

4. Environmental Setting

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This section provides a “description of the physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of the project, as they exist at the time the notice of preparation is published, ... from both a local and a regional perspective” (Guidelines § 15125[a]), pursuant to provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines. The environmental setting provides the baseline physical conditions from which the lead agency will determine the significance of environmental impacts resulting from the proposed project.

4.2 REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

4.2.1 Regional Location

Hacienda Heights is an 11.38-square-mile community in unincorporated Los Angeles County, approximately 20 miles east of downtown Los Angeles. The community is bounded by the City of Industry to the north, the cities of Whittier and La Habra Heights to the south, the unincorporated area of North Whittier to the west, and the unincorporated community of Rowland Heights to the east. Regional access is provided via State Route 60 (SR-60) to the north, with Interstate 605 (I-605) approximately 1.25 miles to the west. See Figure 3-1, *Regional Location*.

4.2.2 Regional Planning Considerations

SCAG Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) represents Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura counties. SCAG is the federally recognized metropolitan planning organization for this region, which encompasses over 38,000 square miles. SCAG is a regional planning agency and a forum for addressing regional issues concerning transportation, the economy, community development, and the environment. SCAG is also the regional clearinghouse for projects requiring environmental documentation under federal and state law. In this role, SCAG reviews proposed development and infrastructure projects to analyze their impacts on regional planning programs.

The 2016-2040 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) was adopted in April 2016 (SCAG 2016). Major themes in the 2016 RTP/SCS include integrating strategies for land use and transportation; striving for sustainability; protecting and preserving existing transportation infrastructure; increasing capacity through improved systems managements; providing more transportation choices; leveraging technology; responding to demographic and housing market changes; supporting commerce,

4. Environmental Setting

economic growth, and opportunity; promoting the links between public health, environmental protection, and economic opportunity; and incorporating the principles of social equity and environmental justice.

The SCS outlines a development pattern for the region, which, when integrated with the transportation network and other transportation measures and policies, would reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from transportation (excluding goods movement). The SCS is meant to provide growth strategies that will achieve the regional GHG emissions reduction targets identified by the California Air Resources Board. The SCS does not require that local general plans, specific plans, or zoning be consistent with the SCS, but provides incentives to governments and developers for consistency. The proposed project's consistency with the applicable 2016-2040 RTP/SCS policies is analyzed in detail in Section 5.4, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*.

South Coast Air Basin Air Quality Management Plan

Hacienda Heights is in the South Coast Air Basin (SoCAB), which is managed by the South Coast Air Quality Management District. Pollutants emitted into the ambient air by stationary and mobile sources are regulated by federal and state law, and standards are detailed in the SoCAB Air Quality Management Plan. Air pollutants for which ambient air quality standards (AAQS) have been developed are known as criteria air pollutants—ozone (O₃), carbon monoxide (CO), volatile organic compounds (VOC), nitrogen oxides (NO_x), sulfur dioxide, coarse inhalable particulate matter (PM₁₀), fine inhalable particulate matter (PM_{2.5}), and lead. VOC and NO_x are criteria pollutant precursors and go on to form secondary criteria pollutants, such as O₃, through chemical and photochemical reactions in the atmosphere. Air basins are classified as attainment/nonattainment areas for particular pollutants depending on whether they meet AAQS for that pollutant. Based on the SoCAB Air Quality Management Plan, the SoCAB is designated nonattainment for O₃, PM_{2.5}, PM₁₀, and lead (Los Angeles County only) under the California and National AAQS and nonattainment for NO₂ under the California AAQS. The proposed project's consistency with the applicable AAQS is discussed in Section 5.1, *Air Quality*.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Legislation

Current State of California guidance and goals for reductions in GHG emissions are generally embodied in Executive Order S 03 05; Executive Order B-30-15; Assembly Bill 32 (AB 32), the Global Warming Solutions Act (2008); and Senate Bill 375 (SB 375), the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act.

Executive Order S 03 05, signed June 1, 2005, set the following GHG reduction targets for the State of California:

- 2000 levels by 2010
- 1990 levels by 2020
- 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050

AB 32 was passed by the state legislature on August 31, 2006, to place the state on a course to reducing its contribution of GHG emissions. AB 32 follows the emissions reduction targets established in Executive Order S 3 05. Executive Order B-30-15 also established an interim goal of a 40 percent reduction below 1990 levels by 2030.

