

CHAPTER 3

Environmental Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures

3.0 Introduction to the Environmental Analysis

This chapter of the Los Cerritos Wetlands Restoration Plan Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) informs decision makers and the public of the type and magnitude of the change to the existing environment that could result from implementation of the Los Cerritos Wetlands Restoration Plan (proposed program). Environmental topics addressed in this PEIR were identified in the Notice of Preparation/Initial Study (NOP/IS) prepared by the Los Cerritos Wetlands Authority for the proposed program. The NOP/IS was circulated for 30 days, from March 8, 2019, through April 8, 2019, as required by *CEQA Guidelines* Sections 15082 and 15063.

This PEIR addresses the environmental impacts determined to be potentially significant pursuant to the NOP/IS, input from the public, and responses to the NOP/IS, including input at the NOP/IS scoping meeting and from the public and agency comments. This PEIR addresses these environmental impacts as well as impacts that could result from implementation of the proposed program in combination with other cumulative projects in the City of Seal Beach and the City of Long Beach in accordance with requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the provisions set forth in the *CEQA Guidelines*. This PEIR also recommends feasible mitigation measures, where possible, that would reduce or eliminate significant environmental effects. Through this process, the Lead Agency has determined that this PEIR analysis should focus on the following environmental issues:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Geology, Soils, and Paleontological Resources
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning

- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities and Service Systems

Through the NOP/IS, it was determined that implementation of the proposed program would have “no impact” on the following environmental issues: agricultural and forest resources, population and housing, and wildfire. These issues are, therefore, not discussed in this PEIR.

3.0.1 Format of the Environmental Analysis

Each section of Chapter 3, *Environmental Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures*, in this PEIR includes a program-level analysis of the proposed program’s direct and indirect environmental impacts. Each section includes an introduction, the environmental setting, the regulatory framework, program-level impacts and proposed mitigation measures, and cumulative impacts. The following provides a brief description and overview of the six components of each section.

3.0.1.1 Introduction

This subsection provides a brief description of the environmental issue along with an overview of the individual analyses that are provided in the sections and key reference and source documents.

3.0.1.2 Environmental Setting

This subsection provides a description of existing (pre-program) conditions in terms of the physical environment that pertains to each respective environmental issue. This section also describes the baseline condition against which program-related impacts are compared.

3.0.1.3 Regulatory Framework

This subsection provides a discussion of federal, state, and local laws, regulations, plans, and/or policies that pertain to the environmental topic being analyzed.

3.0.1.4 Analysis of Impacts

The analysis of impacts evaluates both the program-specific direct and indirect environmental impacts and the potential environmental effects associated with cumulative development. To provide LCWA with the broadest of foundations as a first-tier environmental document, assumptions have been made, where appropriate, in describing the program features that would potentially result in the worst-case impacts¹. This ensures that the analysis in the PEIR documents

¹ For example, detailed data on soil contamination is not available for all of the sites within the program boundary, so this PEIR assumes a worst-case scenario that a large area of soil would need to be remediated. However, during

the potential for environmental impact from all the projects under this proposed program. Once LCWA begins the process of designing specific restoration projects, they will seek to minimize impactful aspects of the project, wherever feasible.

Significance Criteria: Significance criteria are thresholds applied by the Lead Agency to identify significant adverse environmental impacts. A threshold is defined by a Lead Agency based on scientific and factual data relative to the Lead Agency jurisdiction, views of the public in affected areas, the policy/regulatory environment of affected jurisdictions, and other factors.

Methodology: This subsection starts with a description of the methodology, including the key assumptions, used in the analysis. Environmental issues that have been scoped out during the scoping process (i.e., that have been reviewed and determined to not relate to a significant environmental impact) are identified following the significance thresholds.

Impact Evaluation: Each impact is summarized in an “impact statement” that is separately numbered, corresponds with a significance threshold, and is followed by a detailed discussion. Where the impact analysis identifies potential significant adverse environmental effects that could be reduced or avoided through implementation of a mitigation measure or measures, the measure(s) are presented after the relevant impact discussion. 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 sponsor or 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 any identified 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.

