

4.0 EXISTING ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING, ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS, IMPACTS, AND MITIGATION MEASURES

OVERVIEW

The following chapter contains 14 sections, each of which addresses one environmental topic outlined in Appendix G of the Guidelines for the California Environmental Quality Act (*State CEQA Guidelines*) (California Code of Regulations [CCR] Title 14, Chapter 3, Sections 15000–15397).

For each environmental impact issue analyzed, the Revised Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) includes a detailed explanation of the existing conditions, thresholds of significance that will be applied to determine whether the modified Dana Point Harbor Hotels Project (Modified Project) impacts are significant or less than significant, analysis of the environmental impacts, and a determination of whether the Modified Project would have a significant impact if implemented. A “significant impact” or “significant effect” means “a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project” (14 CCR 15382). Each of the environmental topic sections in Chapter 4.0 also includes a discussion of the cumulative effects of the Modified Project when considered in combination with other projects causing related impacts, as required by Section 15130 of the *State CEQA Guidelines*.

Each of the 14 environmental sections is organized into the following subsections:

1. **Introduction** briefly describes the topics and issues covered in the section.
2. **Scoping Process** describes the comment letters received during the public review period of the Initial Study/Notice of Preparation (IS/NOP) and the Supplemental NOP that are related to the topic.
3. **Existing Environmental Setting** describes the physical conditions that existed at the time the Notice of Preparation was prepared for the Original Project and distributed, in comparison to the time the Supplemental Notice of Preparation was prepared for the Modified Project and distributed, which may influence or affect the issue under investigation. This section focuses on physical site characteristics that are relevant to the environmental topic being analyzed.
4. **Regulatory Setting** lists and discusses the laws, ordinances, regulations, and policies that relate to the specific environmental topic and how they apply to the Modified Project. In some cases, regulations that were applicable at the time the 2021 Draft EIR was prepared may have been superseded by subsequent updates or amendments, which the Modified Project would ensure compliance with.
5. **Methodology** describes the approach and methods employed to complete the environmental analysis for the issue under investigation.
6. **Thresholds of Significance** provides the thresholds that are the basis of the conclusions of significance, which are based on the criteria in Appendix G of the *State CEQA Guidelines*.
7. **Project Impacts** describes the potential environmental changes to the existing physical conditions that may occur if the Modified Project is implemented. Evidence is presented to show the cause-and-effect relationship between the Modified Project and potential changes in

the environment. The exact magnitude, duration, extent, frequency, and range or other parameters of a potential impact are ascertained to the extent feasible to determine whether impacts may be significant. In accordance with CEQA, potential project impacts, if any, are classified as follows for each of the environmental topics discussed in this Revised Draft EIR.

- a. **Significant Adverse Impact.** Significant adverse impacts are those that cannot be fully mitigated or avoided. If the Modified Project is approved, decision-makers are required to adopt a statement of overriding considerations pursuant to *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15093 explaining why the Modified Project’s benefits outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental effects caused by these significant adverse environmental impacts.
 - b. **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.** This classification refers to significant environmental impacts that can be feasibly mitigated or avoided. If the Modified Project is approved, decision-makers are required to make findings pursuant to *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15091 that adverse significant impacts have been mitigated to the maximum extent feasible through the implementation of mitigation measures.
 - c. **Less Than Significant Impact.** Less than significant impacts are environmental impacts that have been identified but are not significant. No mitigation is required for less than significant impacts.
 - d. **No Impact.** A “no impact” determination is made when the Modified Project is found to have no environmental impact.
8. **Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation** describes the significance of potential impacts prior to implementation of mitigation measures.
 9. **Regulatory Compliance Measures** (RCMs) are specific standards imposed by the approving agency and are required of the Modified Project to reduce its potential environmental effects. Because these features are regulatory, and therefore required, they do not constitute mitigation measures. In the Initial Study prepared for the Original Project, Regulatory Compliance Measures are referred to as Standard Conditions; for the purpose of this Revised Draft EIR, Regulatory Compliance Measures and Standard Conditions are considered synonymous.
 10. **Mitigation Measures** (MMs) are project-specific measures that would be required for the Modified Project to avoid, minimize, rectify, reduce, eliminate, or compensate for a potentially significant adverse impact.
 11. **Level of Significance after Mitigation** describes the significance of potential impacts after implementation of mitigation measures. Potential significant unavoidable impacts are clearly stated in this section.
 12. **Cumulative Impacts** refers to potential environmental changes to the existing physical conditions that may occur as a result of Modified Project implementation together with all other reasonably foreseeable, planned, and approved future projects producing related impacts. Section 15355 of the *State 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 may result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time. For each of the environmental topics considered in this Revised Draft EIR, the geographic scope of the cumulative analysis is defined. For example, the geographic scope of the cumulative analysis for

