

## **3.9 SOCIOECONOMICS AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

This section describes the existing setting related to population, employment, income, and ethnicity, and discusses the potential effects of the EA Alternatives related to socioeconomics. In addition to general socioeconomic information, this section discusses environmental justice and risks to children's health and safety.

### **3.9.1 Regulatory Framework**

#### **Executive Order 12898: Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations**

EO 12898 requires each Federal agency to make achieving environmental justice part of its mission. Specifically, the agency must identify and address, as appropriate, the disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations. These provisions also apply fully to programs involving Native Americans. The EO also requires each Federal agency to conduct its programs, policies, and activities so that they do not exclude, deny benefits to, or discriminate against persons (including populations) because of race, color, or national origin.

#### **Executive Order 12898: Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks**

EO 13045 requires that "each Federal agency (*a*) shall make it a high priority to identify and assess environmental health risks and safety risks that may disproportionately affect children, and (*b*) shall ensure that its policies, programs, activities, and standards address disproportionate risks to children that result from environmental health risk or safety risks."

### **3.9.2 Affected Environment**

This section presents regional and local demographic and economic information as it relates to the VA Transfer Parcel and the surrounding area. For the purposes of this resource section, the socioeconomic study area includes the Census Tracts that encompass the VA Transfer Parcel and its immediate surrounding area (i.e., U.S. Census Bureau Census Tracts 4287, 4276, and 4277; which encompass the VA Transfer Parcel and the western portion of the City of Alameda), the City of Alameda, and Alameda County. Information about population, housing, employment, income, and ethnicity is derived primarily from the 2010 U.S. and projections by the California Department of Finance and Association of Bay Area Governments. Because the Proposed Action does not propose the addition or removal of housing, the analysis in this EA does not address impacts related to the availability of housing.

#### **Population**

The VA Transfer Parcel is located within the City of Alameda, which had a total estimated population of 73,812 in 2010 (an approximate 2% increase from 2000). No population resides and no residential housing exists within the VA Transfer Parcel. Study area population estimates are summarized in Table 3.9-1.

**Table 3.9-1: Study Area Population Estimates (2000–2010)**

	Population 2000	Population 2010	Percent Change 2000 to 2010
Census Tracts <sup>1</sup>	12,006	13,707	+ 14.2%
City of Alameda	72,259	73,812	+ 2.2%
Alameda County	1,443,744	1,510,271	+ 4.6%

Notes:

NA = not applicable; VA = U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

<sup>1</sup> For purposes of this analysis and to allow comparison between 2010 and 2000 data, information for Census Tracts 4275 and 4274 have been combined. In 2010, Census Tracts 4274 and 4275 were combined, resulting in Census Tract 4287.

Source: U.S. Census 2000a, 2000b, 2010a

## Income and Unemployment

Study area income and unemployment characteristics are summarized in Table 3.9-2. No employment or income generating businesses are currently located within the VA Transfer Parcel. However, the site does contain active conservation and management efforts for the CLT.

**Table 3.9-2: Study Area Income and Unemployment (2010)<sup>1</sup>**

	Per Capita Income (\$)	Median Household Income 2010 (\$)	Unemployed (% of Civilian Labor Force)
Census Tracts	30,441 <sup>2</sup>	61,158 <sup>2</sup>	6.4 <sup>2</sup>
City of Alameda	38,434	74,221	5.4
Alameda County	33,961	69,384	5.6

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Employment and income data from the 2006–2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates were used because 2010 U.S. Census data were not available at the time this document was prepared.

<sup>2</sup> Average of the three Census Tracts.

Source: U.S. Census, 2010a

## Environmental Justice

Consistent with Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations (February 11, 1994), the policy is to identify and address any disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its actions on minority or low-income populations.

The CEQ (1997) has issued guidance to Federal agencies on the terms used in Executive Order 12898, as follows:

- **Low-income Population.** Low-income populations in an affected area should be identified using the annual statistical poverty thresholds from the U.S. Bureau of Census’s Current Population Reports, Series P-60, on Income and Poverty.
- **Minority.** Individual(s) who are members of the following population groups: American Indian or Alaskan Native; Asian or Pacific Islander; Black, not Hispanic origin; or Hispanic.

