Chapter 2 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

In accordance with Section 15125 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, the following section describes the physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of the proposed project, as they exist at the time that the Notice of Preparation (NOP) was published on May 5, 2010. The following discussion constitutes the baseline physical conditions by which the City of San Dimas will determine if the proposed project would result in significant physical environmental effects. In order to describe the regional setting, this section provides a discussion of the general and regional plans that are applicable to the proposed project.

2.1 Project Site Characteristics

The proposed project site is located in eastern Los Angeles County in the San Gabriel Valley, as shown in Figure 1-1 in Chapter 1, Introduction. The site is within the City of San Dimas in a 972-acre area known as the Northern Foothills, which is subject to Specific Plan No. 25. The topography of the project site consists of rolling hills, steep hill and valley areas with a lower-lying bowl area that is relatively flat. Aside from caretaker's quarters, existing water tanks, stables, corrals, several barns, fencing and a leach field, the site is undeveloped. A 150-foot wide Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) easement traverses the northern portion of the project site in a northwest-southeast direction; this easement area includes an underground water supply line known as the Foothill Feeder Glendora Tunnel that is owned and operated by the MWD. The site is bordered by undeveloped, residentially zoned property to the west, located within the City of Glendora and owned by the applicant; in addition, a portion of the project site's western boundary is adjacent to a single family residential lot; further west is residential and recreational uses (including a golf course). The Angeles National Forest is located immediately to the north and northeast of the proposed project site. A small ranch with a pond, planting areas and related uses is located to the east; and further east from the project site, residential, agricultural and recreational uses (including parks and a golf course) occur. Low-density residential development is located to the south of the proposed project site. Figure 2-1 shows the local vicinity and land ownership in the area surrounding the project site.

The proposed project site would be primarily accessible from a northerly extension of Cataract Avenue, a paved public road. As discussed in the Northern Foothills Program EIR (NF-PEIR), a number of unpaved motorways, including Wildwood Motorway, Ferguson Motorway and Sycamore Canyon Road, transect portions of the proposed project site (NF-PEIR pp. 5.3-1 – 5.3-6.). Figure 2-1 identifies these existing motorways.

The proposed project site is located within the San Gabriel River watershed, which is bound by the San Gabriel Mountains to the north, most of San Bernardino/Orange County to the east, the division of the Los Angeles River from the San Gabriel River to the west, and the Pacific Ocean to the south. The watershed is composed of approximately 640 square miles of land spanning over 37 cities. The watershed drains into the San Gabriel River from the San Gabriel Mountains flowing 58 miles south until its confluence with the Pacific Ocean. The City of San Dimas overlies three groundwater basins: San Dimas, Wayhill and Foothill.

The proposed project is located in the South Coast Air Basin. Rainfall in the area is seasonally and annually highly variable with almost all rains falling from November through April. Vegetative cover on the proposed project site includes non-native grasses, coastal sage scrub, disturbed coastal sage scrub, chaparral and a mix of woodlands consisting of coast live oak, walnut, sycamore and eucalyptus. Several special status animal species are known to occur on site, including the cactus wren, Cooper's hawk and loggerhead shrike.

Other features of the environmental setting are described in the existing conditions discussions under each environmental topic, addressed in Sections 4.1 through 4.12 of this EIR.

2.2 Local and Regional Planning Context

Local and regional planning documents that pertain to the proposed project include the City's adopted General Plan, Zoning Ordinance (which includes the applicable Specific Plan No. 25 criteria), State Implementation Plan, Regional Air Quality Management Plan, Congestion Management Plan, Regional Comprehensive Plan, Regional Transportation Plan, Regional Transportation Improvement Program, and Senate Bill 375 Sustainable Communities Strategy. These plans and other relevant plans are further described in various environmental issue sections in Chapter 4 of this EIR.

2.2.1 City of San Dimas General Plan

California Government Code Section 65300 requires each planning agency to prepare and adopt a comprehensive, long-term General Plan for the physical boundaries which bear relationship to its planning area. The General Plan is required to include a Land Use Element, which designates the proposed general location and distribution of land uses for housing, business, industry, open space, education, public buildings and grounds, and other public and private uses of land. Other elements of the San Dimas General Plan are the Circulation Element, Housing Element, Open Space Element, Conservation Element, Safety Element and Noise Element. The City of San Dimas adopted its General Plan in September 1991. Since the adoption of the City of San Dimas General Plan in 1991, ten General Plan Amendments have been adopted, including: GPA 96-1, GPA-99-1, GPA 00-02, GPA 02-02, GPA 03-01, GPA 03-02, GPA 03-03, GPA 04-01, GPA 07-01, and GPA 08-01. All but two of these amendments changed the General Plan Land Use map or clarified density standards for various locations throughout the City. The remaining two amendments (GPA 02-01 and GPA 08-01) updated the Housing Element of the General Plan in 2002 and 2008, respectively. Any new development is intended to conform to the goals, objectives and policies identified in the General Plan.

