CHAPTER 3
Environmental Analysis

3.0.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the structure and format of the analysis provided for each of the 14 environmental issues addressed herein; defines the terminology used in characterizing the level of significance for each impact; and describes the methodology related to the cumulative analysis.

The Initial Study (Appendix A of this Draft EIR) determined that agricultural and forestry resources, mineral resources, and some specific issues related to aesthetics would be less than significant and not addressed further within this Draft EIR. Additional details regarding the analyses scoped out of the Draft EIR can be found in Appendix A of this Draft EIR.

The following impact areas are discussed in this EIR:

- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology, Soils and Seismicity
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation and Traffic
- Utility Services

The analysis of each environmental issue includes the following components:

Section Summary: Identifies the key points and findings of the analysis of the environmental resource being addressed.

Introduction: Provides an introduction to the environmental issue analysis and notes other related issues, if applicable.

Environmental Setting: Describes the existing physical conditions (also referred to as the “baseline”) with regard to the environmental resource area reviewed within and in the vicinity of the project site. Each environmental topic provides a description of the baseline physical conditions by which the City, as Lead Agency, determines whether an impact is significant (additional details regarding baseline may also be provided in the individual impact assessments).
Regulatory Setting: Describes the federal, state, regional, and local laws and regulations that will shape the way development occurs on the project site.

Impact Assessment Methodology: Identifies how impacts on an environmental issue were determined.

Thresholds of Significance: Presents the criteria against which the significance of impacts is determined.

Impact Determination: Presents the determination made for each threshold of significance (using terms detailed below, under Section 3.0.2).

Mitigation Measures: Presents proposed mitigation to reduce significant impacts.

Residual Impacts: Presents the level of impact remaining, based on analysis, after the implementation of mitigation measures, if applicable.

Cumulative Impacts: Addresses the potential for an impact to be created as a result of the combination of the proposed project evaluated in the Draft EIR together with other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future projects causing related impacts (refer to detailed discussion below, Section 3.0.4, regarding the cumulative analysis in this Draft EIR).

Summary of Impact Determinations: Summarizes the conclusions of the impacts analysis associated with each threshold of significance.

Summary of Mitigation Measures: Summarizes the feasible mitigation measures, if applicable, that are proposed to reduce an impact.

Significant Unavoidable Impacts: Identifies significant unavoidable or residual impacts, if any, to an environmental issue that would cause a substantial adverse effect on the environmental and could not be reduced to less than significant level through any feasible mitigation measure(s).

The environmental effects of the alternatives identified in the EIR are discussed in Chapter 4, Alternatives.

Environmental Setting/Baseline

The “Environmental Setting” subsections describe current conditions with regard to the environmental resource area reviewed. California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15125 states:

An EIR must include 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, or if no notice of preparation is published, at the time the environmental analysis is commenced, from both a local and regional perspective. The environmental setting will normally constitute the baseline physical conditions by which a Lead Agency determines whether an impact is significant. The description of the environmental setting shall be no longer than
is necessary to an understanding of the significant effects of the proposed project and its alternatives.

The Notice of Preparation (NOP) was published in October 2015.

When the NOP was issued, the Nordstrom department store was occupied and had a total of 258 employees. While the Nordstrom building was vacated after the NOP was published, the City has found that this constitutes a temporary lull in operations, and that the existing baseline conditions contained in this scenario appropriately include operation of the square footage previously associated with Nordstrom. The *State CEQA Guidelines* and case law recognize that the date for establishing an environmental baseline cannot be rigid (see *State CEQA Guidelines* Sections 15146, 15151, and 15204). In some instances, information is presented in the environmental setting that differs from the precise time of the NOP. This information is considered representative of baseline conditions. Furthermore, environmental conditions may vary from year to year, and in some cases, it is necessary to consider conditions over a range of periods. The baseline conditions relevant to the resource areas being analyzed are described within each resource area section.

**Thresholds of Significance/Significance Criteria**

*State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15382 defines a significant effect on the environment as:

>a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project, including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance. An economic or social change by itself shall not be considered a significant effect on the environment. A social or economic change related to a physical change may be considered in determining whether the physical change is significant.

The “Significance Criteria” subsections provide thresholds of significance by which impacts are judged to be significant in this EIR. These include identifiable quantitative or qualitative standards or sets of criteria pursuant to which the significance of a given environmental effect may be determined. Exceedance of a threshold of significance normally means the effect will be determined to be significant (*State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.7(a)). However, an ironclad definition of significant effect is not always possible because the significance of an activity may vary with the setting (*State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064(b)). Therefore, a Lead Agency has the discretion to determine whether to classify an impact described in an EIR as “significant,” depending on the nature of the area affected. The thresholds of significance used to assess the significant of impacts are based on those provided in Appendix G of the *State CEQA Guidelines*. 
3.0.2 Terminology Used in This Environmental Analysis

When evaluating the impacts of the proposed project and project alternatives, the level of significance is determined by applying the threshold of significance (significance criteria) presented for each resource evaluation area. The following terms are used to describe each type of impact:

**No Impact:** No adverse impact on the environment would occur, and mitigation is not required.

**Less Than Significant Impact:** The impact does not reach or exceed the defined threshold of significance.

**Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation:** The impact reaches or exceeds the defined threshold of significance and mitigation is therefore required. Feasible mitigation measures, when implemented, will reduce the significant impact to a less than significant level.

