5.10 MINERAL RESOURCES

This section of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) evaluates the potential for implementation of the City of Torrance General Plan update to impact mineral resources in the City. Information from the California Division of Mines and Geology has been referenced for existing mineral resources within the study boundary.

5.10.1 Environmental Setting

Minerals are defined as any naturally occurring chemical elements or compounds formed from inorganic processes and organic substances. Minable minerals or "ore deposits" have a value materially in excess of the cost of developing, mining, and processing the mineral and reclaiming the project area. The conservation, extraction, and processing of mineral resources are an integral part of development and economy of the City. Torrance was developed as an oil boom town and relied on the economic benefits of this mineral resource. The City has since expanded its industrial and commercial sector but oil extraction and processing still supports an economic base in the City.

Mineral Resource Classification

The California Geological Survey Mineral Resources Project provides information about California's nonfuel mineral resources. The Mineral Resources Project classifies lands throughout the state that contain regionally significant mineral resources as mandated by the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA) of 1975. Nonfuel mineral resources include metals such as gold, silver, iron, and copper; industrial metals such as boron compounds, rare-earth elements, clays, limestone, gypsum, salt, and dimension stone; and construction aggregate, including sand, gravel, and crushed stone. Development generally results in a demand for minerals, especially construction aggregate. Urban preemption of prime deposits and conflicts between mining and other uses throughout California led to passage of SMARA, which requires all cities and counties to incorporate in their general plans the mapped designations approved by the state Mining and Geology Board.

The classification process involves the determination of production-consumption (P-C) region boundaries, based on identification of active aggregate operations (production) and the market area served (consumption). The P-C regional boundaries are modified to include only those portions of the region that are urbanized or urbanizing and are classified for their aggregate content. An aggregate appraisal further evaluates the presence or absence of significant sand, gravel, or stone deposits that are suitable sources of aggregate. The classification of these mineral resources is a joint effort of the state and the local governments. It is based on geologic factors and requires that the State Geologist classify the mineral resources area as one of the four mineral resource zones (MRZ), scientific resource zones (SZ), or identified resource areas (IRA), described below.

- ***MRZ-1:*** Adequate information indicates that no significant mineral deposits are present or likely to be present.
- ***MRZ-2:*** Adequate information indicates that significant mineral deposits are present or likely to be present, and development should be controlled.
- ***MRZ-3:*** The significance of mineral deposits cannot be determined from the available data.
- ***MRZ-4:*** There is insufficient data to assign any other MRZ designation.

- ***SZ:*** Contains unique or rare occurrences of rocks, minerals, or fossils that are of outstanding scientific significance.

- ***IRA:*** Areas identified by the county or state Division of Mines and Geology where adequate production and information indicates that significant minerals are present.

As part of the classification process, an analysis of site specific conditions is utilized to calculate the total volume of aggregates in individually identified resource sectors. Resource sectors are MRZ-2 areas identified as having regional or statewide significance. Anticipated aggregate demand in the P-C regions for the next 50 years is then estimated and compared to the total volume of aggregate reserves identified within the P-C Region.

Existing Conditions

According to the state Mining and Geology Board, the majority of land within Torrance is classified MRZ-1 and MRZ-3, as shown in Figure 5-10.1, *Mineral Resource Areas*. A small strip of land within the City, south of Pacific Coast Highway and east of Hawthorne Boulevard, is designated MRZ-2.

5.10.2 Thresholds of Significance

According to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, a project would normally have a significant effect on the environment if the project would:

M-1 Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state.

M-2 Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan.

