



February 22, 2019

**Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an
Environmental Impact Report and Public Scoping Meeting for the
VA Alameda Multi-Specialty Outpatient Clinic and National Cemetery
Proposed Project**

Notice is hereby given that the City of Alameda, as California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Lead Agency, will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Veterans Affairs Administration (VA) Alameda Multi-Specialty Outpatient Clinic and National Cemetery proposed Project (Project) and will hold a public scoping meeting to receive comments on the scope of the EIR, as detailed below. This NOP/Notice of Public Scoping Meeting (Notice) is also available online at www.alamedaca.gov.

The City's approval of proposed easements to support the project, will be the first required non-federal discretionary action on the project; therefore, the City will act as CEQA Lead Agency for the Project. The City has determined that an EIR must be prepared for the Project prior to making any final decision regarding whether to approve the Project, in accordance with the CEQA. The EIR will cover environmental topics as defined in CEQA Guidelines, Appendix G. The purpose of the project-specific EIR will be to assess potential physical environmental effects of the Project, to identify ways to minimize or avoid significant effects, and to describe and analyze alternatives to the Project. The City has issued this Notice to Responsible Agencies, Trustee Agencies, federal agencies, transportation planning agencies and agencies with transportation facilities that may be affected and other interested parties. Responsible Agencies are those public agencies, other than the City, that have a role in approving or carrying out the proposed Project.

The VA is the project proponent and Federal lead for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Given updates to project description and a new mitigation plan for the proposed project, it is likely that the VA will be required to circulate a Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) to the original EA that was finalized in 2013. Therefore, the City and VA may consider combining the NEPA and CEQA documentation for public review.

Notice of Preparation of an EIR and Public Scoping Meeting
Veterans Affairs Alameda Multi-specialty Outpatient Clinic and National Cemetery Project

PROJECT TITLE: VA Alameda Multi-Specialty Outpatient Clinic and National Cemetery	PROJECT LOCATION: Approximately 120 acres of land located at the 624-acre former Naval Air Station (VA Transfer Parcel) in Alameda, California 94501
CEQA LEAD AGENCY: Andrew Thomas City of Alameda Planning, Building & Transportation Department 2263 Santa Clara Avenue, Room 190 Alameda, CA 94501 Telephone: (510) 747-6881 athomas@alamedaca.gov	NEPA LEAD AGENCY: Gus Ballis Department of Veteran Affairs GEMS Coordinator; 140/SAC 10535 Hospital Way Mather, CA 95655 Telephone: (916) 843-7098 Gus.Ballis@va.gov
PROJECT APPLICANT/DEVELOPER: Gus Ballis Department of Veteran Affairs GEMS Coordinator; 140/SAC 10535 Hospital Way Mather, CA 95655 Telephone: (916) 843-7098 Gus.Ballis@va.gov	DATE OF THIS NOTICE: February 22, 2019

PUBLIC REVIEW AND SCOPING:

The City of Alameda Planning Board will hold a Public Scoping Meeting to receive comments to help the City refine the scope and content of the EIR on **Monday March 11, 2019, at Alameda City Hall, 2263 Santa Clara Avenue, Alameda, CA 94501, City Council Chambers, 3rd Floor, and beginning at 7:00 PM.** No action will be taken at the meeting. All comments must be received in writing at the City of Alameda Planning, Building & Transportation Department by **5:00 p.m. on Friday, March 22, 2019.**

Comments on the proposed scope and content of the EIR may be submitted in writing to the attention of Andrew Thomas, City of Alameda, at the address indicated above for CEQA Lead Agency Contact. Comments may also be emailed to Andrew Thomas at the email address shown above. If you are an authorized representative of a Responsible Agency, or a Trustee Agency, the City needs to know the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information that is relevant to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed Project. Your agency will need to use the EIR when considering your permit or other approval for the Project. We will also need the name, address, telephone number and email address of the contact person for your agency.

PROJECT SITE AND SURROUNDINGS:

The VA Transfer Parcel is bordered by San Francisco Bay to the west and south and by the remainder of the former NAS Alameda property, now owned by the City of Alameda (City) and referred to as Alameda Point, to the north and east. Most of the VA Transfer Parcel is located in Alameda County, but a small portion in the southwestern corner of the parcel is located in San Francisco County. Regional vehicular access routes to the VA Transfer Parcel include Interstate 880, Interstate 980, and the Webster and Posey Street tubes. Major arterial streets serving Alameda Point include Atlantic Avenue (Ralph Appezatto Memorial Parkway), Willie Stargell Avenue, Pacific Avenue, Central Avenue, Webster Street, and Constitution Way. See Figure 2-1 for the regional project location.

