

4. Environmental Setting

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This section provides a “description of the physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of the project, as they existed at the time the notice of preparation was published, ... from both a local and a regional perspective,” pursuant to provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines (Section 15125[a]). The environmental setting provides the baseline physical conditions from which the lead agency will determine the significance of project-related environmental impacts.

4.2 REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

4.2.1 Regional Location

The City of Riverside is in western Riverside County and is bounded by the unincorporated Riverside County communities of Rubidoux and Jurupa and the cities of Colton and Rialto (San Bernardino County) on the north, Riverside County and the City of Moreno Valley on the east, unincorporated Riverside County on the south, and Riverside County and the cities of Norco and Corona on the west. Regional access to the city is provided by State Route (SR) 91 traversing the city east-west diagonally, and Interstate 215 traversing diagonally north-south in the city’s northeastern boundaries.

4.2.2 Regional Planning Considerations

4.2.2.1 SCAG REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN/SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES STRATEGY

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is a council of governments representing Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura counties. SCAG is the federally recognized metropolitan planning organization for this region, which encompasses over 380,000 square miles. SCAG is a regional planning agency and a forum for addressing regional issues concerning transportation, the economy, community development, and the environment. 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.

The 2020-2045 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) (“Connect SoCal”) was adopted in September 2020. Major themes in the 2020 RTP/SCS include integrating strategies for land use and transportation; striving for sustainability; protecting and preserving existing transportation infrastructure; increasing capacity through improved system management; providing more transportation choices; leveraging technology; responding to demographic and housing market changes; supporting commerce, economic growth, and opportunity; promoting the links between public health, environmental

4. Environmental Setting

protection, and economic opportunity; and incorporating the principles of social equity and environmental justice.

The RTP/SCS outlines a development pattern for the region, which, when integrated with the transportation network and other transportation measures and policies, would reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from transportation (excluding goods movement). The RTP/SCS is meant to provide growth strategies that will achieve the regional GHG emissions reduction targets identified by the California Air Resources Board. However, the RTP/SCS does not require that local general plans, specific plans, or zoning be consistent with the RTP/SCS; instead, it provides incentives to government and developers for consistency.

4.2.2.2 SOUTH COAST AIR BASIN AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT PLAN

The project site 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, and standards detailed in the SoCAB Air Quality Management Plan. These regulated air pollutants are known as criteria air pollutants—carbon monoxide (CO), volatile organic compounds (VOC), nitrogen oxides (NO_x), sulfur dioxide (SO₂), coarse inhalable particulate matter (PM₁₀), fine inhalable particulate matter (PM_{2.5}), and lead. VOC and NO_x are criteria pollutant precursors and go on to form secondary criteria pollutants, such as ozone (O₃), 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 nonattainment for O₃ and PM_{2.5} (San Bernardino County only), under the California and National AAQS and nonattainment for PM₁₀ under the California AAQS (CARB 2021; USEPA 2021).

4.2.2.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS REDUCTION LEGISLATION

Current State of California guidance and goals for reductions in GHG emissions are generally embodied in Executive Order S 03 05; Executive Order B-30-15; Assembly Bill 32 (AB 32), the Global Warming Solutions Act (2008); and Senate Bill 375 (SB 375), the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act.

- **Executive Order S 03 05**, signed June 1, 2005, set the following GHG reduction targets for the State of California:
 - 2000 levels by 2010
 - 1990 levels by 2020
 - 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050
- **Assembly Bill 32** was passed by the state legislature on August 31, 2006, to place the state on a course toward reducing its contribution of GHG emissions. AB 32 follows the emissions reduction targets established in Executive Order S 3 05. Based on the GHG emissions inventory conducted for its 2008 Scoping Plan, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) approved a 2020 emissions limit of 427 million metric tons of carbon dioxide-equivalent emissions (MMT_{CO₂e}) for the state (CARB 2008). CARB is required to update the Scoping Plan every five years. In 2015, Governor Brown signed Executive Order B-

4. Environmental Setting

30-15 into law, establishing a GHG reduction target for year 2030, which was later codified under Senate Bill 32.

