

## 4.4 SOCIO-ECONOMIC ISSUES/ ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

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On February 11, 1994, the President of the United States adopted Executive Order (EO) 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations*. This EO states that to the greatest extent practicable and permitted by law, and consistent with the principles set forth in the report on the National Performance Review, each Federal agency shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations in the United States and its territories and possessions, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the Commonwealth of the Mariana Islands.

Federal agency responsibilities under EO 12898 include conducting its programs, policies, and activities that substantially affect human health or the environment in a manner that ensures that such programs, policies, and activities do not have the effect of excluding persons (including populations) from participation in, denying persons (including populations) the benefits of, or subjecting persons (including populations) to discrimination under such programs, policies, and activities, because of their race, color, or national origin.

“Environmental Justice” is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all peoples regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulation, and policies.

“Fair Treatment” means that no group of people, including racial, ethnic, or socio-economic group, should bear a disproportionate share of negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, municipal, and commercial operations or the execution of federal, state, local, and tribal programs and policies.

“Minority” is defined in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The definition is as follows: (a) Black (Not of Hispanic origin)—all persons having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa; (b) Hispanic—all persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture of origin, regardless of race; (c) Asian or Pacific Islander—all persons having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent or the Pacific Islands. This area includes, for example, China, India, Japan, Korea, the Philippine Islands and Samoa; or (d) American Indian or Alaskan Native—all persons having origins in any of the original peoples of North America, and who maintain cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition.

“Low-income” is defined as a household earning less than 80 percent of the County median income, adjusted for family size, as specified in the current U.S. or California census data or recognized current data. In Los Angeles County, a household size of 1 would be considered “low income” with a maximum income of \$30,850, and family of 4 with a maximum income of \$44,100.

Each Federal Agency is required to analyze the effects, including human health, economic and social effects, of Federal actions, including effects on minority communities and low-income communities, when such analysis is required under NEPA. As a general rule, CEQA only requires an analysis of the environmental impacts of a project. Economic and social effects of a project are not treated as significant effects on the environment. CEQA *Guidelines*, §15131(a).

#### 4.4.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

##### City of Los Angeles

The City of Los Angeles is the second most populous City within the United States with an estimated population of approximately 3.8 million individuals. The ethnic composition of Los Angeles is as follows:

- Hispanic – 45.6%;
- White – 32.1%;
- Asian – 12.6%;
- African-American – 9.4%; and
- American Indian – 0.3%.

Income distribution by population per year, is estimated as follows:

- Less than \$20,000 – 23.5%;
- \$20,000 to \$34,999 – 24.9%;
- \$35,000 to \$49,999 – 18.1%; and
- \$50,000 and over – 33.5%.

##### Civic Center Area – Census Tract 2074

The Hall of Justice site is located within U.S. Census Tract 2074 Los Angeles, California. The boundaries of the census tract include U.S. Highway 101 on the north, North Alameda Street on the east, 2nd Street on the south, and State Highway 110 on the west. Census Tract 2074 has an estimated population of

approximately 1,237 individuals.<sup>1</sup> The ethnic composition of census tract by race composition is as follows:

- White – 32.4%;
- Black or African-American – 26.7%;
- Asian – 5.9%;
- American Indian and Alaska Native – 0.6%;
- Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander – 0.1%;
- Other – 0.1%; and
- Two or more races – 1.1%.

The population by sex is 89.6 percent male and 10.4 percent female. The median age for both males and females is 35 years old. The per capita income is \$37,547 per year within the census tract.<sup>2</sup>

Of the 1,237 individuals residing in the area, approximately 1,070 live-in group quarters and are institutionalized at the Federal Bureau of Prisons, Metropolitan Detention Center. Another 148 individuals live in group quarters and are non-institutionalized.

The remaining 19 individuals live within 13 households scattered throughout the Civic Center area.<sup>3</sup>

#### **4.4.2 THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The project would result in a significant impact if minority or low-income populations would be subjected to disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects due to noise, air quality emissions, and traffic. In addition, the project would result in significant impacts if it would displace or divide a community containing primarily low-income or minority persons.

#### **4.4.3 POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF ALTERNATIVES**

##### **Alternative 1 – No Project Alternative**

Under Alternative 1, the Hall of Justice would remain vacant and unsafe for occupancy and would continue to deteriorate physically. Given the current condition of the building, a program would be

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<sup>1</sup> U.S Census Bureau, *Profile of General Demographic Characteristics, Census Tract 2074, Los Angeles, California, 2000.*

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

required in order to observe and routinely inspect the building to ensure it posed no imminent threat or safety hazard to the surrounding environs. Implementation of this alternative would not result in short-term or long-term noise, air quality, or traffic impacts nor displace or divide a community. Consequently, this alternative would result in less than significant impacts to minority or low-income individuals and would be consistent with EO 12898.

### **Alternative 2 – Repair and Reuse Alternative (Proposed Alternative)**

Construction of this alternative would result in short-term air, noise and traffic impacts as described in the respective sections of this document. According to NEPA Law and Litigation 8:49, temporary environmental effects including temporary disruption during construction activities “are not significant effects that require an environmental impact statement.” Consequently, construction would not cause significant environmental impacts to minority or low-income individuals and is consistent with the provisions of EO 12898.

Operation of this alternative would result in long-term air, noise, and traffic impacts as described in the respective sections of this document. These impacts are considered to be less than significant. Consequently, the operation of the project would not cause significant environmental impacts to minority or low-income individuals and is consistent with the provisions of EO 12898.

The project would not displace any on-site or off-site permanent residents and/or commercial businesses. In fact, this project may provide some short-term and long-term employment opportunities for minority and low-income individuals in the area by providing business/personal services to the building occupants. This in turn would provide for increased business opportunities adjacent to the project site, as well as outlying areas. In addition, the implementation of this alternative would have beneficial impacts on the surrounding neighborhoods through the provision of more efficient governmental services such as better security from the Sheriff locating an office within the Civic Center area. Another benefit of the project would include halting the physical deterioration of the Hall of Justice and surrounding neighborhood by repairing this facility. For the above reasons, the repair of Hall of Justice would not cause environmental injustice to minority or low-income individuals and is consistent with provisions of EO 12898.

### **Alternative 3 – Adaptive Reuse of the Existing Building to Secretary of Interior Standards**

Socioeconomic and environmental justice issues under this alternative would be same as described for Alternative 2. Construction and operational noise, air quality, and traffic impacts would be less than significant. This alternative would benefit the community by providing short-term and long-term employment opportunities, increased business opportunities, and more efficient governmental services. Consequently, this alternative would not cause significant environmental impacts to minority or low-income individuals and is consistent with the provisions of EO 12898.

#### **4.4.4 MITIGATION MEASURES (ALTERNATIVES 2 AND 3)**

No mitigation measures are required for either Alternative 2 or 3.

#### **4.4.5 ADVERSE IMPACTS AFTER MITIGATION (ALTERNATIVES 2 AND 3)**

Impacts under Alternative 2 or 3 would be less than significant.

