

Chapter 3 Environmental Setting

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the regional and local environmental setting of the City of Perris (City) and generalized information regarding natural resources and land use.

3.1 Regional Setting

The City of Perris is in the Perris Block geologic unit, which lies within the Peninsular Ranges Geomorphic Province of Southern California. The Peninsular Ranges Geomorphic Province is characterized by a series of northwesterly trending mountain ranges that extend from the coast of California eastward into the California desert and south to the tip of Baja California, Mexico. The Perris Block is bound on the northeast by the San Jacinto Fault, on the north by the Cucamonga Fault and the San Gabriel Mountains, and on the southwest by the Elsinore Fault and the Santa Ana Mountains. The City of Moreno Valley borders Perris to the north and the City of Menifee borders the City to the south. Unincorporated areas of Riverside County border the City to the east and west.

3.2 Project Location

The proposed Perris Airport Industrial Project (Proposed Project or Project) Site is in the southern part of the City of Perris, in Riverside County. The Project Site is comprised of seven parcels that total 87.69 gross (82.71 net)-acres in size. Site 1 encompasses Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APNs) 330-090-031, -033, -036, -038, -040 and 330-100-031. Site 2 encompasses Assessor's Parcel Number 330-090-034. The Project Site lies on the southeastern portion of the intersection between East Ellis Avenue and Goetz Road. Three paved roads adjoin the Project Site: East Ellis Avenue adjoins the Project Site on the north; Case Road on the east, and Goetz Road on the west. The Project Site shares interior property lines with the runway of Perris Valley Airport. There are no hazardous materials concerns associated with adjacent properties based on visual observations from publicly accessible rights-of-way.

3.3 Land Uses

3.3.1 Existing General Plan Land Use and Zoning Designation

The City of Perris General Plan designates the Project Site for Light Industrial (Site 1 and Site 2) and Public (the connection between Site 1 and Site 2) uses and is zoned Light Industrial (Site 1 and Site 2) and Public (the connection between Site 1 and Site 2).

3.3.2 General Plan Planning Area 8

The Project Site is located within Planning Area 8: Perris Valley Airport. This planning area represents approximately 7 percent of the City land area. Perris Valley Airport is the most prominent use in the area. General and Light Industrial land use designations predominate. Ellis Avenue and Interstate 215 border the planning area at the north, to the south and east is the San

Jacinto River, and S A Street is to the west. Planning Area 8 also includes the Southern California Railway Museum. Other uses include a transfer station for refuse and recycling operations, boat sales lots, and auto repair shops. Two portions of the Green Valley Specific Plan extend into the area from across the San Jacinto River Channel and are designated for industrial uses. Portions of the undeveloped New Perris Specific Plan also extend into Planning Area 8 from Planning Area 5: Central Core.

The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway rail line parallels Case Road through Planning Area 8. The Perris Elementary and Union High School Districts serve Planning Area 8. Both the Eastern Municipal Water District (EMWD) and the City’s water and sewer district provide water and sewer services.

Roughly one-half of Planning Area 8 falls within the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) boundary, including Perris Valley Airport and part of the New Perris Specific Plan. Fifty-eight acres of commercial land uses and 33 acres of industrial land uses are affected. Table 3-1, Planning Area 8, outlines specifications of this planning area.

Table 3-1. Planning Area 8

Acres	1,322
Population	32
Units	9
Commercial/Industrial Building Area	648,496
Flood Zone	A, X, and X500
Land Use Designation	Acres
Neighborhood Commercial (CN)	9
Community Commercial (CC)	55
Light Industrial (LI)	587
General Industrial (GI)	504
Public (P)	160
(Open Space) OS	7

Source: City of Perris Land Use Element

3.3.3 Surrounding Land Uses and Zoning Designations

Properties to the west are designated and zoned General Industrial, properties to the south and east are designated and zoned Light Industrial, and properties to the north are within the Downtown Perris Plan and zoned Employment Plaza.

Based on recent Google Earth imagery, existing land uses in the immediate vicinity of the Project Site appear to include: an apartment complex (northwest of Site 1); an open field (north of Site 1);

a parking lot, building supply warehouse, and rock/stone supply yard (west of Site 1); the Perris Valley Airport parking lot and indoor skydiving facility (south of Site 1); the runway of Perris Valley Airport (Airport) (east of Site 1/west of Site 2), a privately owned, public use airport primarily used for recreation-based flights; a trucking school, a single-family house that appears to be used as a business, and a recycling facility (north and northwest of Site 2); and open fields (south, southeast, and east of Site 2). Refer to Table 3-2, Surrounding Land Uses, below for details regarding land uses that abut the Project Site.

