

3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

This section provides a general overview of the environmental setting for the project. More detailed descriptions of the environmental setting for each environmental issue area can be found in Section 4.0, *Environmental Impact Analysis*.

3.1 REGIONAL SETTING

The project area is located in the City of Rancho Palos Verdes, which encompasses approximately 13.6 square miles. Rancho Palos Verdes is located in southwestern Los Angeles County, along the Palos Verdes Peninsula coastline. The project area is part of the Portuguese Bend Community Association (PBCA). Arterial roadways that provide vehicular access to various parts of Rancho Palos Verdes include Palos Verdes Drive (South, East and West), Hawthorne Boulevard, Crenshaw Boulevard, and Crest Road. Figure 2-1 in Section 2.0, *Project Description*, shows the project area in its regional context. The 2018 population of Rancho Palos Verdes was estimated at 42,723 persons. The City's housing stock as of January 1, 2018, consisted of an estimated 16,317 units (California Department of Finance, January 2018). The average household size in the City was about 2.7 persons per unit (California Department of Finance, January 2018).

The Mediterranean climate of the region and the coastal influence produce moderate temperatures year-round, with rainfall concentrated in the winter months. The sea breeze, which is the predominant wind, is a primary factor in creating this climate and typically flows from the west-southwest in a day-night cycle with speeds generally ranging from 5 to 15 miles per hour. The sea breeze maintains the cool temperatures and clean air circulation and generally prevents warmer inland temperatures and air pollution from permeating into the peninsula, except under certain seasonal conditions such as the offshore Santa Ana winds (City of Rancho Palos General Plan, 2018).

3.2 PROJECT AREA SETTING

The project area is located in the Portuguese Bend community in Rancho Palos Verdes, on the sloping hillsides above the south-central coastline of the City. Of the approximately 111 lots in the 112-acre project area, the vast majority of the developed lots include single-family residences and related accessory structures and uses. The largest developed lot in Zone 2 is occupied by the Portuguese Bend Riding Club, a legal nonconforming commercial stable that was established prior to the City's incorporation in 1973. The majority of the undeveloped lots contain non-native vegetation, and some have small, non-habitable structures (e.g., sheds, stables, fences, etc.) for equestrian or horticultural uses. The lots are generally between ¼-acre and 1 acre or more in size. Topography is highly variable, ranging from relatively level areas to areas of moderate to steeper slopes. Altamira Canyon roughly bisects Zone 2 in a generally north to south direction.

The 112-acre Zone 2 area is primarily surrounded by open space and semi-rural residential development. To the northeast of the project area are developed residential lots in the Portuguese Bend community, as well as City-owned open space in the Portuguese Bend Reserve of the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve, both of which are in Zone 1 of the LMA. To the



northwest and west of the project area are developed residential lots in the Portuguese Bend community and vacant, residentially-zoned land (Upper and Lower Filiorum) which are located in Zone 1 of the LMA. To the south, southeast and east of the project area are developed and undeveloped residential lots in the Portuguese Bend community and located in Zone 5 (the area affected by the 1978 Abalone Cove landslide), Zone 6 (the active Portuguese Bend landslide area) and Zone 3 (located between Altamira Canyon and the westerly edge of the Portuguese Bend landslide area). Individual lots that would gain development potential as a result of the proposed project are located throughout Zone 2 and are, therefore, surrounded by the uses described above as well as other lots, both developed and undeveloped, in Zone 2. Figure 2-1 in Section 2.0, *Project Description* shows the regional location of the City of Rancho Palos Verdes. Figure 2-2 in Section 2.0, *Project Description* shows the 31 Zone 2 lots in the 112-acre proposed project area of Portuguese Bend.

3.3 CUMULATIVE PROJECTS SETTING

In addition to the specific impacts of individual projects, CEQA requires an EIR to consider potential cumulative impacts. CEQA defines “cumulative impacts” as two or more individual impacts that, when considered together, are considerable or will compound other environmental impacts. Cumulative impacts are the changes in the environment that result from the incremental impact of development of the proposed project and other nearby projects. For example, traffic impacts of two nearby projects may be insignificant when analyzed separately, but could have a significant impact when analyzed together. Cumulative impact analysis allows the EIR to provide a reasonable forecast of future environmental conditions and can more accurately gauge the effects of a series of projects.

