3. Environmental Setting and Impact Analysis

The sections in this chapter present information on existing environmental conditions in the Project area for each technical issue area, and describe environmental impacts that would result from the implementation of the proposed Project described in Chapter 2 (Project Description). These analyses consider the potential direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of the proposed Project, including short-term impacts during construction and decommissioning, and long-term impacts during Project operation and maintenance. The sections in this chapter also identify mitigation measures to reduce or avoid significant adverse impacts and describe any adverse impacts that cannot be avoided by the implementation of mitigation measures. The scope of the impact analysis is commensurate with the level of detail for the alternatives provided in Chapter 2 and the availability and/or quality of data necessary to assess impacts.

Analytical Assumptions

The impact analysis was conducted with the following general assumptions:

- The laws, regulations, and policies applicable to the City in authorizing approvals for fiber-optic cable facilities would be applied consistently to the proposed Project.
- All applicable laws, regulations, and standards of the State of California would be applied consistently to the proposed Project.
- The Project applicant will obtain all required permits and approvals from other agencies and comply with all legally applicable terms and conditions associated with those permits and approvals.
- The proposed Project would be constructed, operated, maintained, and decommissioned as described in Chapter 2 (Project Description).
- Short-term impacts are those expected to occur during the construction phase and during decommissioning that do not have lingering effects for an extended period after construction and decommissioning are completed. Long-term impacts are those that would occur during operation and maintenance of the Project or that persist for an extended period after completion of construction or decommissioning.

Types of Effects

The potential direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the proposed Project were considered for each technical issue area. The terms “effect” and “impact” used in this document are synonymous and could be beneficial or detrimental.

Direct effects are caused by the Project and occur at the same time and place as the Project. Indirect effects are caused by the Project and occur later in time or further in distance, but are still reasonably foreseeable. Cumulative impacts are those effects resulting from the incremental impacts of the

Project when combined with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects (regardless of which agency or person undertakes such projects). Cumulative impacts could result from individually insignificant but collectively significant actions taking place over a period. Short-term impacts occur during or for a short time after implementation of a project, such as during construction or immediately after construction. For example, noise impacts from construction activities would be considered a short-term effect. By contrast, long-term effects occur for an extended period after implementation of a project. For example, operational noise during facility operations would be a long-term impact, as it would last for as long as the facility is in operation.

Mitigation Measures Included in the Analysis

CEQA requires that a significance determination be made for each adverse impact identified in an EIR. Significance criteria, the basis for which is set forth in State CEQA Guidelines §15064.7, are identified for each environmental resource area. The significance criteria serve as a benchmark for determining if a project would result in significant adverse environmental impacts when evaluated against the baseline or existing environmental conditions. Impacts are assessed relative to each impact criterion to determine whether the project would have no impact on existing conditions, a less-than-significant impact, a less-than-significant impact with mitigation, or a significant unavoidable impact. Impacts are quantified to the extent possible. In addition, the determination of an impact's significance is derived from standards set by regulatory agencies on the federal, State, and local levels; knowledge of the effects of similar past projects; professional judgment; and plans and policies adopted by governmental agencies.

CEQA requires that feasible mitigation measures be identified to reduce or avoid significant impacts.

The State CEQA Guidelines §15370 define mitigation as:

(a) Avoiding the impact altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action;

(b) Minimizing impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation;

(c) Rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment;

(d) Reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action; and

(e) Compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.

If impacts remain significant after all feasible mitigation is considered (i.e., continue to exceed the threshold of significance identified in the impact criteria), the analysis concludes that the impact is significant and unavoidable. If the Lead Agency elects to approve a project despite its significant and unavoidable impacts, the Lead Agency must also adopt a Statement of Overriding Considerations that explains why the significant and unavoidable impacts associated with the project are acceptable.

Some measures that serve to reduce impacts are required by agencies other than the City, and their implementation will be enforced by those other agencies. The applicant will be required to comply with the requirements of these other agencies.

CEQA Significance Conclusions

For the purposes of CEQA compliance, a determination has been made regarding the significance of each adverse impact identified for the proposed Project. The CEQA Lead Agency (which in this case is the City of Hermosa Beach) is responsible for determining whether an impact is significant and is

required to adopt feasible mitigation measures to minimize or avoid each significant impact. A series of criteria, identified in the "Significance Thresholds" section for each technical issue area, are used to help the CEQA Lead Agency gauge the significance of each impact.

