3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

APPROACH TO ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

The following sections evaluate the potential environmental impacts that could result from the Project, including implementation of the Housing Element Update at the maximum buildout potential scenario and the potential environmental impacts that would result, including establishment of eight Housing Opportunity Sites and a new zoning designation, establishment of the Main Street Program, as well as rezoning of parcels, resulting in increased densification and intensification of residential uses. Implementation of the Housing Element Update is anticipated to occur over the next eight years, which constitutes the City's planning period from 2021 to 2029 to meet the state's RHNA allocation. Potential impacts are assessed against the existing conditions, long-term implementation horizon year of 2030, criteria for determining the significance of potential environmental impacts, analyses of the type and magnitude of environmental impacts, and feasible mitigation measures that would reduce or avoid significant environmental impacts.

The Housing Opportunity Sites were evaluated in this EIR at a programmatic level based on information available to the City of Seal Beach where reasonably foreseeable, direct, and indirect physical changes in the environment could be considered. While the legally required contents of a programmatic-level-based analysis are the same as those of a project-specific analysis, a programmatic level analysis is typically more conceptual and may contain a more general discussion of impacts, alternatives, and mitigation measures than project-specific analysis. As provided in Section 15168 of the CEQA Guidelines, a programmatic level analysis may be prepared on a series of actions that may be characterized as one large project. Use of a programmatic level analysis provides the City (as Lead Agency) with the opportunity to consider broad policy alternatives and program-wide mitigation measures and provides the City with greater flexibility to address environmental issues and/or cumulative impacts on a comprehensive basis. Agencies generally prepare programmatic level analysis for programs or a series of related actions that are linked geographically, are logical parts of a chain of contemplated events, rules, regulations, or plans that govern the conduct of a continuing program, or are individual activities carried out under the same authority and having generally similar environmental effects that can be mitigated in similar ways.

Further (project-level) analysis was not conducted because the City has not received development proposals for the eight Housing Opportunity Sites or within the Main Street Program area analyzed in this EIR and therefore had no further information on which to base an analysis; any such analysis would be too speculative. Similarly, the analysis related to the residential component of the ORCC Specific Plan Project is provided to be informational as the project-specific impacts related to development of the residential component of the ORCC Specific Plan Project are being analyzed in detail and evaluated separately by the City in a standalone EIR.

Environmental Resource Topics

The environmental setting, potential environmental impacts, and mitigation measures related to each environmental resource area are described in the following sections:

- Section 3.1: Aesthetics
- Section 3.2: Air Quality
- Section 3.3: Biological Resources
- Section 3.4: Cultural Resources
- Section 3.5: Energy
- Section 3.6: Geology and Soils
- Section 3.7: Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Section 3.8: Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Section 3.9: Hydrology and Water Quality
- Section 3.10: Land Use and Planning
- Section 3.11: Noise
- Section 3.12: Population and Housing
- Section 3.13: Public Services
- Section 3.14: Recreation
- Section 3.15: Transportation
- Section 3.16: Tribal Cultural Resources
- Section 3.17: Utilities and Service Systems

Organization of Environmental Resource Section

Each environmental resource section is organized as follows:

Summary of Impacts provides a summary of the potential environmental impacts associated with the Project. A discussion of the residential component of the ORCC Specific Plan Project is also included; however, specific impact findings associated with the development of the residential component of the ORCC Specific Plan Project are being evaluated separately by the City in a standalone EIR.

Environmental Setting provides an overview of the existing physical environmental conditions in the study area that could be affected by implementation of the Project (i.e., the “affected environment”). In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15125, each environmental resource section will include a description of the existing physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of the project area to provide the “baseline condition” against which project-related impacts are compared. Typically, the baseline condition is the physical condition that exists when the NOP is published; however, a different baseline may be used in specific cases where it is deemed appropriate. For the Project, the environmental setting described in each of the following sections will be that which existed on November 16, 2023, the date the NOP was published.

Regulatory Setting identifies the plans, policies, laws, and regulations that are relevant to each resource area and describes permits and other approvals necessary to implement future housing projects. Compliance with these applicable laws and regulations is mandatory unless otherwise noted. Therefore, as it relates to the impact analysis, compliance is assumed because the laws in effect require it, and mitigation would generally not be required when compliance with an existing law or regulation would either avoid or reduce a significant impact to a level below significance.

