Chapter 3 Environmental Setting

This chapter provides a "description of the physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of the project" (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15125[a]), pursuant to provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines. The environmental setting provides the baseline physical conditions from which the lead agency will determine the significance of environmental impacts resulting from the project.

3.1 Regional Environmental Setting

3.1.1 Regional Location

The project site is located along the Santa Ana River corridor, generally between Orangewood Avenue and the existing Anaheim Coves at Burris Basin. The project site is primarily located within the City of Orange, and partially located within the City of Anaheim, in Orange County, California. The City of Orange and the City of Anaheim are in the northern Orange County, surrounded by the cities of Placentia, Fullerton, Garden Grove, Tustin, Santa Ana, Stanton, Cypress, and Buena Park. The project site crosses State Route 57 and is located approximately 0.6 miles north of Interstate (I) 5. The location of the project site in a regional context is shown on Figure 2-1, Regional Location, in this Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) Chapter 2, Project Description.

3.1.2 Regional Planning Considerations

3.1.2.1 SCAG Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is a council of governments representing six counties—Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura counties—191 cities, and more than 19 million residents. SCAG is the nation's largest metropolitan planning organization, with jurisdiction over 38,000 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 2024–2050 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy, "Connect SoCal 2024," was adopted in April 2024. Connect SoCal 2024 embodies a collective vision for the region's future and is developed with input from local governments, county transportation commissions, Tribal governments, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and local stakeholders in the member counties. Connect SoCal 2024 is a long-range visioning plan that balances future mobility and housing needs with economic, environmental and public health goals. It builds upon and expands land use and transportation strategies established over several planning cycles to increase mobility options and achieve a more sustainable growth pattern. It charts a path toward a

more mobile, sustainable, and prosperous region by making connections between transportation networks, between planning strategies, and between the people whose collaboration can improve the quality of life for residents of southern Californians. To achieve the plan's vision, elements are organized within the pillars of Mobility, Communities, Environment and Economy. Connect SoCal 2024 allocates $751 billion for transportation projects, including over 2,000 local transportation projects through 2050, such as highway and street improvements, bicycle and pedestrian pathways, railroad grade separations, new transit hubs, and replacement bridges. In addition, Connect SoCal 2024 is supported by a combination of transportation and land use strategies that outline how the region can achieve California's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction goals and federal Clean Air Act requirements. The plan also strives to achieve broader regional objectives, such as the preservation of natural lands, improvement of public health, increased roadway safety, improvement of access to jobs and educational resources, support for the region's vital goods movement industries, and more efficient use of resources.

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

3.1.2.2 South Coast Air Quality Management District

The Cities of Orange and Anaheim are in the South Coast Air Basin (SCAB), which is managed by the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD). Pollutants emitted into the ambient air by stationary and mobile sources are regulated by federal and state law and standards are detailed in the SCAB Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP). In December 2022, the SCAQMD Governing Board adopted the 2022 AQMP. The 2022 AQMP is focused on attaining the 2015 8-hour ozone standard (70 parts per billion) for the SCAB and Coachella Valley. The 2022 AQMP builds upon measures already in place from previous AQMPs. It also includes a variety of additional strategies such as regulation, accelerated deployment of available cleaner technologies (e.g., zero emission technologies, when cost-effective and feasible, and low NOx technologies in other applications), best management practices, co-benefits from existing programs (e.g., climate and energy efficiency), incentives, and other federal Clean Air Act measures to achieve the 2015 8-hour ozone standard. The 2022 AQMP was approved and adopted by the California Air Resources Board on January 26, 2023. Air basins are classified as attainment/non-attainment areas for particular pollutants depending on if they meet ambient air quality standards for that pollutant. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency classifies the SCAQMD as in attainment for the federal carbon

monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), lead, respirable particulate matter (PM_{10}), and sulfur dioxide (SO_2) standards. It is unclassifiable for PM_{10} with respect to federal air quality standards. The SCAQMD is classified as in non-attainment for the ozone (O_3) standard, PM_{10}, and fine particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$) standards. The project's consistency with the applicable ambient air quality standards is discussed in Section 4.1, Air Quality.

3.1.2.3 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; Assembly Bill (AB) 32, AB 1279; and Senate Bill 375 (SB 375).