Currently planned and pending projects in Rancho Palos Verdes and the surrounding areas are listed in Table 3-1. Locations of projects on the list that are in proximity to the project area are shown on Figure 3-1. These projects are considered in the cumulative analyses in Section 4.0, *Environmental Impact Analysis*.¹

¹ On November 19, 2013, the Rancho Palos Verdes City Council introduced Ordinance No. 552 to amend Chapter 15.20 of the Municipal Code and allow limited grading capabilities on lots developed with a residential building. On December 3, 2013, the City Council approved the ordinance, which established a new moratorium exception category (Category Q) to allow the issuance of grading permits for less than 50 cubic yards of non-remedial grading on lots developed with a residential building or other lawfully existing non-residential structure within the moratorium area, provided a Landslide Moratorium Exception Permit is approved by the City. Further, grading under the new provision is required to be balanced on-site.

The City deemed the amendment to be exempt from CEQA, pursuant to CEQA *Guidelines* Section 15301 (Existing Facilities), which applies to the “operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond that existing at the time of the lead agency's determination.” This exemption category applied to the code amendment because the amendment would only permit minor alteration of existing developed lots which would result in a negligible expansion of the existing residential use. Furthermore, the amendment did not have the potential to cause a significant effect on the environment since the code amendment only allows minor grading (less than a cumulative total of 50 cubic yards, balanced on-site) on developed lots and only after demonstrating to the City's geologist that the grading would not aggravate existing geologic hazards.



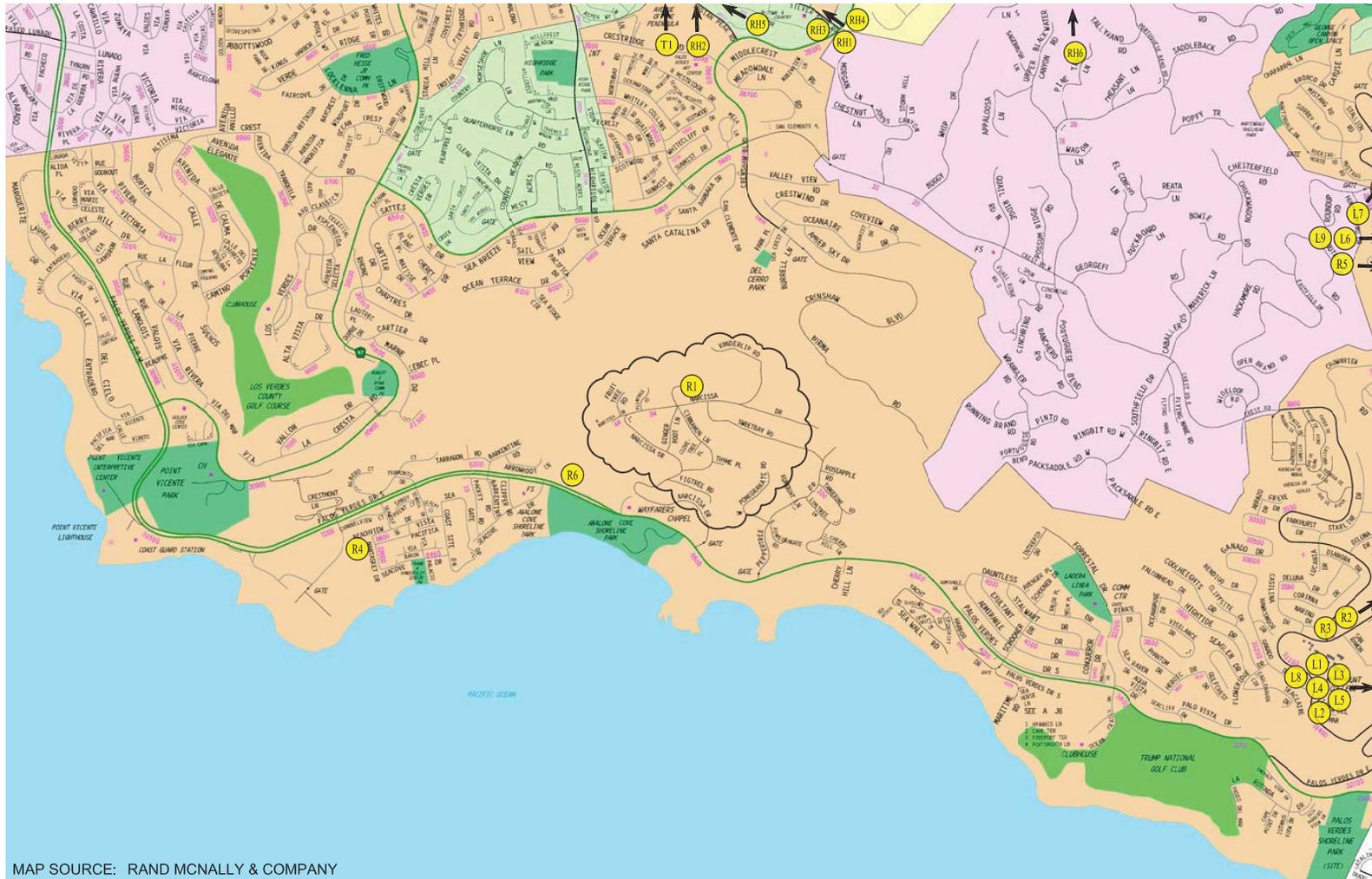
Table 3-1 Cumulative Projects in Rancho Palos Verdes and the Surrounding Area