Thresholds of Significance identifies the thresholds of significance used to determine the level of significance of the environmental impacts for each resource topic, in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Sections 15126, 15126.2, and 15143. The thresholds of significance used in this Draft EIR are based on the checklist presented in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines; best available data; and regulatory standards of federal, state, and local agencies.

Impacts and Mitigation Measures identify the level of each environmental impact by comparing the effects of the project to the environmental setting. Key methods and assumptions used to frame and conduct the impact analysis, as well as issues or potential impacts not discussed further (e.g., such issues for which the project would have no impact), are also described.

Project impacts are organized numerically in each subsection (e.g., Impact AQ-1, Impact AQ-2, Impact AQ-3). A bold-font environmental impact statement precedes the discussion of each impact while its level of significance succeeds the discussion of each impact. The discussion that follows the impact summary includes the substantial evidence supporting the impact significance conclusion.

Mitigation Measures describe any feasible measures that could avoid, minimize, rectify, reduce, or compensate for significant adverse impacts, with measures having to be fully enforceable through incorporation into the Project (PRC Section 21081.6[b]). Mitigation measures are not required for environmental impacts that are found to be less than significant. Where feasible mitigation for a significant environmental impact is available, it is described following the impact. Where sufficient feasible mitigation is not available to reduce environmental impacts to a less than significant level, or where the lead agency lacks the authority to ensure that the mitigation is implemented when needed, the impacts are identified as significant and unavoidable.

Level of Significance After Mitigation describes the level of impact significance remaining after mitigation measures are implemented.

Level of Significance

Determining the severity of Project impacts is fundamental to achieving the objectives of CEQA. CEQA Guidelines Section 15091 requires that decision makers mitigate the significant impacts identified in the Final EIR to less than significant, if feasible. If the EIR identifies any significant unmitigated impacts, CEQA Guidelines Section 15093 requires decision-makers to adopt a statement of overriding considerations that explains why the benefits of the Project outweigh the adverse environmental consequences identified in the EIR.

The level of significance for each impact examined in this Draft EIR is determined by considering the predicted magnitude of the impact against the applicable threshold. Thresholds were developed using criteria from the CEQA Guidelines and Appendix G Checklist; federal, state, and local regulatory schemes; regional and local plans and ordinances; accepted practice; consultation with recognized experts; and other professional opinions.

Each bolded impact statement also contains a statement of the significance determination for the environmental impact as one of the following determinations:

- **Significant and Unavoidable**. An impact that cannot be reduced to below the threshold level given reasonably available and feasible mitigation measures. Such an impact requires a Statement of Overriding Considerations to be issued if the project is approved per CEQA Guidelines Section 15093.

- **Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated**. An impact that can be reduced to below the threshold level given reasonably available and feasible mitigation measures. Such an impact requires findings under CEQA Guidelines Section 15091.

- **Less than Significant**. An impact that may be adverse but does not exceed the threshold levels and does not require mitigation measures. However, mitigation measures that could further lessen the environmental effect may be suggested if they are readily available and easily achievable.

- **No Impact.** The Project would have no effect on environmental conditions or would reduce existing environmental problems or hazards. A "No Impact" answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A "No Impact" answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors, as well as general standards (e.g., the project would not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).

Format Used for Impact Analysis and Mitigation Measures

The format adopted in this Draft EIR to present the evaluation of environmental impacts is described and illustrated below.

Summary Heading of Impact

Impact AQ-1:	**An impact summary heading appears immediately preceding the impact description (Summary Heading of Impact in this example). The impact abbreviation identifies the section of the report (AQ for Air Quality in this example) and the sequential order of the impact (1 in this example) within that section. To the right of the impact number is the impact statement, which identifies the potential impact.**

Impact Analysis
A narrative analysis follows the impact statement.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation
This section identifies the level of significance of the impact before any mitigation is proposed.

Mitigation Measures
In some cases, following the impact discussion, reference is made to federal and state regulations and agency policies that would fully or partially mitigate the impact. In addition, policies and programs from applicable local land use plans that partially or fully mitigate the impact may be cited.

