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. In addition, subsections of Chapter 5, *Environmental Analysis*, provide a more detailed description of the local environmental setting for specific topical areas.

4.2 REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

4.2.1 Regional Location

The development area covered by the La Puerta School Site Specific Plan (Project Area) is in the northern region of the City of Claremont. The city is in the San Gabriel Valley region and in the eastern portion of Los Angeles County. The City is surrounded by the cities of Upland and Montclair and unincorporated areas of San Bernardino County to the east; the City of Pomona to the south and southwest; the City of La Verne and unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County to the west; and unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County to the north (see Figure 4-1, *Regional Location*). Regional access to the Project Area is provided by State Route 210 (SR-210) and Interstate 10 (I-10). The city is also regionally connected by Metrolink, which connects Claremont to San Bernardino and other communities to the east, and to downtown Los Angeles. Claremont is also located near four airports: Cable Airport, Brackett Field Airport, Chino Airport, and Ontario International Airport (Claremont 2009).

4.2.2 Regional Planning Considerations

4.2.2.1 SCAG REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN/SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES STRATEGY

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is a council of governments representing Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura counties. SCAG is the federally recognized metropolitan planning organization for this region, which encompasses over 380,000 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 2020-2045 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) Connect SoCal Plan was adopted on September 3, 2020 (referred to as "Connect SoCal"). Connect SoCal is a long-range visioning plan that balances future mobility and housing needs with economic, environmental, and public health goals. It builds upon and expands land use and transportation strategies established over several planning cycles to increase mobility options and achieve a more sustainable growth pattern (SCAG 2020). This long-range plan, which is a requirement of the state of California and the federal government, is updated by SCAG every four years to reflect demographic, economic, and policy changes.

Applicability of the 2020-2045 RTP/SCS in considered in Sections 5.2, *Air Quality,* 5.7, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*, and 5.12, *Population and Housing*.

4.2.2.2 SOUTH COAST AIR BASIN AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Project Area is in the South Coast Air Basin (SoCAB), which is managed by the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD). 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 (AQMP). Air pollutants for which ambient air quality standards (AAQS) have been developed are known as criteria air pollutants—ozone (O_3), carbon monoxide (CO), volatile organic compounds (VOC), nitrogen oxides (NO_x), sulfur dioxide, coarse inhalable particulate matter (PM_{10}), 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 O_3, 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 AQMP, the SoCAB is designated nonattainment for O_3, $PM_{2.5}$, PM_{10}, and lead (Los Angeles County only) under the California and National AAQS and nonattainment for NO_x under the California AAQS (CARB 2022).