- **Senate Bill 32** made the Executive Order B-15-30 goal for year 2030 of a 40 percent reduction below 1990 levels by 2030 into a statewide-mandated legislative target. CARB issued an update to its Scoping Plan in 2017 that lays out programs for meeting the SB 32 reduction target (CARB 2017).
- **Senate Bill 375** was adopted in 2008 to connect GHG emissions reductions targets for the transportation sector to local land use decisions that affect travel behavior. Its intent is to reduce GHG emissions from light-duty trucks and automobiles by aligning regional long-range transportation plans, investments, and housing allocations to local land use planning to reduce vehicle miles traveled and vehicle trips.
- **Executive Order B-55-18** sets a goal for the state to achieve carbon neutrality no later than 2045 and to achieve and maintain net negative emissions thereafter.

4.3 LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The Riverside Unified School District (RUSD or District) encompasses about 92 square miles in western Riverside County—most of the city of Riverside, a small portion of the city of Jurupa Valley, and unincorporated areas of Riverside County (communities of Highgrove and Woodcrest). The District has 47 schools: 30 elementary schools, 1 special education preschool, 6 middle schools (grades 7-8), 5 comprehensive high schools, 2 continuation high schools, 2 alternative schools, and the Riverside Virtual School (City of Riverside 2022). Districtwide enrollment was 40,247 for the 2021-22 school year (CDE 2022). In the 2021-2022 school year, approximately 2,186 students from five independent attendance areas within the Eastside Neighborhood attended Pachappa, Taft, Castle View, Emerson, and Magnolia Elementary Schools outside of the Eastside Neighborhood (see Figure 3-4, *Attendance Areas*).

RUSD offices are at 3380 14th Street, about 1,700 feet west of the project site; State Route 91 (SR-91; Riverside Freeway) is about 1,000 feet west (access is via the 14th Street interchange). Interstate 215 (Moreno Valley Freeway) is about 1.5 miles north and east of the site, the Santa Ana River is 2 miles west, and the Riverside Canal is about 400 feet west.

4.3.1 Project Location

The proposed project considers three site design options with two different school boundary configurations.

- **Options 1 and 3.** The project site under Options 1 and 3 is bordered by 13th Street to the north, 14th Street to the south, Howard Avenue to the west, and Victoria Street to the south (see Figure 3-3). Under Options 1 and 3, the proposed elementary school would total 8.62 acres and would consist of the following properties:
 - Abraham Lincoln High School (Lincoln High School) at 4341 Victoria Avenue.
 - Twenty-three individual parcels (8 parcels in Block B and 15 parcels in Block C).
 - Two alleyways (one in Block B and one in Block C).

4. Environmental Setting

- A segment of Park Avenue.
- **Option 2.** The project site under Option 2 is bordered by 14th Street to the south, Howard Avenue to the west, Lincoln High School to the east, and 13th Street and Lincoln Park to the north. Under Option 2, the proposed elementary school would total 7.07 acres and would consist of the following properties:
 - A portion of Lincoln High School.
 - A portion of Lincoln Park.
 - Twenty-three individual parcels (8 parcels in Block B and 15 parcels in Block C).
 - Two alleyways (one in Block B and one in Block C).
 - A segment of Park Avenue.
 - A segment of 13th Street.

4.3.2 Existing Land Use

For the purposes of this Draft EIR, all properties listed in the Project Location subheading and shown on Figure 3-3—Lincoln High School, Lincoln Park, 23 parcels, two alleyways, Park Avenue, and 13th Street—are collectively referred to herein as the project site.

