

3H. Land Use

INTRODUCTION

Land use refers to the use of land for various activities, including commercial, industrial, recreational, and residential uses. Local land use policies and development regulations control the type of land use and the intensity of development permitted on private property. Changes in land use patterns that result from new development can affect the character of an area and result in physical impacts to the environment. This chapter focuses on the proposed project's consistency with land use policies/regulations and land use compatibility issues.

SETTING

County of Los Angeles

Los Angeles County is one of the nation's largest counties with 4,081 square miles, bordered on the east by Orange and San Bernardino Counties, on the north by Kern County, on the west by Ventura County, and on the south by the Pacific Ocean. Its coastline is 81 miles long. There are 88 cities within the County, each with its own city council.

City of San Dimas

The City of San Dimas is located in the eastern portion of the San Gabriel Mountains in Los Angeles County. It is surrounded by the City of La Verne to the east, City of Covina to the west, and the City of Glendora to the north. Unincorporated County land and the Cities of Walnut and Pomona are located to the south. According to the City of San Dimas General Plan, the City contains 15 square miles or 9,270 acres.¹ Approximately 42 percent of the City is contained in a dedicated area of permanent open space as part of the Angeles National Forest and Los Angeles County regional parks. The largest land use represented in the City is residential (approximately 37 percent of the total city area).² The remaining 21 percent includes commercial, industrial, open space, public, institutional and other uses.

Existing On-Site Land Uses

The 22.83-acre proposed project site is located in an urbanized area that contains a mixture of land uses including commercial, retail, light industrial and residential uses.

¹ City of San Dimas, *Final Draft City of San Dimas General Plan*, 2000.

² *Ibid.*

The site is located on the southeast corner of Gladstone Street and Lone Hill Avenue, less than ¼-mile west of the 57 Freeway. It is bounded by Gladstone Street and various commercial and residential properties on the north side of Gladstone Street to the north, Lone Hill Avenue, a Chevron, and 12 single family residences to the west, an existing railroad (ATSF) to the east, and a corporate business park to the south. The ATSF right-of-way, which will become part of the MTA's Gold Line, traverses diagonally along the eastern boundary of the proposed project site from Gladstone Street to the 57 Freeway.

The majority of the proposed project site is vacant, under-developed land. Portions of this vacant land were developed with single-family residences as recent as 1999 but have since been removed. Approximately, 20 single-family residences and mobile home trailers are located on the southern portion of the site along West 5th Street. Some of the residences along the southern portion of the site are used for commercial/light industrial purposes including contractor yard uses. In addition, JCPE Enterprise, a local business with offices on-site, occupies the southeastern corner of the project site at the terminus of West 5th Street. The 20 residences and JCPE Enterprise total approximately 10 acres of the total 22.83 acres. No other structures are located on the site.

