

## 4. *Environmental Setting*

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### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this section is to provide, pursuant to provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the State CEQA Guidelines, a “description of the physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of the project, as they exist at the time the notice of preparation is published..., from both a local and a regional perspective” (§ 15125[a]). The environmental setting will provide a set of baseline physical conditions that will serve as a tool from which the lead agency will determine the significance of environmental impacts resulting from the proposed project.

### 4.2 REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

#### 4.2.1 *Regional Location*

The project site is in the City of Pasadena in central Los Angeles County. The City of Pasadena is in the northwest San Gabriel Valley, which is surrounded by the San Gabriel Mountains to the north, the Puente Hills and Montebello Hills to the south, the San Rafael Hills to the west, and the San Jose Hills to the southeast. The San Gabriel Valley is part of the larger Los Angeles Basin, which extends from the San Gabriel and Santa Monica Mountains on the north and Santa Ana Mountains on the east, to the Pacific Ocean on the south. Most of the Los Angeles Basin has a gentle south slope interrupted by scattered ranges of hills, such as the San Rafael Hills about three miles west of the project site.

Regional access to the project site is from Interstate 210 (I-210) via the Lake Avenue exit, as shown in Figure 3-1, *Regional Location*.

#### 4.2.2 *Regional Planning Considerations*

##### **Southern California Association of Governments**

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) represents Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura counties. SCAG is a regional planning agency and a forum for addressing regional issues concerning transportation, the economy, community development, and the environment. SCAG adopts advisory policies and programs to promote regional objectives. These policies are stated in its regional comprehensive plan (RCP) as an advisory document to local agencies for their information and voluntary use while preparing local plans and handling local issues of regional significance. The San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments (SGVCOG) is the council of governments and local transportation planning agency for the San Gabriel Valley subregion of SCAG.

SCAG provides intergovernmental review for regionally significant local plans, projects and programs. SCAG reviews proposed development and infrastructure projects to analyze their impacts on regional planning programs. Crown City Medical Center is not considered a project of regional significance pursuant to the criteria outlined in SCAG’s Intergovernmental Review Procedures Handbook (November 1995) and CEQA Guidelines Section 15206.



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### South Coast Air Quality Management District

The City of Pasadena is in the South Coast Air Basin, which is a subregion of the SCAQMD. The SCAQMD has jurisdiction over an area of approximately 10,743 square miles, including all of Orange County, Los Angeles County except for the Antelope Valley, the non-desert portion of western San Bernardino County, and the western and Coachella Valley portions of Riverside County. The SCAQMD adopted the 2007 Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) to meet the California and federal ambient air quality standards. The 2007 AQMP relies on a comprehensive and integrated control approach aimed at achieving the PM<sub>2.5</sub> standard by 2015 through implementation of short- and midterm control measures and achieving the 8-hour ozone standard by 2024 based on implementation of additional long-term measures. SCAQMD expects exposure reductions to be achieved through implementation of new and advanced control technologies as well as improvement of existing technologies. The SCAQMD is currently developing the 2012 AQMP, which will be a regional and multiagency effort (SCAQMD, California Air Resources Board, SCAG, and EPA). The 2012 AQMP will incorporate the latest scientific and technical information and planning assumptions, including the 2012 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS)<sup>1</sup>, updated emissions inventory methodologies for various source categories, and SCAG's latest growth forecasts.

### 4.3 LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

#### 4.3.1 Location and Land Use

The proposed project site is at 550 to 558 East Colorado Boulevard, next to the southwest corner of Colorado Boulevard and Madison Avenue (see Figure 3-2, *Local Vicinity*). The site is 38,000 square feet, or 0.87 acre, developed as a paved surface parking lot with 76 parking spaces. At the northeast corner of the site is a 100-square-foot office for the parking lot attendant. Access to the site is from Converse Alley, which runs east to west along the south site boundary. There are several planters onsite planted with shrubs and a few small trees. The project site and surrounding land have a uniform south-southeast slope of about 1.5 percent. Existing site conditions are shown on Figure 4-1, *Site Photographs*.

