

CHAPTER III Environmental Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures

III.A INTRODUCTION TO ANALYSIS

Section III.B through Section III.S of Chapter III of this EIR contain a discussion of the potential environmental impacts of implementation of the Candlestick Point–Hunters Point Shipyard Phase II Development Plan Project, including information related to existing site conditions, analyses of the type and magnitude of Project-level and cumulative environmental impacts, and feasible mitigation measures that would reduce or avoid identified significant adverse environmental impacts.

III.A.1 Comments Received on the Notice of Preparation

During the 30-day public review period for the NOP, which began on August 31, 2007, and ended on September 29, 2007, comment letters were received from public agencies and individuals, as further discussed in Chapter I (Introduction) of this EIR. Additional comments were also received during the September 17, 2007, and September 25, 2007, scoping meetings. The NOP, the NOP comment letters, and scoping meeting minutes are included in Appendix A (Notice of Preparation and NOP Comments) of this EIR and were considered in the EIR analyses.

III.A.2 Scope of the EIR

The environmental analyses are presented in the following order:

- Land Use and Plans (Section III.B)
- Population, Housing, and Employment (Section III.C)
- Transportation and Circulation (Section III.D)
- Aesthetics (Section III.E)
- Shadows (Section III.F)
- Wind (Section III.G)
- Air Quality (Section III.H)
- Noise (Section III.I)
- Cultural and Paleontological Resources (Section III.J)
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials (Section III.K)
- Geology and Soils (Section III.L)
- Hydrology and Water Quality (Section III.M)
- Biological Resources (Section III.N)
- Public Services (Section III.O)
- Recreation (Section III.P)
- Utilities (Section III.Q)
- Energy (Section III.R)
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions (Section III.S)

All impacts associated with agricultural resources and mineral resources have been determined to be “Effects Not Found to Be Significant” according to Section 15128 of the CEQA Guidelines, and are briefly discussed in Chapter V (Other CEQA Issues) of this EIR.

III.A.3 Format of the Environmental Analysis

Each environmental topic in Section III.B through Section III.S of the EIR presents a project-level analysis of the Project’s direct and indirect environmental impacts on the environment. Each section includes an introduction, a description of the environmental setting, the regulatory framework, Project-level impacts and proposed mitigation measures, and cumulative impacts. The impact sections include an analysis of the overall impacts of the Project, as well as an analysis of the Project impacts within the two geographically distinct portions of the Project (i.e., Candlestick Point and Hunters Point Shipyard Phase II). Construction and/or operation of shoreline improvements, the marina, Yosemite Slough bridge, or transportation improvements are typically discussed separately, unless there is a reason to discuss them with the Candlestick Point or Hunters Point Shipyard Phase II analyses.

The organization of each of Section III.B through Section III.S follows the outline below:

■ Introduction

The Introduction provides a brief description of the types of impacts that are analyzed in the section. For sections that are lengthy or analytically complex, an introductory overview of the format and structure of the section is presented.

■ Environmental Setting

As required by Section 15125(a) of the CEQA Guidelines, the Environmental Setting includes a description of the existing conditions at the Project site and/or in the vicinity of the Project site that provide the “baseline condition” against which Project-related impacts are compared. While the baseline condition is generally the physical conditions that existed at the time the NOP is published, which was August 2007, there may be reasons why a different baseline condition should be used for the analysis. For example, the baseline condition for transportation/traffic, air quality, and noise is the date(s) the traffic counts were taken, while the baseline condition for biological resources is the last date of the field surveys. Each section describes the baseline condition for that particular analysis.

■ Regulatory Framework

The regulatory framework provides a discussion of federal, state, and local regulations, plans, policies, and/or laws that are directly relevant to the environmental topic being analyzed.

■ Impacts and Mitigation

The impacts and mitigation discussion is divided into the following subsections, as described below.

Significance Criteria

The impact significance criteria used in this EIR are based on San Francisco Planning Department Major Environmental Analysis (MEA) and San Francisco Redevelopment Agency guidance regarding the environmental effects to be considered significant. This guidance is, in turn, based upon Appendix G to the CEQA Guidelines and MEA's Initial Study checklist, with some modifications. In cases where potential environmental issues associated with the Project are identified, but are not clearly addressed by the guidance listed above, additional impact significance criteria are presented. The significance criteria used for each environmental topic/resource are presented at the beginning of the impact discussion in each section of Chapter III of this EIR.

Analytic Method

This subsection identifies the methodology used to analyze potential environmental impacts for each environmental topic under the identified significance criteria. Some evaluations (such as for air quality, traffic, and noise) are quantitative, while others, such as for visual quality and urban design, are qualitative.

