4. Environmental Setting

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this section is to provide 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," pursuant to provisions of CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines. The environmental setting provides a set of baseline physical conditions from which the lead agency determines 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 Ontario is in the southwestern corner of San Bernardino County, is surrounded by the Cities of Chino and Montclair and unincorporated area of San Bernardino County to the west; the Cities of Upland and Rancho Cucamonga to the north; the City of Fontana and unincorporated land in San Bernardino County to the east; and unincorporated Riverside County land to the south; see Figure 3-1, *Regional Vicinity*. Regional circulation to and through the City is provided by Interstate 10 (I-10) and State Route 60 (SR-60) east—west, and by I-15 and SR-83 (Euclid Avenue) north—south.



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 San Bernardino Association of Governments (SANBAG) is the council of governments and local transportation planning agency for the San Bernardino subregion of SCAG. SANBAG administers the San Bernardino County Measure I half-cent transportation sales tax and supports freeway construction projects, regional and local road improvements, train and bus transportation, railroad crossing, call boxes, ridesharing, congestion management efforts, and long-term planning studies in the county.

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, prosperity and sustainability for local neighborhoods and their residents. The project site is in a Compass Blueprint 2% Strategy Opportunity Area (SCAG 2007).

Air Quality and Global Climate Change

The City of Ontario 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 $_{\chi}$), sulfur dioxide, coarse inhalable particulate matter (PM $_{10}$), fine inhalable particulate matter (PM $_{2.5}$), and lead. VOC and NO $_{\chi}$ are criteria pollutant precursors and go on to form secondary criteria pollutants, such as ozone (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 ambient air quality standards (AAQS) for that pollutant. The SoCAB is designated as in nonattainment for O $_{3}$ and PM $_{10}$ and PM $_{2.5}$ under both the California AAQS and the national AAQS, and is designated as in 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 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 CO₂-equivalent (CO₂) pollutants. The California Air Resources Board (CARB) approved a 2020 emissions limit of 427 million metric tons (471 million tons) of CO_{2e} 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.

Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board

The City is in the Chino and Cucamonga subregions of the Middle Santa Ana River Watershed. The Santa Ana River originates in the San Bernardino Mountains and flows over 75 miles southwestward to the Pacific Ocean; the river's watershed spans some 2,650 square miles. The primary drainage features in the City of Ontario are lined channels carrying water from streams originating in the San Gabriel Mountains amd flowing south to the Santa Ana River. These channels include the Cucamonga Flood Control Channel, Day Creek Channel, Etiwanda Creek Channel, and West Cucamonga Channel. The Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board administers the local National Pollution Discharge Elimination System permits for local permittees. Under the most recent permit issued on April 26, 2002, to the County of San Bernardino and the 16 incorporated cities, which include the City of Ontario, new developments and significant redevelopments must implement appropriate Water Quality Management Plans. The renewal application for this permit was filed in 2006 with the Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board but the permit has not yet been renewed. Final drafts for the renewal are being written and the renewal is expected to occur in 2009 (SARWQCB 2008).

Chino Basin Watermaster

The City is situated over the Chino Subbasin of the Upper Santa Ana Valley Groundwater Basin. The Chino Basin Watermaster (CBWM) monitors the water quality and supply of the eight major water channels of the Chino Basin: the San Antonio, West Cucamonga, Cucamonga, Deer Creek, Day Creek, San Sevaine, West Fontana, and DeClez channels. The CBWM initiated a stormwater recharge program in 2003 that could increase the Chino Basin water safe yield by about 12,000 acre-feet per year (afy). Ontario's share of this yield would be 2,489 afy. The CBWM, Inland Empire Utilities Agency, Chino Basin Water Conservation District, and the San Bernardino County Flood District are working together to monitor this recharge program, which would expand and improve 19 recharge basins supplying the Chino Basin with a greater annual supply of water. This would help the Inland Empire Utility Agency region reach its goal of being "drought-proof" and it would reduce its dependence on imported water. For fiscal year 2006–2007, the stormwater recharge program supplied 4,745 acre feet to the Chino Basin.

