



LEVEE PROTECTION PLANNING AND IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT EIR FOSTER CITY

Foster City maintains an 8-mile levee along the Bayfront, surrounding the majority of the outer perimeter of the City. The Levee system was designed to provide protection from flood hazards and storm surges. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) conducted a coastal flood hazard study in 2014, which determined that roughly 85% of Foster City's levee system does not meet FEMA requirements. FEMA granted Foster City a temporary "seclusion mapping" designation in 2015 to remain classified as Zone X (and therefore residents would not be required to purchase flood insurance while the designation was in place), so long as progress was made to address the deficiencies of the levee. In June 2018, Foster City residents voted for and approved a new tax to fund a levee improvement project that will address FEMA's concerns and also address future sea level rise.



The proposed project involved improvement and enhancement of the existing levee system. Baseline assisted with preparation of the environmental impact report (EIR) for the project. Our role included assistance with technical project management, drafting of the project description, preparation of the hydrology and water quality, geology, hazardous materials, air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, and noise and vibration sections of the EIR. There were several challenges associated with the analyses of the proposed project. First, the project alignment was long and therefore was divided into eight segments. The air quality and noise analyses evaluated impacts on receptors for each segment. Second, the project alignment was located adjacent to homes, schools, and parks, which were sensitive receptors for noise and air quality emissions (related to heavy equipment operation). Third, the project proposed a combination of three different levee improvement types. In addition, because the precise design and height of the project were not finalized during the preparation of the EIR analyses, Baseline studied two scenarios, which would have different ranges of levee elevations/floodwall heights.

For noise analysis, Baseline focused on impacts from construction of the proposed project, which could result in the exposure of nearby sensitive receptors, such as residences, schools, hospitals, and retirement homes, to temporary noise levels that would conflict with Foster City Municipal Code regulations, and could generate substantial increases in noise levels for intermittent periods when certain construction activities occur (e.g., pile driving). For air quality, Baseline evaluated impacts associated with fugitive dust emissions and exhaust emissions during project construction. Baseline also discussed impacts related to hazardous materials, geology, and hydrology, including the construction of the improved levee that could interfere with the use of the emergency response/evacuation routes, potential damage to levee project structures due to unstable soil conditions during construction and operation, and degradation of water quality. Baseline developed practical and feasible mitigation measures to reduce potential impacts to the extent feasible.

The intent of the proposed project is to provide flood protection in accordance with updated Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) guidelines and retain FEMA accreditation for its existing levee system. The EIR was certified in May 2017, and the project has a funding source from the successful ballot initiative that passed in June 2018.