- **Minority Population.** Minority populations should be identified where: (a) the minority population of the affected area exceeds 50%, or (b) the minority population percentage of the affected area is meaningfully greater than the minority population percentage in the general population or other appropriate unit of geographic analysis.
- **Disproportionately High and Adverse Human Health Effects.** When determining whether human health effects are disproportionately high and adverse, agencies are to consider the following three factors to the extent practicable:
  1. Whether the health effects, which may be measured in risks and rates, are significant (as employed by NEPA), or above generally accepted norms;
  2. Whether the risk or rate of hazard exposure to a minority population, low income population, or Indian tribe to an environmental hazard is significant (as employed by NEPA) and appreciably exceeds or is likely to appreciably exceed the risk or rate to the general population or other appropriate comparison group; and
  3. Whether health effects occur in a minority population, low-income population, or Indian tribe affected by cumulative or multiple adverse exposure to environmental hazards.
- **Disproportionately High and Adverse Environmental Effects.** When determining whether environmental effects are disproportionately high and adverse, agencies are to consider the following three factors to the extent practicable:
  1. Whether there is or will be an impact on the natural or physical environment that significantly (as employed by NEPA) and adversely affects a minority population, low-income population, or Indian tribe. Such effects may include ecological, cultural, human health, economic, or social impacts on minority communities, low-income communities, or Indian tribes when those impacts are interrelated to impacts on natural or physical environment;
  2. Whether environmental effects are significant (as employed by NEPA) and are or may be having an adverse impact on minority populations, low income populations, or Indian tribes that appreciably exceed or are likely to appreciably exceed those on the general population or other appropriate comparison group; and
  3. Whether the environmental effects occur or would occur in a minority population, low-income population, or Indian tribe affected by cumulative or multiple adverse exposures from environmental hazards.

Environmental justice impacts refer to disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of a Proposed Action on low-income populations, minority populations, or Indian tribes. In order to identify if any potential disproportionate adverse environmental justice effects would be associated with the implementation of the Proposed Action, existing environmental justice characteristics (i.e., minority and low-income population) in the community directly affected (i.e., Census Tracts 4287, 4276, and 4277) were identified. This data is presented for descriptive purposes and do not indicate the probable location of disproportionate impacts. A minority population concentration is identified as follows:

- The minority population in the community is equal to or greater than 50%; or

- The minority population in the community is 10 or more basis points higher than that of the “base” community (city or county, depending on location).

Minority groups include African American, Hispanic, Asian, American Indian and Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. A “low-income” person is defined as a person whose household income is at or below the income level stated in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ poverty guidelines, which in the 2010 guidelines was \$22,050 for a family of four.

The communities in the immediate project area (i.e., 4287, 4276, and 4277) have a combined minority population of 65.4% and a combined percentage of individuals below the poverty level of 14.9%. Table 3.9-3 presents statistics on low-income and minority population characteristics for the study area, including Census Tracts (i.e., 4287, 4276, and 4277), City of Alameda, and Alameda County.

**Table 3.9-3: Environmental Justice Population Characteristics (2010)**

	<b>Total Population</b>	<b>Percent Minority</b>	<b>Percent Below Poverty Level</b>
Census Tracts <sup>1</sup>	13,707	65.4	14.9
City of Alameda	73,812	49.2	10.1
Alameda County	1,510,271	47.2	11.4

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Includes Census Tracts 4287, 4276, and 4277.

Source: U.S. Census, 2010b, 2010c

### 3.9.3 Environmental Consequences

#### Assessment Methods

Socioeconomic impacts refer to the basic attributes and resources associated with the human environment, with particular emphasis on population and employment. Potential impacts can be related to the displacement of populations, residences, and/or businesses; impacts on the availability of housing or accommodation; and the inducement of unplanned growth. Socioeconomic impacts can also stem from the nature and duration of construction and operational activities that, in turn, may lead to displacement or modification of existing activities, and any diversion or temporary suspension of access associated with a Proposed Action. Because the EA Alternatives do not propose the addition or removal of housing, the analysis in this EA does not address impacts related to the availability of housing. Daily population and employment totals for the EA Alternatives were estimated using patient/visitor/employment information from similar VA facilities.

#### Alternative 1

##### *Construction*

##### Population

Alternative 1 would have no effect on existing population in study area. Therefore, there would be no significant construction-related impact.

### **Employment and Income**

Initial construction under Alternative 1 (July 2015 to December 2016) is anticipated to require a temporary crew of 20–56 persons derived from the local labor pool. Construction of subsequent cemetery phases under Alternative 1 (from 2026 through 2116) is anticipated to require a temporary crew of approximately 15 persons for a period of approximately 12 months per phase derived from the local labor pool. Because both the Bay Area as a whole and the city of Alameda have experienced a reduction in employment (including construction jobs) over the last decade (between 2000 and 2010), the additional construction jobs provided by the Proposed Action would have a positive short-term beneficial effect on the local and regional economies. The construction-related impact of Alternative 1 related to employment growth would not have a significant adverse impact.