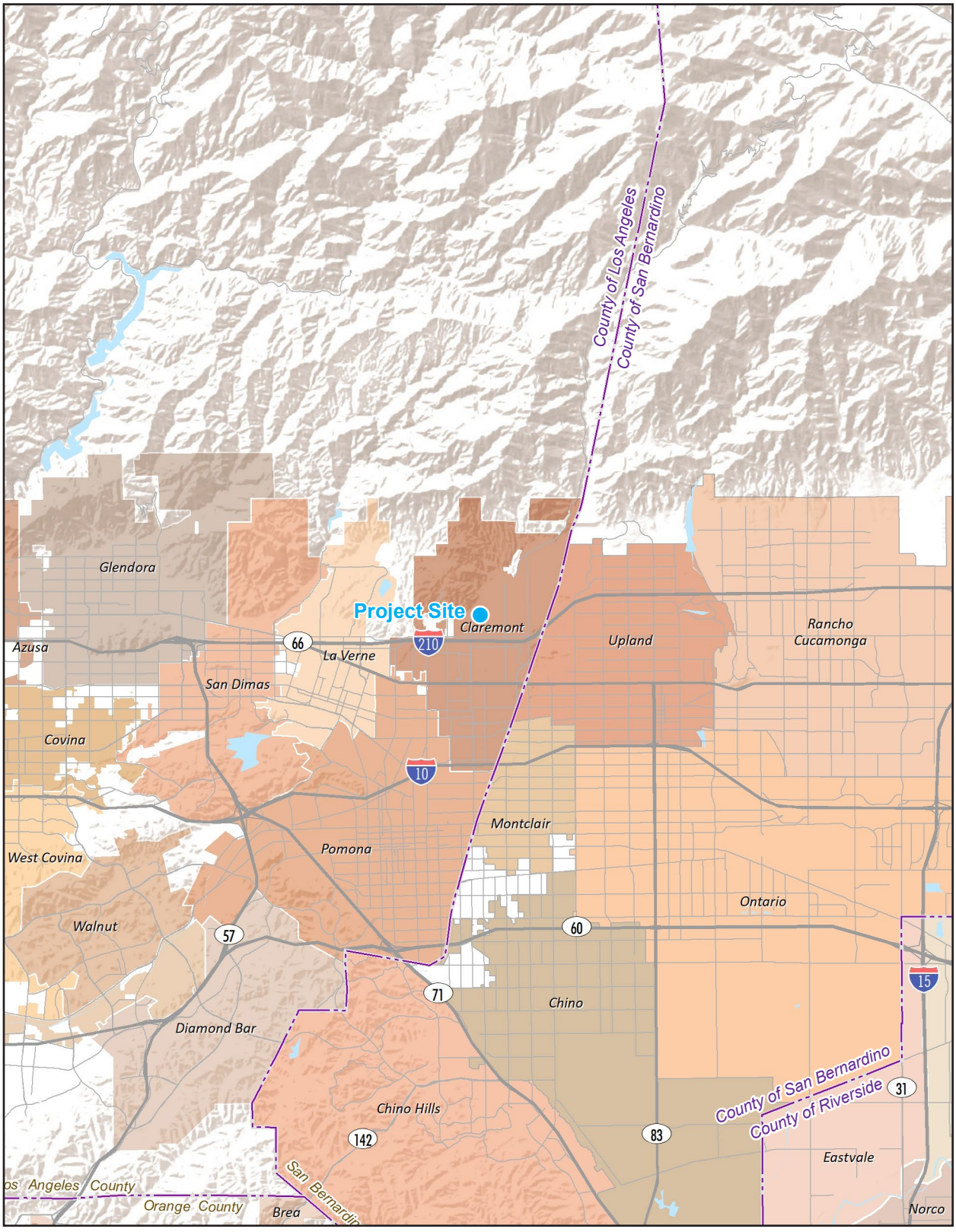
The Specific Plan's consistency with the applicable AAQS is discussed in Section 5.2, *Air Quality*.

4.2.2.3 LOS ANGELES REGION BASIN PLAN

The Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board's (RWQCB) Basin Plan is designated to preserve and enhance water quality and protect the beneficial uses of all regional uses of all regional waters. The Los Angeles Region encompasses the Coastal Watersheds of Los Angeles and Ventura Counties (Region 4). The Basin Plan is a resource for the RWQCB and others who use water and/or discharge wastewater in Region 4. The Basin Plan incorporates all applicable State and Regional Board plans and policies and other pertinent water quality policies and regulations. On July 23, 2021, the Los Angeles RWQCB adopted a Regional Phase I Municipal Separate Stormwater Sewer System (MS4) Permit for discharges within the coastal watersheds of Los Angeles and Ventura counties (Order No. R4-2021-0105, NPDES No. CAS004004). The municipal discharges of stormwater and non-storm water by the City are subject to waste discharge requirements in this MS4 permit.

The Specific Plan's consistency with the MS4 permit is discussed in Section 5.9, *Hydrology and Water Quality*.

Figure 4-1 - Regional Location



County Boundary

Note: Unincorporated county areas are shown in white.

Source: Generated using ArcMap, 2021.

0 3
Scale (Miles)

4. Environmental Setting

This page intentionally left blank.

4.2.2.4 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS REDUCTION LEGISLATION

Current State of California guidance and goals for reductions in greenhouse gas (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 toward reducing its contribution of GHG emissions. AB 32 follows the emissions reduction targets established in Executive Order S-3-05. SB 32 was passed September 8, 2016, and set an interim target consistent with AB 32. Executive Order B-30-15 also established an interim goal of a 40 percent reduction below 1990 levels by 2030.

