

3.0 SETTING

Consistent with Section 15125 of the *State CEQA Guidelines*, this chapter describes the regional setting of SDIA, where the proposed project would be located. More detailed descriptions of baseline conditions associated with specific resource areas (such as traffic/circulation, water quality, etc.) are provided in Chapter 4.0, Environmental Analysis.

The project site, the former NTC landfill, comprises an area wholly within the current boundaries of SDIA, in the City of San Diego. The landfill site is immediately west of T2 West, north of Spruance Road, east of McCain Road and the Navy boat channel, and south of the MCRD, Runway 9/27 and Taxiway B. It is located approximately two miles northwest of downtown San Diego. North Harbor Drive—from which SDIA is accessed—bounds the project site to the south, as does San Diego Bay further south. SDIA includes commercial aviation facilities such as the existing Runway 9/27 and associated airfield taxiways, air cargo and support facilities, general aviation facilities, the Air Rescue/Fire Station, three terminals, ground circulation, transportation and parking facilities, and transit plazas. The project site is within the California Coastal Zone and underlain by State Tidelands owned by the Unified Port District of San Diego and leased by the Authority.

Active military uses abound in the project vicinity, including the MCRD to the north; the Navy Fleet Anti-submarine Warfare property to the south; and Navy pier. The newly developed mixed use Liberty Station community lies west of the project site on former NTC property, and includes some military housing and a military medical clinic in addition to civilian housing, office space, educational, commercial and recreational facilities. The remainder of the former NTC property (which includes the project site) is currently unchanged from its 1997 status, when the NTC ceased operations. Non-military uses in the vicinity include Spanish Landing Park near Harbor Island, a California Historical Landmark; as well as industrial, commercial, marine, residential and recreational uses along the North Embarcadero. Pacific Highway and I-5 run in a generally north-south direction, easterly of the project site. Access to the project site is gained from McCain Road, west of the former landfill, off of North Harbor Drive.

The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) estimates that the January 1, 2006 population of the City of San Diego was approximately 1,311,200 and that the overall regional population, including the 18 cities that comprise the County and the unincorporated areas, was approximately 3,066,800 (SANDAG 2007).

The project site is situated north of Harbor Island on San Diego Bay, and to the northwest of Navy Pier and the Embarcadero. North Island Naval Air Station and the City of Coronado are located across San Diego Bay from the project site, with the Coronado peninsula separating San Diego Bay

from the Pacific Ocean to the south. The Navy boat channel forms a finger of San Diego Bay that terminates northwest of the project site. The San Diego River, which originates in the mountains of eastern San Diego County northwest of the town of Julian and flows generally southwesterly from its headwaters, drains into the Pacific Ocean near the entrance to Mission Bay, approximately three miles northwest of the former NTC landfill site.