Construction under Alternative 1 would not impede residential or business activity within the community surrounding the VA Transfer Parcel because all construction activities would be limited to the currently unoccupied area within the VA Development Area. As discussed in Section 3.3 (Transportation, Traffic, Circulation, and Parking), construction-related trucks would flow into and out of the VA Transfer Parcel using I-880 and designated truck routes in Oakland and Alameda. Construction activities would be limited to the VA Development Area, and construction-related traffic would use existing roadways. Therefore, no residents or businesses would be displaced. No construction-related significant adverse impact related to displacement of persons, residences, and/or businesses would occur.

### **Operation**

### **Population**

Because no housing is proposed under Alternative 1, there would be no direct change in permanent population or housing with implementation of this alternative. In general, a project would be considered growth inducing if its implementation would substantially increase the population or result in the need for additional development, which might not occur if the project were not implemented. Employees are anticipated to be already living in the San Francisco Bay Area and would not require new housing. Thus, no significant impact related to induced population or housing growth would occur under Alternative 1.

### **Employment and Income**

Under Alternative 1 the new daily employment population is estimated to be 250 VA employees in the OPC building and the Conservation Management Office and seven employees at the NCA Cemetery. Because both the Bay Area as a whole and the city of Alameda have experienced a reduction in employment over the last decade (between 2000 and 2010), adding an estimated 257 jobs that could be filled by Bay Area and/or Alameda residents would have a beneficial effect on the regional and local economies. The operational impact of Alternative 1, related to employment growth would not be significant.

### **Environmental Justice**

As identified in Table 3.9-3, the communities surrounding the VA Transfer Parcel do not have a disproportionately high minority or low-income population. In addition, there are no specific impacts on general health or quality of life that would adversely or disproportionately impact the surrounding population. Therefore, it was determined

that no disproportionate adverse environmental justice effects would be associated with the implementation of Alternative 1. There would be no significant impact to environmental justice.

## **Alternative 2 (Preferred Alternative)**

### ***Construction***

The construction of VA facilities under Alternative 2 would be similar to that under Alternative 1. Therefore, impacts of construction under Alternative 2 on population, housing, employment, income, and environmental justice would be the same as those described for Alternative 1. Construction-related impacts of Alternative 2 would not be significant.

### ***Operation***

The operation of VA facilities under Alternative 2 would be similar to that under Alternative 1. Therefore, impacts of facility operation under Alternative 2 on population, housing, employment, income, and environmental justice would be the same as those described for Alternative 1. Operation-related impacts of Alternative 2 would not be significant.

### **Environmental Justice**

As identified in Table 3.9-3, the communities surrounding the VA Transfer Parcel do not have a disproportionately high minority or low-income population. In addition, there are no specific impacts on general health or quality of life that would adversely or disproportionately impact the surrounding population. Therefore, it was determined that no disproportionate adverse environmental justice effects would be associated with the implementation of Alternative 2. There would be no significant impact to environmental justice.

## **No Action Alternative**

### ***Construction***

Because the proposed VA facilities would not be constructed under the No Action Alternative, no construction impacts related to socioeconomics or environmental justice would result. No construction-related significant impact would occur.

### ***Operation***

Under the No Action Alternative, no operational impacts related to socioeconomic or environmental justice would result. No significant operational impact would occur.

## **3.9.4 References**

U.S. Census Bureau (U.S. Census). 2000a. American FactFinder: Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: California, 2000. Available: <[http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/DatasetMainPageServlet?\\_lang=en&\\_ts=329663591260&\\_ds\\_name=DEC\\_2000\\_SF1\\_U&\\_program=](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/DatasetMainPageServlet?_lang=en&_ts=329663591260&_ds_name=DEC_2000_SF1_U&_program=)>. Accessed July 25, 2011.

- . 2000b. American FactFinder: Profile of Selected Economic Characteristics: California, 2000. Available: <[http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/DatasetMainPageServlet?\\_program=DEC&\\_tabId=DEC2&\\_submenuId=datasets\\_1&\\_lang=en&\\_ts=329663615292](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/DatasetMainPageServlet?_program=DEC&_tabId=DEC2&_submenuId=datasets_1&_lang=en&_ts=329663615292)>. Accessed July 25, 2011.
- . 2010a. State and County Quick Facts: Alameda, California. Available: <<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/06001.html>>. Accessed July 25, 2011.
- . 2010b. FactFinder: Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics: 2010, 2010 Census Summary File 1: Census Tracts 4267, 4277 and 4287, California. Available: <[http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=DEC\\_10\\_SF1\\_SF1DP1&prodType=table](http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=DEC_10_SF1_SF1DP1&prodType=table)>. Accessed January 9, 2013.
- . 2010c. American FactFinder: Selected Economic Characteristics, 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Available: <[http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS\\_10\\_5YR\\_DP03&prodType=table](http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_10_5YR_DP03&prodType=table)>. Accessed January 9, 2013.

This page intentionally left blank.