

3.6 LAND USE

This section describes the existing physical and regulatory setting related to land use, existing and planned land uses, and discusses the potential effects of the EA Alternatives related to land use and planning.

3.6.1 Regulatory Framework

The VA Transfer Parcel is located on Federal land owned by the Navy and that would be transferred to VA ownership; thus, the Proposed Action is exempt from local planning regulations of the adjacent jurisdictions, which include the City of Alameda, Alameda County, and the City and County of San Francisco. Although the Proposed Action is not subject to the regulations of regional and local jurisdictions, relevant jurisdictional bodies and plans are discussed below, to provide a land use planning context.

NAS Alameda Community Reuse Plan

The City of Alameda and the Alameda Reuse and Redevelopment Authority (ARRA) adopted the *NAS Alameda Community Reuse Plan* (Reuse Plan) in 1996, which was prepared to guide future development of the property following disposal from Federal ownership (ARRA, 1996). The Reuse Plan is a long-term plan that envisions redeveloping former NAS Alameda into a mixed-use, transit-oriented land use community. The redevelopment would be phased and generally consist of residential, commercial mixed use, town center retail, neighborhood center mixed-use, employment center, and community/civic uses (ARRA, 2006). The Reuse Plan does not apply to the VA Transfer Parcel (as Federally owned property, the VA Transfer Parcel would be outside the jurisdiction of local and State planning and zoning laws and regulations) and only applies to the larger Alameda Point planning area.

City of Alameda Zoning Ordinance

The City of Alameda Zoning Ordinance provides development regulations for all properties within the City. The VA Transfer Parcel is currently zoned M-2-G, a general industrial (manufacturing) district with a special government combining overlay (G). Permitted uses consist of a wide range of commercial and industrial uses, including heavy manufacturing. Conditionally permitted uses include airports and related facilities, shipping terminals, unenclosed uses, and commercial marinas. The G combining district is intended to be combined with other zoning districts and to be applied to lands under government ownership. As Federally owned property, the VA Transfer Parcel is outside the jurisdiction of local and State planning and zoning laws and regulations and the City of Alameda Zoning Ordinance does not apply.

Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA)

The CZMA requires that Federal actions be consistent to the maximum extent practicable with Federally approved state coastal plans. Coastal states prepare coastal management programs under the CZMA. Once the Federal government approves a state's coastal management program, a state gains Federal consistency review authority. California's Federally approved coastal management program contains two designated coastal zone management agencies that implement the Federal consistency provisions: the California Coastal Commission for all coastal areas outside San Francisco Bay and the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development

Commission (BCDC) for the coastal areas in San Francisco Bay. Refer to Section 3.2 (Water Resources) for further discussion of the CZMA and BCDC.

3.6.2 Affected Environment

Existing Land Uses on the VA Transfer Parcel

The VA Transfer Parcel is located in the western portion of former NAS Alameda (see Figure 1-1). The parcel is located within the boundaries of the City of Alameda, with the exception of the southwest corner, which is within the jurisdictional boundaries of the City and County of San Francisco.

The VA Transfer Parcel is comprised of the airfield area of former NAS Alameda. The entire parcel, which is comprised of human-made lands, has been developed or disturbed and is mostly comprised of former airfield infrastructure (e.g., inactive paved runways and taxiways), paved aircraft parking areas, vacant structures and buildings, seven former military bunkers, and other airfield support infrastructure. Areas of vegetated open space are located throughout the parcel, with the largest vegetated areas located in the southern and western portions of the parcel. In addition, a California Least Tern colony is located within a 9.7-acre fenced area of the former airfield (see Figure 1-2). With the exception of the ongoing California Least Tern management efforts, the VA Transfer Parcel is vacant and unused.

Surrounding Land Uses

The VA Transfer Parcel is bordered by the San Francisco Bay to the west and south, and the remainder of the former NAS Alameda property (Alameda Point) to the north and east. The Alameda Point area to the north of the VA Transfer Parcel is comprised of vegetated open space, former airfield infrastructure, and vacant buildings and structures. Further north is the Oakland Inner Harbor and the Port of Oakland, an industrial shipping container terminal. The Alameda Point area to the east of the VA Transfer Parcel is comprised of the former air stations aircraft hangars, office and industrial buildings, and recreational space. This area is currently being utilized by tenants for non-military light-industrial/manufacturing, public administration, office, commercial, and recreational uses. Further east is the City of Alameda, including residential land uses.

The Alameda Point area is the focus of redevelopment by the City of Alameda. The City of Alameda adopted the *NAS Alameda Community Reuse Plan* (Reuse Plan) in 1996, which was prepared to guide future development of Alameda Point following disposal from Federal ownership. The Reuse Plan is a long-term plan that envisions redeveloping the former NAS Alameda into a mixed-use, transit-oriented land use community. The redevelopment would be phased and would consist of residential, commercial mixed use, town center retail, neighborhood center mixed-use, employment center, and community/civic uses (ARRA, 2006). The Reuse Plan does not apply to the VA Transfer Parcel (as Federally owned property, the VA Transfer Parcel would be outside the jurisdiction of local and State planning and zoning laws and regulations) and only applies to the larger Alameda Point area.