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.

In September 2016, Governor Brown signed SB 32 and AB 197, making the Executive Order B-30-15 goal for year 2030 into a statewide mandated legislative target. AB 197 established a joint legislative committee on climate change policies and requires CARB to prioritize direction emissions reductions rather than the market-based cap-and-trade program for large stationary, mobile, and other sources.

The project's ability to meet these regional GHG emissions reduction target goals is analyzed in Section 5.7, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*.

4.3 LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

4.3.1 Location and Land Use

Figures 3-1, *Aerial Photograph of Project Area*, and 4-2, *Local Vicinity*, show the location of the Project Area in the local context. The Project Area is in the northern region of the city and consists of an approximately 9.58 acre roughly square-shaped vacant parcel (APN8670-003-900). As shown in Figure 3-1, the Project Area is bounded by Thompson Creek Trail to the north, Navarro and Lamar Drives to the south, Forbes Avenue to the east, and La Puerta Sports Park to the west. The current address of the Project Area is 2475 Forbes Avenue, which is associated with the now closed public middle school that operated onsite until closing as a middle school in

the late 1970s. In 2018, all buildings, structures and improvements onsite were demolished with the exception of the asphalt paving.

As shown in Figure 3-1, the Project Area is currently vacant and contains undeveloped, disturbed land with some vegetation including shrubs and trees. There are also patches of worn and dilapidated asphalt along the northern end of the site. The Project Area is relatively flat with gently southwesterly slopes. Imported materials (mostly sand, gravels and cobbles, and scattered boulders) have been stockpiled over time in the southwest quadrant of the Project Area.

As shown in Figure 3-1, the Project Area is surrounded by residential uses to the north, east, and south and La Puerta Sports Park and residential uses to the west.

4.3.2 Biological Resources

As shown in Figure 3-1, the Project Area is completely devoid of natural undisturbed vegetation communities and is characterized as disturbed/non-native grassland, disturbed, ornamental and developed. General plant species documented in the Project Area include disturbed/non-native grassland, ornamental trees, palms and shrubs, as well as laurel sumac shrubs. A few scattered native laurel sumac shrubs and coast live oak trees are scattered within and adjacent to the ornamental vegetation. General wildlife species documented on-site include American kestrel (*Falco sparverius*) red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*), Anna's hummingbird (*Calypte anna*), mourning dove (*Zenaida macroura*), black phoebe (*Sayornis nigricans*), Say's phoebe (*Sayornis saya*), American crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*), European starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*), white crowned sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*), lesser goldfinch (*Spinus psaltria*), house finch (*Haemorhous mexicanus*), and side-blotched lizard (*Uta stansburiana elegans*).