Project-specific mitigation measures, beyond those contained in other documents, are set off with a summary heading and described using the format presented below:

MM AQ-1: Project-specific mitigation is identified that would reduce the impact to the lowest degree feasible. The mitigation number links the particular mitigation to the impact with which it is associated (AQ-1 in this example).

Abbreviations used in the mitigation measure numbering are shown in Table 3.0-1.

Table 3.0-1: Environmental Resource Abbreviations

Code	Environmental Resource Topic
AES	Aesthetics
AQ	Air Quality
BIO	Biological Resources
CUL	Cultural Resources
EN	Energy
GEO	Geology and Soils
GHG	Greenhouse Gas Emissions
HAZ	Hazards and Hazardous Materials
HYD	Hydrology and Water Quality
LU	Land Use and Planning
NOI	Noise
POP	Population and Housing
PUB	Public Services
TRANS	Transportation
TCR	Tribal Cultural Resources
UTIL	Utilities and Service Systems

Level of Significance After Mitigation
This section identifies the resulting level of significance of the impact following mitigation.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Section 15130(a) of the State CEQA Guidelines requires a discussion of the cumulative impacts of a project when the project's incremental effect is cumulatively considerable. Cumulatively considerable, as defined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15065(a)(3), 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." The State CEQA Guidelines Section 15355 defines a cumulative impact as two or more individual effects that, when considered together, are considerable or that compound or increase other environmental impacts. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over time.

According to the CEQA Guidelines:

> *Cumulative impacts refer to two or more individual effects that, when considered together, are considerable and that compound or increase other environmental impacts.*
>
> *a) The individual effects may be changes resulting from a single project or multiple 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 probably future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time." (CCR, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, Section 15355)*

In addition, as stated in CEQA Guidelines:

> *The mere existence of significant cumulative impacts caused by other projects alone shall not constitute substantial evidence that the proposed project's incremental effects are cumulatively considerable (CCR, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, Section 15064[T][5]).*

Cumulative Impact Setting

An analysis of cumulative impacts follows the project-specific impacts and mitigation measures evaluation in each section. As established in the CEQA Guidelines, related projects consist of "closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects that would likely result in similar impacts and are located in the same geographic area" (CCR, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, Section 15355).

The State CEQA Guidelines define a cumulative impact as two or more individual impacts that, when considered together, are significant or that compound or increase other significant environmental impacts. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over time (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15355). The incremental impact of a project, although less than significant on its own, may be considerable when viewed in the cumulative context of other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects. A considerable contribution is considered significant from the point of view of cumulative impact analysis.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15130 identifies two basic methods for establishing the cumulative environment in which a project is considered: the use of a list of past, present, and probable future projects or the use of adopted projections from a general plan, other regional planning document, or a certified EIR for such a planning document. This cumulative analysis uses a combination of the "list" approach and the "projections" approach to identify the cumulative setting. The plan and projections approach relies on an adopted plan or reliable projection that describes the significant cumulative impact. This Draft EIR combines both the project list and projection approaches to generate the most reliable future projections possible.

A cumulative impact consists of an impact that is created as a result of the combination of the project evaluated in the EIR together with other past, present and reasonably foreseeable projects causing

related impacts. In this case, the Housing Element Update itself is a plan-level document which provides for increased residential development within the City across a relatively broad geography, including potential housing development that exceeds the regional forecast included for the City in regional plans.

The nature of the Project does not alter the need to analyze cumulative impacts, and consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(b)(1), regional growth projections prepared for Connect SoCal 2024 and contained in the County's transportation model are used for the analysis of VMT and related topics such as air quality, energy, greenhouse gas emissions, and noise.

Geographic Scope

The geographic area analyzed for cumulative impacts is dependent on the resource being analyzed. The geographic area associated with the proposed project's environmental impacts defines the boundaries of the area used for compiling the list of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects considered in the cumulative impact analysis.