Construction and Operational Impacts and Mitigation Measures

This subsection describes the potential direct and/or indirect environmental impacts of the Project and, based on the significance criteria, determines the significance of each environmental impact. Project design features, such as green or sustainability features, that avoid or minimize adverse impacts on the environment are included as part of the Project analyzed in each impact discussion. As previously mentioned, the environmental impacts are described for the Project as a whole, and for the two geographically distinct portions of the Project (e.g., Candlestick Point or Hunters Point Shipyard). Where impacts could occur as a result of construction of the Yosemite Slough bridge, the marina, or the shoreline improvements, those impacts may be discussed separately. In some instances, the analyses for Candlestick Point and Hunters Point Shipyard Phase II are similar, and, therefore, are discussed together as the Project, and are not differentiated by area. (The section provided below, entitled "Analysis Format," provides a visual example of how the analysis is presented in the EIR.)

Each impact is summarized in an "impact statement" that is separately numbered, coincides with an identified significance criterion, and is followed by a detailed discussion. The impact statement also identifies the level of significance after implementation of all feasible mitigation measures. This format is designed to assist the reader in quickly identifying the subject and conclusion of the impact analyses.

The impact statements reflect whether the impact is caused by construction of the Project; implementation of the Project (meaning the conditions that would exist after the Project were constructed, which is generally related to the development pattern); or operation of the Project (reflecting conditions that would exist during actual operational activities, such as additional motor vehicle trips that would be generated by the Project). In a few instances, the impact statement is factual, such as "The Project would conform to the current regional air quality plan." In all cases, the impact statement reflects the condition that would result after the implementation of all of the identified mitigation measures.

A single criterion may have more than one “type” of impact that is analyzed. As an example, in Section III.N (Biological Resources), there is a significance criterion that relates to potential impacts to sensitive species or habitats. Under that significance criterion, several types of impacts are analyzed in separate impact discussions, such as impacts to wetlands and impacts to individual sensitive species.

The geographic scope of the impact analyses vary depending upon the specific environmental issue being analyzed. Where the impact analysis identifies significant adverse environmental effects that could be reduced or avoided through implementation of a mitigation measure, the measure is presented after the relevant impact discussion. Mitigation measures identify specific and measurable actions that could be taken to reduce potentially significant environmental impacts.

Project impacts are also assessed in light of existing regulatory requirements that could serve to mitigate potential impacts. The effectiveness of existing regulations to mitigate potential impacts is often affected by discretionary requirements, site characteristics, and project features and design-level considerations that are not yet detailed. Because there is some discretion in how these regulations can be applied, for some impacts, these requirements are included as mitigation measures to outline the specific process by which the Project will comply with these regulations.

Mitigation measures identify the parties responsible for implementation, a timeframe for implementation, and any applicable public agency approval, oversight, or monitoring that may be required. Mitigation measures would usually be implemented by the Project Applicant, with oversight by one or more public agencies, unless indicated otherwise.

This subsection concludes with a statement regarding whether the impact, after implementation of the mitigation measures and/or compliance with existing local, State, and federal laws and regulations, would remain significant or be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

The Draft EIR uses the following terms to describe the level of significance of impacts identified during the course of the environmental analysis:

- **Significant Impact (S)**—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.” As defined in this EIR, a significant impact exceeds the defined significance criteria and will result in significant and unavoidable impacts, either with or without feasible mitigation. If there are no feasible mitigation measures to reduce the impact, including compliance with existing local, State, and federal laws and regulations, it is considered significant and unavoidable (SU) at the conclusion of the analysis. If there are feasible mitigation measures to reduce the impact, including compliance with existing local, State, and federal laws and regulations, it is considered significant and unavoidable with mitigation (SU/M) at the conclusion of the analysis.
- **Potentially Significant Impact (PS)**—Impact that could exceed the defined significance criteria, but can be eliminated or reduced to a less-than-significant level through implementation of the identified mitigation measures.

- **Less-Than-Significant Impact (LTS)**—Impact that does not exceed the defined significance criteria or would be eliminated or reduced to a less-than-significant level through compliance with existing local, State, and federal laws and regulations.
- **No Impact (NI)**—No adverse changes (or impacts) to the environment are expected.
- **Significant and Unavoidable Impact (SU)**—Impact that exceeds the defined significance criteria and cannot be eliminated or reduced to a less-than-significant level through compliance with existing local, State, and federal laws and regulations and/or implementation of all feasible mitigation measures.
- **Significant and Unavoidable Impact with Mitigation (SU/M)**— Impact that exceeds the defined significance criteria and can be reduced through compliance with existing local, State, and federal laws and regulations and/or implementation of all feasible mitigation measures, but cannot be reduced to a less-than-significant level.
- **Less-Than-Significant Impact with Mitigation (LTS/M)**—Impact that is reduced to a less-than-significant level through implementation of the identified mitigation measures.

