

5. Environmental Analysis

5.10 LAND USE AND PLANNING

This section of the draft environmental impact report (DEIR) evaluates the potential for implementation of the proposed La Puerta School Site Specific Plan (Specific Plan) to result in land use impacts in the City of Claremont. Land use impacts can be either direct or indirect. Direct impacts are those that result in land use incompatibilities, division of neighborhoods or communities, or interference with other land use plans, including habitat or wildlife conservation plans. This section focuses on direct land use impacts. Indirect impacts are secondary effects resulting from land use policy implementation, such as an increase in demand for public utilities or services, or increased traffic on roadways. Indirect impacts are addressed in other sections of this DEIR.

5.10.1 Environmental Setting

5.10.1.1 REGULATORY BACKGROUND

State and local laws, regulations, plans, or guidelines related to land use and planning that are applicable to the Specific Plan are summarized below.

State

California Government Code

The California Government Code (Title 7, Division 1, Chapter 3, Article 8, Sections 65450-65457 [Specific Plans]) provides authority for a city/county to adopt a specific plan by ordinance (as a regulatory plan) or resolution (as a policy plan). When a specific plan is adopted by ordinance, the specific plan effectively replaces portions of all of the current zoning regulations for specific parcels and becomes an independent set of zoning regulations that provide specific direction to the type and intensity of uses permitted or define other types of design and permitting criteria.

Local

City of Claremont General Plan

The City of Claremont General Plan was adopted on November 14, 2006, and last updated in September 2020. The Claremont General Plan is considered the City's blueprint for the future of Claremont. It lays out the vision for how the City will develop over the next 20 to 50 years. The plan contains many goals designed to help City officials and the community preserve our past while building a future that enhances the quality of life for all age groups. The General Plan Land Use, Community Character, and Heritage Preservation Element designates the general distribution, location and intensity of land uses and establishes policies to guide and direct future land use decisions and development. As shown in Figures 3-5, *Existing General Plan Land Use Designation*, the General Plan land use designation of the Project Area is Public. The goals and policies of Land Use, Community Character, and Heritage Preservation Element that relate to the Specific Plan are discussed in Table 5.10-1, *Consistency with the County's General Plan Land Use Element*, below.

5. Environmental Analysis

LAND USE AND PLANNING

City of Claremont Municipal Code and Zoning

Section 16.081, SP Specific Plan District, of Title 16, Zoning, allows for the adoption of Specific Plans to provide greater specificity and flexibility in carrying out the Claremont General Plan that would be possible in other districts. The Specific Plan District is for areas that are subject to a specific plan adopted under Article 8 of Chapter 3 of Title 7 of the Government Code (Section 65450 and following) and Chapter 16.318 of the Municipal Code. As shown in Figure 3-7, *Existing Zoning Designation*, the current (2023) zoning designation of the Project Area is Public.

5.10.1.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

Figure 3-1, *Aerial Photograph of Project Area*, shows the location of the development area covered by the La Puerta School Site Specific Plan (Project Area). The Project Area is an approximately 9.58-acre roughly square-shaped vacant parcel that was formerly used as a public school by the Claremont Unified School District. (CUSD). As shown in Figure 3-1, the Project Area is currently vacant and contains disturbed land with some vegetation including shrubs and trees. There are also patches of worn and dilapidated asphalt along the northern end of the site. The Project Area is relatively flat with gently southwesterly slopes. Imported materials (mostly sand, gravels and cobbles, and scattered boulders) have been stockpiled over time in the southwest quadrant of the Project Area. The Project Area was formerly the site of CUSD's La Puerta Intermediate School; in 2018, all buildings and structures onsite were demolished; the asphalt paving was left in place.

5.10.2 Thresholds of Significance

According to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, a project would normally have a significant effect on the environment if the project would:

- LU-1 Physically divide an established community.
- LU-2 Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.

5.10.3 La Puerta School Site Specific Plan Regulations and Guidelines

The following regulations can be found in Chapter 2, Land Use Regulations, of the proposed La Puerta School Site Specific Plan.

5.10.3.1 CHAPTER 2: LAND USE REGULATIONS

The maximum density is 6.0 units per acre.