In order to provide a systematic evaluation of potential environmental impacts, a classification system has been applied to the impacts of the proposed Project. These classifications indicate whether an identified impact is significant and whether mitigation measures can reduce the severity of the impact to a level that is not significant. The following classifications were uniformly applied to each adverse impact:

- **Class I: Significant impact; cannot be mitigated to a level that is not significant.** Class I impacts are significant adverse effects that cannot be mitigated below a level of significance through the application of feasible mitigation measures. Class I impacts are significant and unavoidable.
- **Class II: Significant impact; can be mitigated to a level that is not significant.** A Class II impact is a significant adverse effect that can be reduced to a less-than-significant level through the application of feasible mitigation measures presented in this EIR.
- **Class III: Adverse; less than significant.** A Class III impact is a minor change or effect on the environment that does not meet or exceed the criteria established to gauge significance.
- **Class IV: Beneficial impact.** Class IV impacts represent beneficial effects that would result from project implementation.

In cases where there is a potential for a certain type of impact, but no such impact would occur for the proposed Project, the reasons for no occurrence of an impact are described and a no impact classification is assigned.

A significant impact is defined by CEQA as "a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project" (State CEQA Guidelines §15382). Significance thresholds serve as a benchmark for determining if a project will result in a significant adverse environmental impact when evaluated against baseline conditions. Although guidance provided by CEQA is used to help determine the significance of impacts, the determination of impact significance is based on the independent judgment of the CEQA Lead Agency. The establishment of any criteria used to evaluate the significance of impacts is also the responsibility of the CEQA Lead Agency. Some impact categories in this document lend themselves to scientific or mathematical analysis and, therefore, to quantification, while others are more qualitative. Some issues, such as air quality, have significance thresholds that are established by agencies with regulatory authority for that resource and have been determined by the CEQA Lead Agency to be applicable to the analysis.

Cumulative Effects Scenario

This section presents the scenario used to determine the cumulative impacts associated with the proposed Project. Cumulative effects are those impacts from related projects that would occur in combination with similar impacts of the proposed Project. To document the process used to determine cumulative impacts, this section provides the CEQA requirements, the methodology used in the cumulative assessment, and the projects identified and applicable to the cumulative analysis. The analysis of cumulative impacts is presented within each issue area section.

Introduction

Preparation of a cumulative impact analysis is required under CEQA. CEQA identifies three basic types of potential impacts: direct, indirect, and cumulative. "Cumulative impact" is the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the proposed Project when considered with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of which agency or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative effects can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over time.

Both CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines require that cumulative impacts be analyzed in an EIR when the resulting impacts are cumulatively considerable and, therefore, potentially significant. The discussion of cumulative impacts must reflect the severity of the impacts, as well as the likelihood of their occurrence; however, the discussion need not be as detailed as the discussion of environmental impacts attributable to the project alone. Further, the discussion is intended to be guided by the standards of practicality and reasonableness. As stated in Public Resources Code Section 21083(b), "a project may have a significant effect on the environment if" the "possible effects of a project are individually limited but cumulatively considerable."

According to Section 15355 of the State CEQA Guidelines:

> "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.

Further, according to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15130 (a)(1):

> As defined in Section 15355, 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. An EIR should not discuss impacts which do not result in part from the project evaluated in the EIR.

In addition, as stated in State CEQA Guidelines Section 15064(h)(4) it should be noted that:

> The mere existence of significant cumulative impacts caused by other projects alone shall not constitute substantial evidence that the proposed project's incremental effects are cumulatively considerable.

Therefore, the cumulative discussions in an EIR focus on whether the impacts of the project under review are cumulatively considerable within the context of impacts caused by other past, present, or future projects. The determination of whether an impact is cumulatively considerable takes into consideration the severity and likelihood of the impact as well as the magnitude of the project's contribution to the cumulative impact. In some circumstances, even a minor project effect can make a substantial contribution to a cumulative impact, meaning that as a cumulative impact becomes more acute, even a small individual contribution to that impact can be considered cumulatively considerable. Cumulative impact discussions for each issue area are provided in the respective sections.

Methodology

The area within which a cumulative effect can occur varies by resource or issue. For example, air quality impacts tend to disperse over a large area, while traffic impacts are typically more localized. For this reason, the geographic scope for the analysis of cumulative impacts must be identified for each issue area.