potential cumulative cultural resources and tribal cultural resources impacts is the same, while the relevant cumulative area with respect to hydrology and water quality impacts includes all projected changes in areas within the defined watershed.

RELATED PROJECTS

In accordance with *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15130, cumulative impacts are anticipated impacts of the Modified Project along with reasonably foreseeable growth. Reasonably foreseeable growth may be based on either:

- 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 the adopted General Plan or related planning document, or in a prior environmental document that has been adopted or certified, and that described or evaluated regional or areawide conditions contributing to the cumulative impact.

For the purposes of the Revised Draft EIR, a list of past, present, and probable future projects is used in the evaluation of potential cumulative impacts. All proposed, recently approved, under construction, and reasonably foreseeable projects that could produce a related or cumulative impact on the local environment when considered in conjunction with a proposed project are evaluated in an EIR. As stated above, an analysis of the cumulative impacts associated with these related projects and the Modified Project is provided in the cumulative impacts discussion under each individual impact category in the 14 topic sections included in this chapter.

In coordination with the City of Dana Point and the City of San Juan Capistrano, a list of past, present, and probable future projects was developed. This list is similar to that used relative to the Original Project in the 2021 Draft EIR, but revisions have been made to reflect recent updates. As shown in Table 4.A, below, the projects include various land uses, such as mixed-use, residential, commercial, hotel, and light industrial. The locations of the related projects are shown on Figure 4.1.

It is noted that some of the related projects may not be completed by 2028 (the Modified Project's anticipated buildout year), may never be built, or may be approved and built at reduced densities. However, to provide a conservative forecast, the future baseline forecast assumes that all of the related projects will be fully built out by 2028.

The discussion of cumulative impacts "should be guided by the standards of practicality and reasonableness" (*Environmental Protection Info. Center v. Department of Forestry & Fire Protection* (2008) 44 Cal.4th 459, 524). A proposal that has not crystallized to the point that it would be reasonable and practical to evaluate its cumulative impacts need not be treated as a probable future project (*City of Maywood v. Los Angeles Unified School District* (2012) 208 Cal.App.4th 362, 397).

Rather, a potential future project qualifies for inclusion in an analysis of cumulative impacts only to the extent the future project is "both probable and sufficiently certain to allow for meaningful cumulative impact analysis" (*Id.* at 398; see *City of Long Beach v. Los Angeles Unified School Dist.* (2009) 176 Cal.App.4th 889, 902 [when "review[ing] the agency's decision to include information in the cumulative impacts analysis[,] ... [w]e determine whether inclusion was reasonable and practical"]).