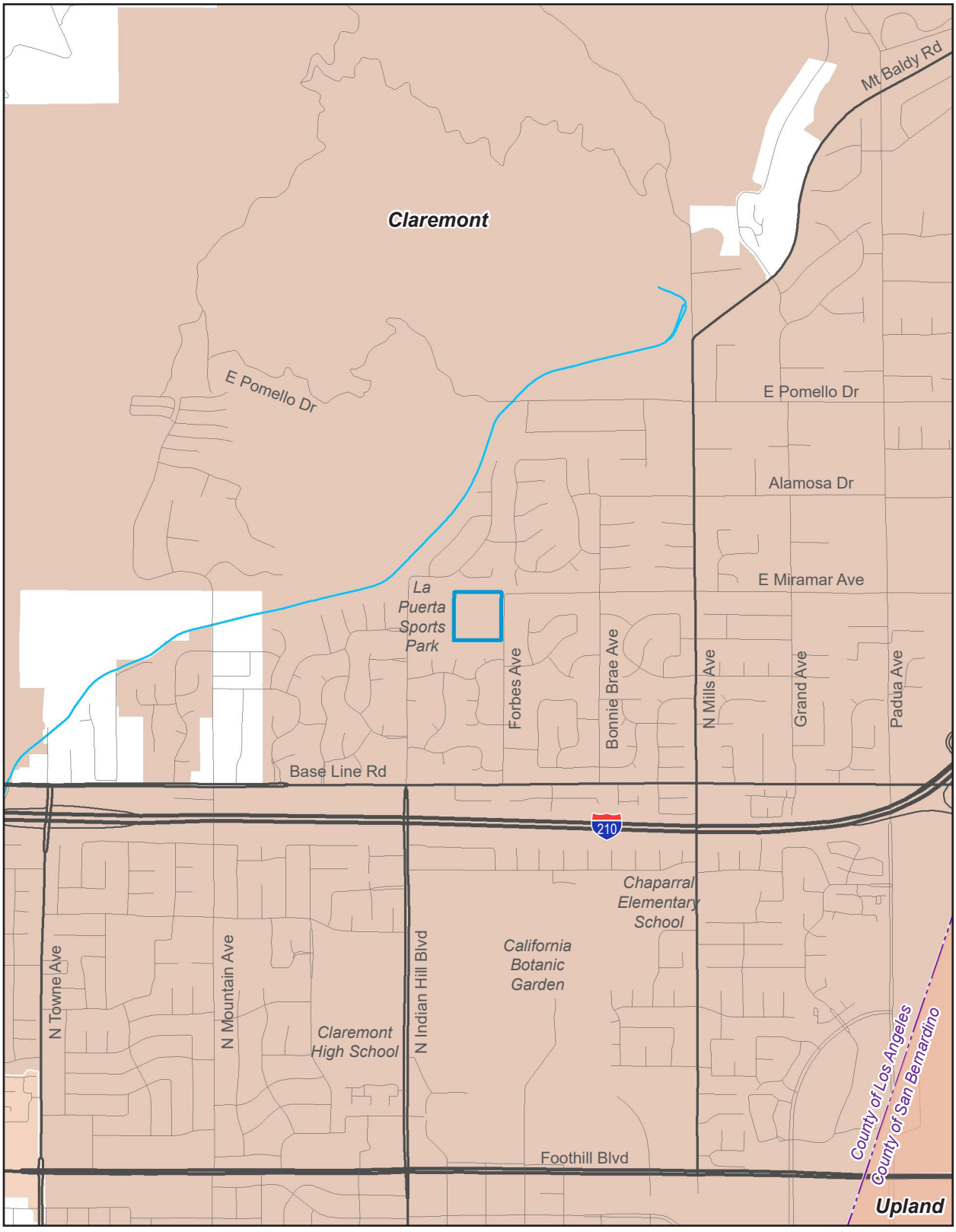
Refer to Section 5.3, *Biological Resources*, for additional information regarding the Project Area's biological resources and an analysis of the impacts to those resources as a result of development accommodated by the Specific Plan.

4.3.3 Climate and Air Quality

The SoCAB, which is managed by SCAQMD, is designated as nonattainment for O_3, and $PM_{2.5}$, under the California and National AAQS, nonattainment for PM_{10} under the California AAQS, and nonattainment for lead (Los Angeles County only) under the National AAQS (CARB 2022). A discussion of regional air quality considerations is described above in Section 4.2.2. An air quality analysis was performed for the Specific Plan, and the results are discussed in Section 5.2, *Air Quality*.

Impacts from GHG emissions as a result of development accommodated by the Specific Plan are discussed in Section 5.7, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*.

Figure 4-2 - Local Vicinity



Project Area Boundary — County Boundary

Note: Unincorporated county areas are shown in white.

Source: Generated using ArcMap, 2021.

0 2,000
Scale (Feet)

4. Environmental Setting

This page intentionally left blank.

4.3.4 Geology and Landform

The Project Area is near the northeastern edge of the San Gabriel Valley within the southern margin of the Transverse Ranges Geomorphic Province (USGS 2015). The San Gabriel Valley region has experienced large earthquakes throughout history most notably the Northridge Earthquake in 1994. The most important geologic feature in the area is the San Andreas fault zone to the northeast and the Cucamonga fault, approximately 0.4 miles southeast of the Project Area (Jennings and Bryant 2010).