Each section of this Draft EIR considers the specific geographic area that is directly related to the individual topic addressed within that section. Some analyses including air quality, energy, greenhouse gas emissions, transportation, and population and housing, rely on much larger geographic areas such as the Southern California region. For issues that may have regional cumulative implications, the cumulative impact analysis for this EIR is based on Connect SoCal 2024, Southern California's most recent Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS). Based on the forecasts in Connect SoCal 2024, in 2050 Seal Beach is estimated to have 13,900 dwelling units. However, as of January 1, 2024, the Department of Finance's (DOF) population and housing estimates identify that Seal Beach is currently estimated to have 14,678 dwelling units, which is more than the number of projected dwelling units for 2050. Therefore, development under the Project in conjunction with development forecasted in Connect SoCal 2024 is accounted for in the cumulative impacts analysis.

For analyses that may have more localized or neighborhood implications (biological resources, cultural resources, noise, public services, utilities), the cumulative impact analysis includes development projects that have recently been approved or have a pending application. Additionally, it includes potential future developments and opportunity sites that have been identified in the Housing Element Update for the adjacent cities. The cumulative impact analysis also includes the ORCC Specific Plan Project as it is a future development project in the City and currently under review.

Table 3.0-2: Geographic Scope of Cumulative Impact and Method of Evaluation

Resource Topic	Geographic Area	Method of Evaluation
Aesthetics	Immediate project vicinity	Projects
Air Quality	Local (toxic air contaminants) air basin (construction-related and mobile sources)	Projects and Projections
Biological Resources	Immediate project vicinity and region	Projects

Resource Topic	Geographic Area	Method of Evaluation
Cultural and Historical Resources	Project site only (does not contribute to cumulative impacts)	Projects
Energy	Immediate project vicinity and region	Projects and Projections
Geology and Soils	Immediate project vicinity	Projects
Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Change	State	Projections
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	Project site only (does not contribute to cumulative impacts)	Projects
Hydrology and Water Quality	Immediate project vicinity and region	Projects
Land Use and Planning	City	Projects
Noise	Immediate project vicinity (effects are highly localized)	Projects
Population and Housing	Region	Projects and Projections
Public Services	Immediate project vicinity	Projects and Projections
Recreation	City and immediate vicinity	Projects
Transportation	Immediate project vicinity	Projects and Projections
Tribal Cultural Resources	Project site only (does not contribute to cumulative impacts)	Projects
Utilities and Service Systems	Local	Projects

Notes:
Projects = the use of a list of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects
Projections = the use of projections contained in relevant planning documents

List of Related Plans and Projects

The list of past, present, and probable future projects can be found in Table 3.0-3, below. Figure 3-1 shows the location of each project.

As noted above, where a cumulative impact is significant when compared to existing or baseline conditions, the analysis must address whether the project's contribution to the significant cumulative impact is "considerable." If the contribution of the project is considerable, then the EIR must identify potentially feasible measures that could avoid or reduce the magnitude of the project's contribution to a less-than-considerable level. If the project's contribution is not considerable, it is considered less than significant and no mitigation of the project contribution is required. The cumulative impacts analysis is formatted in the same manner as the Project-specific impacts.