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

AB 32 was passed by the state legislature on August 31, 2006, to place the state on a course toward reducing itscontribution of GHG emissions. It directs the California Air Resources Board to ensure that statewide GHG emissions are reduced to at least 40 percent below the statewide GHG emissions limit (levels than occurred in 1990) no later than December 31, 2030. AB 1279, enacted in September 2022, updates the goals of AB 32. The bill established a statewide goal to achieve net-zero GHG emissions by 2045 and achieve and maintain net-negative GHG emissions thereafter. Additionally, the bill established a specific target for statewide anthropogenic GHG emissions to be reduced to at least 85 percent below the 1990 levels by 2045. The 2022 Scoping Plan states that the SB 32 2030 reduction target remains a critical step to achieving the AB 1279 target. Additionally, the Scoping Plan acknowledges that new technologies and statewide policies would be required to achieve the AB 1279 target beyond 2030, such as increased emissions reduction standards and increased use of zero-emissions vehicles. As such, a goal of 85 percent reduction from 1990 levels or net-zero GHG emissions is not prescribed as a local target or threshold. The 2030 interim target remains an appropriate threshold for local agencies to achieve a fair share reduction toward statewide emissions reduction goals. As such, the City of Anaheim and other lead agencies throughout the basin continue to apply the SCAQMD interim thresholds. SB 375 was adopted in 2008 and provides a new planning process that coordinates land use planning, Regional Transportation Plans, and funding priorities to help California meet the GHG reduction goals established in AB 32. The project's ability to meet these regional GHG emissions reduction target goals is analyzed in Section 4.5, Greenhouse Gas Emissions.

3.1.2.4 Santa Ana River Basin Plan Water Quality Control Board

The project site is under the jurisdiction of the Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB). The Basin Plan, prepared by the Santa Ana RWQCB, establishes water quality standards for the ground and surface waters of the Santa Ana region and includes an implementation plan describing the actions by the Santa Ana RWQCB and others that are necessary to achieve and maintain the water quality standards. The RWQCB regulates waste discharges to minimize and control their effects on the quality of the region's ground and surface water. The Water Quality Control Plan for the Santa Ana River Basin was adopted in March 1994, and the most recent comprehensive updates to the plan was adopted in February 2016. Since then, the RWCQB adopted several amendments to address specific water quality issues.

Santa Ana RWQCB implements the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit for the Santa Ana area (including southern Orange County). Under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit, a requirement under the Clean Water Act, each jurisdiction must implement measures to reduce urban runoff during all phases of land use development starting with planning, during construction, and after completion of the development. The Santa Ana RWQCB has issued three Municipal Separate Stormwater Sewer System (MS4) permits to the three counties—Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino—and all the incorporated cities within the jurisdiction of this RWQCB. The Santa Ana RWQCB MS4 Storm Water Permit, Order No. R8-2009-0030, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit No. CAS618030, as amended by Order No. R8-2010-0062, is currently in effect, and specifies waste discharge requirements for the County of Orange, the incorporated cities of Orange County, and the Orange County Flood Control District within the Santa Ana region. In March 2024, the Santa Ana RWQCB has released a draft Santa Ana Regional MS4 Permit for public review and comment. The draft Santa Ana Regional MS4 Permit is the first of its kind in the Santa Ana region, where each county previously maintained individual, county-wide permits. The permit combines three existing Phase I MS4 permits for north Orange, western Riverside, and western San Bernardino counties into a single regional permit encompassing the Santa Ana River Watershed area. Santa Ana RWQCB is currently reviewing the comments received during the public review period of the draft Santa Ana Regional MS4 Permit, and the final adoption date has not been announced.

3.2 Local Environmental Setting

3.2.1 Project Location

The project site is located along the Santa Ana River corridor, generally between Orangewood Avenue and the existing Anaheim Coves at Burris Basin. It generally encompasses approximately a 2-mile stretch of the Santa Ana River, covering approximately 111 acres. It is approximately 15 miles upstream from the Pacific Ocean and adjacent to Angel Stadium, Anaheim Regional Transportation Intermodal Center (ARTIC), the Honda Center, and the Arena Corporate Center

(ACC) buildings on the west side of the Santa Ana River in the City of Anaheim. The ARTIC, the Honda Center, and the ACC buildings are all part of the OCVIBE Master Site Plan Project (OCVIBE Project). On the east side of the Santa Ana River, in the City of Orange, the project is near the Sandra Hutchens Regional Law Enforcement Training Center (a facility that includes a combat shooting range), the Orange County Public Works offices, the Stadium Promenade shopping mall, the Extended Stay America – Orange, and the Kinder Morgan Orange Terminal. The project site's regional setting is shown on Figure 2-1, while a closer view of the site and the surrounding local vicinity is shown on Figure 2-2, Local Vicinity. The project is primarily located in the City of Orange and partially located in the City of Anaheim, with many different landowners and jurisdictional bodies. Figure 2-3, Project Site and Adjacent Ownerships, shows the ownership of the project site and adjacent properties.