**Significant Unavoidable Impact:** The impact reaches or exceeds the defined threshold of significance. However, application of feasible mitigation measures would not reduce the impact to a less than significant level.

**Mitigation:** Mitigation refers to feasible measures that would be implemented to avoid or lessen potentially significant impacts. Mitigation includes:

- Avoiding the impact completely by not taking a certain action or parts of an action;
- Minimizing the impact by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation;
- Rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment;
- Reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action; and/or
- Compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.

The mitigation measures would be proposed as a condition of project approval and would be monitored to ensure compliance and implementation.

**Residual Impacts:** This is the level of impact after the implementation of mitigation measures.

3.0.3 Aesthetics and Parking – Senate Bill 743 and Public Resources Code Section 21099

Although the Initial Study completed for the project identified the potential for significant impacts related to aesthetics, that issue was not carried forth into the EIR analysis based on the provisions of Senate Bill 743, codified within CEQA as Section 21099 et seq., which state that “Aesthetic and parking impacts of a residential, mixed-use residential, or employment center project on an infill site within a transit priority area shall not be considered significant impacts on...
the environment,” (Public Resources Code Section 21099(d)(1)). The proposed project meets these criteria as described in detail below.

**Employment Center Project**

The project site is located on five parcels and is composed of approximately 29.85 acres (1,300,266 square feet [sf]) of currently developed land. The project site’s land use and zoning designation is regional commercial (CR) and includes an integration of residential with commercial land uses. The Floor Area Ratio (FAR) maximum for developments within the CR designation is 1.5. The proposed project would include modifications to the existing South Bay Galleria enclosed shopping mall. At maximum buildout, the proposed project would develop a total of 1,950,565 sf of development, including 470,800 sf of major retail stores, 303,890 sf of mall stores, 237,000 sf open-air retail, 99,600 sf of retail stores, a 64,010 sf theater, 105,000 sf hotel, and 650,000 sf of residential uses. The total FAR for the proposed project would be 1.49 FAR. Therefore, the FAR criteria required to qualify the proposed project as an employment center would be met because it exceeds a FAR of 0.75, it is zoned to allow commercial uses (RBMC Section 10-2.910), and the site is considered a transit priority area as described below.

**Infill Site**

The proposed project is located in a highly urban area in the City of Redondo Beach and has been developed with the existing South Bay Galleria enclosed mall property. The project site is surrounded on all sides by existing urban development, as described below:

- To the north, the site is bound by Artesia Boulevard, beyond which are primarily one story commercial-retail structures and multiple-family residential housing.
- To the east, the site is bound by Hawthorne Boulevard, beyond which are one story commercial-retail strip malls and single-family residential housing.
- To the south, the site is adjacent to an existing 150-foot-wide Southern California Edison high-voltage easement. Within the easement are 177th Street between Hawthorne Boulevard and Kingsdale Avenue, electrical towers, and surface parking. Further to the south are additional surface parking and one-story commercial-retail stores.
- To the west, the site is bound by Kingsdale Avenue, beyond which includes one and two story commercial-retail developments, including one big-box retailer and a one-story single-family residential housing and one- and two-story multiple-family residential housing.

According to the City of Redondo Beach General Plan Housing Element, the project site has been identified as an area with a high potential for infill/redevelopment.¹ As the city is primarily built out, most future development will likely occur on underutilized lots where development is not built out to the maximum density permitted.

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Because of the fully developed nature of the area surrounding the project site, the South Bay Galleria site meets the “infill site” criteria.

Transit Priority Area/Major Transit Stop

The project site is located in an area well served by public transit lines, including Metro Local and Rapid bus lines and the City of Torrance Transit System. Refer to Table 3-1 for a list of all transit lines and stops within 0.5 mile of the project site. A further review of whether the project site is within 0.5 mile of a major transit stop is provided in the response to the “Major Transit Stop” criteria discussed below. Table 3-1 depicts the nearest existing public transit service stations to the proposed project site.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Route</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Metro Rapid</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>710</td>
<td>Wilshire Center – South Bay Galleria via Crenshaw Boulevard</td>
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<tr>
<td>740</td>
<td>Jefferson Park – South Bay Galleria via Crenshaw Boulevard and Hawthorne Boulevard</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Metro Local</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Downtown Los Angeles – South Bay Galleria via Hawthorne Boulevard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>130</td>
<td>Los Cerritos – South Bay Galleria via Artesia Boulevard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>210</td>
<td>Hollywood/Vine Station – South Bay Galleria via Crenshaw Boulevard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>211/215</td>
<td>The Forum – South Bay Galleria via Prairie Avenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>344</td>
<td>Rancho Palos Verdes - Harbor Gateway Transit Center via Hawthorne</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Torrance Transit</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Torrance – Harbor Freeway Station</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Torrance – LAX Transit Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rapid 3</td>
<td>Redondo Beach – Long Beach</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Metro is currently preparing a Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) to evaluate the development of a South Bay Green Line extension, which would include continued rail south of the existing Redondo Beach Station, along Inglewood Avenue. The Green Line Extension and light rail platform are planned at the new regional transit center. This potential extension of the rail would come within 0.25 mile of the project site, along Inglewood Avenue, west of the project site. At this time, there are no planned or proposed stations for the extension of the Green Line available yet.