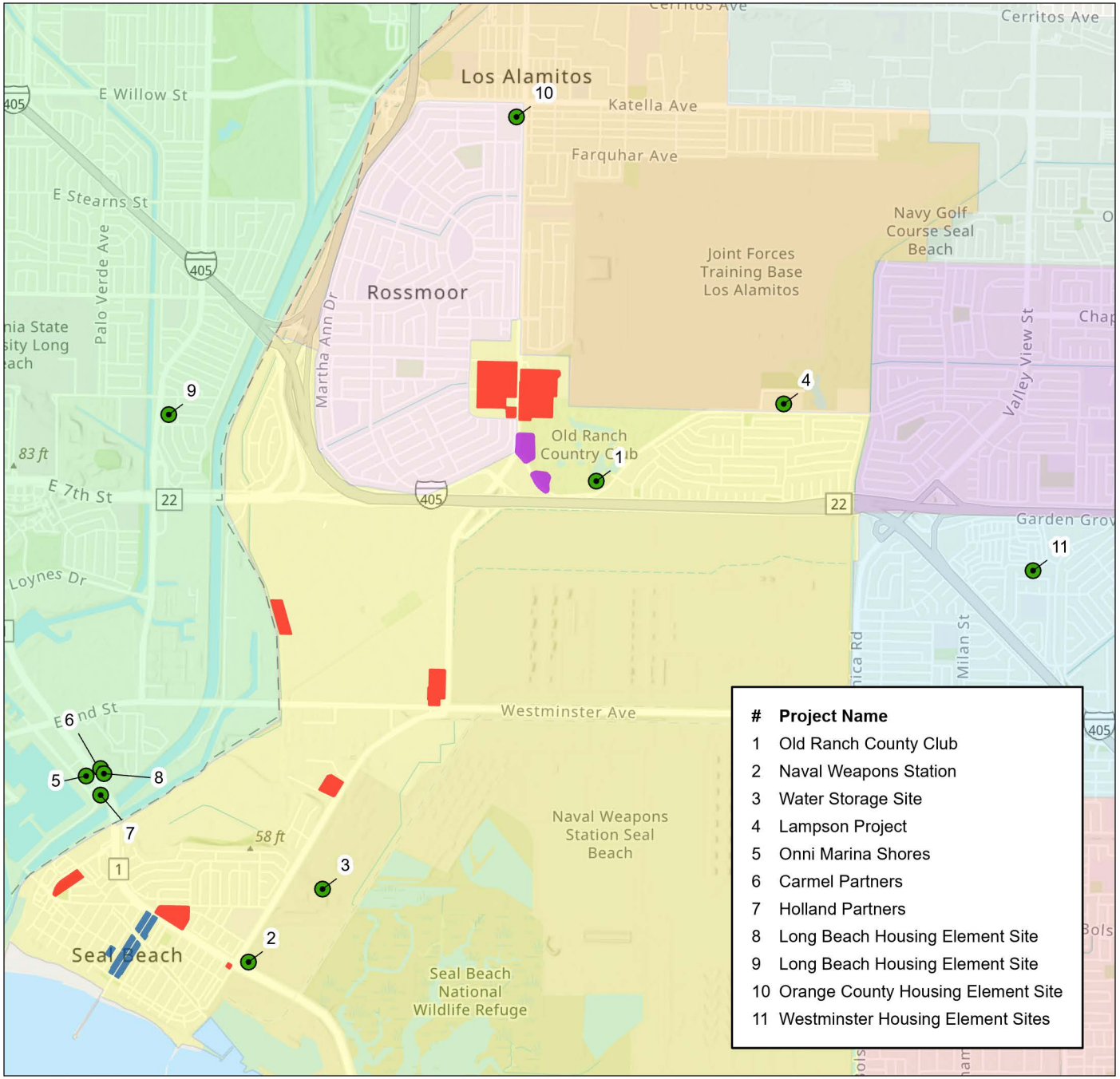
Table 3.0-3: Cumulative Past, Present, and Probable Future Residential Projects in the City and Surrounding Area

#	Project Name*	Location	Project Characteristics	Status	Total Dwelling Units
1	Old Ranch Country Club Project	Old Ranch Country Club, City of Seal Beach	Construction of a 116-unit, 4-level (188,500 square feet) multi-family housing development; a 51-unit, 3-level senior housing complex; medical office facility; overnight accommodation, including a bar and lounge and specialty restaurant	Preparation of EIR	167
2	Naval Weapons Station	Pacific Coast Hwy & Seal Beach Boulevard	Potential future housing developments proposed within the Naval Weapons Station	Anticipated	150
3	Water Storage Site	Within the Naval Weapons Station, approximately 1,000 feet east of Seal Beach Boulevard, near the housing community off Anchor Way	Potential future housing developments proposed within the Naval Weapons Station	Anticipated	65
4	Lampson Project	4665 Lampson Avenue, City of Los Alamitos	Redevelopment of existing office building with a residential development consisting of cluster homes, townhomes, and apartments totaling 246 units	Approved (By City of Los Alamitos)	246
5	Onni Marina Shores	6500-6670 E. Pacific Coast Hwy, City of Long Beach (7242011013)	Two, 5-story buildings with a total of 563,529 square feet containing 600	Approved (By City of Long Beach)	600