3.2.2 General Plan and Zoning

The project site is currently designated as Open Space (OS) and zoned Recreation Open Space (R-O) for the portions in the City of Orange; and designated Open Space and zoned Transition, Public Recreational for the portions in the City of Anaheim.

3.2.3 Public Services and Utilities

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

- Water – Anaheim Public Utilities and City of Orange Water Division
- Wastewater – Anaheim Public Works (City of Anaheim) and Orange Public Works (City of Orange)
- Storm Water – Orange County Flood Control District
- Solid Waste – Republic Services in contract with the City of Anaheim and CR&R in contract with the City of Orange
- Electricity – Anaheim Public Utilities (City of Anaheim) and Southern California Edison (City of Orange)
- Natural Gas – Southern California Gas Company
- Police – Anaheim Police Department and Orange Police Department
- Fire – Anaheim Fire & Rescue and Orange City Fire Department
- School – The project site is within the SAR corridor and will not require any school services

3.3 Assumptions Regarding Cumulative Impacts

CEQA requires that EIRs discuss cumulative impacts in addition to project impacts. In accordance with CEQA, the discussion of cumulative impacts must reflect the severity of the impacts and the likelihood of their occurrence; however, the discussion need not be as detailed

as the discussion of environmental impacts attributable to the project alone. Further, the discussion is guided by the standards of practicality and reasonableness. According to Section 15355 of the CEQA Guidelines, "cumulative impacts" are defined as follows:

> Two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts.
>
> (a) The individual effects may be changes resulting from a single project or a number of separate projects.
> (b) The cumulative impact from several projects is the change in the environment, which results from the incremental impact of the project when added to other 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(a) of the CEQA Guidelines further states that a "cumulative impact consists of an impact which is created as a result of the combination of the project evaluated in the EIR together with other projects causing related impacts."

In addition, Section 15130(a) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that EIRs discuss the cumulative impacts of a project when the project's incremental effect is cumulatively considerable. Therefore, the discussion of cumulative impacts in an EIR evaluates if the impacts of the project would be significant when considered in combination with past, present, and future reasonably foreseeable projects, and if the project would make a cumulatively considerable contribution to those impacts. CEQA recognizes that the analysis of cumulative impacts need not be as detailed as the analysis of project-related impacts but instead should "be guided by the standards of practicality and reasonableness" (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15130[b]). The CEQA Guidelines indicate that, where a lead agency is examining a project with an incremental effect that is not cumulatively considerable, it need not consider the effect significant but shall briefly describe the basis for its conclusion. As further clarified by Section 15065 of the CEQA Guidelines, "cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of an individual project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects. The CEQA Guidelines allow for a project's contribution to be rendered less than cumulatively considerable with implementation of mitigation.

The geographic scope of the cumulative impact analysis varies depending on the specific environmental issue area being analyzed. The geographic scope defines the geographic area within which projects may contribute to a specific cumulative impact. Therefore, past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects within the defined geographic area for a given cumulative issue must be considered.

CEQA Guidelines, Section 15130(b), presents the following two possible approaches for considering past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects and indicates that either could be used:

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
2. A summary of projections contained in an adopted local, regional, or statewide plan, or related planning document, that describes or evaluates conditions contributing to the cumulative effect

This EIR uses a hybrid approach. The City of Anaheim's General Plan was adopted in 2004 with a buildout projection of 129,159 residential units, a population of 403,773, approximately 60.52 million square feet of non-residential uses, and 251,397 total jobs.

The City of Anaheim is currently processing its General Plan Focused Update, which includes updates to the Land Use Element, Circulation Element, Zoning Code, Land Use Plan, Zoning Map, and related plans, as well as preparation of a new Environmental Justice Element. The Draft Program Environmental Impact Report for the proposed General Plan Focused Update was made available for public review from December 20, 2024, to February 3, 2025. Upon adoption, the City of Anaheim's projected buildout would change to 154,801 residential units, a population of 431,340, approximately 113.44 million square feet of non-residential uses, and 274,213 jobs.