The land uses on the project site consist of a high school, residential units, commercial and industrial uses, a public park, City-owned rights-of-way, and vacant parcels (see Table 4-1, *Project Site Parcels*, and Figures 3-3, *Parcel Blocks*, and 4-1, *Aerial Photograph*). Lincoln High School is a continuation high school with specialty programs that include regional occupational programs for auto tech and first responder. Lincoln High School also includes a pre-school program in portable buildings. Lincoln Park is a neighborhood park with amenities including passive greenspace, grove, community center, basketball courts, outdoor fitness equipment, a jungle gym, a horseshoe field, benches, barbeque grills, picnic tables, and walking paths. The residential unit at 4307 Park Avenue is owned by the City’s Housing Authority and is being operated as an affordable Artist-in-Residence.

Table 4-1 Project Site Parcels

Parcel	APN	Building SF	Lot Acres	Address	Land Use	GP/Zoning
Lincoln HS	211-251-001	196,500	3.9	4341 Victoria Ave.	RUSD School	PF/PF
Lincoln Park	211-231-001	--	3.26	4261 Park Ave.	City of Riverside Park	P/PF
Park Avenue	---	--	0.45	City of Riverside	right-of-way	N/A
13th Street	--	--	0.52	City of Riverside	right-of-way	N/A
Block B Parcels						
B1	211-234-001		0.23	2858 13th St.	Vacant	MDR/R-1-7000
B2	211-234-002	--	0.16	4302 Park Ave. and 2898, 2884, 2874 13th St.	Vacant	MDR/CR

4. Environmental Setting

Table 4-1 Project Site Parcels

Parcel	APN	Building SF	Lot Acres	Address	Land Use	GP/Zoning
B3	211-234-003	990	0.12	4322 Park Ave.	SFR	MDR/CR
B4	211-234-004	514 + 348	0.13	4342 Park Ave.	SFR (2 houses)	MDR/CR
B5	211-234-005	1,150	0.14	4376 Park Ave.	SFR	MDR/CR
B6	211-234-006	1,820	0.04	4398 Park Ave.	Commercial	MDR/CR
B7	211-234-007	--	0.19	2875 14th St.	Vacant	MDR/CR
B8	211-234-009	--	0.16	2859 14th St.	Vacant	MDR/R-1-7000
B9 (alley)	---	--	0.06	City of Riverside	right-of-way	N/A
Block B Parcels Subtotal		4,822 SF	1.23 Ac	---	---	---
C1	211-233-001	2,024	0.12	4307 Park Ave.	City of Riverside owned	C/CR
C2	211-233-003	--	0.18	2928 13th St.	Vacant	C/CR
C3	211-233-004	--	0.18	2932 13th St.	Vacant	C/R-3-1500
C4	211-233-005	2,251	0.18	2944 13th St.	SFR	C/R-3-1500
C5	211-233-006	740	0.18	2956 13th St.	SFR	C/R-3-1500
C6	211-233-007	2,196	0.18	2968 13th St.	Multifamily (3-plex)	B-OP/R-3-1500
C7	211-233-008	2,251	0.19	2980 13th St.	SFR	B-OP/R-3-1500
C8	211-233-009	1,849	0.22	4342 Howard Ave.	1 SFRs	B-OP/R-3-1500
C9	211-233-022	--	0.04	4356 Howard Ave.	Vacant with Cell Tower	B-OP/CR
C10	211-233-011	--	0.06	4370 Howard Ave.	Vacant	B-OP/CR
C11	211-233-021	4,578 + 1,121	0.39	2993 14 th St.	L & M Friction Materials (2 metal warehouses) - Closed	B-OP/CR & CG
C12	211-233-018	2,800 + 2,520	0.27	2945 14 th St.	Pit Stop Auto Center (2 metal warehouses)	C/CG
C13	211-233-002	1,015	0.13	4343 Park Ave.	SFR	C/CR
C14	211-233-017	--	0.19	4343 Park Ave.	Vacant	C/CR
C15	211-233-013	--	0.37	4343 Park Ave.	Vacant	C/CR
C16 (alley)	---	--	0.16	City of Riverside	right-of-way	N/A
Block C Parcels Subtotal		23,345 SF	3.04 Ac			

Option 1 & 3: Block B (1.23 ac) + Block C (3.04 ac) + Lincoln HS (3.9 ac) + Park Avenue (0.45 ac) = 8.62 acres