#	Project Name*	Location	Project Characteristics	Status	Total Dwelling Units
			residential units and 4,000 square-feet of ground-level restaurant space		
6	Carmel Partners	6615 E. Pacific Coast Hwy, City of Long Beach (7237020050)	Construction of a six-story mixed-use project consisting of 390 residential dwelling units and 5,351 square feet of commercial/retai l space	Approved (By City of Long Beach)	380
7	Holland Partners	6700 E. Pacific Coast Hwy, City of Long Beach (7242012006)	Construction of a new mixed-use project consisting of 281 residential dwelling units, 3,100 square feet of commercial/retai l space in a building with 592,100 square feet of area	Approved (By City of Long Beach)	281
8	Long Beach Housing Element Site	6695 E. Pacific Coast Hwy (7237020040); 6411 E. Pacific Coast Hwy (7237020051); No address (7237020904)	Candidate site identified in the City of Long Beach's Housing Element as a site for potential future residential development	Proposed in Housing Element Update (By City of Long Beach)	940
9	Long Beach Housing Element Site	1000 N Studebaker Rd (7238015021)	Candidate site identified in the City of Long Beach's Housing Element as a site for potential future residential development	Proposed in Housing Element Update (By City of Long Beach)	115
10	Orange County Housing Element Sites	11061 Los Alamitos Blvd (086-521-47); 11031 Los Alamitos Blvd (086-521-46);	Candidate site identified in the County of Orange's Housing Element as a	Proposed in Housing Element Update (By Orange County)	619

#	Project Name*	Location	Project Characteristics	Status	Total Dwelling Units
		3352 Katella Ave (086-521-19); 11131 Los Alamitos Blvd (086-521-23); 11088 Wallingsford Rd (086-521-11); 11171 Los Alamitos Blvd (086-521-24)	site for potential future residential development		
11	Westminster Housing Element Sites	13251 Springdale Street (203-073-04); Dorothy Lane /Melanie Lane (203-073-05); Dorothy Lane/Lee Drive (203-073-01 and 203-073-03)	Candidate site identified in the City of Westminster's Housing Element as a site for potential future residential development	Proposed in Housing Element Update (By City of Westminster)	122

*The individual projects and sites from adjacent cities' Housing Elements to be included in this table was determined using a criteria of being located within one mile of Seal Beach's city boundaries and a minimum of 100 dwelling units proposed.



#	Project Name
1	Old Ranch County Club
2	Naval Weapons Station
3	Water Storage Site
4	Lampson Project
5	Onni Marina Shores
6	Carmel Partners
7	Holland Partners
8	Long Beach Housing Element Site
9	Long Beach Housing Element Site
10	Orange County Housing Element Site
11	Westminster Housing Element Sites

Stantec

- Cumulative Projects
- Housing Opportunity Sites
- Main Street Program
- Residential Component of the Old Ranch Country Club Specific Plan Project

City Limits

- Cypress
- Garden Grove
- Huntington Beach
- Long Beach
- Los Alamitos
- Rossmoor
- Seal Beach
- Westminster

N

0 2,000 4,000 Feet

(At original document size of 8.5x11)
1:48,000

Notes

1. Coordinate System: NAD 1983 StatePlane California VI FIPS 0406 Feet
2. Data Sources: City of Seal Beach 2024.
3. Background: World Topographic Map: City of Long Beach, County of Los Angeles, California State Parks, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, Bureau of Land Management, EPA, NPS, USDA, USFWS
World Hillshade: Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, FEMA
World Ocean Base: Esri, GEBCO, Garmin, NaturalVue
World Ocean Reference: Esri, GEBCO, Garmin, NGS

Project Location
City of Seal Beach, California

Prepared by KDLP on 2025-03-10
TR by SET on 2025-03-10
IR by JW on 2025-03-10

Client/Project
204266500

City of Seal Beach
Housing Element and Zoning Code Updates Project

Figure No.
Figure 3 - 1

Title
Cumulative Past, Present, and Probable Future Projects

V:\1858\Active\204266000_SealBeachHousingElement\03_data\gis_cad\gis\Prj\SealBeach_Oct2024\SealBeach_Oct2024.aprx Revised: 2025-03-10 By: kdelapena