The project site is well served by public transit, primarily consisting of Metro Local and Rapid bus lines and the City of Torrance Transit System (see Table 3-1). To qualify as a “major transit stop,” the project site must be located at an intersection of two or more major bus routes with a frequency of service interval of 15 minutes or less during the morning and afternoon peak commute. Along the northwestern edge of the project site, at the intersection of Kingsdale Avenue and Artesia Boulevard is a bus stop for the following bus lines: Metro Rapid bus line 710, Metro Local bus lines 210 and 211/215, and Torrance Transit Rapid bus line 3. During the morning and afternoon peak hours, between 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. and
7:00 p.m., Metro Rapid 710 and Metro Local 210 bus lines are anticipated to run approximately every 15 minutes from Monday through Friday.² Service times on Saturdays and Sundays would anticipate buses arriving approximately every 20 minutes. The remaining bus lines, Metro Local 211/215 and Torrance Transit Rapid 3, would arrive at the South Bay Galleria transit stop at approximately every 20 to 25 minutes or more during the a.m. and p.m. peak commute hours during the weekdays. Therefore, the project site qualifies as a major transit stop as two major bus routes service the area with a frequency interval of 15 minutes or less during the morning and afternoon peak commute periods. Because the existing bus services meets the definition of a major transit stop, and the stop is within 0.5 mile of the project site (i.e., it is adjacent to the project site), the South Bay Galleria project site is considered a Transit Priority Area.

Summary

The South Bay Galleria project site meets the criteria outlined above and thus meets the requirements of Public Resources Code Section 21099 and SB 743. As a result, the aesthetic impacts (including, but not limited to, scenic vistas, scenic resources, visual character, light, glare, and shade and shadow) and parking impacts of the proposed residential and employment center project (South Bay Galleria Improvement Project) on an infill site (the project site) within a transit-priority area shall not be considered significant impacts on the environment and will not be considered in this EIR.

3.0.4 Cumulative Impacts

Overview of CEQA Requirements for Cumulative Impacts Analysis

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that EIRs discuss cumulative impacts, in addition to project-specific impacts. Pursuant to Section 15130(b) of the State CEQA Guidelines, the discussion of cumulative impacts must reflect the severity of the impacts and the likelihood of their occurrence; however, the discussion need not be as detailed as the discussion of environmental impacts attributable to the proposed project alone.

Approach to Identifying Cumulative Projects

Section 15130(b) of the State CEQA Guidelines presents two approaches for analyzing cumulative impacts:

(A) A list of past, present, and probably future projects produced related or cumulative impacts, including, if necessary, those projects outside the control of the agency.

(B) A summary of projections contained in an adopted local, regional, or statewide plan, or related planning document, that describes or evaluates conditions contributing to the cumulative effect.

The cumulative impacts analysis completed for the proposed project is based primarily on the adopted growth projections approach.

**Adopted Growth Projections Approach**

In support of the Regional Transportation (RTP) Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS), and other regional planning efforts, Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) developed a series of growth projections using a comprehensive analysis of fertility, mortality, migration, labor force, housing units, and local policies such as land use plans (SCAG 2012; 2016). The 2016–2040 RTP/SCS includes population, housing, and employment forecasts for the city, neighboring communities, and the county. The majority of cumulative analyses use a population growth rate of 0.38 percent per year, which was obtained from the SCAG Integrated Growth Forecast for the City of Redondo Beach (SCAG 2016). To obtain an annual growth rate, the total forecast growth from 2012 to 2040 was divided by the number of years from 2012.

The cumulative impact analysis completed for the proposed project considers growth projected to occur in the vicinity of the project site and the region and analyzes whether the proposed project would contribute any impacts. Additional details on resource-specific cumulative methodology are provided in the individual resource chapters.

**Cumulative Impacts Study Area**

Cumulative study areas are defined based on an analysis of the geographical scope relevant to each particular environmental issue. Therefore, the cumulative study area for each individual environmental impact issue may vary. For example, the geographic scope for cumulative impacts associated with hazards and hazardous materials encompasses the project site and a 0.25-mile radius from the project site, while a cumulative air quality impact may affect the entire South Coast Air Basin. The specific boundaries and the projected growth within those boundaries for the cumulative study area of each environmental issue are identified in the applicable environmental issue sections.

**3.0.5 References**


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4 \( \frac{67,400 - 67,200}{67,200} \times 100 = 1.072\% \) growth increase from 2012 to 2040. \( \frac{0.72\%}{20\text{years}} = 0.038\% \) annual growth rate.