

SECTION 2.0 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

A general description of the regional and local environmental setting for the City of Arcadia is provided below. More detailed information regarding the environmental setting is provided under each topical issue in Section 4.0 of this EIR. The environmental setting as described in this EIR constitutes the baseline of existing conditions in the City at the time the Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the EIR was distributed in August 2009.

2.1 PROJECT LOCATION

The City of Arcadia (City) is located in central Los Angeles County in the northwestern portion of the San Gabriel Valley. The City sits at the foot of the San Gabriel Mountains and touches the San Gabriel River at its southeastern boundary. Jurisdictions surrounding the City include the City of Monrovia to the east and northeast, the Angeles National Forest and the City of Sierra Madre to the north, the City of Pasadena to the northwest, unincorporated County land to the west, Temple City to the southwest, and unincorporated County land to the southeast. Regional access to the City is provided by the Interstate (I) 210 Freeway, which runs through the northern section of the City in an east-west direction. Near the City's southeastern edge east of the San Gabriel River, is the San Gabriel River Freeway (I-605). The regional location of the City is shown in Exhibit 2-1, Regional Location.

2.2 PROJECT SETTING AND CHARACTERISTICS

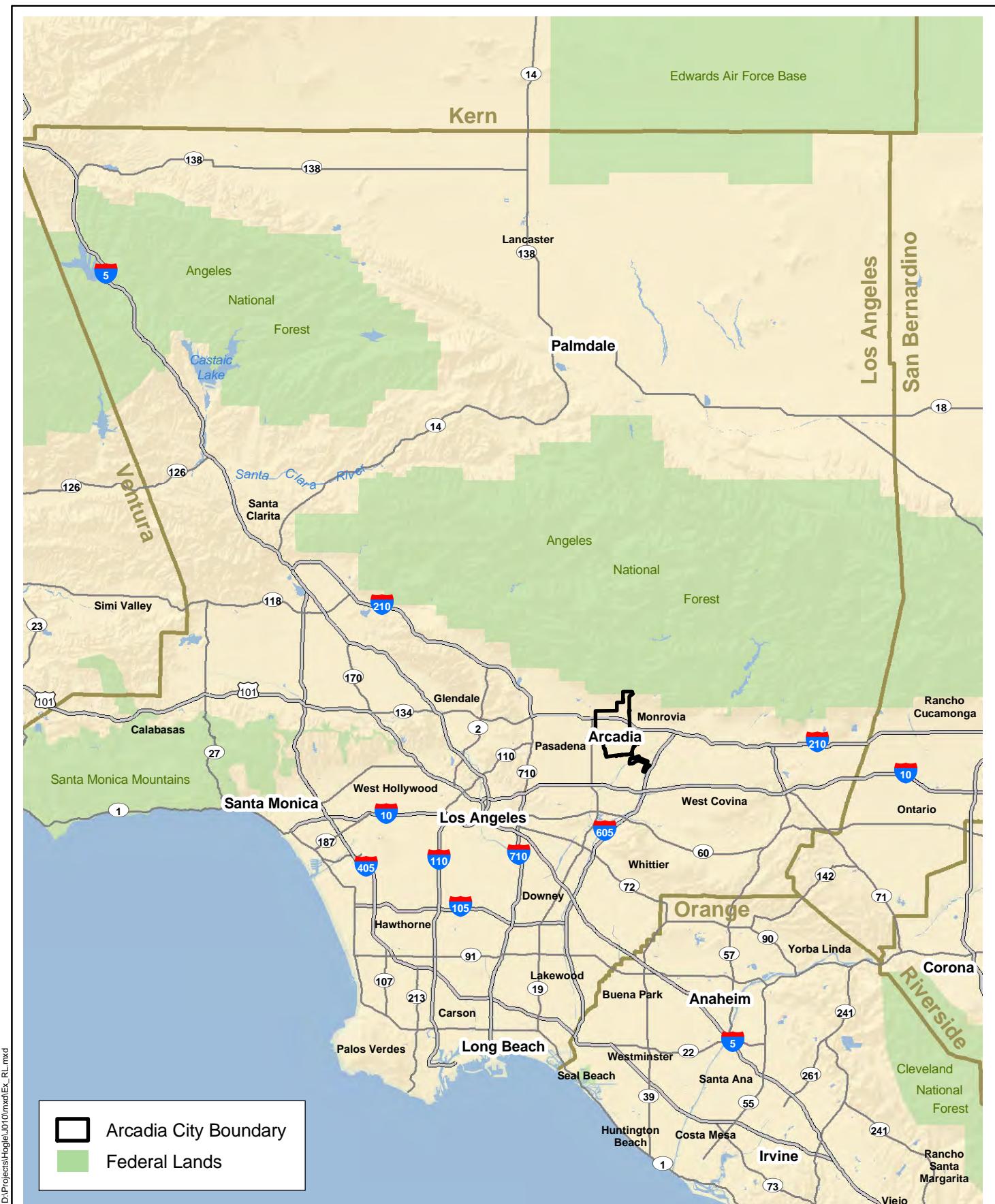
2.2.1 REGIONAL SETTING

The City is located within the County of Los Angeles, which occupies a 4,084-square-mile area in the Southern California region and consists of 88 incorporated cities and scattered unincorporated areas. The total population in the County is estimated at 10,441,080 persons, within a housing stock of 3,431,588 units, as of January 2010. The average household size is 3.122 persons per household and the vacancy rate is 4.22 percent. Employment estimates for March 2010 show the County's labor force at 4,889,700 persons and a 12.3 percent unemployment rate (EDD 2010).

The San Gabriel Valley (Valley) is an approximately 400-square-mile area at the eastern portion of Los Angeles County. The Valley is bound on the north by the San Gabriel Mountains, on the west by the Repetto and Merced Hills, on the south by the Puente Hills, and on the east by the San Jose Hills. It is home to approximately 2.0 million persons living in 31 cities and 5 unincorporated communities. The Rio Hondo and San Gabriel Rivers flow from the San Gabriel Mountains on the north through the San Gabriel Valley, toward the Pacific Ocean on the south. Regional access in the Valley is provided by the I-210, I-10 and State Route (SR) 60 Freeways, which run east-west through the Valley, and by the I-605, SR-57 and SR-710 freeways, which run north-south through the Valley.