Option 2: Block B (1.23 ac) + Block C (3.04 ac) + Lincoln HS (1.05 ac of 3.9 ac) + Park Avenue (0.45 ac) + 13th Street (0.52 ac) + Lincoln Park (0.78 ac of 3.26 ac) = 7.07 acres

SFR = Single Family Residence

General Plan: MDR = Medium Density Residential; PF = Public Facilities/Institutional; P = Public Park; B-OP = Business-Office Park

Zoning: R-1-7000 Single Family Residential; R-3-1500 Multi-family Residential; PF = Public Facilities; CR = Commercial Retail; CF = Commercial General

4. Environmental Setting

4.3.3 Zoning and General Plan

Zoning for the project is R-1-7000 = Single Family Residential; R-3-1500 = Multi-family Residential; PF = Public Facilities; CR = Commercial Retail; CF = Commercial General (see Figure 4-2, *Existing Zoning Designations*).

General Plan land use designation for the project site is MDR = Medium Density Residential; PF = Public Facilities/Institutional; P = Public Park; B-OP = Business-Office Park; C = Commercial (see Figure 4-3, *Existing General Plan Designations*).

Eastside Neighborhood Planning Area. The Eastside Neighborhood is bounded by SR-91 on the west, Third Street on the north, and Chicago Avenue on the east. This community is primarily composed of single-family residential areas with some multiple-family residential areas. Commercial areas are primarily along University and Chicago Avenues. See Figure 4-2 for the Eastside Neighborhood boundary.

Riverside Marketplace Specific Plan. The project site is within the 200-acre, Riverside Marketplace Specific Plan area (see Figure 4-4, *Riverside Marketplace Specific Plan*), bounded by Third Street on the north, State Route 91 (Riverside Freeway) on the west, Fourteenth Street on the south, and a line approximately 100 feet easterly of Park Avenue on the east (The SWA Group). The Riverside Marketplace Specific Plan area is intended to revitalize, complement, and enhance the area while incorporating key elements of its historic context. The Riverside Marketplace Specific Plan designates Block C parcels C1 through C3 and C13 through C15 as Retail Business and Office, parcels C4 through C12 as High Density Industry; and Lincoln Park as Neighborhood or Local Park.

4.1.1 Surrounding Land Uses

The project site is surrounded by the following development:

- **North: 13th Street** and residential uses beyond 13th Street to the north, and 12th Street and residential uses and vacant parcels beyond 12th Street to the north.
- **East: Victoria Avenue** and residential beyond Victoria Avenue to the east.
- **South: 14th Street** and commercial (botanical shop, auto repair shop, and gas station) and residential uses beyond 14th Street to the south.
- **West: Howard Avenue** and industrial buildings and train tracks beyond Howard Avenue to the west.

Riverside-Downtown Metrolink and Amtrak Station at 4066 Vine Street is about 650 feet west of the project site; the tracks cross the below-grade 14th Street about 540 feet to the west. According to SCAG, the High Quality Transit Areas (HQTAs) is within one half-mile of a well-serviced transit stop or a transit corridor with 15-minute or less service frequency during peak commute hours. The project site and its vicinity are in the SCAG's HQTA. Riverside Transit Agency (RTA) and the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) have two major public transportation improvement projects proposed adjacent to the Riverside-Downtown station.

4. Environmental Setting

Figure 4-1 - Aerial Photograph



--- Project Boundary

0 275
Scale (Feet)