This EIR evaluates the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts resulting from planning, construction, and operation of the Project, including impacts that occur on site or off site.

Analysis Format

The impact number and the subject matter of the analysis is first presented in a banner to clearly indicate what is being discussed. Following that, there are usually three impact statements and related impact discussions. Using the following example as a guide, the first one addresses Candlestick Point (i.e., Impact PH-2a), the second addresses HPS Phase II (i.e., Impact PH-2b), and the third addresses the impact of the Project (i.e., Impact PH-2), which is the combined impact of Candlestick Point and HPS Phase II. Where impacts could occur as a result of construction of the Yosemite Slough bridge, the marina, or the shoreline improvements, those impacts are usually discussed separately, resulting in four or more impact discussions, which would be numbered Impact PH-2c, Impact PH-2d, and Impact PH-2e, using the numbering sequence of the following example. In these cases, the impacts are still summarized with a combined impact of the Project. One exception to this general format is in Section III.N, where Project impacts are presented after the discussion of individual impacts at Candlestick Point and HPS Phase II. Project impacts begin with Impact BI-22 and conclude with Impact BI-26.

The following is an example of how the impact analysis is usually presented:

Impact PH-2: Population Growth

Impact of Candlestick Point

Impact PH-2a Operation of the development at Candlestick Point would induce direct and indirect population growth, but this growth would not be considered substantial. (Less than Significant) [Criterion C.a]

Impact Discussion

Impact of Hunters Point Shipyard Phase II

Impact PH-2b Operation of the development at HPS Phase II would induce direct and indirect population growth, but this growth would not be considered substantial. (Less than Significant) [*Criterion C.a*]

Impact Discussion

Combined Impact of Candlestick Point and Hunters Point Shipyard Phase II

Impact PH-2 Operation of the Project would induce direct and indirect population growth, but this growth would not be considered substantial. (Less than Significant) [*Criterion C.a*]

Impact Discussion

As previously noted, in some instances, the analyses for Candlestick Point and Hunters Point Shipyard Phase II are similar, and, therefore, are discussed together as the Project; in these cases, the analysis is not differentiated by area. The following is an example of how the impact analysis is presented in these situations:

Impact AE-1: Effect on a Scenic Vista or Scenic Resources

Impact AE-1 Construction activities associated with the Project would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista or scenic resources. (Less than Significant) [*Criteria E.a and E.b*]

Impact Discussion

■ Cumulative Impacts

CEQA requires that EIRs discuss a project's potential contributions to cumulative impacts, in addition to project-specific impacts. Section 15130(a)(1) of the CEQA Guidelines states that a "cumulative impact consists of an impact which is created as a result of the combination of the project evaluated in the EIR together with other projects causing related impacts." Other projects include past, present, and reasonably probable future projects.

Section 15130(b)(1) of the CEQA Guidelines states that the approach to the cumulative impact analysis may be based on either of the following approaches, or a combination thereof:

- A list of past, present, and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts
- A summary of projections contained in an adopted general plan or related planning document designed to evaluate regional or areawide conditions

For the purposes of this EIR, the analysis of the potential for the Project's incremental effects to be cumulatively considerable is based upon a list of related projects identified by the City and neighboring jurisdictions and/or on full implementation of the City's General Plan and/or other planning documents, depending upon the specific impact being analyzed. For example, the cumulative analysis for the Traffic Study (which is the basis for many of the cumulative analyses in this document) uses the San Francisco

County Transportation Authority (SFCTA) travel demand forecasting model, which projects general background growth based on Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) projections and is consistent with buildout of the City's General Plan. The Traffic Study specifically updated the background growth assumptions based on information regarding a number of major related projects, including (Figure III.A-1 [Cumulative Development in the Project Vicinity]):

- India Baseline Shoreline
- Hunters Point Shipyard Phase I
- Hunters View
- Jamestown
- Executive Park
- Brisbane Baylands
- Cow Palace
- Visitacion Valley/Schlage Lock