The OCVIBE Master Site Plan Project (OCVIBE Project) that borders the project site on the west was approved in 2022, revised in 2024, and is within the Platinum Triangle Mixed Use Overlay Zone, which was included in the City of Anaheim's adopted General Plan. Existing development is included as part of the existing environmental baseline when evaluating project impacts. The approved OCVIBE Project, is in various stages of development, including the planning phase, design stage, or construction phase. The OCVIBE Project comprises approximately 92.08 net acres, and is generally bounded by State Route 57 to the west, the Santa Ana River to the east, the confluence of the State Route 57 and Santa Ana River to the south, with the Southern California Edison easement area forming the northern boundary. The OCVIBE Project includes the Honda Center (2695 East Katella Avenue), ARTIC (2626 East Katella Avenue), and the ACC office buildings (1400–1600 South Douglass Road). The OCVIBE Project includes the following development intensities with the OCVIBE Master Site Plan Amendment No. 1 that was approved in November 2024:

- Commercial – 1,922,776 GSF
- Office – 251,680 to 576,680 GSF
- Institutional – 250,000 GSF
- Residential – 1,920 to 2,250 Dwelling Units/ up to 2.79 million GSF

The City of Orange General Plan was adopted in 2010, with a buildout projection of 65,680 dwelling units, approximately 70 million square feet of non-residential uses, a population of 194,543, and 120,700 jobs.

Depending on the environmental category, some impacts are site specific, while others may extend beyond city boundaries. Chapter 4, Environmental Analysis, of this Draft EIR provides a discussion of cumulative impacts associated with development and growth in the city and region for each environmental resource area.

Cumulative impact analyses are conducted within the most appropriate geographic boundaries. Certain cumulative impacts, such as biological resources and geology and soils, considered site-specific impacts and nearby surrounding areas, while such as those related to air quality and hydrology/water quality, extend across regional boundaries and are assessed in the context of regional plans and defined significance thresholds. Climate change, being a global issue, is analyzed based on state regulations and regional plans designed to address its cumulative effects. Below is a summary of the approach and scope of cumulative impact analyses, with further details provided in each environmental topical section:

- **Air Quality.** Air quality impacts include regional (cumulative) impacts and localized impacts. For cumulative impacts, the analysis is based on the regional boundaries of the Southern California Air Basin.
- **Biological Resources.** The biological resources survey area for the project included the project site and the 100-foot buffer around the project site. The cumulative analysis considers surrounding areas with similar biological resources within the Cities of Anaheim and Orange.
- **Cultural Resources.** Cultural resources impacts are generally site specific. Cumulative impacts consider the potential effects of the project, combined with impacts from other site-specific developments in Anaheim and Orange allowed in their respective general plans.
- **Geology and Soils.** Geology and soils impacts are site specific, and the cumulative impacts area considered for geology and soils impact is limited to the project site boundaries.
- **Greenhouse Gas Emissions.** GHG emissions impacts are not site-specific impacts but cumulative impacts. Therefore, the analysis in Section 4.5 provides the analysis to determine if the project would make a cumulatively considerable contribution to a significant cumulative GHG emissions impact.
- **Hazards and Hazardous Materials.** The cumulative analysis considers surrounding areas within the Cities of Anaheim and Orange, as projected in their general plans.
- **Hydrology and Water Quality.** The recharged groundwater and stormwater runoff from the project site could impact downstream water quality and off-site drainage facilities. Cumulative impacts are analyzed within the Santa Ana River Watershed.

- **Noise.** Cumulative construction impacts are based on nearby projects that may have concurrent construction schedules. Cumulative operational impacts are typically based on existing development combined with the project and reasonably foreseeable nearby future development.
- **Transportation.** The cumulative vehicle miles traveled traffic impact analysis consider the potential for the project in conjunction with other development projects as projected and allowed in the Cities of Anaheim and Orange per their general plans.
- **Tribal Cultural Resources.** Cumulative impacts related to Tribal Cultural Resources are based on the local Native American Tribes' culturally significant areas and include, but are not limited to, cultural landscapes and regions, specific heritage sites, and other Tribal Cultural Places.

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