Table 3-2. Surrounding Land Uses

Site 1	
North	An apartment complex northwest of Site 1, which includes a baseball field as one of its amenities and an open field directly north
East	The runway of Perris Valley Airport, a privately owned, public use airport primarily used for recreation-based flights
South	Perris Valley Airport parking lot and indoor skydiving facility
West	Goetz Road
Site 2	
North	A trucking school, a single-family house that appears to be a business, and a recycling facility
East	Open fields
South	Open fields
West	The runway of Perris Valley Airport, a privately owned, public use airport primarily used for recreation-based flights

3.3.4 Airport Land Use

The Project Site is located within the Zone E – Other Airport Environs Airport Overlay Zone for the March Air Reserve Base/Inland Port Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan per Title 19 of the Perris Municipal Code. Prohibited uses in Zone E include agriculture, livestock operations or any activity that may attract birds and thereby present a hazard to the nearby airport.

The Project Site is within the airport influence area of Perris Valley Airport. Due to its proximity to the Perris Valley Airport runway, the Project Site is within Compatibility Zones A through D. Warehouses and truck yards are permitted in Zones B1 through D. Zone B1 is most restrictive with regards to allowable uses and occupancy; Zone D is less restrictive.

3.4 Existing Physical Site Conditions

CEQA Guidelines Section 15125(a)(1), recommends that the physical environmental condition that existed at the time an EIR’s Notice of Preparation is released for public review normally be used as the comparative baseline for the EIR analysis. The Notice of Preparation for this Draft EIR was released for public review on October 20, 2023, and the following pages include a description

of the Project Site's physical environmental condition (Existing Conditions) as of that approximate date. More information regarding the Project Site's environmental setting is provided in the specific sections of Draft EIR Chapter 4, Environmental Analysis.

3.4.1 Land Use

The Project Site consists of undeveloped land with native vegetation and has land use designations of Light Industrial Light Industrial (Site 1 and Site 2) and Public (the connection between Site 1 and Site 2) and is zoned Light Industrial (Site 1 and Site 2) and Public (the connection between Site 1 and Site 2). The Project Site was previously used as agricultural land, specifically row crops and orchards from at least the late 1930s to approximately the late 1960s. The current airplane landing strip, bisecting the central portion of the Project Site was first depicted in a 1985 aerial photograph; the remainder of the Project Site was depicted as being undeveloped. Significant changes were not observed between the 1980s and present day.

3.4.2 Aesthetics and Topographic Features

The closest eligible state scenic highway to the Project Site is State Route 74 which is located approximately 1.3 miles west of the Project Site. The Project Site itself is not a scenic vista and does not block or diminish a scenic vista. Topographic features proximate to the Project Site include the San Gabriel and San Bernardino Mountains. Existing elevations across the western portion of the Project Site vary from 1425.5 to 1415.8 (NAVD88 datum). This western area currently slopes down at approximately 0.5 percent grade to the southeast. Existing elevations across the eastern portion of the Project Site vary from 1418.5 to 1413.5 (NAVD88 datum). The eastern area currently slopes down at approximately 0.3 percent grade to the southeast.

3.4.3 Land Cover/Vegetation

The Project Site is located within the Western Riverside County MSHCP Mead Valley Area Plan area. A 10.04-acre portion of the Project Site is located within MSHCP Criteria Area Cell 3377, Subunit 4, San Jacinto River Lower and is completely developed. A 3.74-acre off-site impact area extends into MSHCP Criteria Area 3276, Subunit 4 – San Jacinto River Lower. A disturbed agricultural drainage ditch bisects the off-site impact area and ultimately drains to Proposed Constrained Linkage 19 (San Jacinto River). The Project Site and off-site impact area occurs partially within a predetermined Survey Area for six MSHCP narrow endemic plant species.

3.4.4 Climate and Air Quality

The Project Site is located in western Riverside County within the South Coast Air Basin. The South Coast Air Basin consists of Orange County, together with the non-desert portions of Los Angeles, Riverside, and San Bernardino counties. Regionally, the interaction of land (offshore) and sea (onshore) breezes controls local wind patterns in the area: daytime onshore flows and evening offshore flows. Air stagnation may occur during the early evening and early morning

during periods of transition between day and nighttime flows. The region also experiences periods of hot, dry winds from the desert known as Santa Ana winds.

Locally, the prevailing wind is generally from the northwest to the southeast. The dominant daily wind pattern is an onshore 8 to 12 mph daytime breeze and an offshore 3 to 5 mph nighttime breeze. The typical wind flow pattern fluctuates only with occasional winter storms or strong northeasterly Santa Ana winds from the mountains and deserts northeast of the South Coast Air Basin. Summer wind flow patterns represent worst-case conditions, as this is the period of higher temperatures and more sunlight, which results in ozone formation.

