

SECTION 3.0



ENVIRONMENT SETTING

3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

3.1 LOCATION

The Project Area is located within the incorporated boundaries of the City of San Diego in the southwestern portion of San Diego County approximately 2 miles west of downtown San Diego.

The Project Area is located within a highly developed residential and commercial area and is bounded by the Peninsula community of Point Loma to the north and west, the United States Marine Corps Recruit Depot (MCRD) to the northeast, San Diego International Airport (Lindbergh Field) to the east, and Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) Training Center and San Diego Bay to the south (refer to Figure 2-2).

3.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

In accordance with the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act (DBCRA) of 1990, the U.S. Navy (Navy) concluded all active military use of NTC San Diego in April 1997. At the time of closure, NTC San Diego covered approximately 541 acres. The Navy determined 430 acres of NTC San Diego to be “surplus” to the federal government’s needs and proposes to transfer this acreage to the City of San Diego (City) in the year 2000, while 72 acres are being retained by the Navy for the construction of military family housing; these 502 acres comprise the Project Area. The remaining 39 acres are to be retained by the Navy in their current state and are not part of the Project; therefore, they will not be discussed further in this document.

Transportation and Circulation

Freeways located in the vicinity of the Project Area consist of Interstate 5 (I-5), which runs north-south approximately 1 mile northeast of the Project Area, and Interstate 8 (I-8), which runs east-west approximately 1 mile north of the Project Area. Major roadways in the vicinity of the Project Area include Pacific Highway, Midway Drive, Rosecrans Street, North Harbor Drive, Nimitz Boulevard, and Sunset Cliffs Boulevard. Two bus routes (Route 28 and Route 35) operated by the Metropolitan Transit Development Board serve the Project Area.

Four gated access points provide access to the Project Area. Onsite roadways consist primarily of two-lane roads with one travel lane in each direction. Other roadways comprise one-way, one-lane streets.

Cultural Resources

A total of 52 buildings and 18 cultural landscape elements in the Project Area have been recommended and approved as eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. This Historic District is composed of the original core buildings constructed during the 1920s to early 1930s period. Other historic resources in the Project Area include Site NTC-S-1, a single gravestone dating to 1932, and a road section within Ingram Plaza that is included as part of the Historic District.

Population, Employment, and Housing

Regarding population, employment, and housing, the Project Area and vicinity consist of San Diego County, with particular emphasis on the Centre City, Lindbergh Field, Midway, and Peninsula communities of the City of San Diego. The Project Area is located within the Central Major Statistical Area (MSA) of San Diego County, which comprises downtown San Diego and surrounding developed communities.

Infrastructure and Utilities

The Project Area receives its potable water under contract from the City. Wastewater is treated at the City Sewage Treatment Plant in Point Loma. Stormwater is managed through a network of drains that ultimately discharge into the boat channel. Electricity and natural gas are supplied by San Diego Gas and Electric. Non-hazardous waste is transported to Miramar Landfill, a City sanitary landfill. A cogeneration plant produces electricity and high-pressure steam used for heating. The Naval Consolidated Area Telephone System provides telephone service to the Project Area, which is supplemented by residential and contractor line service from Pacific Bell.

Biological Resources

The Project Area is highly disturbed and generally lacks native vegetation and associated wildlife. The boat channel traversing the site in a northeast/southwest direction supports

the following habitats: ruderal, freshwater marsh, disturbed ephemeral wetland, subtidal estuarine open water, and rocky shoreline habitats. San Diego Bay, the largest coastal bay in southern California, is a highly modified estuarine ecosystem.

Geology and Soils

The Project Area is located within the Coastal Plains physiographic province, which comprises recent alluvium, Quaternary marine deposits, and marine terrace deposits. Soils at the Project Area have been heavily disturbed by previous use and primarily comprise artificial fill and bay deposits. The U.S. Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service has categorized the Project Area as an Urban Land Area because a particular soil type cannot be identified. Although no faults are known to underlie the Project Area, several north-south trending faults are located to the east and west.

Hydrology and Water Quality

The Project Area is located within the Pueblo San Diego Hydrographic Unit (HU) and the San Diego Mesa HU. Surface water resources in the vicinity of the Project Area comprise San Diego Bay, located immediately south of the Project Area, and the boat channel, which separates the Camp Nimitz portion from the rest of the Project Area. Surface water runoff is collected by a system of swales and culverts and discharged into San Diego Bay and the boat channel through 32 outfalls. Although groundwater at the Project Area generally occurs at 7 to 10 feet below ground surface, these groundwater resources are not used for drinking water due to their poor quality.