There are a variety of different uses near the site. Directly across Colorado Boulevard to the north is a church. To the south is a five-level parking structure serving many of the nearby uses. To the west is an eight-story general office building and to the east, across Madison Avenue are commercial uses and a restaurant is currently under construction. There are several additional multistory buildings in the area. Surrounding land uses are shown in previous Figure 3-3, *Aerial Photograph*.

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<sup>1</sup> The RTP is a long-range transportation plan that is developed and updated by SCAG every four years. The RTP provides a vision for transportation investments throughout the region. Using growth forecasts and economic trends that project out over a 20-year period, the RTP considers the role of transportation in the broader context of economic, environmental, and quality-of-life goals for the future, identifying regional transportation strategies to address our mobility needs.

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### Site Photographs



View looking northeast across the project site from the southwest corner of the site. A church and office building opposite Colorado Boulevard from the site are in the left and middle background, respectively.



View looking southeast across the project site from the northwest corner of the site. The parking structure opposite Converse Alley from the site is in the right background.

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### 4.3.2 Climate and Air Quality

The project is located in the South Coast Air Basin (SoCAB). The SoCAB consists of Los Angeles County (excluding the Antelope Valley portion), Orange County, and the western, nondesert portions of San Bernardino and Riverside Counties. Air quality is affected by both the rate and location of pollutant emissions. Meteorological conditions such as wind speed, wind direction, solar radiation, and atmospheric stability, along with local topography heavily influence air quality by affecting the movement and dispersal of pollutants. Predominant meteorological conditions in the SoCAB are primarily light winds and shallow vertical mixing due to low-altitude temperature inversion. These conditions, when coupled with the surrounding mountain ranges, hinder the regional dispersion of air pollutants. The strength and location of a semipermanent, high-pressure cell over the northern Pacific Ocean is the primary climatological influence on the SoCAB, as is the ocean, which moderates the local climate by acting like a large heat reservoir. Because of these influences, warm summers, mild winters, infrequent rainfall, and moderate humidity typify climatic conditions through most of the SoCAB. These meteorological conditions, in combination with regional topography, are conducive to the formation and retention of ozone (O<sub>3</sub>) and urban smog.

Although the climate of the SoCAB can be characterized as semiarid, the air near the land surface may be moist on some days because of the presence of a marine layer. Humidity restricts visibility in the SoCAB, also increasing the conversion of sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) to sulfates. Because the ocean effect is dominant, periods of heavy early morning fog are frequent, and low stratus clouds are a characteristic feature. These effects decrease with distance from the coast. More than 90 percent of the rainfall occurs from November through April. Monthly and yearly rainfall totals are extremely variable. Summer rainfall usually consists of widely scattered thundershowers near the coast and slightly heavier shower activity in the eastern portion of the region near the mountains.

### 4.3.3 Noise

The noise environment in the vicinity of the project site is dominated by traffic noise from Colorado Boulevard and Madison Avenue. Other sources include noise associated with the onsite parking lot and parking structure opposite Converse Alley south of the site, including car door slams and alarms.

### 4.3.4 Scenic Features and Historic Resources

The site is currently developed as a surface parking lot and there are no scenic features onsite. Street trees are featured along Colorado Boulevard and Madison Avenue, consisting of Indian laurel fig (*Ficus Retusa*), camphor (*Cinnamomum camphora*), maidenhair or ginko (*Ginko biloba*) and southern magnolia (*Magnolia Grandiflora*). The San Gabriel Mountains border the north and northwest portions of the City and are visible to the north from the southern part of the project site.

No historic-era properties are located within the proposed project site. However, two historic lampposts are installed in the sidewalk in a public right-of-way on the south side of Colorado Boulevard near the northern site boundary. The Pasadena Playhouse National Historic District (PPHD) is located near the project site (see Figure 5.2-1, *Pasadena Playhouse Historic District*). The boundaries of the district were drawn in a “U” shape and include properties along Colorado Boulevard as well as South El Molino Avenue, Madison Avenue and Green Street. The proposed Crown City Medical Center project site, as well as its western neighbor (which is now occupied by the County of Los Angeles), and the Pasadena Presbyterian Church across Colorado Boulevard to the north are not located within the boundaries of the PPHD and do not contribute to the historic district. The nearest contributing element to the historic district is the 1929 First Trust Bank Building, located at the northeast corner of the intersection of Colorado Boulevard and Madison Avenue. The following buildings have been designated historic properties by the City of Pasadena:



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- Singer Building, 520 East Colorado Boulevard, the second building west of the site on the south side of Colorado Boulevard.
- Star News Publishing, 525 East Colorado Boulevard, at the northeast corner of Colorado Boulevard and Oakland Avenue.
- First Trust Building and Garage, 587 to 611 East Colorado Boulevard, opposite the intersection of Colorado Boulevard and Madison Avenue from the project site.