3.6.3 Environmental Consequences

Assessment Methods

The land use analysis compares land use conditions at full build-out of each alternative against the existing land use environment or baseline condition. Impacts related to coastal zone management are discussed in Section 3.2, (Water Resources). Impacts related to recreational uses are discussed in Section 3.13 (Public Services).

Alternative 1

Construction

Construction of Alternative 1 would not contribute to the physical division of an established community by constructing physical barriers or obstacles to circulation. In addition, construction activities associated with this alternative would occur within the boundaries of the VA Transfer Parcel and would not result in direct conflicts with existing and planned land uses in the surrounding community. Therefore, no significant adverse construction impacts on land use would occur.

Operation

In the past, NAS Alameda operated as a secured military site and provided no public access, with little physical connectivity to the surrounding community. Alternative 1 would redevelop a portion of this underutilized and vacant property and provide limited public access within the VA Development Area. However, access would be limited within the larger VA Transfer Parcel, specifically the CLT colony and open space areas located within the southern portion of the parcel. This area would be limited for the protection and conservation of the CLT (see Section 3.1 [Biological Resources] for more information).

Proposed land uses in the surrounding community (i.e., Alameda Point Reuse Plan), when combined with the Proposed Action, would provide a more continuous land use pattern than existing conditions and provide new services. Alternative 1 would provide improved connectivity between the VA Development Area and land uses in the surrounding community by improving and providing new pedestrian, bicycle, and street connections. Therefore, Alternative 1 would not physically divide an established community; rather it would integrate the VA Development Area into the surrounding community. This would be considered a beneficial impact.

Under Alternative 1, the built environment of the VA Development Area would change and include new land uses and activities, including medical, memorial, and cemetery uses, than under existing conditions. Reuse of the VA Transfer Parcel as proposed under Alternative 1 would alter the existing land use character by converting the currently underutilized land uses within the project site to productive uses; provide infrastructure improvements and community services; and provide limited access open space. As such, Alternative 1 would improve the existing land use condition and would result in a beneficial impact.

Following transfer from the Navy to VA, the property would remain under Federal ownership and would continue to not be under the jurisdiction of local and State land use and zoning and local planning regulations and reviews would not be applicable. However, the Proposed Action would be compatible with existing and proposed land uses surrounding the VA Transfer Parcel, including the Alameda Point Civic Core planning area (e.g., mixed-use

office, institutional, industrial, attached residential, and recreational land uses) to the east and the Alameda Point Northwest Territories planning area (e.g., park and recreational land uses) to the north.

Implementation of Alternative 1 would not physically divide an established community; conflict with substantive requirements of local land use plans or policies (as Federally owned property, the VA Transfer Parcel would be outside the jurisdiction of local and State planning and zoning laws and regulations); and the Proposed Action is compatible with and would not have a substantial adverse impact on the existing character and planned uses of the surrounding community. Therefore, Alternative 1 would not have a significant adverse impact on land use.

Alternative 2 (Preferred Alternative)

Construction

Effects on land use resulting from implementation of Alternative 2 would be identical to those identified under Alternative 1. Therefore, no significant adverse construction impacts on land use would occur.

Operation

Alternative 2 would involve the same project components as Alternative 1; however, under Alternative 2, the VA Development Area would be located farther north and would extend into the Northwest Territories subarea of the NAS Alameda property. The operation of VA facilities proposed under Alternative 2 would be similar to operation under Alternative 1, because this alternative would include the same types of uses, only in a different site configuration and a larger area. Thus, operational land use impacts of Alternative 2 would essentially be the same as those of Alternative 1.

Implementation of Alternative 2 would not physically divide an established community; conflict with substantive requirements of local land use plans or policies; and the Proposed Action is compatible with and would not have a substantial adverse impact on the existing character and planned uses of the surrounding community. Therefore, Alternative 2 would not have a significant adverse impact on land use.

No Action Alternative

Construction

Under the No Action Alternative, the Fed-to-Fed transfer would not take place and the proposed development (e.g., VHA OPC, VBA Outreach Office, NCA Cemetery) would not be built. Therefore, no significant construction impacts on land use would occur.

Operation

Under the No Action Alternative, the Fed-to-Fed transfer would not take place and the proposed development and operations (e.g., VHA OPC, VBA Outreach Office, NCA Cemetery, etc.) would not occur. Therefore, no significant operational impacts on land use would occur.

3.6.4 References

Alameda Reuse and Redevelopment Authority (ARRA). 1996 (January). *NAS Alameda Community Reuse Plan*. Alameda, CA. Prepared by EDAW, Inc., San Francisco, CA.

———. 2006 (February). *Alameda Point Preliminary Design Concept*. Alameda, CA. Prepared by Roma Design Group.

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