As identified in the General Plan, the proposed project site is located in the Northern Foothills area of the City. The guiding principal for managing environmental values and future development within the

Northern Foothills area is to protect the area's natural environment and existing resources, and to ensure that the design/layout of future hillside development preserves sensitive resources in place, adapts to the natural hillside topography and maximizes view opportunities to, as well as from, the development. The project site is presently designated as "Northern Foothills" in the General Plan.

2.2.2 City of San Dimas Zoning Ordinance

The San Dimas Zoning Ordinance is consistent with the San Dimas General Plan and is the primary implementation tool for the Land Use Element. The zoning ordinance and map embody the community's goal for land use regulation, which helps preserve the quality of life of San Dimas. The Zoning Map designates districts in the City where certain land uses are permitted. The goal of zoning is for neighboring land uses to be compatible with one another.

The proposed project site is located within the approved Specific Plan No. 25 area, which presently establishes the type, location, intensity and character of development to take place. Specific Plan No. 25 functions as a general blueprint for future development within the specific plan area and focuses on the physical characteristics of the area and the integration of these physical characteristics with surrounding uses. Permitted land uses in Specific Plan No. 25 include detached single-family residential, grazing, public parks and open space, and public and private trails. Public and/or quasi-public utility transmission, communication and/or service facilities are permitted, provided that the proposed facility is located a minimum of 300 feet from the nearest residence and does not exceed 25 feet in height.

2.2.3 State Implementation Plan

The federal Clean Air Act (CAA) (and its subsequent amendments) requires each state to prepare an air quality control plan referred to as the State Implementation Plan (SIP). The CAA amendments dictate that states containing areas violating the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) revise their SIPs to include extra control measures to reduce air pollution. The SIP includes strategies and control measures to attain the NAAQS by deadlines established in the CAA. The SIP is periodically modified to reflect the latest emissions inventories, plans, and rules and regulations of air basins as reported by the agencies with jurisdiction over them. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has the responsibility to review all SIPs to determine if they conform to the requirements of the CAA. The California Air Resources Board (CARB) adopted its 2007 State Strategy for California's 2007 SIP on September 27, 2007.

2.2.4 Regional Air Quality Management Plan

Under the requirements of the California Clean Air Act (CCAA), each local air district is required to develop its own strategies to achieve both state and federal air quality standards for its air basin. The most recent comprehensive plan prepared for the South Coast Air Basin is the 2007 Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) adopted on July 13, 2007. The 2007 AQMP is designed to meet the state and federal CAA planning requirements and focuses on ozone and $PM_{2.5}$. The 2007 AQMP incorporates significant new emissions inventories, ambient measurements, scientific data, control strategies, and air quality modeling. The EPA, the CARB, local governments, Southern California Association of

Governments (SCAG), and the South Coast Air Quality Management District are the agencies that implement the AQMP programs.

2.2.5 County of Los Angeles Congestion Management Program

The Congestion Management Program (CMP) for Los Angeles County is updated every five years by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transit Authority in accordance with Proposition 111, passed in June 1990. The most recent version of the document is the 2004 CMP adopted on July 22, 2004. The CMP was established in California to more directly link land use, transportation and air quality and to develop a partnership among transportation decision makers on devising appropriate transportation solutions that include all modes of travel. The CMP alone does not solve all of the mobility issues within Los Angeles County. Many mobility issues are localized traffic concerns and are not addressed through the CMP. Nevertheless, the CMP is an important tool for addressing transportation needs throughout Los Angeles County. The CMP also demonstrates the benefits of nine years of highway monitoring, eight years of local growth monitoring, and 13 years of local transportation improvements. The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transit Authority has temporarily suspended some requirements of the adopted CMP while considering changing the CMP to a fee-based program.

2.2.6 Regional Comprehensive Plan

The 2008 Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP) is a major advisory plan prepared by SCAG that addresses regional issues including housing, traffic/transportation, water, and air quality. The RCP serves as an advisory document to local agencies in the Southern California region for their information and voluntary use in preparing local plans and handling local issues of regional significance. The RCP presents a vision of how Southern California can balance resource conservation, economic vitality, and quality of life. The RCP identifies voluntary best practices to approach growth and infrastructure challenges in an integrated and comprehensive way. It also includes goals and outcomes to measure progress toward a more sustainable region. The RCP includes the following nine chapters: land use and housing; open space and habitat; water; energy; air quality; solid waste; transportation; security and emergency preparedness; and economy.

2.2.7 Regional Transportation Plan

On May 8, 2008 SCAG adopted the “2008 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP): Making the Connections”, which is a component of the RCP. The 2008 RTP presents the transportation vision for the region through the year 2035 and provides a long-term investment framework for addressing the region’s transportation and related challenges. The plan focuses on maintaining and improving the transportation system through a balanced approach that considers system preservation, system operation and management, improved coordination between land-use decisions and transportation investments, and strategic expansion of the system to accommodate future growth.

2.2.8 Regional Transportation Improvement Program

The 2008 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) is a listing of all capital transportation projects proposed over a six-year period for the SCAG region. The RTIP projects include highway improvements, transit, rail and bus facilities, high occupancy vehicle lanes, signal synchronization, intersection improvements, freeway ramps and other facilities. The RTIP implements the projects and programs listed in the RTP in compliance with state and federal requirements. County Transportation Commissions have the responsibility of proposing county projects, using the most current RTP policies, programs, and projects as a guide, from among submittals by cities and local agencies. The locally prioritized lists of projects are forwarded to SCAG for review. From this list, SCAG develops the RTIP based on consistency with the current RTP, inter-county connectivity, financial constraint and conformity satisfaction.

