this chapter discuss the possible environmental effects of the proposed Project and
6 alternatives identified by LAHD that would avoid or substantially lessen significant
7 impacts for an environmental issue (or resource) area. Sections 3.1 through 3.14
8 discuss both environmental issues found to be potentially significant and those found
9 not to be significant.

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

- 13 ■ Environmental Setting (the environmental setting or baseline for this draft EIR is
14 the physical condition that existed in March 2008 [when the review and comment
15 period of the NOP began for this project])
- 16 ■ Significance Criteria (i.e., the criteria against which the significance of an impact
17 is judged)
- 18 ■ Impact Assessment Methodology
- 19 ■ Impacts and Mitigation Measures of the proposed Project
- 20 ■ Mitigation and Monitoring
- 21 ■ Significant Unavoidable Impacts

22 Significant cumulative impacts for the proposed Project for each environmental
23 resource area are summarized in Chapter 4.0 of this draft EIR. The proposed Project
24 alternatives are presented in Chapter 5.0. The CEQA Baseline and its application to
25 the analysis of potential impacts from the proposed Project is explained in detail in
26 Section 1.6.6 and Section 2.10 in this EIR.

3.0.2 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 (but mitigable, or avoidable) 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—which may or may not be reduced somewhat—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.

1 **3.0.3 Requirements to Evaluate Alternatives**

2 CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6 require that an EIR describe a range of reasonable
3 alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, that could feasibly attain
4 most of the basic project objectives but would avoid or substantially lessen any
5 significant environmental impacts. The EIR should compare merits of the
6 alternatives and determine an environmentally superior alternative. Chapter 5.0 of
7 this draft EIR sets forth potential alternatives to the proposed Project and evaluates
8 their suitability, as required by CEQA Guidelines (Section 15126.6).

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