2.2.2 LOCAL SETTING

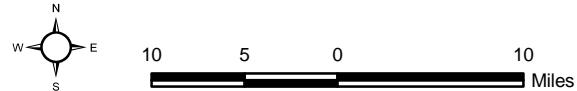
The majority of existing land uses in the City is residential in nature, with the Los Angeles Arboretum, Santa Anita Park (Racetrack), Arcadia County Park, Westfield Santa Anita Mall, and Santa Anita Golf Course located at the center of the City and serving as the City's main regional attractions. A number of commercial and industrial districts are also found at scattered locations throughout the City.



Regional Location

Arcadia General Plan Update

Exhibit 2-1



The City of Arcadia covers approximately 11.1 square miles (7,109 acres). In addition to land within the City boundaries, another 1.26 square miles (807 acres) of unincorporated County land has been designated by the Local Agency Formation Commission for the County of Los Angeles (LAFCO) as being within the logical extension of the City's boundaries and could be annexed into the City in the future. These lands are within the City of Arcadia's Sphere of Influence (SOI)¹, and include three areas:

- A rectangular area between Michillinda Avenue and Rosemead Boulevard from Foothill Boulevard to Duarte Road;
- An inverted L-shaped area south of the commercial uses on Live Oak Avenue located west of the Sierra Madre Wash and east of Santa Anita Avenue and Tyler Avenue; and
- An irregular area east of the Sierra Madre Wash until Mayflower Avenue and north of Lynd Avenue.

Exhibit 2-2, City Boundaries, shows the City boundaries and its SOI, which represent the planning area for the *Arcadia General Plan*.

Aesthetics

The City is highly urbanized and is developed with low to medium density land uses. Lower density residential uses are found near the foothills at the northern section of the City, with low and medium density residential areas at the southern section. High density housing is found at the western section and in the City's Downtown area (central eastern section). Commercial uses are found at the central section and on major streets and intersections, with limited industrial uses at its eastern and southeastern sections. Open space areas include City parks, County parks, and two public golf courses. Mature trees line most streets. Views of the San Gabriel Mountains are readily available to the north and provide an aesthetic backdrop for the City. Aesthetics and visual quality are discussed in Section 4.1 of this EIR.