4. Environmental Setting

In 2008, SB 375 was adopted to connect GHG emissions reductions targets for the transportation sector to local land use decisions that affect travel behavior. Its intent is to reduce GHG emissions from light-duty trucks and automobiles by aligning regional long-range transportation plans, investments, and housing allocations to local land use planning to reduce vehicle miles traveled and vehicle trips. SCAG's targets are an 8 percent per capita reduction from 2005 GHG emission levels by 2020 and a 13 percent per capita reduction from 2005 GHG emission levels by 2035.

The proposed project's ability to meet these regional GHG emissions reduction target goals is analyzed in Section 5.4, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*.

Regional Water Quality Control Board, Los Angeles

Under the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Act, California's water quality control law, the State Water Resources Control Board has ultimate control over water quality policy and allocation of state water resources. The State Board, through its nine Regional Water Quality Control Boards, carries out the regulation, protection, and administration of water quality in each region. Each regional board is required to adopt a water quality control plan or basin plan. Hacienda Heights is in the Los Angeles Basin, Region 4.

The Los Angeles Regional Board's Basin Plan is designed to preserve and enhance water quality and protect the beneficial uses of all regional waters. It designates beneficial uses for surface and groundwater; sets narrative and numerical objectives that must be attained or maintained to protect the designated beneficial uses and conform to the state's antidegradation policy; and describes implementation programs to protect all waters in the region.

4.3 LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

4.3.1 Location and Land Use

Wedgeworth ES is at 16949 Wedgeworth Drive, Hacienda Heights, unincorporated Los Angeles County (Assessor's Parcel Number 8209-001-901). It is bounded by SR-60 to the north, Wedgeworth Drive to the south, Eagle Park Road to the west, and Pepperbrook Channel to the east. The campus is currently accessed via an enter-only driveway on Wedgeworth Drive and a full-access driveway on Eagle Park Road. The Eagle Park Road driveway also serves the baseball fields.

The 20-acre project site is currently developed with the Wedgeworth ES facilities and a baseball park with four baseball fields. The main elementary school campus occupies the southeast corner of the project site; the baseball fields and related parking area occupy the northern half of the 20-acre site; and the remaining southwest portion (approximately 4 acres) of the project site is vacant. See Figure 3-3, *Aerial Photograph*. Wedgeworth ES has the maximum capacity to serve 600 students, and the 2018-19 school year enrollment was 542 K-5 students (CDE 2019). The school provides portable classroom buildings, hardcourts, turf playfield, and staff and visitor parking lots. The baseball park is not part of the Wedgeworth ES operation, and its four ballfields were constructed and operated by the Highlander Baseball organization. The project site is in the East San Gabriel Valley Planning Area, Hacienda Heights Community Plan.

4. Environmental Setting

The project site was used for agricultural purposes from at least the 1950s through the 1960s until the project site was developed with the existing uses.

4.3.2 Surrounding Land Uses

The project site is surrounded by residential uses on three sides, and beyond SR-60 to the north are various business park uses—industrial, manufacturing, retail commercial, etc. Puente Hills Mall, approximately 1,450 feet to the east, has various retail commercial, restaurants, and entertainment uses. Glen A. Wilson High School, Bixby Elementary School, and Cedarlane Academy K-8 are approximately 0.3, 0.4, and 0.6 mile, respectively, to the west of the project site.

4.3.3 Public Services and Utilities

The project site is surrounded by urban development with existing public services and utilities.

The following service providers provide utilities services to the project site:

- Water – Rowland Water District
- Wastewater – Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County
- Storm Water – Los Angeles County Flood Control District
- Solid Waste – Valley Vista Services, Inc.
- Electricity – Southern California Edison
- Natural Gas – Southern California Gas Company
- School – Hacienda La Puente Unified School District
- Police – Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department
- Fire – Los Angeles County Fire Department

4.3.4 General Plan and Zoning

The project site is designated H5 Residential 5 (0–5 dwelling unit per acre) by the General Plan (Hacienda Heights Community Plan) and zoned R-A (Residential Agricultural).

4.4 ASSUMPTIONS REGARDING CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Section 15130 of the CEQA Guidelines states that cumulative impacts shall be discussed where the project's incremental effects are cumulatively considerable. It further states that this discussion shall reflect the level and severity of the impact and the likelihood of occurrence, but not in as great a level of detail as that necessary for the project alone. Section 15355 of the Guidelines defines cumulative impacts to be “two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts.” Cumulative impacts represent the change caused by the incremental impact of a project when added to other proposed or committed projects in the vicinity.

Section 15130 [b][1] of the CEQA Guidelines states that the information utilized in an analysis of cumulative impacts should come from one of two sources:

4. Environmental Setting

- A list of past, present, and probable future projects producing related cumulative impacts, including, if necessary, those projects outside the control of the agency.
- A summary of projections contained in an adopted General Plan or related planning document designed to evaluate regional or area-wide conditions.