Lithologic observations of local geology reveal that alluvium on the Project Area consists mostly of sandy gravel and gravelly sand (GeoSystems 2002). The Project Area lies at an approximate 1,480 feet above sea level (USGS 2015). The Project Area is in the Canyon Basin subarea of the Six Basins Area aquifer system and groundwater was observed at a depth of approximately 191 feet below ground surface in October 2020 (LACDPW 2022).

Refer to Section 5.6, *Geology and Soils*, for additional information regarding the geological setting and the impact on geology and soils as a result of development accommodated by the Specific Plan.

4.3.5 General Plan and Zoning

As shown in Figure 3-5, *Existing General Plan Land Use Designation*, the General Plan land use designation of the Project Area is Public. As shown in Figure 3-7, *Existing Zoning Designation*, the zoning designation of the Project Area is Public.

4.3.6 Hydrology

As shown in Figure 3-1, *Aerial Photograph of the Project Area*, the Project Area is vacant and contains undeveloped, disturbed land with some vegetation including shrubs and trees. The site is relatively flat with gentle southwesterly slopes. Under existing conditions, stormwater is carried through the site's natural drainage via sheet flow towards the southwestern corner of the site. At this point, surface drainage from the site is collected via an existing concrete V-ditch (open drainage channel) near the southwestern corner of the Project Area. The V-ditch traverses the entire southern boundary of the adjacent La Puerta Park—it begins at the southeastern end of the park (where it abuts the Project Area's southwestern boundary) and terminates at the southwestern end of the park, where it discharges onto Indian Hill Boulevard via a parkway culvert. Under existing conditions, site drainage does not flow onto Forbes Avenue.

Additionally, there are existing storm drains and curb-and-gutter improvements along Forbes Avenue, which forms the Project Area's eastern boundary, and Miramar Avenue. Nearby catch basins that feed into the storm drains include two along Miramar Avenue (on the north and south side) near the intersection of Forbes Avenue and Miramar Avenue and one on the west side of Forbes Avenue just south (approximately 100 feet) of the Project Area's southeastern boundary.

Refer to Section 5.9, *Hydrology and Water Quality,* for additional information regarding hydrological conditions and an analysis of the impacts on hydrology and water quality as a result of development accommodated by the Specific Plan.

4.3.7 Noise

As shown in Figure 3-1, *Aerial Photograph of the Project Area*, the Project Area is currently vacant and the surrounding noise environment is influenced primarily by the residential uses, sports-related activities at the La Puerta Sports Park, and vehicles traveling on local residential streets.

Refer to Section 5.11, *Noise*, for additional information concerning the existing noise environment and an analysis of the potential noise impacts as a result of development accommodated by the Specific Plan.

4.3.8 Scenic Features

Sycamore Canyon Park is located approximately 0.16-mile north of the Project Area. Additionally, the San Gabriel Mountains are north of the Project Area. Views of the hills at Sycamore Canyon Park and San Gabriel Mountains can be seen from the Project Area and its surroundings.

Refer to Section 5.1, *Aesthetics*, for more information on scenic features and the potential impact to such features as a result of development accommodated by the Specific Plan.

4.3.9 Public Services and Utilities

Police protection services in Claremont is provided by the City of Claremont Police Department. The Los Angeles County Fire Department provides fire service and receives wildland fire protection from the Los Angeles County Fire Department's County Forester and Fire Warden. The Project Area is within the boundaries of the Claremont Unified School District (CUSDB), which serves students in grades K-12. The Claremont Helen Renwick Public Library, funded and operated by operated by the County of Los Angeles Public Library system, provides library services in Claremont.

Water conveyance service to the Project Area is provided by the Golden State Water Company. The City provides wastewater collection and conveyance service for the Project Area. Utilities and service systems serving the Project Area include electricity (Southern California Edison), natural gas (Southern California Gas Company), and telecommunications (Spectrum and Frontier).