Agriculture and Forest Resources

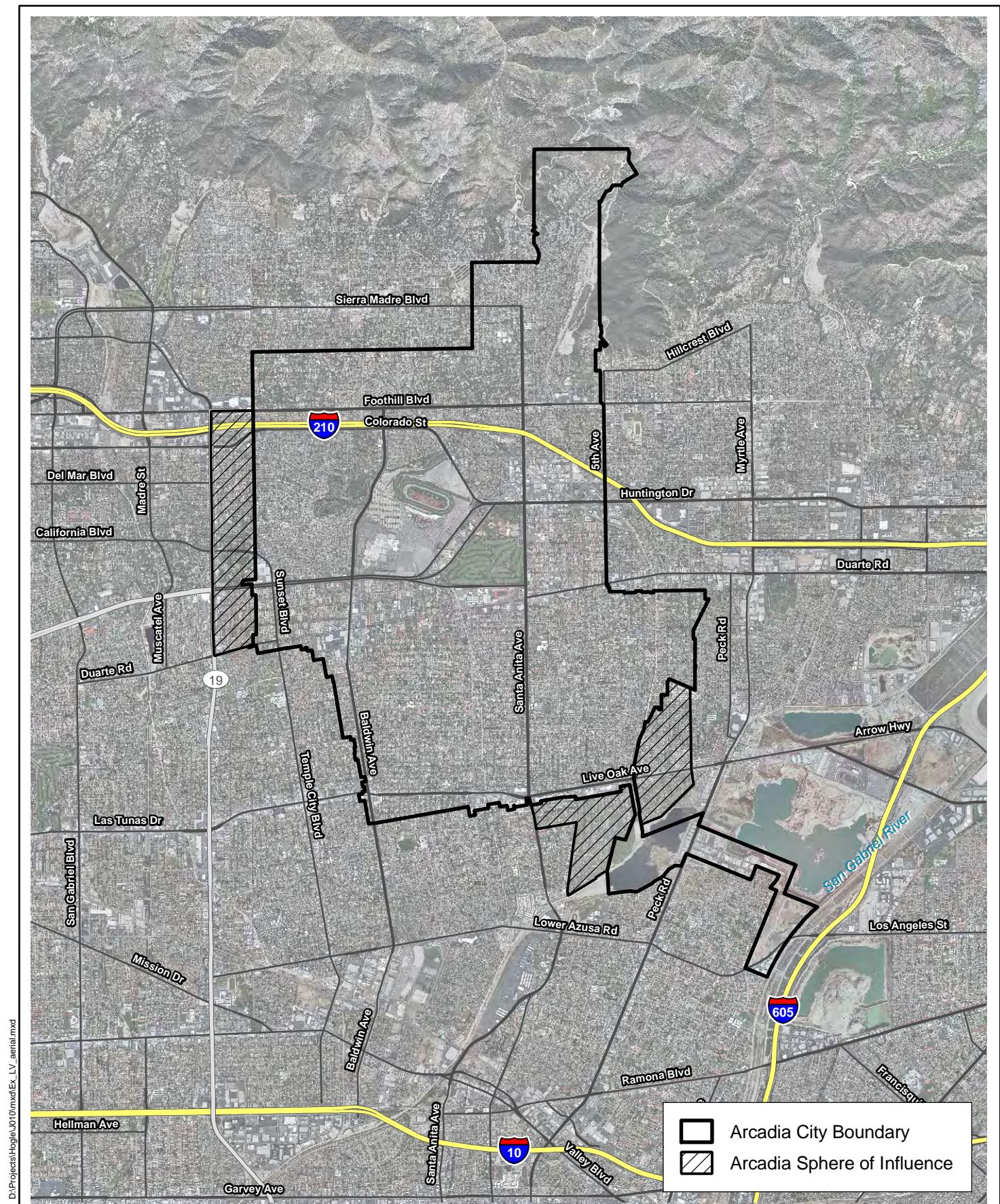
There are no agricultural uses in or near the City. There are no forest lands or timberland in the City, but the Angeles National Forest is located north of the City. Agriculture and forest resources are discussed in Section 4.2 of this EIR.