Table 4.A: Summary of Related Projects

Project No.	Project Name	Location	Status	Project Description
City of Dana Point				
1	Headlands Specific Plan	121-acre site south of Pacific Coast Highway and west of the Dana Point Harbor	Approved September 2004	Specific plan regulating both the conservation and the development of the specific plan area. Plan provides for public parks, coastal trails, and open space.
2	Dana Point Harbor Revitalization Plan	276.8-acre site at Dana Point Harbor	Approved January 2006; commercial core redevelopment and parking structure currently under construction.	Comprehensive revitalization plan regulating the incremental development of all commercial uses and public improvements in the Dana Point Harbor area.
3	South Cove	100 Doheny Way	Construction completed	Multi-family residential
4	South Shores Church Master Plan	32712 Crown Valley Parkway	Approved March 2015; Phase I of the project (the preschool/administration building and one of the education buildings) was completed in early 2020.	Master plan regulating the redevelopment of a house of worship site, including the addition of a preschool/administration building, a community life center, and two education buildings.
5	Vista Del Mar	34177 Pacific Coast Highway	Construction completed	Mixed-use project consisting of approximately 7,000 sf of retail, restaurants, and subterranean parking. 39 multi-family residential units.
6	Prado West	34137 Pacific Coast Highway	Construction completed	Mixed-use project consisting of approximately 32,000 sf of retail, restaurants, and subterranean parking, and 109 multi-family residential units.
7	Del Prado Place	24722 Del Prado	Under construction	Mixed-use project including approximately 5,000 sf of commercial, and subterranean parking, and 18 for-sale dwelling units.
8	Paseo Del Prado	24622 and 24642 Del Prado	Under review	Mixed-use including approximately 11,750 sf of restaurant and retail commercial space, subterranean parking, and 29 for-sale dwelling units.
9	Lantern District Mixed Use	34111 Pacific Coast Highway	Pre-application submittal	Mixed-use including 50-unit apartment, 22 room hotel, 1,300 sf cafe/coffee shop, and subterranean parking.
10	St. Edwards Catholic Church Remodeled and Expansion	33926 Calle La Primavera	Completed	Remodel and expansion of an existing house of worship and school.
11	Capistrano Hillside Project	Via Canon	Approved June 2024	Eleven (11) unit Single-family residential tract development.