5. Environmental Analysis LAND USE AND PLANNING

Section 2.3.1 Permitted and Conditionally Permitted Uses

- The uses permitted are described in the Claremont Municipal Code Section 16.001.010 Uses and Development Permitted in the RD Districts.
- Accessory dwelling units are permitted and subject to the development standards of this chapter (Section 2.3) and requirements of Chapter 16.333, Accessory Second Units.

Table 5.3-1, *Proposed Specific Plan Development Standards*, in Section 5.1, *Aesthetics*, of this DEIR includes the development standards for the Project Area as listed in the proposed Specific Plan.

5.10.4 Environmental Impacts

Impact 5.10-1: Development accommodated by the Specific Plan would not divide an established community. [Threshold LU-1]

Impact Analysis: The Project Area, which is currently vacant and contains undeveloped, disturbed land with some vegetation including shrubs and trees, is surrounded by residential uses to the north, east, and south and La Puerta Sports Park and residential uses to the west (see Figure 3-1, *Aerial Photograph of Project Area*).

The Specific Plan would accommodate the development of a new single-family residential community. The development of residential uses would not divide established residential communities surrounding the Project Area, but instead, would provide additional residential uses on a vacant, underutilized property. Implementation of the Specific Plan would not introduce a physical barrier that would separate land uses that are not already separated. Connections between residential uses surrounding the Project Area would remain and not be impeded or impacted in any way. Except for a new private entry street that would be introduced along Forbes Avenue, which forms the eastern boundary of the Project Area, the Project would not physically change or disrupt the surrounding neighborhood's street patterns or otherwise impede movement through the neighborhoods.

While there are established residential areas surrounding the Project Area, development accommodated by the Specific Plan would not physically divide these communities because the development would occur within the confines of the Project Area and would not introduce roadways or other infrastructure improvements that would bisect the residential communities.

Implementation of the Specific Plan would not introduce a new land use that could disrupt existing land use patterns.

Therefore, no impact would occur.

5. Environmental Analysis

LAND USE AND PLANNING

Impact 5.10-2: Implementation of the Specific Plan would not conflict with applicable plans adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. [Threshold LU-2]

Impact Analysis: The Specific Plan would allow for the development of residential uses on the currently vacant and undeveloped Project Area. The planning and regulatory plans that govern development and use of the Project Area are the Claremont General Plan and Claremont Municipal Code and the proposed La Puerta Specific Plan. Following is an analysis of the Project's consistency with these adopted land use regulations.

City of Claremont General Plan

The Claremont General Plan, as required by the California Government Code, establishes direction for future growth and development within the City of Claremont. The California Government Code (under Sections 65451.b and 65454) states that a "specific plan shall include a statement of the relationship of the Specific Plan to the General Plan, and further, that it may not be adopted or amended unless found to be consistent with the General Plan." The Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) defines consistency with a General Plan as "a program or project that will further the objective and policies of the General Plan".

Existing and proposed general plan designations of the Project Area are shown in Figures 3-5, *Existing General Plan Land Use Designation*, and 3-6, *Proposed General Plan Land Use Designation*. The project applicant proposes amending the Claremont General Plan land use map to change the land use designation for the Project Area from Public to Residential 6 (residential homes between 2.1 and 6 units per acre), which is the land use designation of the surrounding neighborhoods (see Figures 3-5 and 3-6). The adjacent La Puerta Sports Park is not included in the project applicant's proposed General Plan Amendment and would retain its existing Public land use designation. The Residential 6 land use designation of the Specific Plan is appropriate for the Project Area. The residential uses permitted under the Specific Plan would be consistent with those permitted under the Residential 6 land use designation proposed for the Project Area, and similar to those surrounding the Project Area.

Additionally, in accordance with the holding in *Sierra Club v. County of Napa*, 121 Cal. App.4th 1490 (2004), "[a] project is consistent with a county's general plan (and any specific plan adopted to further the objectives of the general plan) 'if, considering all its aspects, it will further the objectives and policies of the general plan and not obstruct their attainment.' [Endangered Habitats League, Inc. v. County of Orange (2005) 131 Cal. App.4th 77, 782.] A given project need not be in perfect conformity with each and every general plan policy. To be consistent, a [project] must be 'compatible with' the objectives, policies, general land uses and programs specified in the general plan."

