

Chapter 2 Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

This chapter describes the current state of the resources in the project area and identifies the potential effects of implementing the proposed project. Each subsection describes the present conditions, discusses the potential impacts of building the proposed project, and indicates what measures would be taken to avoid, minimize, or mitigate those impacts.

The environmental analysis contained within the following chapter considers the potential environmental consequences associated with implementation of two Build Alternatives and the No-Build Alternative. The environmental impact analyses discuss potential impacts in three general categories: human environment, physical environment, and biological environment. The following discussion of potential effects is presented by environmental resource area.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES WITH NO IMPACTS

As part of the scoping and environmental analysis carried out for the project, the following environmental issues were considered but no adverse impacts were identified. As a result, there is no further discussion about these issues in this document.

- **Coastal Zone** – California’s Coastal Zone generally extends 1,000 yards inland from the mean high tide line. The project area is located approximately 4 miles from the Pacific Ocean and is not located within the Coastal Zone. No impacts would occur and no avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures are required.
- **Wild and Scenic Rivers** – According to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), there are no wild and scenic rivers located in the project area. No impacts would occur and no avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures are required.
- **Farmlands/Timberlands** – According to the California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP), there are no designated important farmlands in the project area. According to the City of Los Alamitos General Plan Land Use Element, there are no agricultural land uses or timberlands within the vicinity of the project site. No impacts would occur and no avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures are required.
- **Environmental Justice** – The Build Alternatives would have no effect to minority or low-income populations because no such populations have been identified, based upon research conducted with the U.S. Census Bureau. Efforts undertaken to identify those populations included analyzing census data provided on the U.S. Census Bureau website from both the 2010 Census and 2015 American Community Survey. No minority or low-income populations that would be adversely affected by the Build Alternatives have been identified as determined above. Therefore, this project is not subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12898. No impacts would occur and no avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures are required.
- **National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)** – The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Species List identified four special-status species/essential fish habitats with potential to occur in the general vicinity of the biological study area (BSA). However, no special-status species/essential fish habitats were observed in the BSA, and are not expected to occur based on lack of suitable habitat. A “no effect” finding was determined

for all species on the NMFS Species List having the potential to occur in the BSA. No impacts would occur and no avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures are required.

- **Natural Communities** – Based on the *Natural Environment Study (Minimal Impacts)* (NES-MI), no native plant communities or natural communities of special concern occur within the BSA. Further, the project would not adversely affect migration corridors or wildlife linkages within the BSA. Although Coyote Creek (a concrete-lined drainage facility) exists to the west of the project site, the project would not encroach into the facility nor affect any existing wildlife movement within the channel. No impacts would occur and no avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures are required.
- **Plant Species** – According to the NES-MI, a total of 15 special-status plant species were identified as potentially occurring within the BSA (two of which are Federally listed). However, the BSA is primarily composed of existing developments (e.g., commercial, residential, and transportation land uses), roadways, medians, pedestrian sidewalks, landscaped areas, and channelized waterways, with no naturally occurring habitat types remaining. Therefore, the NES-MI concluded that special status plant species are not expected to occur and are presumed absent from the BSA based on specific habitat requirements for special status plant species, availability and quality of habitat within the BSA, and known distributions. There are no critical habitats identified for plant species by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for the project area. No impacts would occur and no avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures are required.
- **Threatened and Endangered Species** – Based on the USFWS Species List acquired for the proposed project in addition to potential species listed or proposed for listing under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA), a total of 10 Federally listed and 8 State listed threatened or endangered plant and animal species were determined to have potential to occur in the general vicinity of the BSA; refer to Table 2-1, USFWS Species Effect Determination. However, no Federal or State listed threatened or endangered plant and animal species were observed in the BSA, and are not expected to occur based on lack of suitable habitat and known distributions. There are no critical habitats identified by the USFWS for threatened or endangered species for the project area. A “no effect” finding was determined for all species on the USFWS Species List having the potential to occur in the BSA, refer to Table 2-1. No impacts would occur and no avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures are required.

Table 2-1: USFWS Species Effect Determination

Common/Scientific Name	Status	Species Requirements	Species Habitat Present/Absent	Rationale	Effect Determination
Birds					
tricolored blackbird (<i>Agelaius tricolor</i>) Population: Wherever found	FESA: None CESA: Candidate Endangered	Range is limited to the coastal areas of the Pacific coast of North America, from Northern California to upper Baja California. Can be found in a wide variety of habitat including annual grasslands, wet and dry vernal pools and other seasonal wetlands, agricultural fields, cattle feedlots, and dairies. Occasionally forage in riparian scrub habitats along marsh borders. Basic habitat requirements for breeding include open accessible water, protected nesting substrate (freshwater marsh dominated by cattails, willows, and bulrushes [<i>Schoenoplectus</i> sp.]), and either flooded or thorny or spiny vegetation and suitable foraging space providing adequate insect prey.	Absent	There is no suitable habitat within the BSA. The majority of the BSA has been developed.	The Build Alternatives would have no effect on this species.
Western yellow-billed cuckoo (<i>Coccyzus americanus occidentalis</i>) Population: Wherever found	FESA: Threatened CESA: Endangered	In California, the breeding distribution is now thought to be restricted to isolated sites in Sacramento, Amargosa, Kern, Santa Ana, and Colorado River valleys. Obligate riparian species with a primary habitat association of willow-cottonwood riparian forest.	Absent	There is no suitable habitat within the BSA. The majority of the BSA has been developed.	The Build Alternatives would have no effect on this species.
Belding's savannah sparrow (<i>Passerculus sandwichensis beldingi</i>) Population: Wherever found	FESA: None CESA: Endangered	Found in salt marshes, grasslands, tundra, mountain meadows, sandy regions, and short-grass prairies.	Absent	There is no suitable habitat within the BSA. The majority of the BSA has been developed.	The Build Alternatives would have no effect on this species.
light-footed clapper rail (<i>Rallus longirostris levipes</i>) Population: Wherever found	FESA: Endangered CESA: Endangered	Occurs in coastal saline emergent wetlands along Southern California. Prefers emergent wetland dominated by pickleweed and cordgrass. Requires shallow water and mudflats for foraging, with adjacent higher vegetation for cover during high water.	Absent	There is no suitable habitat within the BSA. The majority of the BSA has been developed.	The Build Alternatives would have no effect on this species.