A “significant effect” is defined by *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15382 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.

This PEIR uses the following terms to describe the level of significance of impacts identified during the course of the environmental analysis:

- **No Impact**—No adverse impact on the environment would occur, and mitigation is not required.
- **Less-than-Significant Impact**—A less-than-significant impact does not result in a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area

future phases of the restoration design process, more data on soil contamination will be collected which in turn will be used to refine the restoration design so that a smaller area of soil requires remediation, thereby reducing impacts associated with larger-scale remediation.

affected by the proposed program, including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance (see *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15382). Impacts determined to be less than significant do not require mitigation measures.

- **Significant Impact**—Public Resources Code Section 21068 defines a significant impact as “a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in the environment.” The thresholds identified in each section of this EIR and the CEQA definition of “significant impact” are applied to reach this conclusion. Feasible mitigation measures or alternatives to the project must be identified and adopted if they would avoid or substantially reduce the significant impact.
- **Significant and Unavoidable Impact**—A significant and unavoidable impact is a substantial adverse effect on the environment that cannot be mitigated to a less-than-significant level. A project with significant and unavoidable impacts could still proceed, but the Lead Agency would be required to adopt a statement of overriding considerations, pursuant to *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15093, explaining why the Lead Agency would proceed with the project in spite of the potential for significant environmental impacts.

Cumulative Impacts: CEQA requires that EIRs discuss a project’s potential contribution to cumulative impacts, in addition to project-specific impacts. In accordance with CEQA, 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. According to *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15355:

“Cumulative impacts” refer to two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts.

- (a) *The individual effects may be changes resulting from a single project or a number of separate projects.*
- (b) *The cumulative impact from several projects is the change in the environment, which results from the incremental impact of the project when added to other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time.*

CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(a)(1) further states, “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 projects (existing conditions), present projects (projects under construction), and reasonably foreseeable future projects (proposed, approved, or reasonably expected).

CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(a) also requires that EIRs discuss the cumulative impacts of a project when the proposed project’s incremental effect is “cumulatively considerable.” Under *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15065(a)(3), “cumulatively considerable” means that “the incremental effects of an individual project are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.” Where a Lead Agency is examining a project with an incremental effect that is not cumulatively considerable, it need not consider the effect significant but must briefly describe the basis for its conclusion. If the combined cumulative impact associated with a project’s incremental effect and

the effects of other projects is not significant, *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15130(a)(2) requires a brief discussion in the EIR of why a cumulative impact is not significant and why it is not discussed in further detail. *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15130(a)(3) requires supporting analysis in the EIR if a determination is made that a project's contribution to a significant cumulative impact is rendered less than cumulatively considerable and, therefore, is not significant. CEQA recognizes that the analysis of cumulative impacts need not be as detailed as the analysis of project-related impacts, but instead should “be guided by the standards of practicality and reasonableness.” (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15130(b)). The discussion of cumulative impacts in this PEIR focuses on whether the impacts of the proposed program are cumulatively considerable.

The fact that a cumulative impact is significant does not necessarily mean that project-related contribution to the cumulative impact analysis is significant, as well. Instead, under CEQA, a project-related contribution to a significant cumulative impact is only significant if the contribution is “cumulatively considerable.” To support each significance conclusion, this PEIR provides a cumulative impact analysis. These potential impacts are documented where program-specific impacts have been identified that, together with the effects of other cumulative projects, could result in cumulatively significant impacts.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(b) defines consideration of the following two elements as necessary to provide an adequate discussion of cumulative impacts: “(A) a list of past, present, and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts, including, if necessary, those projects outside the control of the agency, or (B) a summary of projections contained in an adopted local, regional, or statewide plan, or related planning document, that describes or evaluates conditions contributing to the cumulative effect.” In this EIR, each environmental impact area looks at a list of past, present, and probable future projects, and in some cases, a combination of the cumulative projects list and the summary of projections is used. Cumulative study areas are defined based on an analysis of the geographical scope relevant to each particular environmental issue. Therefore, the cumulative study area for each individual environmental impact issue may vary and will be defined in each section. For example, cumulative aesthetic considerations encompass only the surrounding areas with direct views of the proposed program, while air quality is a regional issue that is analyzed on a broader scale.