Consistent with OPR and the holding in *Sierra Club v. County of Napa*, Table 5.10-1 provides an analysis as to why the Specific Plan is consistent (i.e., "compatible") or inconsistent with the Claremont General Plan Land Use, Community Character, and Heritage Preservation Element, and how it would help implement and further various goals and policies of this element. The Specific Plan's consistency with other elements (e.g., circulation, housing, noise, air quality) of the Claremont General Plan is contained in the analysis provided in the respective topical sections of this DEIR. The analysis in Table 5.10-1 concludes that implementation of the Specific Plan would be consistent with the Claremont General Plan. Therefore, implementation of the Specific Plan would not result in significant land use impacts related to the Claremont General Plan.

5. Environmental Analysis LAND USE AND PLANNING

Future development that would be accommodated by the Specific Plan would be subject to the City's development review process upon a formal request for a development permit. The City's development review process would include verification of land use compatibility compliance in accordance with the development standards and design guidelines of the Specific Plan.

Table 5.10-1 General Plan Consistency Analysis

General Plan Policies	Consistency Analysis
Goal 2-1 – Make Claremont a model for the application of sustainable development practices.	
Policy 2-1.1: Encourage sustainable development that incorporates green building best practices and involves the reuse of previously developed property and/or vacant sites within a built-up area.	Consistent. As stated in the Specific Plan, the number four goal area stated in the Claremont Sustainable City Plan (Goal Area 4: Sustainable Build Environment) is for a sustainable built environment, which considers new construction, neighborhood development, infrastructure development, and existing development. Development accommodated by the Specific Plan would implement this goal area of the Claremont Sustainable City Plan and would include sustainable design features including but not limited to photovoltaics, electric vehicle capable infrastructure, and low-flow water fixtures. Additionally, the Project Area, which was formerly the La Puerta Intermediate School, is currently vacant and undeveloped. As shown in Figure 3-1, <i>Aerial Photograph of Project Area</i> , the Project Area is in an urbanized area of the City. The Specific Plan would accommodate an infill residential development project in an established residential neighborhood.
Policy 2-1.3: Encourage development that incorporates green building practices to conserve natural resources as part of sustainable development practices.	Consistent. See response to Policy 2-1.1.
Policy 2-1.4: Avoid development of isolated residential areas in the hillsides or other areas where such development would require significant infrastructure investment, adversely impact biotic resources, and/or create adverse visual impact.	Consistent. The Specific Plan would accommodate the development of residential uses on a vacant and undeveloped site that was formerly a school campus and is within an established residential neighborhood. Residential uses are present to the north, south and west of the Project area. The Project Area is not in a hillside; the Project Area and its surroundings are generally flat with gently sloping topography. As demonstrated in Chapter 5.1, <i>Aesthetics</i> , implementation of the Specific Plan would not create an adverse visual impact. As demonstrated in Chapter 5.3, <i>Biological Resources</i> , implementation of the Specific Plan would not adversely impact biological resources, with implementation of mitigation measures.
Goal 2-2 – Preserve the City's distinctive residential that strengthen our neighborhoods character by maintaining land use patterns that strengthen our neighborhoods.	
Policy 2-2.1: Provide opportunities for a variety of housing types that respond the needs of residents of all age ranges and incomes and located in all areas of the City.	Consistent. The Specific Plan would accommodate the construction of single-family homes and would increase the housing supply in the City. The single-family homes would support the housing needs of residents of all age ranges; however, the types of homes that would be developed would be offered at a price that would not be available to all income levels. The homes would be market-rate homes and would be affordable to individuals at the price level that the homes will be marketed for. Although the homes that would be developed would be on the higher price range, they would still provide housing types for the higher-end market.
Policy 2-2.2: Promote neighborhood identity and conservation of individual neighborhood character.	Consistent. The Specific Plan would advance this policy in multiple ways. The Specific Plan would facilitate the construction of two-story single-family homes, which would be comparable to the two-story single-family homes located on the western side of the Project Area, along Forbes Avenue. The Specific Plan permits the development of homes that would be designed in four architectural styles: American Cottage, California Bungalow, California Craftsman, and Spanish. The architectural styles were inspired by architecture found in the Claremont Historic Village and would be compatible with the existing homes in the community. Homes that are located adjacent to Forbes Avenue would be oriented toward the street and would be in traditional lots. This design technique would help integrate the new La Puerta community into the existing neighborhood.