Table 2-1: USFWS Species Effect Determination [continued]

Common/Scientific Name	Status	Species Requirements	Species Habitat Present/Absent	Rationale	Effect Determination
California Least tern (<i>Sterna antillarum browni</i>) Population: Wherever found	FESA: Endangered CESA: Endangered	This species is an endangered migratory shorebird that nests on our beaches within a limited range from northern Baja California to San Francisco Bay. Habitats include cleared, sandy areas for nesting and depends on estuaries, lagoons, and other open water areas for hunting small fish. They roost on the ground in unprotected areas of the coastal environment in colonies.	Absent	There is no suitable habitat within the BSA. The majority of the BSA has been developed.	The Build Alternatives would have no effect on this species.
least Bell's vireo (<i>Vireo bellii pusillus</i>) Population: Wherever found	FESA: Endangered CESA: Endangered	Primarily occupy Riverine riparian habitat that typically feature dense cover within 1 -2 meters of the ground and a dense, stratified canopy. Typically, it is associated with southern willow scrub, cottonwood-willow forest, mule fat scrub, sycamore alluvial woodlands, coast live oak riparian forest, arroyo willow riparian forest, or mesquite in desert localities. It uses habitat which is limited to the immediate vicinity of water courses, 2,000 feet elevation in the interior.	Absent	There is no suitable habitat within the BSA. The majority of the BSA has been developed.	The Build Alternatives would have no effect on this species.
Coastal California gnatcatcher (<i>Poliophtila californica californica</i>) Population: Wherever found	FESA: Threatened CESA: None	Obligate resident of sage scrub habitats that are dominated by California sagebrush. This species generally occurs below 750 feet elevation in coastal regions and below 1,500 feet inland. It prefers habitat with more low-growing vegetation.	Absent	There is no suitable habitat within the BSA. The majority of the BSA has been developed.	The Build Alternatives would have no effect on this species.
western snowy plover (<i>Charadrius nivosus ssp. nivosus</i>) Population: Pacific Coast population DPSU. S.A. (CA, OR, WA), Mexico (within 50 miles of Pacific coast)	FESA: Threatened CESA: None	Occurs on sandy beaches, salt pond levees and along the shores of large alkali lakes. Breeding generally occurs above the high tide line on coastal beaches, sand spits, dune-backed beaches, sparsely vegetated dunes, beaches at creek and river mouths, and salt pans at lagoons and estuaries. Nests typically occur in flat, open areas with sandy or saline substrates; vegetation and driftwood are usually sparse or absent.	Absent	There is no suitable habitat within the BSA. The majority of the BSA has been developed.	The Build Alternatives would have no effect on this species.

Table 2-1: USFWS Species Effect Determination [continued]

Common/Scientific Name	Status	Species Requirements	Species Habitat Present/Absent	Rationale	Effect Determination
Flowering Plants					
Salt Marsh bird's-beak (<i>Cordylanthus maritimus</i> ssp. <i>maritimus</i>) Population: Wherever found	FESA: Endangered CESA: Endangered	Upper terraces and higher edges of coastal salt marshes where tidal inundation is periodic. Found at elevations ranging from 0 to 99 feet. Blooming period is from May to October.	Absent	There is no suitable habitat within the BSA. The majority of the BSA has been developed.	The Build Alternatives would have no effect on this species.
Ventura Marsh Milk-vetch (<i>Astragalus pycnostachyus</i> var. <i>lanosissimus</i>) Population: Wherever found	FESA: Endangered CESA: None	Grows in coastal dunes, coastal scrub, marshes and swamps. Found at elevations ranging from 3 to 115 feet above mean sea level (msl). Blooming period is from June to October.	Absent	There is no suitable habitat within the BSA. The majority of the BSA has been developed.	The Build Alternatives would have no effect on this species.
California Orcutt grass (<i>Orcuttia californica</i>) Population: Wherever found	FESA: Endangered CESA: Endangered	Only found in vernal pool habitat. Found at elevations ranging from 49 to 2,165 feet. Blooming period is from April to August.	Absent	There is no suitable habitat within the BSA. The majority of the BSA has been developed.	The Build Alternatives would have no effect on this species.
Mammals					
Pacific Pocket mouse (<i>Perognathus longimembris pacificus</i>) Population: Wherever found	FESA: Endangered CESA: None	Occurs in fine, sandy soils along the coast of southern California. The species is considered extirpated from its historic range with the exception of a small population on the Dana Point Headlands and three populations on Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton.	Absent	There is no suitable habitat within the BSA. The majority of the BSA has been developed.	The Build Alternatives would have no effect on this species.

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