Regional/Statewide Efforts for Agricultural Preservation

The California Land Conservation Act of 1965, commonly known as the Williamson Act, allows city or county governments to preserve agricultural land or open space through the use of contracts with landowners. The southern portion of the City, south of Riverside Drive, in the New Model Colony (NMC), has areas that are under contract through the Williamson Act of 1965. The Williamson Act is meant to preserve agricultural land and to prevent the conversion of agriculture land to nonagricultural land uses. Contracts last 10 to 20 years and are automatically renewed unless a notice of nonrenewal is issued by the landowner. Williamson Act Contracts were administered by the County of San Bernardino until the NMC was incorporated into the City in 1999. Once annexed to the City, administration of the contracts became the responsibility of the City of Ontario. In addition, portions of the NMC are in the San Bernardino County Agricultural Land Preserve and designated Southern California Agricultural Land Foundation Preserves in the City. These preserves were established and maintained with funds from the 1988 Park Bond Act regulations and are managed by the County of San Bernardino.



Regional Habitat Conservation Plans and Areas

San Bernardino Kangaroo Rat

The San Bernardino kangaroo rat was emergency listed as endangered in January 1998, when its population had been reduced by approximately 95 percent due to habitat loss, urban development, degradation, water conservation activities, and fragmentation owing to sand and gravel mining operations. The species is typically found on alluvial fans, in floodplains, along washes, in adjacent upland areas, and in areas with historic braided channels. Final designation of critical habitat for the San Bernardino kangaroo rat was issued in April 2002 (Department of the Interior 2002). Approximately 145 acres in the northeastern corner of the City, associated with Etiwanda Creek and the Etiwanda Conservation Basin, are within the very southern portion of Critical Habitat Unit 4 Etiwanda Alluvial Fan and Wash (see Figure 5.4-1, *Areas of Potential Occurrence of Sensitive Species*, in Section 5.4, *Biological Resources*). There may be some potential for remnant suitable habitat for San Bernardino kangaroo rat. However, the area is disturbed and surrounded by developed industrial uses. There is very low potential for the species to occur in the City.

Delhi Sands Flower-Loving Fly

The Delhi sands flower-loving fly is a federally listed endangered species. By 1997, studies indicated that over 97 percent of the area containing the Colton Dunes soil type (consisting of Delhi soil series) had been converted to agriculture, developed for urban or commercial uses, or otherwise altered. The fly has not been

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observed in the City. The nearest California Natural Diversity Data Base recorded occurrence of the fly is outside of and southeast of Ontario (see Figure 5.4-1).

Critical habitat has not been designated for this species. In 1998, only six sites, totaling less than 45 acres, were known to be occupied, and only one is permanently protected. The Draft Recovery Plan for the fly was prepared in 1997. The plan delineated actions required to recover and/or protect the listed species. The former range of the species was divided into three Recovery Units: Jurupa, Colton, and Ontario. According to the Draft Recovery Plan, there is restorable habitat for the fly along the Southern California Edison right-of-way and a shallow wash in southwestern Ontario (West Cucamonga Channel), and a few other locations within the Ontario Recovery Units. The planned recovery of the fly is partially dependent upon the restoration, management, and preservation of such areas.

There is one approved Habitat Conservation Plan in the City. The Oakmont Industrial Group Habitat Conservation Plan was established for the protection of the fly on approximately 19 acres adjacent to the intersection of Greystone Drive and Stanford Avenue near the eastern City boundary (USFWS 2008).

Airport Planning

The State Aeronautics Act of the California Public Utilities Code establishes statewide requirements for airport land use compatibility planning and requires nearly every county to create an Airport Land Use Commission or other alternative. San Bernardino County opted for an alternative to the commission and delegated responsibility to prepare an Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan to each airport jurisdiction. The Los Angeles/Ontario International Airport and Chino Airport establish the requirements for land use compatibility for designated areas near the airports. Land use decisions in the vicinity of the airports are reviewed by the airports. If the airport determines that any of the proposed actions are inconsistent with the Airport Land Use Plan, the City, after a public hearing, may overrule the airports by a two-thirds vote of the City Council if it makes specific findings that the proposed action is consistent with the purposes stated in Public Utilities Code, Section 21670. Thereafter, the proposed action is not subject to review by the airports. A local agency that proposes to overrule the airports must first provide the airport and the California Department of Transportation, Division of Aeronautics, with the proposed decision at least 45 days prior to the decision. Any comments by the airport or Division of Aeronautics must be included in the final record of the local agency's final decision to overrule the airport.

