
CHAPTER 3 Environmental Analysis

3.0 INTRODUCTION TO ANALYSIS

Sections 3.1 through 3.15 of Chapter 3 of this EIR/EA contain a discussion of the potential environmental impacts of implementation of the project, including information related to existing site conditions, analyses of the type and magnitude of individual environmental impacts, and feasible mitigation measures that could reduce or avoid environmental impacts. An assessment of cumulative impacts is provided in Chapter 4 (Other CEQA and NEPA Considerations).

3.0.1 SCOPE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

As described in Chapter 1 (Introduction), WTA prepared and distributed to local and regional responsible agencies and other interested parties an NOP identifying their intent to prepare a project-level analysis of a new ferry terminal at Oyster Point Marina/Park and a new ferry route from South San Francisco to the East Bay. The focus of the Project EIR/EA analysis is on those areas identified in the 2003 WTA PEIR as requiring site-specific analysis. The following environmental issue areas are addressed in this EIR/EA:

- Biological Resources
- Water Resources
- Air Quality and Health Risk
- Noise and Vibration
- Geology and Soils
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Energy
- Transportation and Circulation
- Land Use, Plans, and Policies
- Aesthetics and Visual Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Section 4(f) Evaluation (NEPA)
- Environmental Justice (NEPA)
- Population, Employment, and Housing
- Public Services and Utilities

Several environmental topics (i.e., environmental criteria) were discussed in adequate detail at both a program and project level within the 2003 WTA PEIR (URS 2003). The analysis and mitigation measures associated with each of these impacts within the 2003 WTA PEIR were determined to be adequate for this project and are incorporated by reference, and as identified in each environmental issue area under Impacts and Mitigation Measures Incorporated from 2003 WTA PEIR. These impacts and mitigation measures are not discussed further in this EIR/EA. It is assumed that mitigation associated with these impacts will apply to this specific project.

Further within this EIR/EA, certain impacts associated with air quality and health risk, transportation and circulation, and noise and vibration were determined to be “Effects Not Found to Be Significant” according to Section 15128 of the CEQA Guidelines. A summary of these issues, and why they are not addressed in detail in this EIR/EA, is provided under a Section entitled “Effects Not Found to Be Significant” under “Projects Impacts and Mitigation” in the appropriate sections of Chapter 3 (Environmental Analysis) of this EIR/EA.

3.0.2 FORMAT OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

■ Environmental Setting

According to Section 15125 of the CEQA Guidelines and 40 CFR 1508.8, an EIR/EA must include a description of the existing physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of the project to provide the “baseline condition” against which project-related impacts are compared. The baseline condition is the physical condition that exists when the Notice of Preparation (NOP) is published. The NOP for the South San Francisco Ferry Terminal Project EIR was published December 17, 2004. Accordingly, the conditions that exist on the project site and in the vicinity at the time of the NOP (or the most recent information available) will serve as the existing conditions for the analysis.

■ Regulatory Framework

The Regulatory Framework provides a summary of regulations, plans, policies, and laws that are relevant to each issue area.

■ Impacts and Mitigation

This section is further divided into the following subsections, as described below.

Methodology

This subsection identifies the methodology used to analyze potential environmental impacts.

Impacts and Mitigation Measures Incorporated from 2003 WTA PEIR

This subsection identifies the impacts and mitigation measures from the 2003 WTA PEIR that are relevant to this project. These mitigation measures would be a part of the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program developed for the project. Appendix H includes all impacts and mitigation measures included in the 2003 WTA PEIR and their relation to the current project.

Environmental Criteria

Environmental criteria are thresholds used to determine whether potential environmental effects are substantially adverse. The environmental criteria used in this analysis were in accordance with CEQA and

NEPA. This subsection defines the type, amount, and/or extent of impact that would be considered a substantial adverse change in the environment. Some thresholds (such as air quality, traffic, and noise) are quantitative, while others, such as visual quality, are qualitative. The thresholds are intended to assist the reader in understanding how and why the EIR reaches a conclusion that an impact is adverse.

Environmental criteria that are listed in this section are only those that are fully analyzed in this EIR/EA, and they are provided both in the “Environmental Criteria” section and immediately before the relevant impact analysis for ease of correlation. Thresholds that have been determined to be “Effects Not Found to Be Significant,” are provided in the section entitled “Effects Not Found to Be Significant.”

Impacts and Mitigation Measures

This subsection describes the potential environmental impacts of the project and, based upon the environmental criteria, concludes whether the environmental impacts would be considered adverse, potentially adverse, or not adverse. Each impact is summarized in an “impact statement,” followed by a more detailed discussion of the potential impacts and the severity of each impact before mitigation. This subsection also includes feasible mitigation measures that could reduce the severity of the impact. In addition to feasible mitigation measures (MMs), the WTA will also continue to comply with all applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations, and these laws and regulations are considered to be part of the project description. Applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations that are considered part of the project description are not identified in the impact analysis and will not be included in the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program. Following the description of MMs, the subsection concludes with a statement regarding whether the impact, following implementation of the MMs, would remain adverse, and thus be adverse and unavoidable, or would be reduced.

The analysis of environmental impacts considers both the construction and operational phases associated with implementation of the project. As required by Section 15126.2(a) of the CEQA Guidelines and 40 C.F.R. 1508.8, direct, indirect, short-term, long-term, on-site, and/or off-site impacts are addressed, as appropriate, for the environmental issue area being analyzed.

NEPA

For purposes of NEPA, significance is only used to determine the level of analysis and public involvement required (i.e., Categorical Exclusion, Environmental Assessment, and Environmental Impact Statement). Significance of individual impacts is not discussed.

CEQA

Each impact discussion is separately numbered and includes a brief CEQA conclusion statement that summarizes the subject of the analysis based on CEQA. Consistent with CEQA, mitigation is identified for individual impacts. This format is designed to assist the reader in quickly identifying the subject of the impact analyses. The Draft EIR/EA identifies the CEQA conclusion using the following terms to describe the severity of impacts identified during the course of the environmental analysis:

- **Significant and Unavoidable (SU)**—Impact that exceeds the defined environmental criteria after the consideration of feasible mitigation measures
- **Significant (S)**—Impact that exceeds the defined environmental criteria and cannot be eliminated or reduced through the implementation of feasible mitigation measures. After consideration of feasible mitigation measures, this impact would be considered adverse and unavoidable
- **Potentially Significant Impact (PS)**—Impact that exceeds the defined environmental criteria and can be eliminated or reduced through the implementation of feasible mitigation measures
- **Less Than Significant (LTS)** – Impact would cause no substantial adverse change in the environment.
- **No Impact (NI)**—Impact that does not exceed the defined environmental criteria

A “significant effect” is defined by Section 15382 of the CEQA Guidelines as “a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance. An economic or social change by itself shall not be considered a significant effect on the environment...[but] may be considered in determining whether the physical change is significant.”

■ References

This section identifies sources relied upon for each environmental topic area analyzed in this document (Sections 3.1 through 3.15).