Refer to Sections 5.10, *Public Services*, and 5.13, *Utilities and Service Systems*, for additional information regarding public services and utilities and service systems, respectively, and an analysis of impacts on public services and utilities as a result of development accommodated by the Specific Plan.

4.3.10 Transportation

Regional access to the Project Area is provided by State Route 210 (SR-210) and Interstate 10 (I-10). The City is also regionally connected by Metrolink, which connects Claremont to San Bernardino and other communities to the east, and to downtown Los Angeles. Local access to the Project Area is provided by Forbes Avenue, Miramar Avenue, and Base Line Road.

Refer to Section 5.12, *Transportation*, for a detailed analysis of the existing street network and the potential impacts on the transportation system as a result of development accommodated by the Specific Plan.

4.4 ASSUMPTIONS REGARDING CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Section 15130 of the CEQA Guidelines states that cumulative impacts shall be discussed where they are significant. 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 as "…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.

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

A. A list of past, present and probable future projects producing related cumulative impacts, including, if necessary, those projects outside the control of the agency; or

B. A summary of projections contained in an adopted general plan or related planning document designed to evaluate regional or area-wide conditions.

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 geology and soils, and others may have impacts outside the City boundaries, such as regional air quality.

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 regional boundaries (e.g., air quality and traffic) have been addressed in the context of various regional plans 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:

- **Aesthetics.** The geographic context for the analysis of cumulative aesthetics and visual resources impacts includes development projects in the City of Claremont. The physical impacts as a result of development accommodated by the Specific Plan are localized and would take place within the footprint of the Project Area.
- **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.** While energy impacts are site specific, they contribute to the consumption and demand for energy in the region and are compared to regional totals.
- **Greenhouse Gas Emissions.** GHG emissions impacts are not site-specific impacts but cumulative impacts. Therefore, the project-level analysis in Section 5.7 also provides the analysis to determine whether

the project would make a cumulatively considerable contribution to significant cumulative GHG emissions impact.

- **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.
- **Population and Housing.** Cumulative impacts are based on regional demographic projections in regional plans (e.g., SCAG's RTP/SCS).

4.5 REFERENCES

California Air Resources Board (CARB). 2022. Area Designations Maps/State and National. https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/resources/documents/maps-state-and-federal-area-designations.

California Geological Survey (CGS), 2000. Seismic Hazard Zone Report for the Mount Baldy 7.5-Minute Quadrangle, Los Angeles County, California, Seismic Hazard Zone Report 039, 49pp.

———. 2016. Earthquake Zones of Required Investigation, Mount Baldy Quadrangle, scale 1:24,000.

Claremont, City of. 2009, October 13 (revised). City of Claremont General Plan. Adopted November 14, 2006.

———. 2022. Fire Department- Fire Services. https://www.ci.claremont.ca.us/living/fire-department.

———. 2022. Police Department- About The Police Department. https://www.ci.claremont.ca.us/government/departments-divisions/police-department/about-us.

Claremont Unified School District (CUSD). 2022, August 30 (accessed). "Schools." Claremont Unified School District Home Page menu. https://www.cusd.claremont.edu.

Jennings, C. W., and W. A. Bryant. 2010. Fault Activity Map of California, California Geological Data Map Series, Map No. 6, scale 1:750,000.

Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (LARWQCB). 2022. LARWQCG Basin Plan. https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/losangeles/water_issues/programs/basin_plan/index.html.

Morton, D. M. and F. K. Miller, 2003. Preliminary Geologic Map of the San Bernardino 30' X 60' Quadrangle, California, Version 1.0, United States Geological Survey Open-File Report 03-293, scale 1:100,000.

Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG). *Connect SoCal*: The 2020–2045 Regional Transportation Plan / Sustainable Communities Strategy of the Southern California Association of Governments. https://www.connectsocal.org/Pages/Connect-SoCal-Final-Plan.aspx.

United States Geological Survey (USGS). 2015. 7.5' Topographic Series, Mount Baldy, California Quadrangle Map, scale 1:24,000.