

## 4. SETTING AND BASELINE, IMPACTS, AND MITIGATION

This chapter is organized into sections by environmental factor; 15 factors in total are evaluated. Each section first provides a brief summary then describes the study area analyzed as well as the regulatory setting applicable to that environmental factor. Each section then examines the regional and local environmental setting as well as the alternative baseline, if relevant. Finally, each section describes the impact analysis methodology, discloses specific impacts that would result from redevelopment as described in Chapter 3: Description, and recommends mitigation measures to mitigate significant impacts.

Normally, the “baseline,” the physical context in which a lead agency determines environmental impacts of a proposed action, and the environmental setting are the same, and comprise those conditions existing at the time a lead agency issues a Notice of Preparation (NOP). Under specific conditions, a lead agency may select an alternative baseline to the setting.<sup>1</sup> When a lead agency is determining environmental impacts of implementing a reuse plan for a military base, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA, § 21083.8.1) allows the agency to make this determination in the context of the physical conditions that existed at the time the federal decision to close the base became final. Use of an alternative baseline allows a lead agency to determine impacts of reuse relative to activity levels of an operational—rather than a closed—military facility. CEQA does not allow use of an alternative baseline where it would limit the scope of review of impacts related to hazardous or toxic materials or wastes. Moreover, a lead agency that opts to use an alternative baseline is not specifically required by CEQA to use that baseline in determining impacts for all environmental factors under investigation.

### Alternative Baseline

In this case, the NOP was issued in August 2001, which is the date of the environmental setting; Congress finalized the decision to close the Oakland Army Base (OARB) in September 1995, which is the date of the alternative baseline. It should be understood the alternative baseline applies only to the OARB sub-district, not the entire redevelopment project area, and only to the following topics:

- **Traffic**—based on probable traffic trip generation by OARB in 1995 on a circulation system that includes the reconstructed Cypress Freeway (the Cypress Freeway was not completed until 1998);
- **Air Quality**—based on available 1994 measurements for stationary source emissions and 1995 baseline traffic for mobile source emissions;

<sup>1</sup> These conditions require the lead agency to notify responsible and trustee agencies of its intention to consider an alternative baseline, to hold a public hearing on the matter, to state how the alternative baseline will be integrated into the reuse planning and environmental review processes, and to present in writing the reasons for its decision. The City has complied with these conditions, and evidence of such compliance is included in Appendix 1.

- 1       • **Water Consumption**—based on actual OARB 1995 usage;
- 2       • **Energy Consumption**—based on measured OARB 1995 demand;
- 3       • **Noise**—based on estimates of noise-generating uses and activities occurring at OARB in  
4       1995;
- 5       • **Population and Employment**—based on total military and civilian personnel employment in  
6       1995; and
- 7       • **Schools**—based on the estimated number of school children living at the OARB and  
8       attending public schools in 1995.

9       For these environmental factors, the description of the environmental setting is followed by a  
10       description of alternative baseline conditions. For those environmental factors where an  
11       alternative baseline is used for the OARB, the baseline for analysis comprises the alternative  
12       baseline for the OARB sub-district plus the setting of the Maritime and 16<sup>th</sup>/Wood sub-districts.  
13       For all other environmental factors, the baseline for analysis is the setting at the time the NOP  
14       was issued.

15       **Significance Criteria and Impacts**

16       The City used criteria and thresholds to assist in making determinations of impact significance.  
17       The significance criteria used in this analysis were derived from the standard CEQA Initial Study  
18       checklist, as well as from standards adopted by regulatory and jurisdictional agencies for the  
19       purpose of environmental protection. Using these criteria in the context of the baseline, and  
20       considering available planning and scientific information, the City has made a determination of  
21       the significance of each impact using one of the three significance levels as defined below:

- 22       • **Significant**—it can be stated with certainty that an established criterion or threshold would  
23       be clearly exceeded.
- 24       • **Potentially significant**—an established criterion or threshold may be exceeded, but this  
25       conclusion cannot be stated conclusively.
- 26       • **Less than significant**—it can be stated with certainty that an established criterion or  
27       threshold would clearly not be exceeded.

28       **Mitigation**

29       Mitigation measures are recommended for each significant or potentially significant impact, and  
30       the significance of the mitigated, or residual, impact is described. Adverse impact would, or  
31       might remain significant after implementation of feasible mitigation—residually significant  
32       impacts—are termed “unavoidable.”

1 In the detailed analysis of each potentially significant or significant impact of redevelopment, a  
2 brief mitigation statement is provided. Following the impact analysis is a more detailed  
3 description of each mitigation measure (in those cases where additional information is useful, or  
4 where mitigation comprises a detailed program). In the detailed discussion of mitigation  
5 measures, the work “should” or “may” indicates a preference or option for action, but not a  
6 requirement. The word “shall” indicates a required element of the mitigation measure.

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