5.10.3 Environmental Impacts

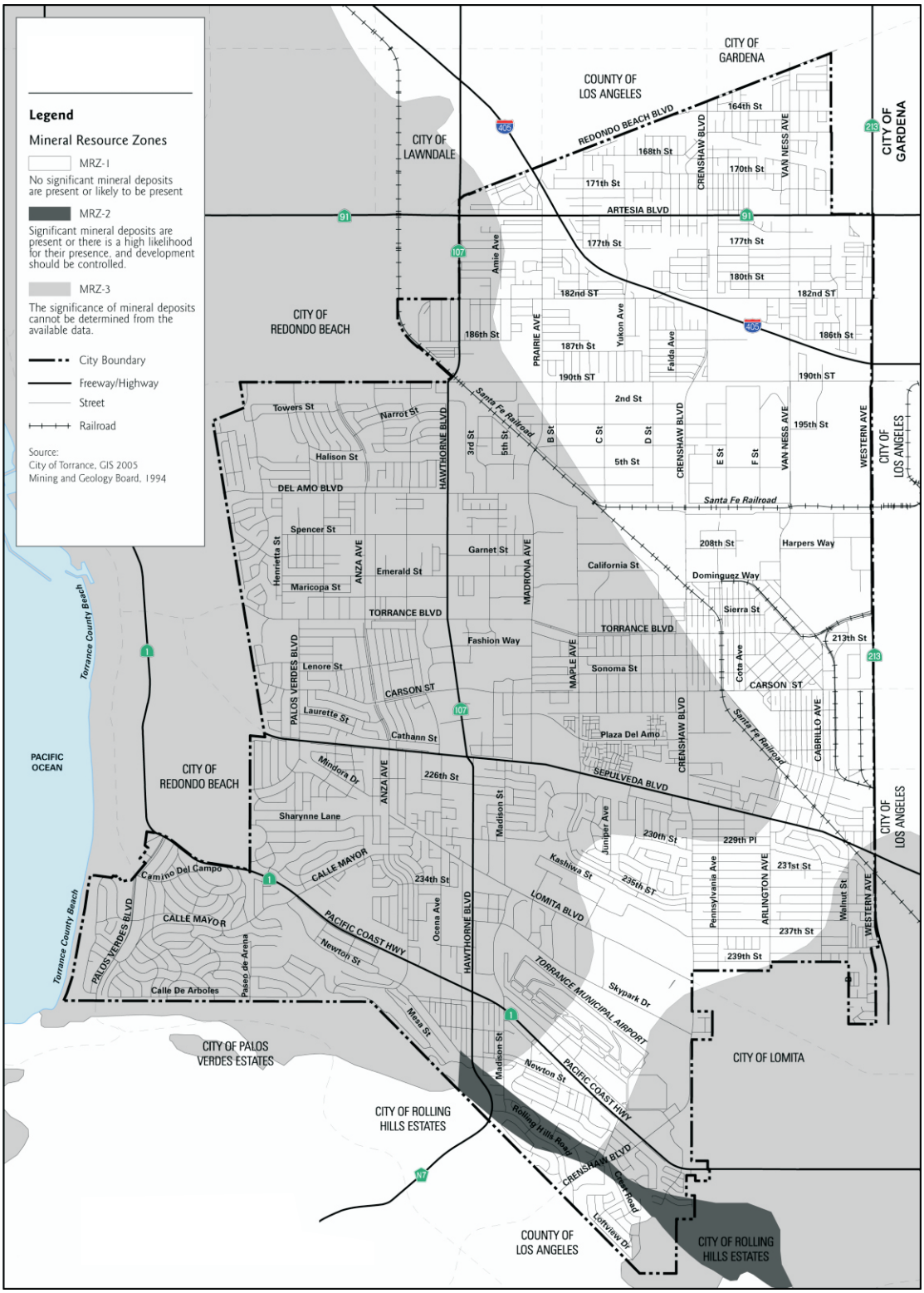
The following impact analysis addresses thresholds of significance for which the initial study disclosed potentially significant impacts. The applicable thresholds are identified in brackets after the impact statement.

IMPACT 5.10-1: PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION WOULD NOT RESULT IN THE LOSS OF AVAILABILITY OF A KNOWN MINERAL RESOURCE. [THRESHOLDS M-1 AND M-2]

Impact Analysis: According to the state Mining and Geology Board, the majority of land within Torrance is classified MRZ-1 and MRZ-3. A small strip of land within the City is designated MRZ-2. This area is south of Pacific Coast Highway, and roughly east of Hawthorne Boulevard, as shown in Figure 5-10.1. However, this land is not in mineral production, but is currently developed with residential uses.

The development of the City in accordance with the general plan update would not significantly impact mineral resource extraction. The overall layout of the City would not change substantially and the areas currently identified for mineral resource extraction would be used for this purpose to the extent considered economically viable by the City. Policy CR.22.2 would allow for revitalization of areas that are not producing oil to their fullest potential within public safety limitations. Impacts on mineral resources are less than significant.

Mineral Resources Area



Source: Torrance General Plan 2005

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5.10.4 Relevant General Plan Update Policies

The following Torrance General Plan policy would reduce impacts on mineral resources caused by development in the City:

Community Resources Element, Energy Conservation and Objective Policies

- Encourage revitalization of marginally producing oil lands (Policy CR.22.2).

5.10.5 Existing Regulations

- Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975.

5.10.6 Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Upon implementation of regulatory requirements and standard conditions of approval, the following impacts would be less than significant: 5.10-1.

5.10.7 Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are necessary.

5.10.8 Level of Significance After Mitigation

No significant unavoidable adverse impacts relating to mineral resources have been identified, and no mitigation measures are necessary.

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