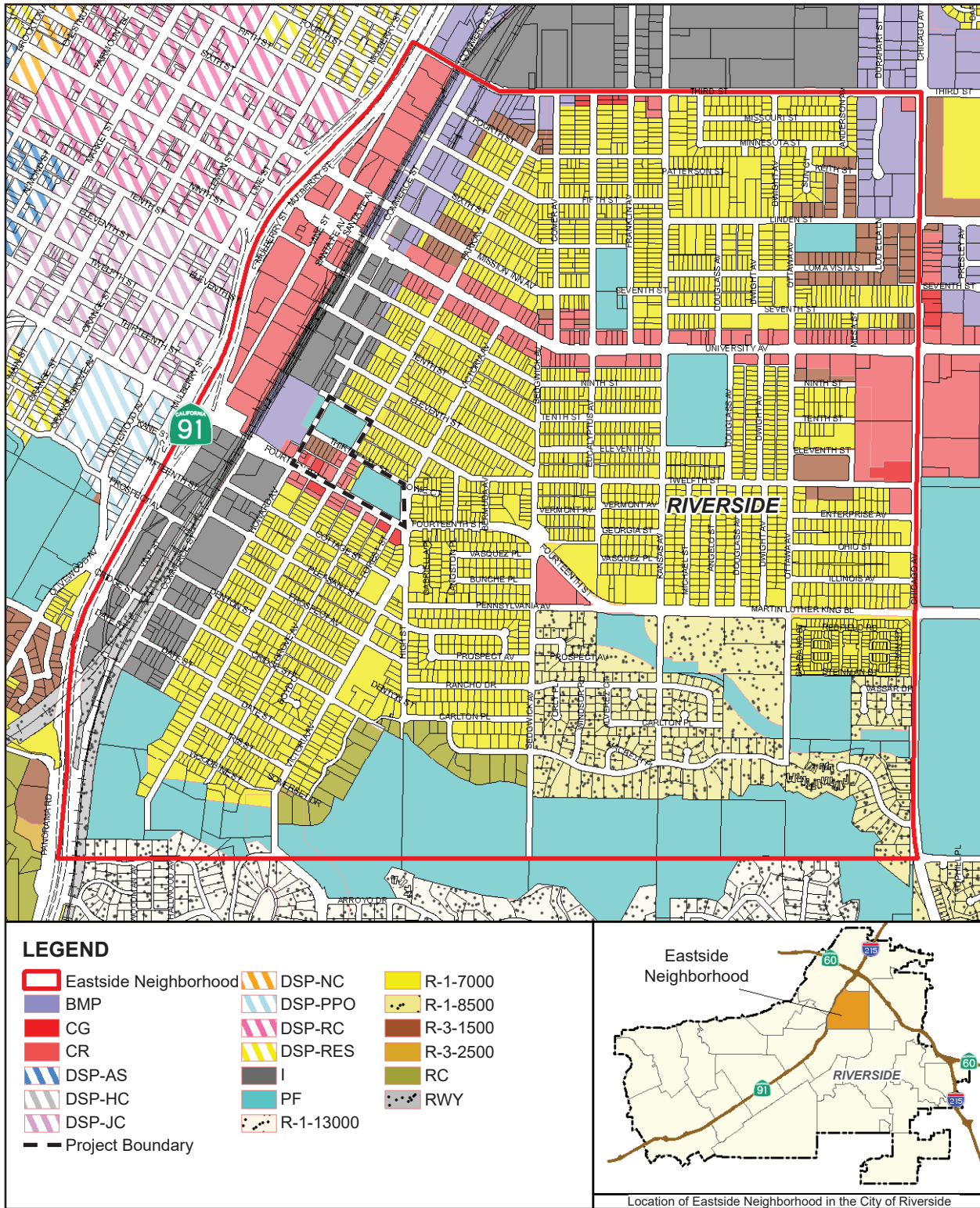
Source: Nearmap, 2021

4. Environmental Setting

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4. Environmental Setting

Figure 4-2 - Existing Zoning Designations



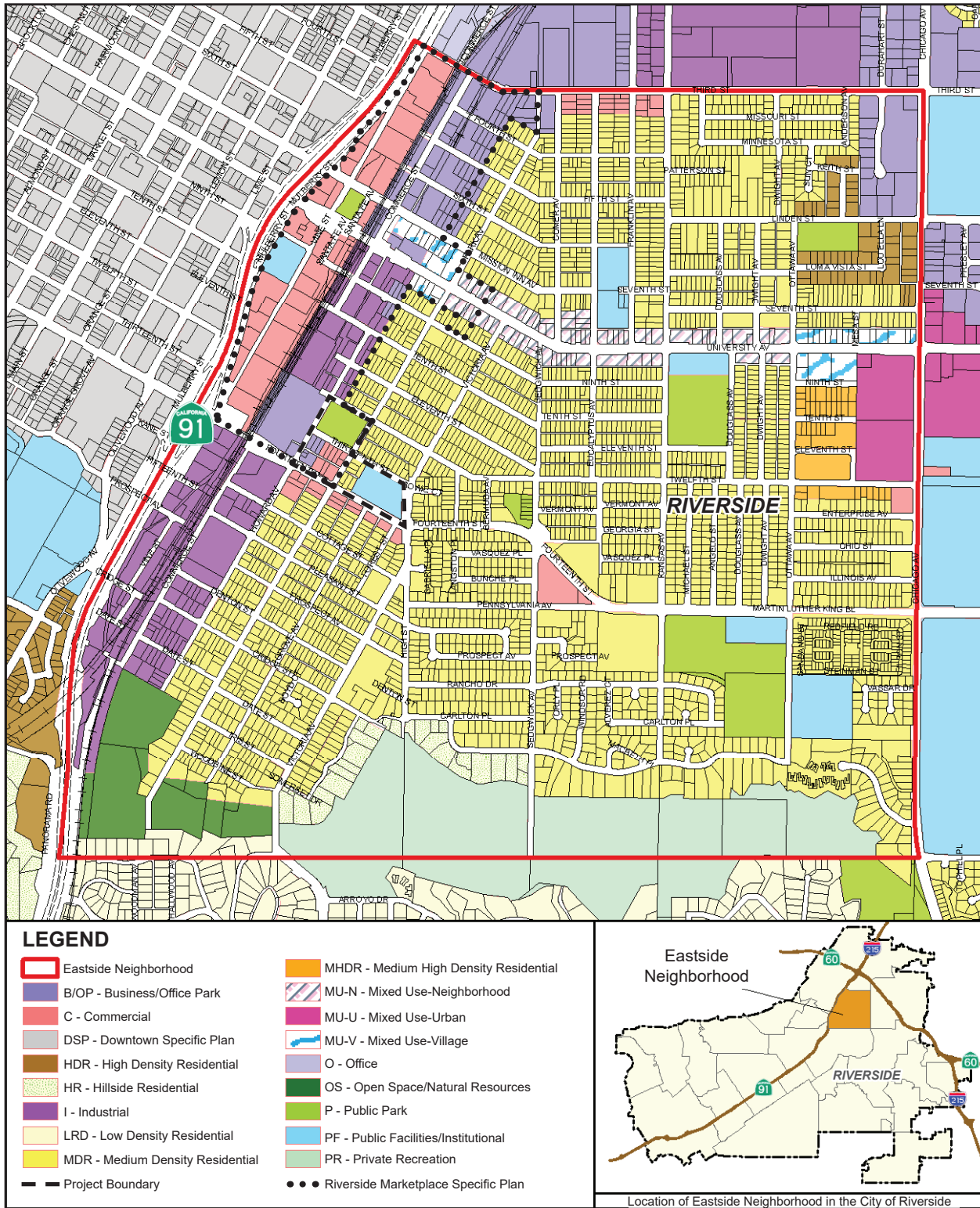
Source: City of Riverside, June, 2009

