

## 4. *Environmental Setting*

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### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this section is to provide, pursuant to provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the State CEQA Guidelines, 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.” The environmental setting will provide a set of baseline physical conditions that will serve as a tool 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 the environmental topical areas.

### 4.2 REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

#### 4.2.1 Regional Location

The City of Torrance is in the southeastern portion of Los Angeles County, referred to as the South Bay, a highly urbanized region. Neighboring communities include Rolling Hills Estates and Palos Verdes Estates to the south, Redondo Beach to the west, Gardena and Lawndale to the north, and Carson to the east. The Pacific Ocean forms the western border of a small portion of southwest Torrance; see Figure 3-1, *Regional Vicinity Map*. Interstate 405 (I-405, or San Diego Freeway) transects the northern portion of the City, and provides regional circulation to and through the City.



#### 4.2.2 Regional Planning Considerations

##### **Southern California Association of Governments**

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) represents Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura Counties. SCAG is a regional planning agency and a forum for addressing regional issues concerning transportation, the economy, community development, and the environment. Advisory policies and programs adopted by SCAG to promote regional objectives are expressed in its Regional Comprehensive Plan. 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 such as the Regional Housing Needs Assessment and the Regional Transportation Plan. The 2008 Regional Comprehensive Plan is advisory only and cannot be used by SCAG for intergovernmental review. The South Bay Cities Council of Governments (SBCCOG) is the council of governments and local transportation planning agency for the South Bay subregion of SCAG.

In 2004, SCAG adopted a regional growth strategy known as the Compass Blueprint 2% Strategy. The program is the part of the 2004 regional growth forecast policy that attempts to reduce emissions and increase mobility through strategic land use changes. Compass Blueprint, through extensive public participation, land use, and transportation modeling and analysis, has resulted in a plan that identifies strategic growth opportunity areas (2% Strategy Opportunity Areas) where the program will help cities and counties reap the maximum benefits from regional planning implemented in cooperation and partnership with the local community. The Compass Blueprint 2% Strategy is a guideline for how and where the growth vision for southern California's future can be implemented toward improving measures of mobility, livability,

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prosperity, and sustainability for local neighborhoods and their residents. Portions of Torrance are in a Compass Blueprint 2% Strategy Opportunity Area (SCAG 2007).

### **Air Quality and Global Climate Change**

The City of Torrance is in the South Coast Air Basin (SoCAB), which is managed by the South Coast Air Quality Management District. The air pollutants emitted into the ambient air by stationary and mobile sources are regulated by federal and state law. These regulated air pollutants are known as criteria air pollutants and are: carbon monoxide, volatile organic compounds (VOC), nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>), sulfur dioxide, coarse inhalable particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub>), fine inhalable particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>), and lead. VOC and NO<sub>x</sub> are criteria pollutant precursors and go on to form secondary criteria pollutants, such as ozone (O<sub>3</sub>), through chemical and photochemical reactions in the atmosphere. Air basins are classified as attainment/nonattainment areas for particular pollutants, depending on whether they meet ambient air quality standards (AAQS) for that pollutant. The SoCAB is designated nonattainment for O<sub>3</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub> under both the California AAQS and the national AAQS, and is designated attainment for all other criteria pollutants.

Assembly Bill 32 (AB 32), the Global Warming Solutions Act, was passed by the California state legislature on August 31, 2006, to place the state on a course toward reducing its contribution of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. AB 32 follows the emissions reduction targets established in Executive Order S-3-05, signed on June 1, 2005, which requires the state's global warming emissions to be reduced to 1990 levels by the year 2020 and by 80 percent of 1990 levels by year 2050. Projected GHG emissions in California are estimated at 596 million metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalent (CO<sub>2e</sub>) pollutants. The California Air Resources Board (CARB) approved a 2020 emissions limit of 427 million metric tons (471 million tons) of CO<sub>2e</sub> for the state. The 2020 target requires emissions reductions of 169 million metric tons, approximately 30 percent of the projected emissions. Pursuant to the requirements of AB 32, the state's reduction in global warming emissions will be accomplished through an enforceable statewide cap on global warming emissions that will be phased in starting in 2012. In order to effectively implement the cap, CARB adopted the Scoping Plan in December 2008 that identified the greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets and reduction strategies for the various emission sectors within the state.

### **Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board**

Most of Torrance is in the Dominguez Watershed, which covers 133 square miles in the southwestern portion of Los Angeles County, as shown on Figure 5.8-1, *Watersheds*. The primary waterway draining the Dominguez Watershed is the Dominguez Channel, which extends 15 miles in a southeasterly direction from its origin in the City of Hawthorne until it discharges into Los Angeles Harbor. The remainder of the City, near the City's western boundary, is in the Lower Santa Monica Bay Watershed, where local runoff is directed to detention or retention basins scattered throughout the area. Many of these basins occupy what were natural depressions between sand dunes. In the southeastern part of the city, the Wilmington Drain discharges runoff to Machado Lake. In the south-central part of the City, runoff is directed via storm drains to the WALTERIA Retention Basin, where it is dissipated by infiltration and evaporation.