Topographic features such as the San Gabriel and San Bernardino Mountains form a natural barrier to the dispersion of air contaminants and the primary meteorological influence is a semi-permanent high-pressure cell that hovers over Southern California. During the late spring, summer, and early fall, descending warm air is derived from this area of high pressure and blankets a layer of air that is cooler and closer to the ground. This weather occurrence, coupled with stable air temperatures, limits the vertical rise and dispersion of air pollutants. These pollutants are then trapped within the basin created by mountain ranges as the ocean breezes push eastward from the Pacific Ocean.

The combination of stagnant wind conditions and low inversions produces the greatest pollutant concentrations. On days of no inversion or high wind speeds, ambient air pollutant concentrations are lowest. During periods of low inversions and low wind speeds, air pollutants generated in urbanized areas are transported predominantly onshore into Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. In the winter, the greatest pollution problems are carbon monoxide and oxides of nitrogen because of extremely low inversions and air stagnation during the night and early morning hours. In the summer, the longer daylight hours and the brighter sunshine combine to cause a reaction between hydrocarbons and oxides of nitrogen to form photochemical smog.

The combination of topographic and meteorological characteristics of the basin results in a gradual degradation of air quality from coastal areas to inland areas, which is most evident with the photochemical pollutants such as ozone. The greatest ozone problems are recorded at those South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) monitoring stations located at the base of the San Gabriel and San Bernardino Mountains, ranging from the City of Santa Clarita, east to the City of San Bernardino.

The South Coast AQMD has divided the South Coast Air Basin into 38 air monitoring areas with a designated ambient air monitoring station representative of each area. The Project Site is located within the Perris Valley air monitoring area (Area 24), which is located in Riverside County and covers from the San Bernardino and Riverside County line on the north, Paloma Valley on the south, Perris on the west, and the San Jacinto Valley on the east. Prior to 2022, ambient air concentrations of ozone within Area 24 were monitored at the Perris Valley Monitoring Station, which was located approximately 1.6 miles northwest of the Project Site at 237 North D Street,

Perris. The Perris Valley Monitoring Station also measured ambient concentrations of respirable particulate matter (PM₁₀) prior to 2021. Ambient air quality concentrations are no longer monitored within Area 24.

Refer to Draft EIR Section 4.2, Air Quality, and Section 4.7, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, for a more detailed discussion of the existing air quality and climate setting for the Project Site.

3.4.5 Cultural Resources and Tribal Cultural Resources

Cultural resources are found throughout the City of Perris and are reminders of the City's prehistoric and historical record. Cultural resources are the tangible or intangible remains or traces left by past people who inhabited the region. They encompass both the built and the archaeological environments, as well as Traditional Cultural Properties. They are typically in protected areas near water sources and multiple ecoregions and can include Traditional Cultural Places, such as gathering areas, landmarks, and ethnographic locations.

A records search, review of historical maps and aerial photographs, and a field survey of the Project Site were conducted. No cultural resources were identified during the survey of the Project Site. The Project Site has been impacted by historical agricultural activities and modern grading; as such, any cultural resources at or near the existing ground surface that may have been present are likely to have been removed or destroyed.

3.4.6 Geology and Landform

Western Riverside County has been mapped for Alquist-Priolo zones; however, no zones exist within the City of Perris. While seismic activity is known to exist throughout Southern California, there are no known faults running through or near the Project Site that could result in substantial effects. The City is located on a flat broad basin. The Project Site's overall topography is relatively flat. Additionally, according to the City of Perris General Plan Safety Element, the Project Site is not in an area prone to slope instability or susceptible to landslides. Section 4.6, Geology and Soils, includes further discussion on the City's geology and landforms.

3.4.7 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

The Project Site is proximate to Perris Valley Airport, a private airport primarily used for recreation-based flights is located east of the Project Site. Due to its proximity to the Perris Valley Airport runway, the Project Site is also within Compatibility Zones A through D of the Perris Valley Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP). The proposed warehouses, truck yard, employee parking, and retention basins would be in Zones B1 through D. Warehouses and truck yards are permitted in Zones B1 through D. Zone B1 is most restrictive with regards to allowable uses and occupancy; Zone D is less restrictive.

The Project Site is also located within Zone E – Other Airport Environs Airport Overlay Zone for March Air Reserve Base/Inland Port Airport (March ARB/IPA). As presented in Table MA-2, Basic Compatibility Criteria, of the 2014 March ARB/IPA ALUCP, Compatibility Zone E does not have a restriction on a non-residential, average land use intensity. As identified on Table MA-2 of the 2014 March ARB/IPA ALUCP, prohibited uses within include hazards to flight only.

There are no hazardous materials concerns associated with adjacent properties based on visual observation from publicly accessible rights-of-way.