Additionally, to determine which cumulative projects may contribute to cumulative impacts, the LCWA considered known projects within a 3-mile radius of the program boundaries, which were obtained from the City of Seal Beach and City of Long Beach. To address regional growth, adopted plans (such as the SCAG 2016–2040 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy Growth Forecast, the City of Seal Beach General Plan, and the City of Long Beach General Plan) are used in the cumulative impact analysis. The Seal Beach and Long Beach sections of the *2016–2040 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy Growth Forecast* (SCAG 2016) was reviewed.

Established databases (such as www.CEQAnet.ca.gov) were used to identify projects that were being evaluated by agencies within southern/coastal Los Angeles County. This information was then sent to the cities of Seal Beach and Long Beach with a request for confirmation that the list

was comprehensive or, if it was found not to be comprehensive, with a request to identify projects that had not been included on the list. The jurisdictions contacted in August 2019 are as follows:

- City of Seal Beach
- City of Long Beach Planning Bureau
- Long Beach Department of Public Works

Table 3-1, *List of Cumulative Projects*, lists the cumulative projects.

TABLE 3-1
LIST OF CUMULATIVE PROJECTS

Project No.	Project Name	Location	Distance from Program Area	Description	Size	Status
City of Seal Beach						
1	Ocean Place Residential Project	1st Street and Marina Drive	0.6 miles from the program area	The project includes a single-family home project and a neighborhood park.	6.4 acres	n/a
2	Main and PCH Mixed-Use Center Project	350 Main Street	0.6 miles from the program area	The project includes retail, office, a coffee shop, and a dojo.	6,808 sf 5,593 sf 999 sf 1,600 sf	Complete
3	Seal Beach Residential Project	Southwest of 1st Street and PCH	0.25 miles from the program area	The project includes a 28-home residential subdivision.	n/a	Approved
4	LA Fitness Health Club	12411 Seal Beach Boulevard	1.9 miles northeast of the program area	The project includes a single-story, 37,000-square-foot private health club within the existing Shops at Rossmoor retail development in the City of Seal Beach, as well as improvements to the left-turn pocket on northbound Seal Beach Boulevard onto Rossmoor Center Way and the widening of Rossmoor Center Way.	37,000 sf	Final EIR
5	Bay Theater Restoration Mixed Use Project	340 Main Street	0.3 miles south of the program area	The project involves restoration of the theater into a luxury entertainment and renovate a combined 2,200 sf of office and apartment space on the second and third floors of the building.	2,200 sf	Negative Declaration
6	Seal Beach Water Infrastructure Capital Improvement Projects	Community Swimming Pool Facility Westminster Boulevard Seal Beach Pier Repair (including Pier Utility Upgrade Project, Zero Tower Safety Improvements, Pier Base Structural Evaluation, 8th and 10th Street Beach Lot Asphalt Replacement)	0.1 miles southeast of the program area 0.3 miles east of the program area 0.7 miles south of the program area	Capital Improvement Projects closest to the program area include constructing a new community swimming pool, replacement of a transmission line within Westminster Boulevard, several Seal Beach Pier improvements, perimeter improvements for the City of Seal Beach Maintenance Yard, and Community Swimming Pool Facility.	multiple	Mitigated Negative Declaration