The proposed VA Development Area, which is where the VA would construct the proposed services buildings and associated infrastructure, is situated on 112 acres in the northwestern portion of the VA Transfer Parcel. In addition to the area proposed for facilities development, the proposed Project includes areas designated for on-site wetland mitigation construction, stormwater management and water quality control structures, and a temporary OPC modular building complex. On-site utilities would be constructed within the VA Development Area, and off-site utilities would be constructed outside of the VA Transfer Parcel, under easements on City property north and east of the VA parcel. The onsite wetland mitigation would be constructed at the south end of the VA Transfer Parcel adjacent to existing wetland features.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The Navy completed an interagency transfer of approximately 624 acres of excess federal property (referred to as the "VA Transfer Parcel") to the VA for the VA's construction and operation of a Veterans Health Administration OPC, Veteran Benefits Administration outreach office, National Cemetery Administration columbaria cemetery, conservation management office, and associated permanent infrastructure on approximately 112 acres of land (referred to as the "VA Development Area"); initial stages of construction at the Development Area and implementation of the onsite mitigation plan is scheduled to begin in 2020. Under the Project, the VA proposes to construct the VA OPC, VBA

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Outreach Office, NCA Cemetery, and CMO to satisfy the mandates imposed by federal regulatory guidance, fulfill the healthcare needs of the Bay Area Veteran population and support the protection of an existing 9.7-acre California Least Tern (CLT; *Sterna antillarum browni*) colony. In support of the main facilities, the VA would construct an access utility/road corridor on approximately 6-acres of City land to the east of the VA Transfer Parcel; two new stormdrains would also be constructed underground on City land to the north of the VA property. The remaining 512 acres, including the CLT colony and the 8-acre proposed wetlands mitigation and enhancement area at the south end of the VA's parcel, would remain undeveloped and managed for the long-term persistence and sustainability of the seasonal CLT colony and other species, with access restricted during the CLT breeding/nesting season. Per a 2012 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Section 7 Biological Opinion, all permanent construction at the VA Development Area would be required to be located at least 1,800 feet away from the CLT colony.

The VA, as owner of the property and Project proponent, is responsible for obtaining all applicable permits prior to construction. The VA will be responsible for implementing and monitoring all applicable minimization and mitigation measures identified in the Final NEPA and CEQA documents, as well as all measures identified in the 2012 USFWS Biological Opinion and any identified during National Marine Fisheries Service consultation.

PROJECT APPROVALS

The proposed Project would require discretionary approvals from the City of Alameda for the use of easements on City properties to construction new stormwater management facilities and for the construction of an offsite access road and underground utilities. In addition to City of Alameda approvals, the Project is anticipated to require or has completed the following approvals:

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - Federal Endangered Species Act, Section 7 compliance;
- National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) - Federal Endangered Species Act, Section 7 compliance;
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife – California Endangered Species Act compliance;
- State Historic Preservation Officer - National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 compliance;
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Clean Water Act, Section 404 permitting;
- Veterans Affairs - National Environmental Policy Act compliance;
- San Francisco Bay RWQCB - Clean Water Act, Section 401 Water Quality Certification & Section 402 National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) - General Construction Stormwater Permit Waste Discharge Requirements; and
- San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission - Consistency Determination

PROBABLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF THE PROJECT:

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City staff and the Project applicant (VA) have agreed that the proposed Project may have a significant effect on the environment and that a project-level EIR is the appropriate document for compliance with CEQA. To date, a CEQA Initial Study and NEPA Environmental Assessment (2003) have been prepared to focus the analysis and address all environmental topic areas, including examining the environmental impact of the Project, identifying mitigation measures, and analyzing whether proposed mitigation measures would reduce any potentially substantial impacts to an unsubstantial level as defined by NEPA, or significant environmental impacts to a less than significant level as defined by CEQA. The Final EA was published in 2013; the SEA is in process and will be available for public comment in 2019. The EIR will further expand upon the analyses performed in the Initial Study and EA to meet CEQA regulatory requirements and will identify mitigation measures to reduce any potentially significant impacts to a less than significant level, as necessary; those potential impacts found to be less than significant are evaluated in the IS. Field studies and/or quantitative analysis are proposed in the following environmental topics:

- Emissions (Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas) Analysis: The EIR will include an analysis of the Project construction and operational air quality and greenhouse gas emissions using the latest emissions models. It is anticipated that the Project will be implemented consistent with all local, state, and federal requirements and that emissions impacts will be minimized or avoided.
- Biological Analysis: The EIR will include an analysis of the biological resources at and around the site and the potential impact of the Project on these resources. It is anticipated that the Project will be implemented consistent with all federal and state requirements and that impacts to biological resources will be minimized or avoided.
- Cultural Analysis: The EIR will include an assessment of the cultural significance of structures at the site, the impact of modification or removal of these resources, and measures that could reduce these impacts. It is anticipated that the proposed Project could result in significant impacts related to the removal of historic structures.
- Transportation Analysis: The EIR will include a detailed analysis of the potential transportation impacts and feasible mitigations to minimize impacts to automobile, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian travel. The analysis is proposed to include study of both intersection operations and vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

INFORMATION:

Documents relating to the Project are available for review at the Alameda Planning, Building & Transportation Department and at <http://www.alamedaca.gov>.

Andrew Thomas
City of Alameda, Planning, Building and Transportation Department

Date: February 22, 2019

Attachments: Figure 1, Site Location Map
Figure 2, Illustrative Proposed Project Site Plan