2.2.9 Senate Bill 375 Sustainable Communities Strategy

On September 30, 2008, the California Senate updated its land use policies to focus on a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) as part of the regional transportation plan for each metropolitan area. Senate Bill (SB) 375 requires the ARB to develop regional greenhouse gas emission reduction targets to be achieved from the automobile and light truck sectors for 2020 and 2035. The 18 metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) in California (including SCAG) are required to prepare a SCS to reduce the amount of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in their respective regions and demonstrate the ability for the region to attain ARB's targets. SCS is intended as a way to reach the goals of Assembly Bill (AB) 32, the Global Warming Solutions Act passed in 2006, which requires the state to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2020. SCS is generally defined as a development pattern that meets the state target for reducing GHG emissions, while taking into account the region's housing needs, transportation demands, and protection of resource lands.

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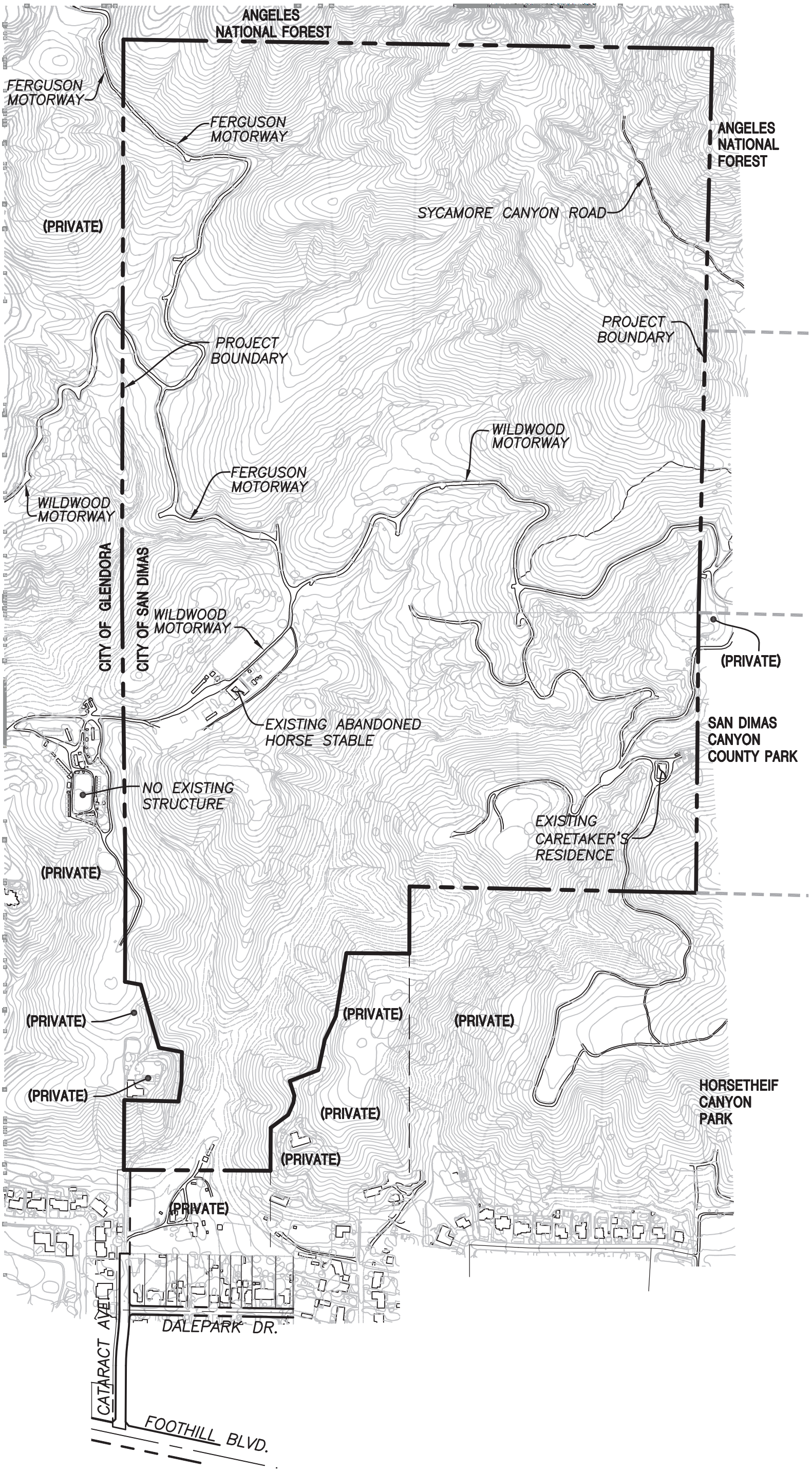

Source: FUSCOE Engineering 2010

PBS&J

No Scale

N

EXISTING PROJECT SITE
FIGURE 2-1