### **Airport Planning**

#### ***Torrance Municipal Airport, Zamperini Field***

The Torrance Municipal Airport is administered by the City of Torrance General Services Department but the operations and maintenance of the airport are under the control of the Public Works Department.

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The 500-acre Torrance Municipal Airport is used mainly for recreational purposes and is designated for general aviation. The risk for accidents is small because of speed, weight, and fuel weight restrictions enforced at the Torrance Airport. Between 1988 and 2004, 26 aviation accidents occurred.

The airport has two runways, running in northwest to southeast directions. The first runway (29R-11L) is 5,000 feet long by 150 feet wide, and the second runway (29L-11R) is 3,000 feet long by 75 feet wide. Consistent with state aviation regulations, a runway protection zone (RPZ) has been established at each end of each active runway. The size of the RPZ is determined by the type of landing approach used for that runway. The City of Torrance has control over 57 percent of the RPZ for the 5,000-foot runway. The remaining 43 percent is under the jurisdiction of the City of Lomita. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) mandates the airport operator to restrict uses of RPZ land under its control to those compatible with airport operations.

### **Torrance Airport Master Plan and the Comprehensive Land Use Plan**

The first airport master plan for Torrance Municipal Airport was developed in 1956. In 1962, the airport master plan was revised to restrict airport use to general aviation and executive use. The second version of the master plan was finalized in 1973 and revised again in 1977. The most recent complete version of the airport master plan was completed in 1981. Modifications of this airport master plan have been made to keep the management of the airport up to date.

The Torrance Municipal Airport Master Plan must be consistent with the Los Angeles County Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) and FAA regulations. The ALUC is the operating body responsible for the comprehensive land use plan (CLUP) that covers aviation activities of 15 public use airports in Los Angeles County, including those of the Torrance Municipal Airport (Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning 2009). The boundaries for each airport and the development restrictions within each of those boundaries are depicted in the CLUP. All proposed land uses within the boundaries for each airport must coincide with the restrictions of the CLUP. Figure 5.9-1 shows the runway protection zones and the planning boundary of Torrance Municipal Airport as it is found in the CLUP, and Figure 5.11-3 shows the noise contours.



### **4.3 LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING**

#### **4.3.1 Location and Land Use**

The City of Torrance, approximately 21 square miles, is generally bounded by Rolling Hills Estates and Palos Verdes Estates to the south, Redondo Beach to the east, Gardena and Lawndale to the north, and Carson to the west. Chapter 3, *Project Description*, describes the project and its location.

#### **4.3.2 General Plan and Zoning**

The existing City of Torrance General Plan, adopted in 1992, provides the basis for the current land use designations. Tables 3-1 and 3-2 in Chapter 3, *Project Description*, provide the statistics for buildout of land uses under the current general plan.

The City of Torrance Zoning Ordinance, the primary tool used to implement the general plan, regulates development type and intensity citywide. Development regulations imposed include those setting limits on building height, requiring setbacks, and specifying the percentage of a site that must be landscaped. The zoning ordinance also outlines standards for residential planned unit development, affordable housing, adult entertainment businesses, historical preservation, and many other land uses. The proposed project does not include a zoning ordinance update.

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### **4.4 ASSUMPTIONS REGARDING CUMULATIVE IMPACTS**

Section 15355 of the CEQA 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 are the change caused by the incremental impact of an individual project compounded with the incremental impacts from closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time.

Section 15130 of the CEQA Guidelines states that cumulative impacts shall be discussed when the project’s incremental effect is considerable. It further states that this discussion of cumulative impacts shall reflect the severity of the impacts and the likelihood of occurrence, but the discussion need not provide as great detail as is provided for the effects attributable to the project alone. 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:

- 1) A list of past, present, and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts, including, if necessary, those projects outside the control of the agency; or
- 2) A summary of projections contained in an adopted general plan or related planning document, or in a prior environmental document which has been adopted or certified, which described or evaluated regional or area-wide conditions contributing to the cumulative impact. Any such planning document shall be referenced and made available to the public at a location specified by the lead agency.

The cumulative impact analysis contained in this DEIR uses method No. 2. The proposed project consists of the City of Torrance General Plan update. Consistent with Section 15130(b)(1)(B) of the CEQA Guidelines, this DEIR analyzes the environmental impacts of development in accordance with proposed land use plan. As a result, this DEIR addresses the cumulative impacts of development in the City of Torrance and the larger South Bay region surrounding it, as appropriate. In most cases, the potential for cumulative impacts is contiguous with the City boundary, since the City is the service provider for various City services and public utilities.

### **4.5 DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING**

More detailed descriptions of the environmental setting will be provided in each resource subsection in Chapter 5.