

CHAPTER 3

Environmental Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Organization of Chapter 3

Chapter 3 is organized by environmental discipline, as follows:

3.2 Land Use, Planning, and Recreation	3.8 Traffic and Circulation
3.3 Visual Quality	3.9 Air Quality
3.4 Geology, Soils, and Seismicity	3.10 Noise and Vibration
3.5 Hydrology and Water Quality	3.11 Hazards and Hazardous Materials
3.6 Biological Resources	3.12 Public Services and Utilities
3.7 Cultural Resources	

Each section of Chapter 3 describes the following:

- Approach to Analysis. This subsection describes the general approach to analyzing a given environmental topic and cross-references related issues addressed elsewhere in the EIR.
- Setting. This subsection presents a description of the existing physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of the project. California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, Section 15125(d), requires that the environmental setting section evaluate consistency with local plans and policies. This evaluation is presented in Section 3.2, Land Use. Appendix D of this EIR presents a list of general plan goals and policies, as well as guidance polices from the EBMUD's *East Bay Watershed Master Plan*. Sections 3.3 through 3.12 describe resource-specific plans (e.g., the Bay Area Air Quality Management District's *Basin Management Plan*). Some policies, such as those from local noise and tree ordinances, are explicitly used as significance criteria in Sections 3.3 through 3.12.
- Significance Criteria. Refer to Section 3.1.2, below.
- Impacts and Mitigation Measures. Refer to Sections 3.1.2 and 3.1.3, below.

The evaluations presented in each Chapter 3 section distinguish between impacts associated with Alternative 1 facilities versus impacts associated with Alternative 2 facilities.

3.1.2 Significance Criteria and Impacts

In Chapter 3, the environmental impacts of the proposed WTTIP are identified and classified as significant or less than significant. Section 15382 of the CEQA Guidelines defines a significant impact as “a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project.” For each category of physical conditions evaluated in this EIR, significance criteria were developed using the CEQA Guidelines, city and county standards and policies, or the “significance thresholds” of federal, state, regional, or local agencies. Impacts classified as significant meet the criteria developed for each category of physical conditions. Impacts that are not significant (because they do not meet the significance criteria) are identified as less than significant. The impacts were determined by comparing the environmental effects of constructing and operating WTTIP projects with existing environmental conditions. Each impact is numbered; mitigation measures identified for that impact are assigned the same number. In many cases, impacts apply to all WTTIP projects. Impacts are further characterized for the project-level components as warranted in the text following each impact.

Following the discussion of impacts for project-level elements are more general discussions of impacts for program-level elements.

Chapter 4 addresses impacts associated with growth that could be induced by the project; Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the collective impacts of implementing the WTTIP projects and evaluates the WTTIP’s potential to contribute to cumulative impacts.

Some projects evaluated in this EIR at a project-level of detail would not be implemented for a number of years. To the extent that there are substantial changes in either the characteristics of a project or the circumstances under which a project is undertaken, or if new information that shows that new significant impacts could occur or impacts disclosed in this EIR could be substantially more adverse, then EBMUD will conduct additional evaluation of the project pursuant to the requirements of CEQA.

3.1.3 Mitigation Measures

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.4(a)(1) states that an EIR “shall describe feasible measures which could minimize significant adverse impacts....” Section 15126.4(a)(3) also states that “mitigation measures are not required for effects which are not found to be significant.” In this EIR, mitigation measures are identified (where feasible) for all of the significant impacts and for some of the impacts labeled as less than significant. All mitigation measures are proposed as part of the project.

3.1.4 Project-Level Versus Program-Level Evaluation

This EIR serves as a project EIR and a program EIR. Table 2-1 in Chapter 2 indicates proposed actions evaluated at a project level of detail and those actions evaluated at a program level of detail. The program-level projects are potential future actions that may or may not be necessary depending on future circumstances; these projects are not proposed to occur until well into the

future and/or have not yet been developed enough to permit a detailed evaluation. Consequently, the program-level elements are evaluated in a more general manner. In Chapter 3, impacts associated with these projects are discussed at the end of each technical section. The District will undertake further environmental review pursuant to CEQA as the need arises to design and implement these program-level components and as further details about the specific location and construction characteristics of those projects are known.

When the District undertakes subsequent environmental review for facilities evaluated at a program level of detail, the information contained in this EIR will be revisited to determine the accuracy and the adequacy of these evaluations. In accordance with criteria set forth in CEQA, this EIR can:

- Provide the basis in an Initial Study for determining whether a specific WTTIP project may have significant effects;
- Be incorporated by reference to deal with regional influences, secondary effects, cumulative impacts, alternatives, and other factors that apply to the WTTIP as a whole; and/or
- Focus subsequent environmental review to permit discussion solely of new effects or more adverse effects than those considered in this EIR.