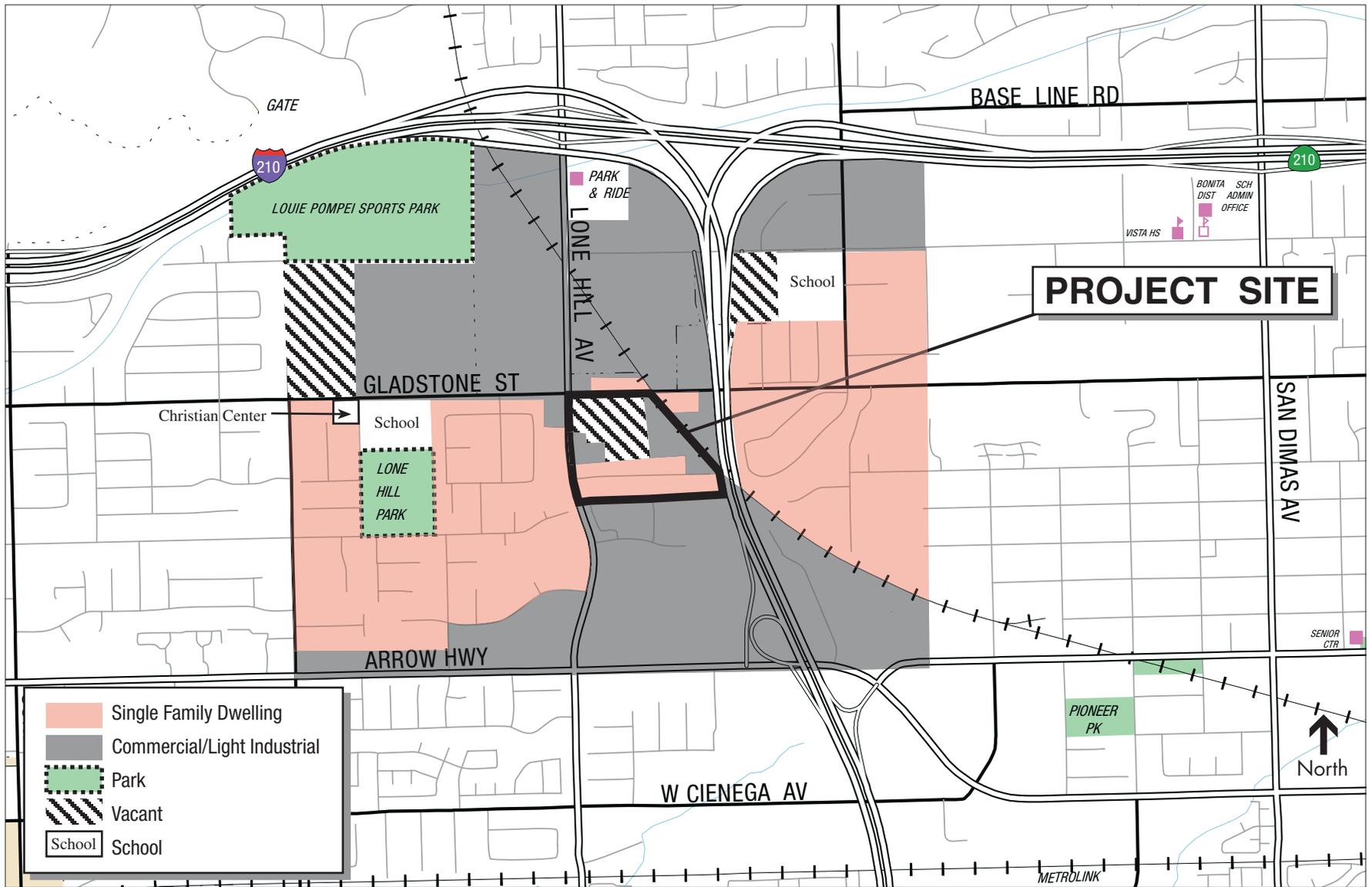
The proposed project site contains several trees and landscaping that are scattered throughout the site. Much of the existing vegetation is concentrated around the 20 residences located on the southern portion of the site.

Existing Surrounding Land Uses

The proposed project site is located in an urbanized area that contains commercial, residential, and transportation uses. The Glendora Marketplace, Ormco Sybron dental manufacturing facility and railroad tracks are located across Gladstone Street in the City of Glendora north of the site. Adjacent properties east of the ATSF right-of-way are mainly used for light industrial and commercial purposes including an auto body shop, a welding shop, and parking for construction equipment and trucks. Adjacent properties to the west (across Lone Hill Avenue) include a Chevron retail gasoline service station and 16 single-family residences. A corporate business park is located adjacent to the proposed project site to the south.

Figure 3H-1 includes a land use map of the project vicinity. As shown in Figure 3H-1, the general land use pattern of the area can be characterized by the following land use types:

- Single-Family Residential
- Commercial
- Corporate Business Park
- Park
- Vacant
- Institutional (School)



SOURCE: Thomas Brothers Maps, 2003
 Environmental Science Associates, 2003

Costco Commercial Complex / 202349 ■

Figure 3H-1
 Land Use Map

There are 16 existing residential homes located on the west side of Lone Hill Avenue south of Gladstone Street. These homes have driveways fronting onto Lone Hill Avenue that have been in place for a number of years.