Air Quality

Arcadia is located within the South Coast Air Basin, which is currently classified as a State non-attainment area for ozone (O₃), PM10, PM2.5, nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), and lead (Los Angeles County portion), and an attainment area for carbon monoxide (CO), sulfur dioxide (SO₂), and sulfates. The Basin is classified as a federal non-attainment area for 8-hour ozone, PM10, PM2.5, and currently meets the federal standards for CO, NO₂ and SO₂ (CARB 2010).

Air quality in the City may be characterized by readings at the West San Gabriel Valley air quality monitoring station in Pasadena. The 2008 readings show that the federal 8-hour standard for O₃ was exceeded a total of 16 days, while the State 1-hour standard was exceeded

¹ A sphere of influence is the area that a city or special district is expected to provide services through future annexation or changes in local government boundaries. The Local Agency Formation Commission of the county designates the spheres of influence of individual cities to resolve uncertainty concerning the availability and source of services for undeveloped or unincorporated land; to promote orderly land use and service planning by public agencies; and to provide direction to landowners when and if they seek additional or higher level services.



City Boundaries

Arcadia General Plan Update



1 0.5 0 1 Miles

Exhibit 2-2

a total of 16 days and the 8-hour standard was exceeded on 26 days. The federal 24-hour PM2.5 standard was exceeded on 2 days. No federal or State standards for CO or NO₂ were exceeded (SCAQMD 2009). Air quality is discussed in Section 4.3 of this EIR.

Biological Resources

Vegetation within the City consists largely of non-native ornamental trees, grasses, and shrubs that are typical of urban landscaping. Open space areas in the City that support native vegetation are confined to vacant lots at the northern end of the City, the undeveloped portions of Wilderness Park located in the northern portion of the City, along natural creeks, and at the Peck Road Spreading Basin and Water Conservation Park located in the southern portion of the City. Biological resources are discussed in Section 4.4 of this EIR.

Cultural Resources

The City's rich cultural history is marked by a number of historic sites and structures over 45 years old and historical buildings in the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register of Historical Resources, California Historic Landmarks, and California Points of Historical Interest. There are numerous recorded cultural resource sites, including one archaeological site, identified within the City based on a record search with the South Central Coastal Information Center (SCCIC) (SCCIC 2009). No paleontological resources have been identified within the City but there are fossil localities recorded from the same or similar sedimentary units that occur in the northern section of the City (McLeod 2009). Cultural resources are discussed in Section 4.5 of this EIR.

Geology and Soils

The City is located in the northwestern portion of the San Gabriel Valley at the foot of the San Gabriel Mountains. This area has moderately sloping topography, with steep hillsides at the northern end. Geologic hazards in the City include landslide and erosion potential at the northern portion, liquefaction potential north of the Raymond fault and at the southern section of the City, and potential for soil settlement and collapsible soils (Wilson Geosciences 2008).

Active and potentially active faults that cross the City include the Raymond fault (also known as Raymond Hill fault), which crosses the northern half of the City, and the Sierra Madre fault at the base of the San Gabriel Mountains (northern end of City). Other faults that may affect the City include the Puente Hills blind thrust, Upper Elysian Park blind thrust, and the Eaton Wash groundwater barrier. Fault rupture, severe groundshaking, liquefaction, and dam inundation hazards are present in the City (Wilson Geosciences 2008). Geology and seismicity issues are discussed in Section 4.6 of this EIR.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

There are hazardous material users and hazardous waste generators in the City that are concentrated in the City's industrial districts along the railroad line between Santa Anita Avenue and Second Avenue; at the southern edge of the City near the San Gabriel River; and in commercial districts along Duarte Road, Baldwin Avenue, Foothill Boulevard, and Live Oak Avenue (Arcadia 2004). The El Monte Airport is located 1.25 miles south of the City and poses a potential for aircraft accidents at the southern section of the City (Los Angeles County ALUC 2003). The northern section of the City is designated as a Very High Fire Hazard Zone (VHFHZ) due to steep terrain, brush vegetation, and narrow roads (CAL FIRE 2007). Hazards and hazardous materials are discussed in Section 4.7 of this EIR.