Air Quality

The San Diego Air Basin generally corresponds with the jurisdictional limits of San Diego County. San Diego meets the federal and state standards for all pollutants except the state particulate matter (PM₁₀) and 1-hour oxides of nitrogen (NO_x) standards and federal and state ozone (O₃) standards.

Public Health and Safety

Public health and safety issues at the Project Area are primarily associated with the microwave tower located at Building 617 on Camp Nimitz; the Cogeneration Plant

located at Building 566, the exposed portions of the concrete drainage channel located on the western portion of the Project Area, and the Runway Protection Zone associated with Runway 9/27 of Lindbergh Field.

Visual Resources

Communities in the vicinity of the Project Area include the surrounding communities of Loma Portal, Roseville, and Midway. Additionally, important public view corridors running through the Project Area effectively extend the visual region several blocks to the west. The Project Area is highly visible to sensitive receptors including residents of adjacent communities, and pedestrians and motorists on adjacent roads. Structures in the Project Area are distinguished by the Mission Revival and Spanish Pueblo architectural styles; the Historic Core and the boat channel and associated recreation area are rated “high quality” visual quality character units.

Noise

Prevalent noise sources onsite exist as a result of vehicle traffic from surrounding roadways (e.g., Rosecrans Street, Nimitz Boulevard, and Sunset Cliffs Boulevard) and aircraft operations at adjacent Lindbergh Field. Applicable noise regulations, plans, and policies include the City of San Diego Noise Ordinance Sections 59.5.0401 and 59.5.0404; the City of San Diego’s Transportation Element of the General Plan; Title 24 of the California Administrative Code; the Comprehensive Land Use Plan for Lindbergh Field; and the Department of the Navy’s Planning in the Noise Environment.

Hazardous Materials and Wastes

The Project Area contains several areas where hazardous materials have been identified. These areas include remediation sites associated with the Installation Restoration Program and Underground Storage Tank Program, Points of Interest identified during a Basewide Environmental Baseline Survey, buildings containing asbestos-containing materials, and buildings with lead-based paint. These areas are in various stages of the investigation and remediation process.

Community Services and Facilities

With regard to schools, public primary and secondary education is provided by eight elementary schools, one junior high school, and one senior high school of the San Diego Unified School District. Police protection is provided by the Western Division Command of the City of San Diego Police Department. Four fire stations of the San Diego City Fire Department (Fire Department) serve the Project Area and vicinity, while the Airport Fire Station provides fire protection exclusively for Lindbergh Field. Several recreational facilities, including ball fields, running tracks, tennis courts, a golf course, bike paths, and boating facilities are located at the Project Area. Recreational facilities and opportunities are addressed in the City of San Diego Progress Guide and General Plan, Peninsula Community Plan and Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan, Midway/Pacific Highway Corridor Community Plan, and the tidelands trust.

3.3 PLANNING CONTEXT

Land use and development within the City is governed by the City of San Diego Progress Guide and General Plan. This document provides the City's development policies in the form of findings, goals, guidelines, standards, and recommendations for the City, including communities surrounding the Project Area. Because the Project Area has historically been designated as federal property and is in the process of being transferred from the Navy to the City, specific recommendations for the Project Area are not provided in the General Plan.

The Project Area is located on San Diego Bay, a highly developed residential and commercial area. The facility is bounded by the Peninsula community of Point Loma to the north and west, MCRD to the northeast, Lindbergh Field to the east, and ASW Training Center and San Diego Bay to the south.

Land use at NTC San Diego during its operation as a military facility comprised the following: housing, training, recreation, administration, and support. After closure of NTC San Diego, portions of the property were leased to the City of San Diego, which in turn subleased land to various institutions under lease agreement. Some of the major interim uses include the Metropolitan Wastewater Department (MWW) laboratory, Head Start; a fire fighting training facility presently used by the San Diego Fire Department; storage, berthing, training, and administrative facilities used by the National

Civilian Corps, the San Diego Food Bank, the Vietnam Veterans, and San Diego State University; and several Department of Defense interim functions.

A “Master Lease” (including all improvements and related personal property) exists between the City of San Diego and the Navy. The Master Lease covers Buildings 234 and 235, which are subleased to the MWWD; Building 417, subleased to San Diego State University as a marine studies laboratory; and Building 619, subleased to the Head Start program as a child care facility.

In addition to the existing Master Lease, on April 29, 1997, the City Council voted to exercise its option to acquire the right to lease up to 60 buildings located on the main base. This action is known as “Modification 4.” The lease was further modified (“Modification 8”), effective May 1, 1999. There would be no resource-specific impacts associated with the Master Lease.

The Project Area is located in the coastal zone and, as such, is subject to requirements of the Coastal Zone Management Act and the California Coastal Act.