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Project No.	Project Name	Location	Distance from Program Area	Description	Size	Status
		Beach Yard Perimeter Wall Improvements	0.7 miles west of the program area			
		15 1st Street Renovation	0.7 miles west of the program area			
7	17th Street Properties	232 through 244 17th Street	0.7 miles south of the program area	The project would include four single-family residential structures and demolish an existing duplex of 1,696 square feet.	0.52 acres	Mitigated Negative Declaration
8	Local Coastal Plan	Seal Beach Coastal Zone	—	The City of Seal Beach will work with the California Coastal Commission to prepare and obtain certification for a Local Coastal Plan for the City of Seal Beach	—	Ongoing
9	Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach Ammunition Pier and Turning Basin Project	800 Seal Beach Blvd, Seal Beach, CA 90740	0.81 miles south of the program area	The project would including improvements to the Naval Weapons Station, including increasing the number of concrete piles, widening the south mole, increase the size of truck turnaround, widening the causeway, and changing the width of the public negation channel.	—	Construction began December 2019
City of Long Beach						
9	Pacific Coast Highway (PCH) & 2nd Street	6400 PCH	0.14 miles from the program area	The project would demolish the existing Seaport Marina Hotel and construct a commercial center totaling 245,000 square feet, which would include approximately 95,000 square feet of retail uses, a 55,000-square-foot grocery store, a 25,000-square-foot fitness/health club, and approximately 70,000 square feet of restaurant uses, as well as 1,150 parking spaces. The proposed commercial structures would be one- and two-story buildings with a maximum height of 35 feet.	10.93 acres	Final public hearing fall 2017
10	Southeast Area Specific Plan	Southeast edge of the City of Long Beach	0.3 miles northwest of program area	The project would replace the current 1,475-acre PD-1 zoning district with a new Specific Plan covering 1,466 acres and remove 9 acres from the PD-1 boundaries to convert to conventional zoning. Therefore, the project would change the boundaries of PD-1 so that the project would consist of two separate areas: (1) 1,466 acres within the boundaries of the current 1,475-acre PD-1, and (2) 9 acres within the current PD-1 directly west of the Marina Vista Park (or "Conventional Zoning Area"). Both of these areas combined constitute the project area.	1,466 acres	Approved and Final EIR certified by City of Long Beach on Sept. 19, 2017. Pending approval by Coastal Commission.

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Project No.	Project Name	Location	Distance from Program Area	Description	Size	Status
11	Alamitos Generating Station Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Project	690 Studebaker Road	0.82 miles northwest of program area	The project would construct 300 megawatts of battery energy storage at the existing Alamitos Generating Station. The proposed BESS facility is an energy storage warehouse utilizing advanced technology batteries and control systems to provide electrical service to Southern California Edison. This storage facility would consist of three 100-megawatt containment buildings, similar in appearance to server farms, located within the existing surface parking lot between existing Units 1 through 4 and the switchyard. Each building would be 65 feet in height, 270 feet in length, and 165 feet in width, comprising three levels: two battery storage levels separated by a mezzanine level. The mezzanine level would contain mechanical equipment such as electrical controls and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning units.	71.2 acres	Approved public hearing summer 2017
12	AES Alamitos Energy Center	South of State Route 22 (7th Street), west of the San Gabriel River, north of 2nd Street, and east of Studebaker Road	1.10 miles northwest of program area	The project, which involves modernizing the existing Alamitos Generating Station, consists of two gas turbine power blocks. Power Block 1 would provide two natural-gas-fired combustion turbine generators in a combined cycle configuration, two unfired heat recovery steam generators, one steam turbine generator, an air-cooled condenser, an auxiliary boiler, and related ancillary equipment. Power Block 2 would consist of four simple cycle combustion turbine generators with fin-fan coolers and ancillary facilities.	21 acres	Under environmental review
13	Alamitos Bay Bridge Replacements	The Alamitos Bay Bridge, over the Los Cerritos Channel	0.2 miles south of program area	The Alamitos Bay Bridge is located on State Route 1, in the City of Long Beach a north-south arterial that provides interregional, recreational, commuter, and truck access and local travel through an urban corridor. The bridge was built in 1959 and has been subjected to harsh wear and tear. It is seismically vulnerable at the joints and columns. In addition, it has substructure vulnerabilities which include scour, differential settlement and erosion of the channel banks. Considering all of the above, the bridge is identified as seismically deficient and is highly likely to fail during a maximum credible earthquake. Improvements to the bridge are needed to enhance the safety of the structure and to maintain the level of service. The Bridge Replacement Project would replace the bridge with a new, wider bridge that meets current AASHTO standards and CALTRANS seismic standards.	Not available (n/a)	Planning phase