Map No.	Project Status	Project Name/ Location	Land Use	Size
City of Rancho Palos Verdes				
R1	Approved, some under construction	Monks Plaintiffs' Lots Zone 2 of the Landslide Moratorium Area	SFR	16 DU
R2	Proposed	Patel Subdivision 27582 Palos Verdes Drive East	SFR	2 DU
R3	Proposed	Maupin Subdivision 30389 & 30399 Palos Verdes Drive East	SFR	2 DU
R4	Proposed	Nantasket Subdivision 11-41 Nantasket Drive	SFR	4 DU
R5	Proposed	Chase Bank 28300 S. Western Avenue	Bank	4,131 GSF
R6	Proposed	Point View 6001 Palos Verdes Drive South	SFR	38 DU
City of Rolling Hills Estates				
RH1	Under construction	601-627 Silver Spur Road 600 Deep Valley Drive	Residential Care	114 DU
RH2	Approved	27520 Hawthorne Boulevard	Residential Care	91 DU
RH3	Approved	927 Deep Valley Drive	Condominiums Commercial	75 DU 2,000 GLSF
RH4	Under construction	Peninsula Center Southwest corner of Hawthorne Blvd and Silver Spur Road	Commercial	16,000 GLSF
RH5	Under construction	627 Deep Valley Drive	Condominiums Commercial	58 DU 5,810 GLSF
RH6	Approved	26311-27000 Palos Verdes Drive East	SFR Country Club	114 DU 61,411 GSF
City of Los Angeles				
L1	Proposed	319 N. Harbor Boulevard	Condominiums	94 DU
L2	Proposed	1046 Sl. Seaside Avenue	Dry dock facility	7 acres
L3	Under construction	550 S. Palos Verdes Street	Apartments Retail Office	412 DU 3,800 GLSF 14,875 GSF
L4	Under construction	Del Taco 670 W. 4 th Street	High-turnover restaurant	2,619 GSF
L5	Proposed	Harbor View Mixed-Use 921 S. Beacon Street	Mixed-use	107,000 GSF
L6	Proposed	2175 W. John S. Gibson Boulevard	Affordable housing	165 DU
L7	Under construction	Ponte Vista at San Pedro 26900 W. Western Avenue	SFR Condominiums	208 DU 492 DU
L8	Proposed	437-439 West 4 th Street	Apartments Affordable housing Retail	91 DU 8 DU 2,000 GLSF
L9	Proposed	515 N. Beacon Street	Temporary shelters	102 beds
City of Torrance				
T1	Proposed	Southwest corner of Hawthorne Boulevard and Via Valmonte	Apartments	248 DU

SFR = single family residential
 DU = dwelling units
 GSF = gross square feet
 GLSF = gross leasable square feet



Zone 2 Landslide Moratorium Ordinance Revisions EIR
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MAP SOURCE: RAND MCNALLY & COMPANY

-  PROJECT AREA
-  CITY OF RANCHO PALOS VERDES RELATED PROJECT
-  CITY OF ROLLING HILLS ESTATES RELATED PROJECT
-  CITY OF LOS ANGELES RELATED PROJECT
-  CITY OF TORRANCE RELATED PROJECT

Location of Related Projects

Figure 3-1

City of Rancho Palos Verdes

Source: Linscott, Law & Greenspan Engineers, May 2019.