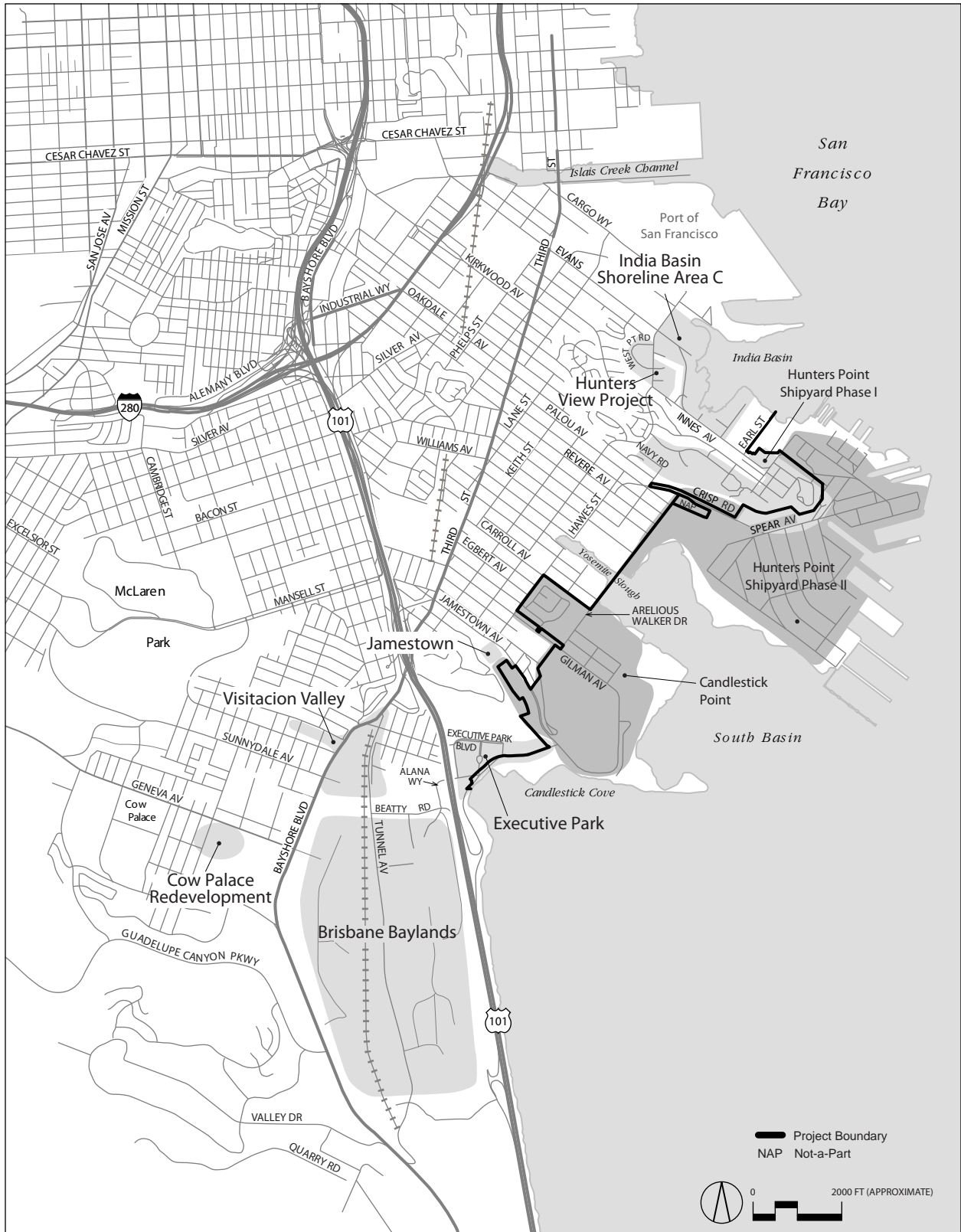
A comprehensive list of all related projects included in background growth assumptions can be found in the Traffic Report, which is included as Appendix D (Transportation Study) to this EIR.

The geographic scope of the cumulative impact analyses and the specific related projects that are included in the analyses may also vary depending on the specific environmental issue being analyzed. Each technical section of this EIR designates the cumulative context for each cumulative impact analysis.

The EIR presents a cumulative impact analysis only where the Project's incremental effect would result in a less-than-significant, less-than-significant with mitigation, significant and unavoidable, or significant and unavoidable with mitigation, cumulative impact.

CEQA requires that an EIR discuss cumulative impacts to determine whether they are significant. If the cumulative impact is significant, the Project's incremental effects must be analyzed to determine if the Project's contribution to the cumulative impact is cumulatively considerable. In accordance with Section 15065(a)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines, this determination is based on an assessment of the Project's incremental effects viewed in combination with the effects of past, present, and probable future related projects. The existence of a currently existing significant cumulative impact does not necessarily mean that the Project's contribution to that impact must be significant. Instead, a Project's contribution to a significant cumulative impact is significant only if its contribution is cumulatively considerable.

CEQA recognizes that the analysis of cumulative impacts need not be as detailed as the analysis of project-level impacts, but instead should "be guided by the standards of practicality and reasonableness" (Section 15130(b) of the CEQA Guidelines). The discussion of cumulative impacts must reflect the severity of the impacts and the likelihood of their occurrence; however, the discussion need not be as detailed as the discussion of environmental impacts attributable to the Project alone.



SOURCE: Fehr & Peers, AECOM, 2009.

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FIGURE III.A-1



Candlestick Point — Hunters Point Shipyard Phase II EIR
CUMULATIVE DEVELOPMENT IN THE PROJECT VICINITY