4. Environmental Setting

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4. Environmental Setting

Figure 4-3 - Existing General Plan Designations



Source: City of Riverside, June, 2009

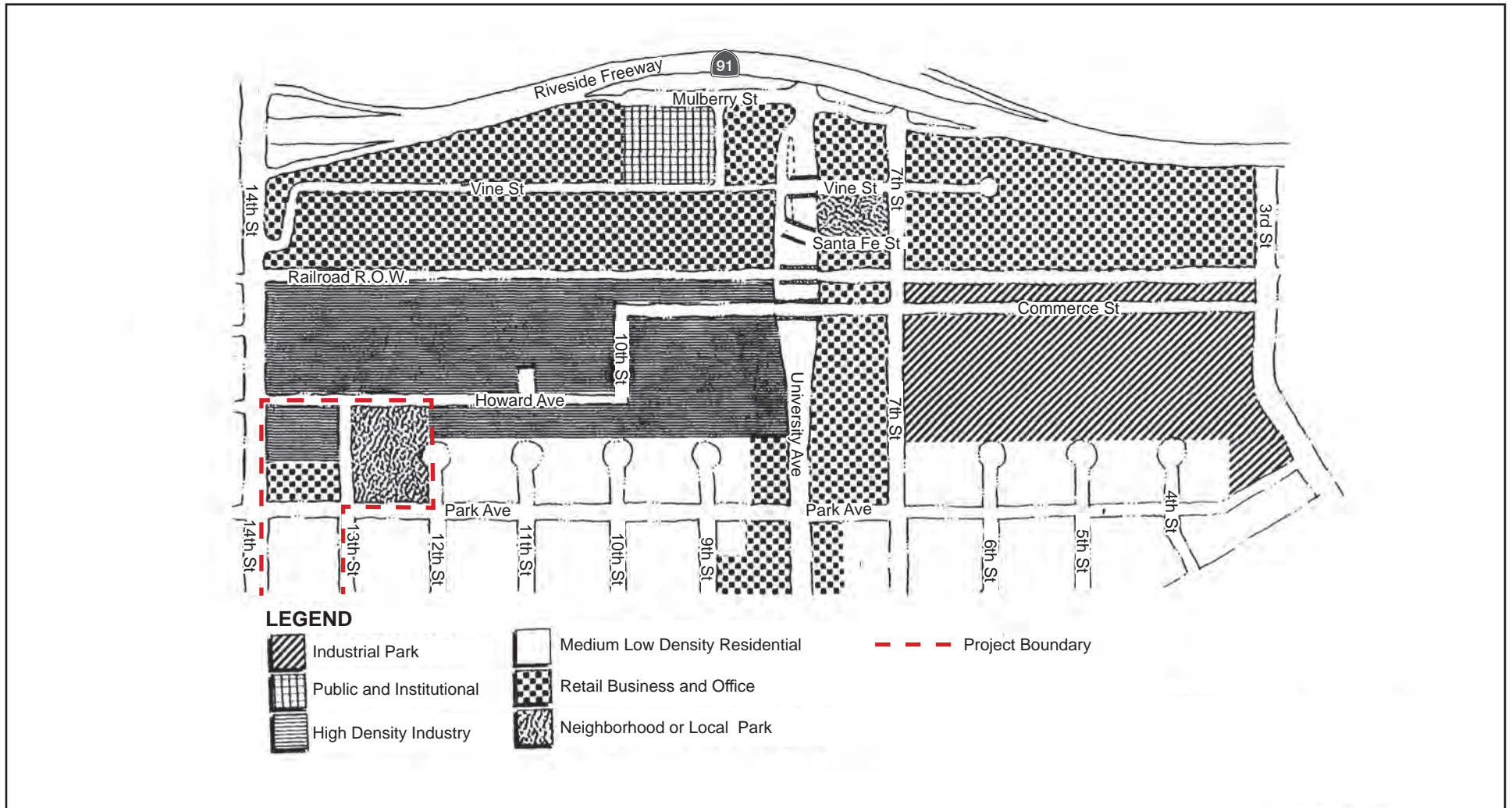
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 Scale (Feet)



4. Environmental Setting

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Figure 4-4 - Riverside Marketplace Specific Plan



Source: The SWA Group, and The Arroyo Group. Riverside Marketplace, Specific Plan and Environmental Impact Report, April 1991.