Hydrology and Water Quality

The City is located within the watershed of the Los Angeles River through the Rio Hondo. Surface topography is defined by various local drainage courses. Runoff from the San Gabriel Mountains goes through the City along four major washes: Easton Wash, Arcadia Wash, Sierra Madre Wash, and Santa Anita Wash. Excess flows in these washes are diverted to spreading basins located below Eaton Wash and at the Santa Anita Wash dam and within Sierra Vista Park. Water in the Santa Anita Wash is also spread at the Peck Road Spreading Basin/Water Conservation Park, located west of Peck Road at the southern portion of the City. These facilities are maintained by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works (LADPW 2009).

The City is underlain by the Main San Gabriel and Raymond groundwater basins, with the Raymond basins underlying the area located generally north of the Raymond Fault and the Main San Gabriel basin south of the fault. The Raymond Fault acts as a hydrological barrier between the two basins (Wilson Geosciences 2008).

Water bodies that do not meet water quality standards are deemed “impaired” and, under Clean Water Act Section 303(d), are placed on a list of impaired water bodies for which a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) must be developed for the impairing pollutant(s)². Segments of the Los Angeles River and the Rio Hondo located downstream of the City are listed as impaired water bodies (Los Angeles RWQCB 2009). Hydrology and water quality are discussed in Section 4.8 of this EIR.