5. Environmental Analysis

LAND USE AND PLANNING

Table 5.10-1 General Plan Consistency Analysis

General Plan Policies	Consistency Analysis
Policy 2-2.4: Protect neighborhoods from impacts from non-residential development.	Consistent. Implementation of the Specific Plan would introduce residential uses within an established residential community. It would convert a large vacant land into a new residential community that would be compatible with and complementary to the surrounding residential uses.
Policy 2.2-5: Prohibit the creation of gated streets.	Consistent. The residential community that would be accommodated by the Specific Plan will include a new private street that will not include a gated entry. The roads within the Project Area will be privately maintained by a Homeowners Association (HOA). However, the ungated nature of the private street will allow the public to access the community, similar to roadways in the surrounding neighborhoods. Public parking will be available in the Project Area through a public easement.
Goal 2-5 Maintain and enhance Claremont's unique character	
Policy 2-5.1: Insist on excellence in architectural design of new construction in City.	Consistent. The Specific Plan contains a detailed set of standards and guidelines that provide the design framework for streetscape, landscape, and buildings to create a unified community character. Examples of design features that have specific guidelines include building form and massing, setbacks, materials and finishes, windows, color, and lighting. As noted in the response Policy 2-2.2, the Project Area has four architectural styles that were inspired by eclectic architecture found in the Claremont Historic Village. As buildings are constructed, the City will use the design review process to ensure the community is built out to the vision outlined in the Specific Plan.
Goal 2-9 Make roads comfortable, safe, accessible, and attractive for use day and night.	
Policy 2-9.1: Provide crosswalks and sidewalks along streets that are accessible for people with disabilities and people who are physically challenged.	Consistent. Future project residents will access the Project Area via Forbes Avenue and new private streets that will have sidewalks that will be ADA-compliant and have street trees to provide shade. On Forbes Avenue, improvements will be made on the west side of the right-of-way to accommodate the homes, driveways, sidewalks, and curb cuts. Additionally, connectivity from Forbes Avenue to the La Puerta Sports Park will continue via the existing Thompson Creek Trail, which abuts the northern boundary of the Project Area.
Policy 2-9.2: Provide lighting for walking and nighttime activities, where appropriate.	Consistent. The Specific Plan includes standards for lighting. These include standards for streetscape design which calls for functional lighting fixtures that shine the least amount of light but be bright enough for people to perform activities; providing lighting that illuminates building address numbers, landscape, and structures at night; and lighting fixtures that are consistent with the architectural style of the new residences.
Goal 2-11 – Promote community identity and local history by encouraging context- sensitive design and development.	
Policy 2- 11. 1: Encourage a variety of architectural styles for new and renovated structures that reflect local architectural characteristics.	Consistent: The Specific Plan includes design guidelines for four architectural styles that would form the new residential community aesthetics and are derived from the architecture found in the Claremont Historic Village and the surrounding neighborhoods. These include the American Cottage, California Bungalow, California Craftsman, and Spanish architecture styles. For each architecture style, the Specific Plan provides descriptions for various design features, including roof components, roof materials, wall materials, wall colors, trim and details, trim colors, windows, doors and gates, and accent colors.
Policy 2-11.2: Strengthen neighborhood identity with new development that is architecturally compatible with surrounding structures.	Consistent: See response to Policy 2-11.1.
Policy 2-11.3: Require that new construction, additions, renovations, and infill developments be sensitive to neighborhood context and building forms and scale.	Consistent. See response to Policy 2-2.2.