3.4.8 Hydrology and Water Quality

Drainages on Case and Ellis are Jurisdictional to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and Regional Water Quality Control Board. The water courses around the Project Site have been identified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as Zone AE. Flood Zone AE is defined as a high-risk flood zone with a 1 percent annual chance of flooding. The Project Site is shown on FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map number 06065C1440H, effective December 2021. The western area of the Project Site currently slopes down at approximately 0.5 percent grade to the southeast, draining to an existing storm drain inlet in the Perris Valley Airport property. The eastern area currently slopes down at approximately 0.3 percent grade to the southeast, draining to an existing ditch in Case Road. The existing drainage pattern for the Project Site and the general area is characterized by sheet flows that follow the slope.

3.4.9 Noise

A variety of noise sources exist in the City of Perris. Mobile noise sources produce a major effect on the ambient noise environment. These sources include automobile traffic, aircraft overflights, and train movements. The primary noise source within the City is automotive traffic along the streets and highway network. Traffic noise is generated by the friction of tires on pavement, together with the sounds of engines and exhausts. Generally, higher traffic volumes and speeds equal higher noise levels along the roadway. Accordingly, the highest traffic noise levels are typically found along freeway and highway corridors.

Refer to Draft EIR Section 4.11, Noise, for a more detailed discussion of the Project Site's existing noise setting.

3.4.10 Public Infrastructure and Services

The Proposed Project includes construction of an on-site network of water, sewer, storm drain, electric, and natural gas infrastructure. Potable water for the Proposed Project and wastewater disposal services would be provided by the EMWD, which provides and distributes potable water throughout all but a small portion of the City of Perris and its Sphere of Influence. The Perris City Water District buys all of its water from the EMWD that, in turn, delivers the water through five

metered connections to the Perris Water system. Wastewater generated by the Proposed Project would be treated by the EMWD treatment plant approximately 2 miles southeast of the Project Site. A 12-inch City of Perris domestic waterline exists within Goetz Road. Electrical service to the Proposed Project would be provided by Southern California Edison and natural gas would be provided by Southern California Gas. Telecommunications would be provided telecommunications by Verizon or another local provider. Trash, recycling, and green waste services within the City are provided by CR&R Environmental Services.

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), under contract with Riverside County and operating as the Riverside County Fire Department, provides fire prevention and suppression to the City of Perris. Riverside County Fire Department Station No. 1 located at 210 W. San Jacinto Avenue and Riverside County Fire Department Station No. 90 at 333 Placentia Avenue exclusively serve the City of Perris. Riverside County Fire Department Station No. 1 is approximately 1.4 miles roadway miles north of the Project Site. Riverside County Fire Department Station No. 90 is approximately 4.1 roadway miles north of the Project Site. Other Riverside County Fire Department stations respond to emergency service calls in the City on an as-needed basis.

The City of Perris contracts with the Riverside County Sheriff's Office for the provision of municipal police services in the City. The Proposed Project would be designed and operated in compliance with the standards provided within the Perris Municipal Code and Sheriff's Office for new development with regard to public safety. The Perris Police Station is located at 137 N. Perris Boulevard and is located approximately 3.5 roadway miles northwest of the Project Site. Police response times vary by time of day and priority of the call. Typical operational police protection services involved with the proposed industrial and retail uses include after-hours patrol, crime and traffic accident/collision responses, and calls for service.

The Project Site is located within the Perris Union High School District, which covers 182 square miles in Riverside County and is comprised of four schools serving 9th through 12th grade (PUHSD, 2022). The Project Site is also located within the Perris Elementary School District, which covers 49 square miles in Riverside County and is comprised of seven schools serving Kindergarten through 8th grade (PESD, 2022). The Project Site is within the current enrollment areas for the following schools: Railway Elementary School and Perris High School.

Residents of the City of Perris are provided library services through the Riverside County Library System.

The City's Community Services Department is responsible for recreational facilities in the City.

Chapter 6, Other CEQA Considerations; Section 4.13, Transportation; and Section 4.15, Utilities and Service Systems, include further discussion on public infrastructure and services.

3.4.11 Transportation

Two state highways traverse the City: Interstate 215 and Highway 74. Both highways are owned and maintained by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans).

Interstate 215 runs north to south through the City of Perris and is designated as a freeway. The freeway is 4 lanes south of Redlands Avenue and 6 lanes north of Redlands Avenue. State Route 74 generally runs east–west through the City, connecting Southeastern Perris with the downtown area and Interstate 215. Between Case Road and 4th Street, State Route 74 and Interstate 215 are the same roadway. State Route 74 is 4 lanes from Interstate 215 west through downtown Perris and is 2 lanes west of Navajo Road and east of Interstate 215.

A network of City-owned and maintained streets provides for traffic circulation within Perris and interconnects with state and County roadways for access to the surrounding region. This network is comprised of roadways classified as primary arterials, secondary arterials, collectors, and local streets.

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