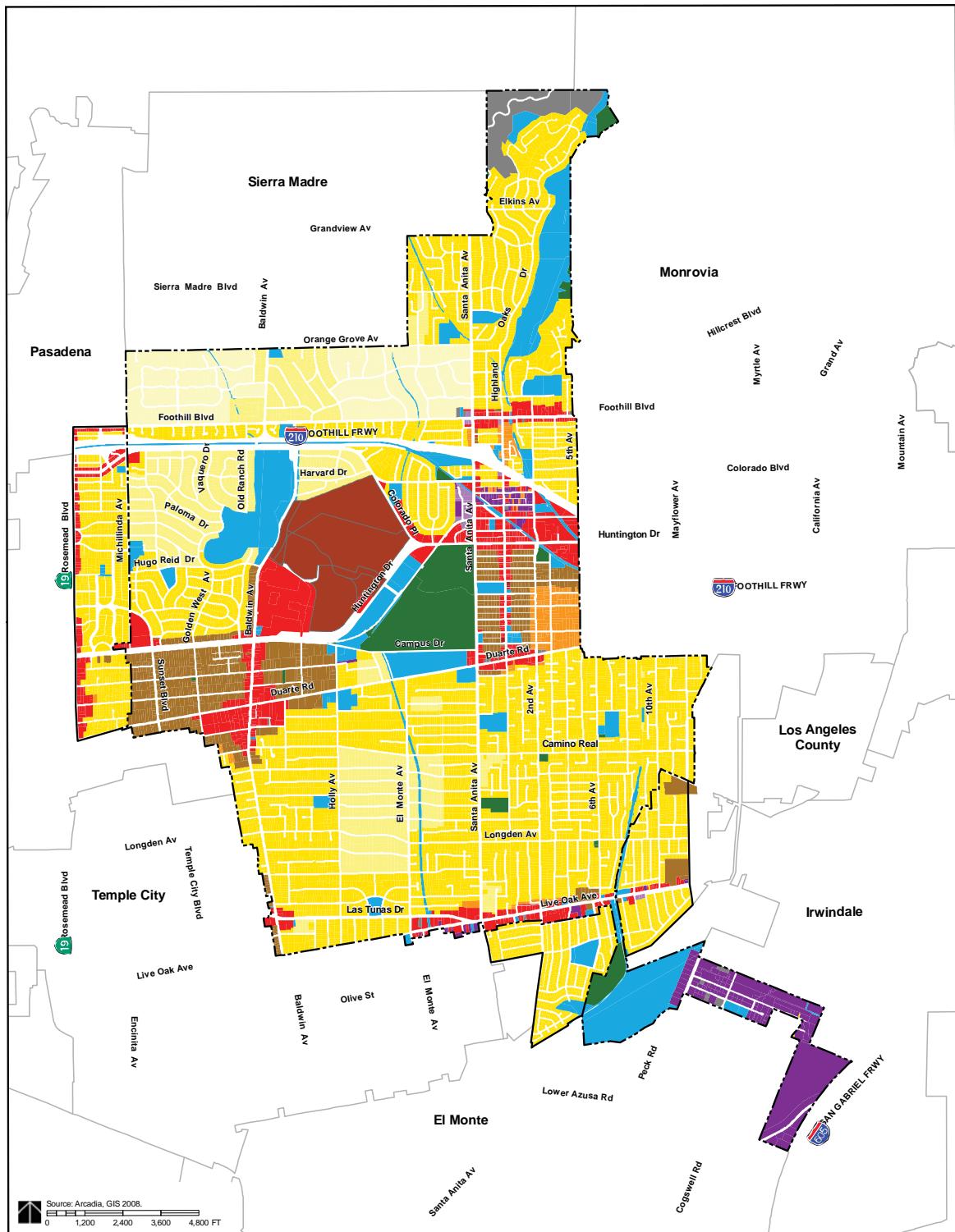
Land Use

The City is primarily developed with single-family residential neighborhoods (49.44 percent), which were initially developed in the 1930s and later spread northerly and westerly. The southern portion of the City also developed during the first half of the 20th century as 1-acre ranches devoted primarily to chicken raising and light agricultural uses. During the mid 1950s to the early 1960s, hillside residential development extended into the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains at the City’s northern section. Another 6.36 percent of the City is developed with multi-family residential uses, primarily in the western section between Duarte Road and Huntington Drive and in the Downtown area. Since the 1980s, the City has remained largely developed, with vacant land limited to 91.4 acres of small, scattered parcels, with 72.3 of the acres in a few large lots with steep slopes at the northern end of the City. The vacant parcels make up a total of 1.15 percent of the total land area in the City and its SOI (Hogle-Ireland 2010).

Commercial uses (covering 5.67 percent of the City’s land area) are located along major roadways and include the Westfield Santa Anita Mall. Santa Anita Park (a horse racing facility), the Los Angeles County Arboretum, Los Angeles County’s Arcadia County Park, and the Santa Anita Golf Course are large open spaces and recreational facilities at the center of the City (approximately 468 acres). Public and institutional uses cover 8.98 percent and open space areas cover 3.20 percent of the City. Industrial uses cover only 2.61 percent. Roads, the freeway, and other rights-of-way cover 19.70 percent (Hogle-Ireland 2010). Exhibit 2-3, Existing Land Uses, shows existing land uses in the City and its SOI.

The Land Use Map in the adopted General Plan is shown in Exhibit 4.9-1 in Section 4.9, Land Use and Planning, of this EIR. Land use issues are discussed in Section 4.9 of this EIR.

² A TMDL is an estimate of the total load of pollutants from point, non-point, and natural sources that a water body may receive without exceeding applicable water quality standards.



Existing Land Uses

Arcadia General Plan Update



Exhibit 2-3

Source: Hogle-Ireland, Inc. 2010

BonTerra
CONSULTING

Mineral Resources

While no mining operations are currently ongoing in the City, the Rodeffer Quarry previously operated at the southern end of the City (from 1967 to 1990). The former quarry site is currently subject to reclamation activities (landfilling with inert materials). The areas along Sierra Madre Wash, Santa Anita Wash, the San Gabriel River (including the Peck Road Spreading Basin), and the quarry site are designated as MRZ-2, which means that adequate information indicates that significant mineral deposits are present or there is a high likelihood for their presence, and development should be controlled (Arcadia 1996).

The flood control wash and basin and the spreading basin are expected to remain in their current open space use for flood hazard prevention and groundwater recharge functions. The former quarry site has been mined of its resources and is under reclamation. The site is expected to be redeveloped with future commercial/industrial uses. The Livingston-Graham site is available for future mining activity but this would occur in the City of Irwindale, not Arcadia. No future mining operations are expected in the City (Hogle-Ireland 2010). Mineral resources are discussed in Section 4.10 of this EIR.