4.3 LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

4.3.1 Location and Land Use

The City of Ontario, approximately 50 square miles, is generally bounded by Benson Avenue and Euclid Avenue on the west; I-10, 8th Street, and 4th Street on the north; Etiwanda Avenue and Hamner Avenue on the east; and Merrill Avenue and the San Bernardino County/Riverside County boundary on the south; see Figure 3-3, *Local Vicinity*. Chino Airport and the California Institution for Men, a state correctional facility, are adjacent to the southwestern boundary of the City. Almost the entire City is developed with residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, airport, institutional/public, and recreational uses. Existing land uses in the City are shown on in Figure 4-1, *Existing Land Uses*. Table 4-1, *City of Ontario Existing (Baseline) Land Uses*, provides land use statistics the current composition of land uses in the City. According to the California Department of Finance, the City of Ontario currently has a population of 173,690 people.

Table 4-1 City of Ontario Existing (Baseline) Land Uses			
Land Use Designation	Residential Units	Nonresidential Square Footage	Acres
Nonresidential			
Administrative/Professional		3,275,261	151
Commercial		12,968,195	1,134
Industrial		15,480,433	1,353
Manufacturing		15,446,253	1,723
Office		8,354,829	376
Public Facilities		3,162,488	165
Warehousing		19,902,552	1,805
Residential			
High Density Residential	9,508		445
Low Density Residential	30,229		4,989
Low-Medium Density Residential	1,104		113
Medium Density Residential	3,347		241
Mobile Home	2,091		202
Other Residential	1		5
Other			
Agricultural Multi-Use			6,808
Miscellaneous Service Organizations			87
Parks/Recreation/Cultural			754
Schools			497
ROW			5,137
Transportation/Utilities/Communication			3,247
Vacant			2,512
Vacant Building			222
Totals	46,280	78,590,011	31,966



4.3.2 General Plan and Zoning

Source: Kimley-Horn Associates 2009

The existing City of Ontario General Plan, adopted in 1992, and the Ontario Sphere of Influence (New Model Colony) General Plan Amendment, adopted in 1999, provides the basis for the current land use designations. Table 3-1, *City of Ontario Current General Plan Land Use Designations* in Chapter 3, *Project Description*, provides the statistics for buildout of land uses under the current General Plan. The City of Ontario Zoning Code (Municipal Code, Title 9, Article 12) contains 27 zoning districts: 7 residential, 6 commercial, 3 industrial, 4 other (including public facilities and open space), and 7 overlay zones.

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.

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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
- 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 areawide 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, as described above. The proposed project consists of The Ontario Plan for the City of Ontario. Consistent with Section 15130(b)(1)(B) of the CEQA Guidelines, this DEIR analyzes the environmental impacts of development in accordance with Preferred Land Use Plan. As a result, this DEIR addresses the cumulative impacts of development within the City of Ontario, and the larger Inland Empire 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. For potential cumulative impacts related to traffic, air quality, and noise, which have the potential for impacts beyond the City boundary, these have been addressed through use of the City's traffic model. The City of Ontario has developed a traffic model for purposes of forecasting cumulative growth within the City of Ontario, and regionally. Regional growth outside of the City of Ontario has accounted for traffic, air quality, and noise impacts through use of the City's traffic model, which is a socioeconomic traffic model that uses regional growth projections to calculate future traffic volumes. The growth projections adopted by the City and surrounding area are used for the cumulative impact analyses of this DEIR. Please refer to Section 5 of this DEIR for a discussion of the cumulative impacts associated with development and growth within the City and region.

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.

Figure 4-1 Existing Land Uses



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