0 700
 Scale (Feet)

4. Environmental Setting

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4. Environmental Setting

- **RTA**, in partnership with the City of Riverside, is developing the new 4.7-acre Vine Street Mobility Hub east of SR-91 along the west side of Vine Street across from the Riverside-Downtown Amtrak/Metrolink Station. The Vine Street Mobility Hub will be a multimodal transportation hub consisting of an 18-bay bus transfer station and associated layover facilities, including a driver lounge, security office, and restrooms for drivers and coach operators. This project has been approved but construction has not been started.

RTA's mobility hub is likely to result in a minor increase in vehicular traffic associated with park-and-ride and drop-off/pick-up activity. However, these increased traffic volumes would be negligible because most of that traffic would be using the streets adjacent to the project site regardless of whether the bus stop zones were located at the new hub or curbside along the streets. Moreover, the new hub project does not include any additional parking facilities (Garland Associates 2020).

- **RCTC** and Metrolink are planning to improve the Riverside–Downtown Metrolink Station by constructing an additional passenger loading platform, installing new railroad tracks, extending the existing pedestrian bridge, providing additional elevator and stair access, improving the traffic access/circulation system, modifying the bus drop-off area, adding sidewalks, and expanding the parking lot. The expanded parking lot will be on the east side of the railroad tracks at a property called the Prism Aerospace lot. The most recent plan calls for 400 parking spaces. This project is undergoing CEQA process and is anticipated to be considered for approval in late 2022.

The Draft EIR includes RCTC and Metrolink's Riverside-Downtown Station Improvements Project in its cumulative traffic analysis to evaluate its cumulative impact and the Draft EIR prepared for the Riverside-Downtown Station Improvements Project also included the proposed Eastside Elementary School in its cumulative impact analysis. Both Draft EIRs did not find any significant traffic impacts related to the Station Improvements Project.

4.3.4 Public Services and Utilities

The project site is surrounded by urban development with existing public services and utilities, and the following service providers provide utilities to the project site:

- Water: Riverside Public Utilities Department
- Wastewater: Riverside Public Works Department
- Stormwater: Riverside Public Works Department and Riverside County Flood Control District
- Solid Waste: Riverside Public Works Department
- Electricity: Riverside Public Utilities Department
- Natural Gas: Southern California Gas Company
- School: Riverside Unified School District
- Police: Riverside Police Department
- Fire: Riverside Fire Department

4. Environmental Setting

4.4 ASSUMPTIONS REGARDING CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Cumulative impacts are defined as “two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts” (14 CCR [CA Code of Regulations] Section 15355). Cumulative impacts are the change caused by the incremental impact of the project evaluated in the EIR together 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.

Section 15130 of the CEQA Guidelines states that cumulative impacts must be discussed when the project’s incremental effect is cumulatively considerable. Pursuant to 14 CCR Section 15065 (a)(3), “cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental effects of an individual project are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects. It further states that this discussion must reflect the level and severity of the impact and the likelihood of occurrence, but not in as great a level of detail as for the project.

The information used in an analysis of cumulative impacts comes from one of two sources (per 14 CCR Section 15130 [b][1]):

- A. A list of past, present, and probable future projects producing related cumulative impacts, including, if necessary, those projects outside the control of the agency.
- B. 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 area-wide conditions contributing to the cumulative impact.

The cumulative impact analyses in this Draft EIR use a combination of Sources A and B. Depending on the environmental category, the cumulative impact analysis in each topical section of this Draft EIR may use either source. Some impacts are site-adjacent, such as aesthetics, and others may have impacts outside the immediate vicinity, such as air quality. Table 4-2, *Development Projects for Cumulative Analysis*, list the cumulative projects considered under Source A.

Table 4-2 Development Projects for Cumulative Analysis

Project Name	Description
Riverside-Downtown Station Improvements	Metrorail Station Expansion & Parking Lot
Mission Lofts Apartment Complex	212 Residential Dwelling Units – 3050 Mission Inn Avenue
Affordable Housing Development	8 Residential Dwelling Units – 2719 11th Street
Medical Office Building	27,000 sq. ft. – 4508 Olivewood Avenue

Source: Garland 2022.

4. Environmental Setting

4.5 REFERENCES

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4. Environmental Setting

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