Noise/Vibration

Major noise sources in the City include vehicles on the I-210 Freeway and major roadways, such as Huntington Drive, Santa Anita Avenue, Foothill Boulevard, Colorado Boulevard, Orange Grove Avenue, Michillinda Avenue, and Duarte Road. Events at Santa Anita Park generate noise impacts on adjacent land uses that include vehicle noise, maintenance activity noise, and loudspeaker noise. Operations at the El Monte Airport to the south also generate noise in the City during the approach and departure of aircraft and flyovers.

Freight and passenger trains once used the railroad running through the City, but train operations on this line ceased in 1994. With the proposed extension of the Metro Gold Line light rail service into and through Arcadia, train noise is expected to be reintroduced into the City. Noise is discussed in Section 4.11 of this EIR.

Population, Housing and Employment

The City has a resident population of 56,719 persons and a housing stock of 20,370 dwelling units as of January 2010. The average household size is 2.874 persons per household, and the vacancy rate is 4.11 percent (DOF 2010). Employment estimates show a March 2010 labor force of 27,500 persons, of which 7.1 percent were unemployed (EDD 2010).

The City is projected to have a 2035 population of 65,704 persons, with 23,045 housing units and an employment base of 30,356 jobs (SCAG 2008). Population, housing, and employment are discussed in Section 4.12 of this EIR.

Public Services and Utilities

Existing public services and utilities serving the City are identified below. Additional information regarding existing and planned facilities/infrastructure is provided in Section 4.13, Public Services, and Section 4.16, Utilities and Service Systems.

- **Fire Protection:** The Arcadia Fire Department has total of 58 firefighters and support personnel, reserve firefighters, and a number of volunteers within 3 fire stations. It operates on 3 shifts with at least 17 personnel on duty at any one time (Arcadia Fire Department 2010).
- **Police Protection:** The Arcadia Police Department has 68 sworn peace officers and 33 support staff. The Department also contracts with four parking control officers and seven part-time reserve police officers, and has 94 citizen-volunteers (Arcadia Police Department 2009).
- **Schools:** The Arcadia Unified School District (AUSD) serves the majority of the City through six elementary schools, three middle schools, and one high school. Some areas at the edges of the City or within its SOI are served by five other schools districts: El Monte Union High School District, El Monte City School District, Monrovia Unified School District, Pasadena Unified School District, and Temple City Unified School District.
- **Water Supply/Facilities:** The City provides water services to existing land uses, with supplies consisting of groundwater from the Raymond and Main San Gabriel groundwater basins. Other water suppliers in the City include the Sunny Slope Water Company, East Pasadena Water Company, and California-American Water Company, which serve small areas along the western boundary of the City and its SOI, and the Golden State Water Company, which serves the area along the southern and eastern boundaries of the City and its SOI (Arcadia 2005).
- **Wastewater (Sewer) Facilities:** The City owns and maintains local sewer lines, which connect to the sewer trunk lines and wastewater treatment plants operated by the County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County (CH2MHill 2006).
- **Solid Waste Disposal:** Waste Management provides waste collection services in the City, with final disposal at the landfills of the County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County.
- **Dry Utilities:** Southern California Edison, Sempra Energy, AT&T, Time Warner, and Champion Broadband provide electrical power, natural gas, telephone, and cable services to existing developments in the City.

Parks and Recreation

Approximately 253.66 acres of the City is developed with parks. When combined with joint use parks and facilities and open space areas, a total of 785.09 acres of parkland, park facilities, and open space areas are found in the City. These include 13 City parks, 4 County parks, and joint use facilities with the AUSD. Approximately 550.75 acres are located within parks and recreational facilities operated by the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation. Another 25.5 acres are in a privately owned Par 3 golf course that is open to the public (Arcadia 2007). Parks and recreation are discussed in Section 4.14 of this EIR.

Transportation

Regional access to the City is provided by the I-210 Freeway, which runs in an east-west direction between Colorado Street and Foothill Boulevard at the northern section of the City. Major streets in the City include Michillinda Avenue, Baldwin Avenue, Santa Anita Avenue,

Second Avenue, Fifth Avenue, Orange Grove Avenue, Foothill Boulevard, Colorado Street, Huntington Drive, Duarte Road, Camino Real, Longden Avenue, Las Tunas Drive, and Live Oak Avenue (The Mobility Group 2008).