APPLICABLE REGULATIONS

City of San Dimas General Plan

The General Plan is the basic planning document of a city or county and acts as a “blueprint” for development. Every city and county must adopt a general plan with seven mandatory elements: land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, and safety. Other topics that local governments frequently choose to address are public facilities, parks and recreation, community design, or growth management, among others. Depending on the community’s location, general plans also contain special topics, including local coastal plans, waste management, hazardous waste, seismic hazards, floodplain management, and airport land use.

According to the City of San Dimas General Plan, the project site is designated Industrial.³ Currently, the City is in the process of updating and amending its General Plan and proposes to designate the southeast corner of Lone Hill Avenue and Gladstone Street as a “business park.”⁴

City of San Dimas Planning and Zoning Code

The city or county zoning code is the set of detailed requirements that implement the general plan policies at the level of the individual parcel. The zoning code presents standards for different uses and identifies which uses are allowed in the various zoning districts of the jurisdiction. Since 1971, state law has required the city or county zoning code to be consistent with the jurisdiction’s general plan. Local land use decisions must be consistent with the communities’ general plans: zoning, subdivision approvals, use permits and public works.

The proposed project site contains 47 parcels, for which the zoning varies from Industrial to Single-Family Residential (see Figure 3H-1).⁵ The Industrial zoning allows for general industrial uses and accessory offices, cafeterias, recreational facilities, restaurants, and other such facilities designed to assist in the daily business of the primary use permitted on the site, and the Single-Family zoning allows for the development of single-family homes and manufactured housing on a permanent foundation in areas zoned S-F 7500.⁶

³ City of San Dimas, *General Plan – Land Use Element*, 1991.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ City of San Dimas. *Municipal Code Title 18 - Zoning*.

Specific Plan Area No. 24

A Specific Plan provides a link between a general plan and site-specific restrictions and regulations outlined in zoning codes. The proposed project site is located within Specific Plan Area No. 24. The City is currently considering updates and amendments to the Specific Plan No. 24. As part of this process and as part of the proposed project, the Specific Plan would be amended to reflect a commercial use at the proposed project site instead of the proposed conversion to industrial. In addition, the Specific Plan for Area No. 24 is intended to:

- Provide a coordinated, logical method for the property within the project area to recycle into light industrial;
- Ensure that the development within the project area is compatible and sensitive to adjacent uses;
- Create a high quality and aesthetically attractive visual entrance to the city;
- Minimize the negative adverse impact of traffic generated by any development by directing traffic away onto the two adjacent major arterial highways efficiently and quickly;
- Incorporate creative and sensitive planning, architecture, landscape architecture, and engineering to develop a project that will enhance the existing adjacent uses and promote the existing and future appearance of San Dimas; and,
- Provide provisions for the continued use and maintenance of existing improvements as the project areas recycle into development consistent with the provisions of the design standards within this chapter. (Ord. 944 § 1 (I (A)), 1990)⁷

IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

Methodology

The environmental baseline for the proposed project is based on project information pertaining to existing land use characteristics and patterns. The proposed project is assessed to determine whether it creates physical division within the community. In addition, the proposed project also is assessed to determine its conformity with applicable local plans and policies.

⁷ City of San Dimas, *Municipal Code – Chapter 18.540, Specific Plan No. 24.*

Criteria for Determining Significance

The criteria used to determine the significance of a potential impact are based on the model initial study checklist contained in Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines. The proposed project may result in a significant impact if it would:

- Physically divide an established community;
- Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect; or,
- Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan.

Project Impacts

Impact 3H1: The proposed project would not physically divide an established community.

As mentioned above, the proposed project site is bounded by Lone Hill Avenue to the west, Gladstone Street to the north, the ATSF right-of-way to the east, and a corporate business park to the south. The proposed project site is currently developed with 20 single-family homes, 1 septic tank business, and 1 mobile home trailer located between an undeveloped lot and a corporate office development. Consequently, the conversion of the site to a commercial complex would result in the demolition of these existing structures on-site. The residences that would be removed as part of the proposed project would be relocated to another area of San Dimas. Therefore, the development of the project site with a commercial complex is not anticipated to divide an established community. No significant impacts are anticipated.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Residual Impacts

Impacts would be less than significant.

Impact 3H2: The proposed project would not conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the proposed project.

