

3.16 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

3.16.1 INTRODUCTION

All actions involving a federal action (funding, permit, or land) must comply with Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, signed by President Clinton on February 11, 1994. This Executive Order directs federal agencies to take the appropriate and necessary steps to identify and address disproportionately high and adverse effects of federal actions on the health or environment of minority and low-income populations to the greatest extent practicable and permitted by law.

3.16.2 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Over 10 million people live within a 25-mile radius of the site, the area considered to be the service area for the proposed action and encompassing the population most likely to utilize the nature center. Of these, approximately 900 live within 0.25-mile of the site and would be the most likely to be affected by construction of the interpretive center. To provide an accurate picture of the demographics of the population that would be affected by the proposed action, both the 25-mile and 0.25-mile radii are referenced in the following discussion.

Income

Low income is defined based on the Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines, which in 2006, was defined as \$20,000 for a family of 4. Within 0.25-mile of the site, median household income ranges from \$43,269 to \$66,333.¹ This is much higher than the Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines, and consequently, the immediate population around the site would not be classified as disadvantaged in terms of income. Furthermore, as shown in Table 3.16-2, a smaller proportion of individuals (6.8 percent) within 0.25-mile of the site are below the national poverty level compared to that of the City of Los Angeles (22.1 percent), Los Angeles County (17.9 percent), and California (14.2 percent).

¹ Note that Table P53 from which this data was derived is aggregated at a broader level than other tables used in this analysis. Consequently, the data for income is representative at the Block Group level, while race and ethnicity, and children and youth are aggregated to the Block level.

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TABLE 3.16-1 MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN 1999

	Within ¼ mile of project site		City of Los Angeles	LA County	California
	(min)	(max)			
Median household income in 1999	43,269	42,189	36,687	47,493	66,333

TABLE 3.16-2 1999 INDIVIDUAL INCOME RELATIVE TO THE NATIONAL POVERTY LEVEL

	Within ¼ mile of project site		City of Los Angeles		LA County		California	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1999 Income below poverty	556	6.8	801,050	22.1	1,674,599	17.9	4,706,130	14.2
1999 Income at or above poverty	7,610	93.2	2,821,556	77.9	7,675,172	82.1	28,393,914	85.8
<i>Total Individuals</i>	<i>8,166</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>3,622,606</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>9,349,771</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>33,100,044</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Within the 25-mile radius of the site, 22.4 percent of the households have an income below \$20,000. This is comparable to the 22.1 percent of the population within the City of Los Angeles below the poverty level (see Table 3.16-2), though higher than the respective averages for Los Angeles County and California.

Minority Populations

Within one-quarter-mile of the project site, almost 85 percent of the population identify themselves as Hispanic or Latino (Table 3.16-3). This is substantially higher than comparable statistics for the City of Los Angeles (46.5 percent), Los Angeles County (44.6 percent), and California (32.4 percent). A smaller proportion within the 0.25-mile buffer are white (37.6 percent), and a much higher proportion are “some other race” (45.1 percent). By comparison, the proportion of the population identifying themselves as Hispanic or Latino within 25 miles of the site is similar to the averages for the City of Los Angeles and Los Angeles County.

TABLE 3.16-3 RACE AND ETHNICITY

	1/4 mile radius	25-mile radius	City of LA	LA County	California
	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Ethnicity:</i>					
Hispanic or Latino	84.6	45.1	46.5	44.6	32.4
Not Hispanic or Latino:	15.4	54.9	53.5	55.4	67.6
<i>Race:</i>					
White alone	37.6	50.9	46.9	48.7	59.5
Black or African American alone	0.1	9.3	11.2	9.8	6.7
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	1.9	0.9	0.8	0.8	1.0
Asian alone	9.5	14.1	10.0	11.9	10.9
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	1.0	N/a	0.2	0.3	0.3
Some other race alone	45.1	24.9	25.7	23.5	16.8
Two or more races	4.9	N/A	5.2	4.9	4.7

Children and Youth

Children and youth are defined as individuals under 17 years of age, as recorded by the Census Bureau. As shown in Table 3.16-4, a larger proportion of the population residing within one-quarter-mile of the project site is aged 17 years or younger, when compared to the City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, or California averages. Within 0.25-mile of the site, 31.9 percent of the population is aged 17 years or younger. This compares to 26.6 percent for the City of Los Angeles, 28.0 percent for Los Angeles County, and 27.3 percent for California. Although children and youth make up a greater proportion of the population within 0.25-mile of the site, in each case, children and youth make up just under 1/3rd of the total population; consequently, the slight difference in the proportion of the local population classed as children and youth would not be noticeable.