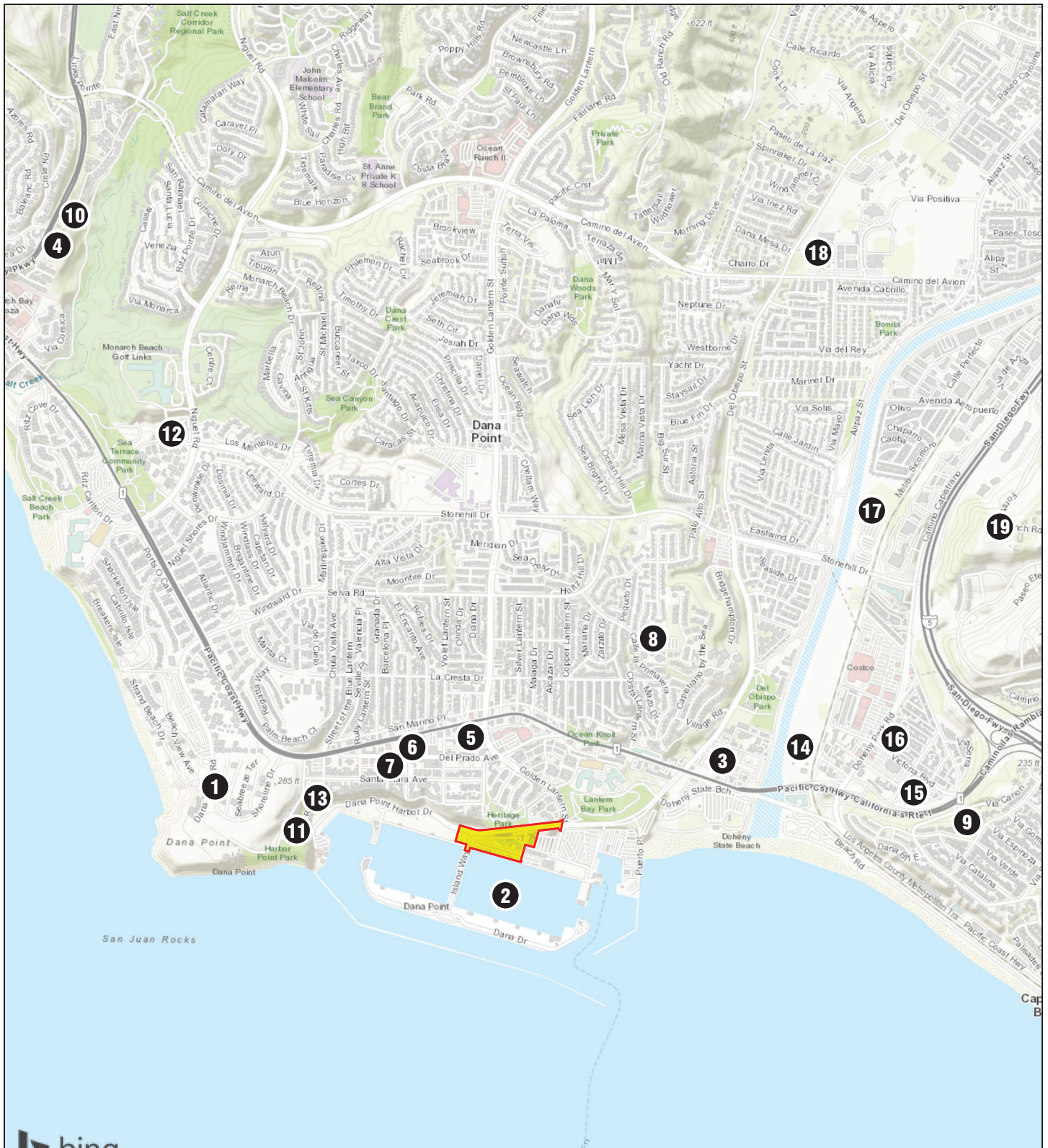
Table 4.A: Summary of Related Projects

Project No.	Project Name	Location	Status	Project Description
12	Monarch Coast Apartments	32400 Crown Valley Parkway	Construction completed	Multi-family residential
13	Lantern Point Hotel	34482 Street of the Green Lantern	Approved November 2019; Appealed by California Coastal Commission December 2019	51 room hotel
14	Grand Monarch	87 Monarch Beach Resort South	Construction completed	Multi-family residential
15	Resort Hotel at Cannon's	34344 Street of the Green Lantern	Approved June 2018	100 guest room hotel to replace Cannon's Seafood Grill Restaurant.
16	Doheny Ocean Desalination Plant and South Coast Water District Administration Offices	Facilities located north of Pacific Coast Highway, between the San Juan Creek Channel and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe rail line. Infrastructure located along Pacific Coast Highway, Del Obispo Street, Dana Point Harbor Road, Park Lantern, Doheny Park Road, Las Vegas, and Doheny State Beach.	Approved June 2019; Project startup 2026	Ocean water desalination facility and its associated infrastructure including administration offices.
17	Victoria Boulevard Specific Plan/Capistrano Unified School District Bus Yard	5.5-acre site at 26126 Victoria Boulevard.	Approved by City in July 2024; Local Coastal Program Amendment with suggested modifications approved by California Coastal Commission at their February 5, 2025, meeting	306 multi-family residential units
18	Doheny Village Zoning District Update Project	80 acres bounded by both the City of San Juan Capistrano and Interstate 5 (1-5) on the north, the 1-5 off-ramp to Pacific Coast Highway (PCH) on the east, PCH on the south, and on the west, the Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA)/Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) railroad right-of-way.	Adopted in 2021	Comprehensive land use and zoning update to both preserve and enhance the eclectic combination of commercial, light industrial, and residential mixed uses in Doheny Village.

Table 4.A: Summary of Related Projects

Project No.	Project Name	Location	Status	Project Description
City of San Juan Capistrano				
19	Ganahl Lumber Development Project	17-acre site that is located predominantly north of Stonehill Drive between San Juan Creek Channel/Trail and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe rail line.	Construction of hardware store and lumberyard completed; fast-food restaurants approved, but not yet constructed.	An approximately 43,000 sf hardware store and lumber-yard that includes ancillary facilities, two fast-food restaurants, and a 399-space parking lot for nearby auto dealerships.
20	The Farm Specific Plan	35-acre site located at 32382 Del Obispo Street	Construction completed	Specific plan allowing for the development of up to 180 single-family homes, the installation of a 0.5-acre park, and the creation of a multi-use trail on the site.
21	Pacifica San Juan	26384 Paseo Lluvia	Construction completed	Multi-family residential

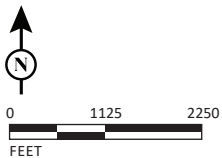
Sources: City of Dana Point and City of San Juan Capistrano (2024).
sf = square foot/feet



LSA

LEGEND

- 1** Related Project Location
- Project Site Boundary



SOURCE: ESRI/Bing

I:\2024\20241680\G\Related_Projects.ai (9/16/2024)

FIGURE 4.1

*Dana Point Harbor Hotels Project
Related Project Locations*

This page intentionally left blank