

3.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

This chapter describes the affected environment and evaluates the potential direct, indirect, short-term, and long-term impacts for each relevant human and natural environmental resource potentially impacted by the Proposed Action. An evaluation of the potential cumulative impacts resulting from the Proposed Action, when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, is presented in Chapter 4 (Cumulative Impacts). The analysis of potential impacts is based on the full build-out of the Proposed Action. The study area examined includes the project area (i.e., VA Transfer Parcel) and, where applicable, the area surrounding the project area, including the larger Alameda Point area, the San Francisco Bay, and the City and County of Alameda.

Each environmental resource area potentially impacted by the Proposed Action is addressed in its own section, numbered as follows:

- Section 3.1: Biological Resources;
- Section 3.2: Water Resources;
- Section 3.3: Transportation, Traffic, Circulation, and Parking;
- Section 3.4: Cultural Resources;
- Section 3.5: Visual Resources and Aesthetics;
- Section 3.6: Land Use;
- Section 3.7: Air Quality;
- Section 3.8: Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Change;
- Section 3.9: Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice;
- Section 3.10: Hazards and Hazardous Substances;
- Section 3.11: Utilities;
- Section 3.12: Noise;
- Section 3.13: Public Services; and
- Section 3.14: Geology and Soils.

Potential environmental impacts are identified, where applicable, according to their significance. According to the CEQ, the significance of an impact is determined by examining both its context and intensity (40 CFR 1508.27). Context is related to the affected region, the affected interests, and the locality, while intensity refers to the severity of the impact, which is based on the following considerations:

- Impacts may be both beneficial and adverse. A significant effect may exist even if the Federal agency believes that on balance the effect will be beneficial;
- The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety;
- Unique characteristics of the geographic area, such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas;
- The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be controversial;
- The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks;
- The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration;

- Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts. Significance exists if it is reasonable to anticipate a cumulatively significant impact on the environment. Significance cannot be avoided by terming an action temporary or by breaking it down into small component parts.
- The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, or structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the NRHP or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources;
- The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the ESA; and
- Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

The impact analysis compares projected future conditions to the affected environment. For each resource area, the potential construction or operational impacts are identified, if applicable, and the methodology and general assumptions used in the impact analysis are presented. Each identified impact is characterized according to its significance. Impacts are either significant (with corresponding mitigation, as feasible) or not significant, or significant and unavoidable where mitigation is not feasible or would not eliminate or reduce the impact to not significant. Although the focus of this analysis is on identifying potential adverse impacts, some beneficial effects also are identified by the analysis. The Navy would be responsible for transfer of excess Federal property and VA would be responsible for the construction and operation of the proposed facilities. In addition, VA would be responsible for implementation of, if applicable, the mitigation and avoidance measures identified in this EA.

Under NEPA, the Federal agency proposing an action must evaluate the environmental effects (impacts) that can reasonably be anticipated to be caused by or result from the Proposed Action and alternatives. The Proposed Action will be required to comply with Federal, State, and local laws and regulations. The potential environmental impacts that have been evaluated are those impacts which can reasonably be expected to result from the lawful implementation of the Proposed Action. In identifying direct impacts and reasonably foreseeable indirect impacts, the Navy and VA have taken into account all applicable measures and restrictions protective of human health and the environment that are required by existing laws and regulations. In many instances, the existence of such laws and regulations renders impacts that might have occurred in the absence of such laws highly unlikely and not reasonably foreseeable. In other instances, such laws and regulations work to lessen potential impacts to levels that are not significant. Because compliance with applicable laws is mandatory for the action proponent, compliance with the requirements of such laws and regulations is generally not identified separately as mitigation. Measures or controls that can be taken to reduce impacts to a level that is not significant are suggested for each alternative, as appropriate.

The Navy's Proposed Action is to dispose of excess property at the former NAS Alameda via a Fed-to-Fed transfer to VA. Transfer of the property by the Navy to the VA, an administrative action, would not, in itself, have a direct adverse impact on the human and natural environment. Therefore, this EA's impact analysis is focused on the potential impacts resulting from the VA's subsequent construction and operation of a VHA OPC, VBA Outreach Office, Conservation and Management Office, NCA Cemetery, off-site utility/road corridor, and associated infrastructure.