The cumulative impact analysis in this EIR uses the first methods. It uses a combination of method A and B. Generally, the growth projections that are identified in the Los Angeles County General Plan have been utilized for the general plan forecast year conditions. Table 4-1, *Cumulative Projects*, provides cumulative projects list obtained from the cities of Industry and La Puente and the County of Los Angeles.

Table 4-1 Cumulative Projects

Project Address	City/County	Project Type	Land Use	Unit
17110 A Colima Road	Los Angeles County	Services	Fast-Food Restaurant without Drive-Through Window	4,000 SF
17110 B Colima Road	Los Angeles County	Services	Fast-Food Restaurant without Drive-Through Window	1,000 SF
16234 Folger Street	Los Angeles County	Residential	Single-Family Detached Housing	86 DU
1085 Bixby Drive	Industry	Industrial	General Office Building	6,000 SF
1067 Larimore	La Puente	Residential	Multi-Family Housing (Low Rise)	5 DU
747 Del Valle	La Puente	Residential	Multi-Family Housing (Low Rise)	45 DU
15921 Sierra Vista	La Puente	Residential	Multi-Family Housing (Low Rise)	5 DU
335 Willow	La Puente	Residential	Single-Family Detached Housing	5 DU
14317 Beckner	La Puente	Residential	Multi-Family Housing (Low Rise)	5 DU

Source: PlaceWorks 2019.

Depending on the environmental category, the cumulative impact analysis may use either source A or B. Some impacts are site specific, such as cultural resources, and others may have impacts outside the community or county boundaries, such as regional air quality. Please refer to Chapter 5, *Environmental Analysis*, of this DEIR for a discussion of the cumulative impacts associated with development and growth in the County and region for each environmental resource area.

Cumulative impact analyses for several topical sections are also based on the most appropriate geographic boundary for the respective impact. Several potential cumulative impacts that encompass different jurisdictional boundaries (e.g., air quality and traffic) have been addressed in the context of appropriate and defined significance thresholds. Climate change is a global issue, and the cumulative impacts analysis has been addressed in the context of state regulations and regional plans designed to address the global cumulative impact. The following is a summary of the approach and extent of cumulative impacts, which are further detailed in each environmental topical section:

- **Air Quality.** Air quality impacts include regional (cumulative) impacts and localized impacts. For cumulative impacts, the analysis is based on the regional boundaries of the SoCAB.
- **Energy.** Cumulative impacts are based on potential related development within each service provider's boundaries—Southern California Edison and Southern California Gas Company.

4. Environmental Setting

- **Geology and Soils.** Impacts are typically site specific and generally would not combine with impacts of other projects to result in cumulatively considerable impacts, but the cumulative impacts analysis in this EIR considers the combined effects of nearby past and reasonably foreseeable projects in conjunction with the project.
- **Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions.** GHG emissions impacts are not site-specific impacts but cumulative impacts. Therefore, the project-level analysis in Section 5.4 also provides the analysis to determine whether the project would make a cumulatively considerable contribution to significant cumulative GHG emissions impact.
- **Hydrology and Water Quality.** The project site is in the San Gabriel River Watershed, therefore, the cumulative impacts analysis in this EIR considers the combined effects of the proposed project, along with other cumulative projects in this watershed.
- **Noise.** Cumulative traffic noise impacts are based on the traffic study, which considers the regional growth based on citywide and regional projections. Cumulative construction impacts are based on nearby projects that may have concurrent construction schedules. Cumulative operational impacts are based on existing development combined with the project and reasonably foreseeable nearby future development.
- **Recreation.** The area considered for cumulative impacts for recreation is the community of Hacienda Heights.
- **Transportation and Traffic.** The traffic study considers the project's cumulative contribution to traffic and transportation issues in project vicinity. The cumulative traffic analysis is based on cumulative projects in the vicinity of the school obtained from the cities of Industry and La Puente and the County of Los Angeles. To assess future opening traffic conditions, ambient growth was added to the existing traffic volumes plus traffic from cumulative projects at the time of project opening year in 2021. To assess future traffic conditions that correspond to when the Phase 2 project site will be operational in 2026, ambient growth was added to the existing traffic volumes plus traffic from cumulative projects at the time of project Phase 2 opening year.
- **Tribal Cultural Resources.** Cumulative impacts related to tribal cultural resources are based on the local Native American tribes' culturally significant areas and include, but are not limited to, cultural landscapes and regions to specific heritage sites and other tribal cultural places.