TABLE 3.16-4 CHILDREN AND YOUTH

	Children and Youth		Total Population
	Number	%	Number
¼ mile radius	287	31.9	899
25-mile radius	2,888,026	28.2	10,255,388
City of LA	981,311	26.6	3,694,820
LA County	2,667,976	28.0	9,519,338
California	9,249,829	27.3	33,871,648

3.16.3 CRITERIA FOR SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECTS

The proposed action would have an adverse effect on environmental justice if it resulted in a disproportionate adverse health or environmental effect from pollution or other environmental hazards on certain individuals, certain neighborhoods, or federally recognized tribes.

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Note that there are no known federally recognized tribes in the vicinity of the project site.

To determine whether an environmental justice effect would result, the data presented in Section 3.16.2 was analyzed to determine whether a disproportionate minority, low income, or children and youth population exist in the vicinity of the site. If so, the effects of the action would be analyzed to determine whether these individuals or neighborhoods would be adversely affected. If not, the action would be deemed not to have a disproportionately adverse effect on environmental justice.

3.16.4 PROJECT EFFECTS ON ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

3.16.4.1 NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

The No Action Alternative would result in no change to the site. The site would continue to be used for educational and recreational purposes with its existing facilities. No direct, indirect, or cumulative adverse effects on a minority, low income, or children and youth population would occur.

3.16.4.2 18,230 SF ALTERNATIVE

As indicated in Table 3.16-1, there is a larger proportion of Hispanic or Latino within one-quarter-mile of the site compared to the City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, or California; therefore, there is potential for construction to disproportionately affect Hispanic or Latino populations. Given that the majority of construction impacts would be contained on-site, it is unlikely that construction of the 18,230 sf Alternative would result in a disproportionate affect on any one population, including a population defined by ethnicity/race. Furthermore, construction access routes would generally follow major routes around the project site, most of which do not include residences (see Section 3.9, Land Use), and thus would not disproportionately single out any one population. There would be no displacement of the population surrounding the project site, as all construction would be contained to the current site limits. Consequently, the construction effects of the 18,230 sf Alternative would not be adverse.

Assuming that operational effects of the 18,230 sf Alternative would be proportionately evenly distributed – with effects decreasing with distance – no low income, minority, or children and youth populations would be disproportionately affected. The 18,230 sf Alternative would provide enhanced educational and recreational resources to the community within 25 miles of the site. Consequently, the operational effects of the 18,230 sf Alternative would be beneficial.

3.16.4.3 14,000 SF ALTERNATIVE (PROPOSED ACTION)

Most construction effects would be contained on-site; thus, the construction effects of the 14,000 sf Alternative would not be adverse. As with the 18,230 sf Alternative, the 14,000 sf Alternative would not disproportionately affect a population of low income, minority, or children and youth population. It would have the beneficial effect of providing enhanced educational and recreational resources to disadvantaged, minority, and low-income groups.

3.16.4.4 10,000 SF ALTERNATIVE

Most construction effects would be contained on-site; thus, the construction effects of the 10,000 sf Alternative would not be adverse. As with the 18,230 sf Alternative, the 10,000 sf Alternative would not disproportionately affect a population of low income, minority, or children and youth population. It would have the beneficial effect of providing enhanced educational and recreational resources to disadvantaged, minority, and low-income groups.

3.16.4.5 2,800 SF ALTERNATIVE

Construction effects would be contained on-site; thus, the construction effects of the 2,800 sf Alternative would not be adverse. The 2,800 sf Alternative would not disproportionately affect a population of low income, minority, or children and youth population. Consequently, the operational effects of the 2,800 sf Alternative would not be adverse.

3.16.5 MITIGATION MEASURES

No mitigation measures are required.

3.16.6 SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

3.16.6.1 NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Because no action would be taken on the project site, the No Action Alternative would have no direct, indirect, or cumulative effect on environmental justice.

3.16.6.2 18,230 SF ALTERNATIVE

See Section 3.16.6.5 below.

3.16.6.3 14,000 SF ALTERNATIVE (PROPOSED ACTION)

See Section 3.16.6.5 below.

3.16.6.4 10,000 SF ALTERNATIVE

See Section 3.16.6.5 below.

3.16.6.5 2,800 SF ALTERNATIVE

The Alternatives would not have an adverse effect on minority, low-income, or children/youth populations. These alternatives would provide the beneficial effect of a new nature center and expanded programming. No direct, indirect, or cumulative effects related to environmental justice would occur.

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