The analysis of cumulative effects considers a number of variables including geographic (spatial) limits, time (temporal) limits, and the characteristics of the resource being evaluated. The geographic scope of each analysis is based on the topography surrounding the proposed Project and the natural boundaries of the resource affected, rather than jurisdictional boundaries. The geographic scope of cumulative effects will often extend beyond the scope of the direct effects, but not beyond the scope of the indirect effects of the proposed Project. In addition, each project (see Table 3-1), has its own implementation schedule, which may or may not coincide or overlap with the proposed Project's schedule.

Cumulative impacts evaluated in this EIR would likely represent a "worst-case" scenario for the following reasons:

- Not all of the related projects will be approved and built. It is also possible that related projects will not be constructed or opened until after the proposed Project has been built;
- Some related projects may be completed prior to the initiation of proposed Project construction; and
- Related projects would likely be, or have been, subject to unspecified mitigation measures, which would reduce potential impacts.

The analysis focuses on addressing the following: (1) the area(s) in which the effects of the proposed Project would occur (i.e., the geographic scope); (2) the effects that are expected in the area(s) from the proposed Project; (3) past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects that have or that are expected to have impacts in the same area; (4) the impacts or expected impacts from these other projects; (5) and the overall impact(s) that can be expected if the individual impacts are allowed to accumulate.

Relevant Cumulative Projects

For preparation of the cumulative projects list, the City of Hermosa Beach and the City of Manhattan Beach were contacted for a current list of projects within their respective jurisdictions. The EIR preparers also attempted to ascertain whether any cumulative projects are planned off shore of Hermosa Beach, but were unable to identify any such projects. Therefore, the compiled list of cumulative projects consists solely of projects located on shore. Other relevant previously prepared documents were consulted to ensure completeness of the cumulative project list, presented in Table 3-1 below. The locations of these projects are shown in Figure 3-1.

Table 3-1. Transpacific Fiber-optic Cable Systems Project Cumulative Projects List

Project	Type	Location	Status	Map No.
City of Hermosa Beach				
Clash Hotel	Hotel	1429 Hermosa Avenue	In plan check, 2015/16 construction	8
10,124 sq. ft. 3 Unit Office Building	Office	2101 Pacific Coast Highway	Approved, 2015/16 Construction	9
300 sq. ft. TI Office Space	Office	824 1st Street	Approved, 2015/16 Construction	10
Strand & Pier Hotel Mixed Use Project	Hotel/Restaurant/ Small Retail	Pier Avenue and 13th Street	Application Filed. Pending applicant modifications and EIR Process	11
Skechers Design Center and Executive Offices	Design Center and Executive Offices	2851/2901/3001, 3125 Pacific Coast Highway; 744 Longfellow Ave	Application filed, EIR in process, 2018 occupancy	12
130 room Hotel	Hotel	Hotel developed south of 11th Court, west of Hermosa Ave and over Scotty's, replace Scotty's with restaurant.	Pre-Application, EIR required.	13
Hope Chapel Site	Mixed Commercial	2420 Pacific Coast Highway – 950 Artesia Boulevard	Pre-Application	14
City of Manhattan Beach				
Grocery Store Conversion and New Retail/Bank Building	Commercial	707 N. Sepulveda Boulevard	Use Permit under review.	1
Manhattan Village Mall Renovation	Commercial	3200 N. Sepulveda Boulevard.	Use Permit approved Dec. 2014.	2
5,000 sq. ft. medical office building	Office	1101 Aviation Boulevard	Plan Check submitted Oct 2014	3
6,927 sq. ft. retail and office building	Retail/Office	213 Manhattan Beach Boulevard	Under Construction	4
12,000 sq. ft. grocery store conversion	Commercial	1133 Artesia Boulevard	Use Permit approved by City April 2014	5
25,350 sq. ft. medical office building including 2,300 sq. ft. retail/coffee	Mixed Commercial	1000 N. Sepulveda Boulevard	Building Permit Issued October 2014	6
15,000 sq. ft. office building including 700 sq. ft. deli	Mixed Commercial	865 Manhattan Beach Boulevard	Use Permit approved by City February 2014	7

Source: ICF International, City of Hermosa Beach, City of Manhattan Beach

Figure 3-1

Cumulative Projects