Bus transit services in Arcadia are provided by six Metro (LACMTA) bus routes and four Foothill Transit routes, which primarily serve the commercial areas and corridors in the City. In addition, the City operates Arcadia Transit, which provides a curb-to-curb service in response to individual travel requests (The Mobility Group 2008).

The Metro Gold Line provides light rail transit services from Downtown Los Angeles to Pasadena, with the rail line running at the center median of the I-210 Freeway at its eastern segment. The last station on this line is located on Sierra Madre Villa Avenue, approximately one mile west of the City of Arcadia's northwestern corner. An extension of the Gold Line is currently being proposed, which would run on the existing Santa Fe railroad right-of-way at the center of the I-210 Freeway in the western section of the City, which then turns southeasterly away from the freeway at the eastern section of the City. This project is expected to begin operations in 2011 for the segment extending from Pasadena to Azusa and in 2014 for the segment extending from Azusa to Montclair. As part of this extension, a station is proposed at the southeastern corner of the intersection of First Avenue and Santa Clara Street in the City (The Mobility Group 2008). Transportation and circulation are discussed in Section 4.15 of this EIR.

Greenhouse Gases

Greenhouse gases (GHGs), such as carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and fluorinated gases, have the potential for trapping heat in the atmosphere, resulting in global warming. The use of fossil fuels in the transportation sector (such as automobiles, trucks, and airplanes) is the single largest source of GHG emissions in California, accounting for 40.7 percent of total GHG emissions in the State between 1990 and 2004. Other sources include electric power generation, industrial activities, commercial and residential developments, agriculture, and forestry (CEC 2006). GHGs are discussed in Section 4.17 of this EIR.

2.2.3 RELEVANT PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Regional Plans

A number of regional plans apply to development within the City and the region. These include the Southern California Association of Governments' (SCAG's) Compass Growth Vision Report, Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA), and Regional Transportation Plan (RTP); the Los Angeles County Congestion Management Program (CMP); the South Coast Air Quality Management District's (SCAQMD) Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP); and the Regional Water Quality Control Board's (RWQCB) *Water Quality Control Plan for the Los Angeles Region*. These plans are discussed within each applicable topical issue in Section 4 of this EIR.

Local Plans

A number of plans and policies adopted by the City regulate development in the City. These are discussed below.

Arcadia General Plan

The State's Planning, Zoning, and Development Laws (*California Government Code §§65000-66037*) call for the preparation, review, and revision of a General Plan for each county and city. *California Government Code* Section 65300 states:

Each planning agency shall prepare and the legislative body of each county and city shall adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan for the physical development of the county or city, and of any land outside its boundaries which in the planning agency's judgment bears relation to its planning. Chartered cities shall adopt general plans which contain the mandatory elements specified in Section 65302.

The *City of Arcadia General Plan* was last updated in 1996 and contains goals, policies, and strategies for the development and conservation of land within the City, and regulates all development within the incorporated area of the City. The General Plan contains four major chapters, addressing the primary issues that affect development in the City. These chapters include Chapter 2, Community Development; Chapter 3, Municipal Facilities and Services; Chapter 4, Environmental Resources; and Chapter 5, Environmental Hazards.

Arcadia Municipal Code

The *Arcadia Municipal Code* (including the City's Zoning Regulations in Title IX, Chapter 2 of the Municipal Code) regulates the operations and activities in the City. The Zoning Regulations contain development standards and design regulations for new development in the City to assist in the implementation of the City's General Plan and to protect and promote the City's public health, safety, comfort, convenience, prosperity, and general welfare.

Downtown Arcadia Central Redevelopment Plan

The Arcadia City Council, acting as the City's Redevelopment Agency, adopted the Central Downtown Redevelopment Plan in 1973 to remove blight along the Huntington Drive corridor, the railroad tracks, and adjacent commercial and industrial areas. The Redevelopment Plan calls for the development and redevelopment of this area and the revitalization of the City's historic core in accordance with the "Downtown 2000" program. A number of commercial developments and an affordable housing project have been constructed as part of this redevelopment effort. In addition, streetscape and public facility improvements, facade rehabilitation, business attraction, marketing and signage, and parking improvements have been completed.