5. Environmental Analysis LAND USE AND PLANNING

Table 5.10-1 General Plan Consistency Analysis

General Plan Policies	Consistency Analysis
Goal 2-12 – Create distinctive places throughout Claremont.	
<p>Policy 2- 12.3: Encourage new developments to incorporate drought tolerant and native landscaping that is pedestrian friendly, attractive, and consistent with the landscaped character of Claremont.</p>	<p>Consistent: The Specific Plan contains a landscape concept that provides guidance on landscaping for residential development that would occur in the Project Area. The landscape concept contains a planting palette that includes a variety of trees and shrubs that are historically found in the area, are native and adapted to the local environment, and are drought tolerant. Recognizing the importance of trees in the City, the Specific Plan includes provisions for the provision of street trees along the public and private roadways, some of which are mature size at the time of installation.</p> <p>The Specific Plan's landscape concept contains the following design principles: a) In accordance with Chapter 16.131 of the Claremont Municipal Code, low water use plant materials would be selected to limit irrigation needs and minimize water use; b) Mediterranean and other local, climate-friendly plants may be used alongside native species; and c) Canopy trees should be provided for shade and enhance building energy efficiency, especially adjacent to south and southwest facing building facades.</p>
<p>Policy 2- 12.10: Enhance the City's streetscapes by pursuing initiatives that will facilitate the undergrounding of utilities.</p>	<p>Consistent: The Specific Plan stipulates that all utilities will be underground. This design strategy will enhance the City's streetscape. All on-site dry utilities are provided through underground infrastructure except the above ground transformers and pedestals.</p>
Goal 2-13 Achieve a city-wide network of streetscapes that are interesting and attractive.	
<p>Policy 2- 13.1: Maintain and enhance the City's collection of streets trees, and improve Claremont's image of a "City with trees."</p>	<p>Consistent. See response to Policy 2-12.3.</p>
<p>Policy 2- 13.2: Strive to ensure that street design appropriately pairs the aesthetic quality of a street with its functional aspects.</p>	<p>Consistent. The new residential community accommodated by the Specific Plan will be accessed from Forbes Avenue. For the segment of Forbes Avenue where homes would be oriented toward the street, improvements would occur on the west side of the right-of-way to accommodate the homes, driveways, sidewalks, and curb cuts. Forbes Avenue will have curb adjacent sidewalks with landscape opportunities between the sidewalks and the homes, with shade trees planted along the street. The internal streets will be 36 feet wide, and they will be compliant with the Local Street designation in the Claremont General Plan. They will also include street trees and sidewalks for pedestrian accessibility. The Specific Plan contains a planting palette that includes street trees.</p>

5.10.5 Cumulative Impacts

Implementation of the Specific Plan, in conjunction with other cumulative development in accordance with the Claremont General Plan, could result in a change in land use patterns and land uses. However, other development projects in the City would be required to undergo discretionary review and would be subject to the same CEQA review as the Specific Plan. For example, as with the Specific Plan, other development projects would be required to analyze the potential land use and planning impacts that could result from the projects. They would also be required to demonstrate their consistency with applicable land use goals and policies of the Claremont General Plan, as well as with other applicable plans and regulations governing land use (e.g., SCAG's 2020–2045 RTP/SCS). As with the Specific Plan, other development projects would similarly be required to comply with all applicable existing regulations, procedures, and policies that are intended to address land use and planning impacts.

5. Environmental Analysis

LAND USE AND PLANNING

As demonstrated in Tables 5.10-1, implementation of the Specific Plan would be consistent with the Claremont General Plan, which is a land use plans adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.

In consideration of the preceding, the Specific Plan's contribution to cumulative land use and planning impacts would be rendered less than significant, and therefore, Specific Plan impacts would not be cumulatively considerable.

5.10.6 Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Upon implementation of regulatory requirements, the following impacts would be less than significant: 5.10-1 and 5.10-2.

5.10.7 Mitigation Measures

No significant adverse impacts related to land use and planning were identified and no mitigation measures are required.

5.10.8 Level of Significance After Mitigation

No significant adverse impacts related to land use and planning were identified.

5.10.9 References

Not applicable.