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Project No.	Project Name	Location	Distance from Program Area	Description	Size	Status
14	Bridge Preventive Maintenance Program—Group 4	2nd Street bridges over the San Gabriel River and Hanes Steam Plant Channel	0.2 miles east of program area	The Bridge Preventive Maintenance Program-Group 4 project includes the improvements of the 2nd St bridges over the San Gabriel River and Hanes Steam Plant Channel.	n/a	In approval process
15	7th Street Gateway Landscaping	7th Street	0.53 miles north of program area	The project includes landscaping of the 7th Street Gateway.	n/a	Estimated construction winter/spring 2017
16	AES Southland Sewer Interconnect Alignment	Loynes Drive Bridge spanning over the Los Cerritos Channel	0.05 miles north of program area	The project is a proposed Sewer Interconnect Alignment impacting Loynes Drive Bridge spanning over the Los Cerritos Channel.	n/a	Planning phase
17	Major & Secondary Highway Program	Atherton Street between Outer Traffic Circle and Clark Avenue	2.1 miles northwest of program area	The project would reconstruct and resurface City streets to extend their useful life, provide incidental curb, gutter and sidewalk improvements, construct curb ramps and bus pads, and replace pavement markings.	n/a	Estimated construction Jan 2017–Sep 2017
		Broadway between Alamitos Avenue and Junipero Avenue	2.9 miles west of program area			
		Junipero Avenue between Ocean Boulevard and Broadway	3 miles west of program area			
18	Citywide Slurry Seal Program	Various locations including Peralta Avenue	0.4 miles north of program area	The project would repair residential streets through pavement sealing and slurry sealing. Repair work would also include patching the street pavement and installation of traffic striping and marking.	n/a	
19	Bridge Deck Repair	Studebaker	0.02 miles east of program area	In conjunction with the County of Los Angeles and CALTRANS, the project would inspect, repair, upgrade, and retrofit City of Long Beach owned bridges.	n/a	Estimated construction in 2017
20	Belmont Pool Revitalization Project	4000 East Olympic Plaza	1.8 miles from the program area	The project would revitalize a pool complex.	125,000 square feet (sf)	Estimated construction beginning 2017 (for 18 months)
21	5744 East 2nd Street	5744 East 2nd Street	1.3 miles from the program area	The project includes commercial retail.	1,122 sf	n/a

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Project No.	Project Name	Location	Distance from Program Area	Description	Size	Status
22	Haynes Generating Station Intake Channel Infill Project	6801 Second Street	Adjacent to program area	The project would include decommissioning of the generation units at the Haynes Generating Station as well as demolition to provide for energy storage solutions and other clean grid initiatives. As part of this Project the Haynes Generating Station Intake Channel would be filled.	n/a	Mitigated Negative Declaration
23	300 Studebaker Road Industrial Park Project	300 Studebaker Road	170 feet north of the program area	The project would demolish 400 feet of existing concrete, on-site pipeline structures, and asphalt paving, and would develop two concrete tilt-up industrial buildings.		Mitigated Negative Declaration
24	Los Cerritos Wetlands Oil Consolidation and Restoration Project	6433 E. 2nd Street, 6701 E. Pacific Coast Highway, and the northeast corner of Studebaker Road and 2nd Street	Within the program area	The proposed project would consolidate existing oil operations and implement a wetlands habitat restoration project that would provide new public access opportunities to this portion of the Los Cerritos wetlands.	n/a	Approved April 2018

SOURCE: City of Seal Beach; City of Seal Beach Proposed 5 Year Capital Improvement Program FY 2019/2020–2023/2024; City of Long Beach.

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