The City of San Dimas General Plan delineates the planning guidelines and policies for development throughout the City. According to the General Plan, the proposed project

site consists of 47 parcels, whose zoning is a mix of Industrial and Single-Family Residential. The General Plan's Land Use Element designates the proposed project site as Industrial/Business Park. A General Plan amendment to change the land use designation to Commercial is being considered as part of the proposed project. Additionally, a Specific Plan amendment and zone change would be completed as part of the proposed project prior to construction.

The construction of a commercial complex at the proposed project site would be consistent with the general goals and would be related to the development of commercial resources contained within the City of San Dimas General Plan and Specific Plan No. 24. The proposed project would be located in an area of increasing commercial development as permitted by the City of San Dimas General Plan. The proposed project has also incorporated design features, including landscaping throughout the project site, that would increase compatibility with the existing land uses, specifically the residences to the north and west. The proposed commercial complex is intended to serve the local community and would provide a public resource within the community. Therefore, the proposed project would not create any significant land use and planning impacts related to conflicts with either the City's General Plan or Specific Plan No. 24.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Residual Impacts

Impacts would be less than significant.

Impact 3H3: The proposed project would not conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan.

The proposed project site is not located in, or adjacent to, any existing or proposed Significant Ecological Areas (SEA).⁸ The nearest SEA to the proposed project site is located in San Dimas Canyon, approximately 3.5 miles to the northeast. Therefore, the proposed project will not impact any existing conservation plans. No significant impacts are anticipated.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Residual Impacts

Impacts would be less than significant.

⁸ Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning. *SEA Update Study 2000*, November 2000.

Impact 3H4: Together with other area projects, the proposed project would not have cumulative land use impacts.

Although the proposed commercial complex would alter the existing land use, it would not divide a community and is consistent with land use policy promulgated by the City of San Dimas. Development of the proposed project site would occur in a manner consistent with the surrounding community. No foreseeable future project in the vicinity would have a significant adverse environmental effect that would be considered cumulatively considerable with the construction of the proposed project (see Chapter 2, Table 2-2).

There are currently 16 residential homes located on the west side of Lone Hill Avenue south of Gladstone Street, across from the proposed project site. These homes have driveways fronting onto Lone Hill Avenue that have been in place for a number of years. While it is not desirable to have direct residential frontage on an arterial highway such as Lone Hill Avenue, this condition has existed for some time in this area. These residents generally have to back out of their driveways onto Lone Hill Avenue to access the existing highway. The proposed project and cumulative projects would likely cause increases in traffic, thereby making it more difficult for residents to enter and exit their driveways.

The residents on Lone Hill Avenue (across from the proposed project site) only have an access problem when they leave their driveways and are forced to back out into traffic. Thus the residents' potential problems occur in the morning when the residents leave for work. The proposed project does not open until 10AM when most residents have already left for work. The proposed project would not generate a significant amount of traffic when the stores are closed. Therefore, the proposed project's traffic would not contribute to the existing problem and is anticipated to have a less than significant impact on the residents of Lone Hill Avenue (across from the proposed project site). The City acknowledges that there is an existing problem and intends to work with the residents to implement a program independent of the proposed project to address the existing problem. The applicant has voluntarily agreed to participate, even though under CEQA such a program is not required to mitigate existing problems.

Four access design options were considered to provide improved access to the residences located west of the proposed project site (see Chapter 3L. Transportation/Traffic). The four options include: 1) removal of select properties to provide for semi-circular driveways adjacent to the remaining houses; 2) elimination of the sidewalk on the west side of Lone Hill Avenue to provide additional roadway width; 3) creation of a one-way frontage road along the west side of Lone Hill Avenue to provide for residential driveway access restricted to local residences only; and, 4) widening along the proposed project site (east side of Lone Hill Avenue) to provide additional lane width. The opportunities presented by these four design options could help improve safety and operations along Lone Hill Avenue. Implementation of such improvements may require major reconstruction and/or reconfiguration of these existing homes adjacent to the proposed project site, however, these impacts are not anticipated to be significant land use impacts. Therefore, the cumulative land use impact would be considered less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Residual Impacts

Impacts would not be cumulatively considerable.