### 4.3.5 General Plan and Zoning

The General Plan land use designation for the project site is Central District Specific Plan. The Central District is subdivided into subdistricts, which are in turn subdivided into precincts. The project site is in the Pasadena Playhouse District,<sup>2</sup> which is intended to provide a mixed-use environment focused on Colorado Boulevard and the Playhouse that functions as a cultural and arts center for the community. The site is in the Playhouse North/Colorado Boulevard Precinct, designated for commercial and mixed-use land uses (RTKL Associates 2004).

The zoning district on the project site is CD-4 (Central District, Sub-area 4), which permits a variety of residential, commercial, public, and service uses.

### 4.4 ASSUMPTIONS REGARDING CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Section 15355 of the CEQA Guidelines defines cumulative impacts as “two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts.” Cumulative impacts are the change caused by the incremental impact of an individual project compounded with the incremental impacts from closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time.

Section 15130 of the CEQA Guidelines states that cumulative impacts shall be discussed when the project’s incremental effect is considerable. It further states that this discussion of cumulative impacts shall reflect the severity of the impacts and the likelihood of occurrence, but the discussion need not provide as great detail as is provided for the effects attributable to the project alone. The CEQA Guidelines (Section 15130 [b][1]) state that the information utilized in an analysis of cumulative impacts should come from one of two sources:

- 1) A list of past, present and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts, including, if necessary, those projects outside the control of the agency; or
- 2) A summary of projections contained in an adopted general plan or related planning document, or in a prior environmental document which has been adopted or certified, which described or evaluated regional or areawide conditions contributing to the cumulative impact. Any such planning document shall be referenced and made available to the public at a location specified by the lead agency.

The cumulative impacts analyses in this SDEIR use method No. 1 pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(a). The list of related projects provided by the City of Pasadena is shown in Table 4-1 below; the locations of the related projects are shown on Figure 4-2, *Related Projects Locations*. Regional growth outside of the project study area has been accounted for in traffic, air quality, greenhouse gas, and noise

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<sup>2</sup> This designation is distinct from the Pasadena Playhouse National Register Historic District.

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impacts through use of a 1.5 percent growth factor, consistent with regional growth projections, that was added to background traffic volumes.

For other impacts, the appropriate service area or region was used for purposes of cumulative impact analysis. Specifically, the appropriate area for evaluating historic resources is the Pasadena Playhouse National Register Historic District area. For air quality, the geographic scope is the South Coast Air Basin.

*Table 4-1  
Related Projects*

<b>Project</b>	<b>Description / Location</b>	<b>Land Use</b>
1	151-153 S Hudson Avenue	Condominium Retail/Commercial
2	123-139 S Los Robles Avenue	Condominium Retail/Commercial
3	229-247 S Marengo Avenue	Condominium
4	880 E Colorado Boulevard	General Office Bank Specialty Retail Hotel Restaurant Multifamily Residential Less Existing Office Less Existing Bank
5	132 N Euclid Avenue	Church Addition
6	Walnut/Marengo Apartments	Apartments
7	700 E Walnut	Mixed Use
8	135 N Oakland Avenue	Master Plan Redevelopment
9	270 S Oakland Avenue	Condominium Less Existing Apartment
10	686 E Union Street	Condominium General Office Restaurant Retail/Commercial Less Existing General Office
11	737 E Walnut Street	Condominium
12	770 E Walnut Street	Condominium Retail/Commercial
13	171 S Hudson Avenue	Condominium General Office Less Existing General Office
14	680 E Colorado Boulevard	Office/Retail

Source: Iteris 2010.



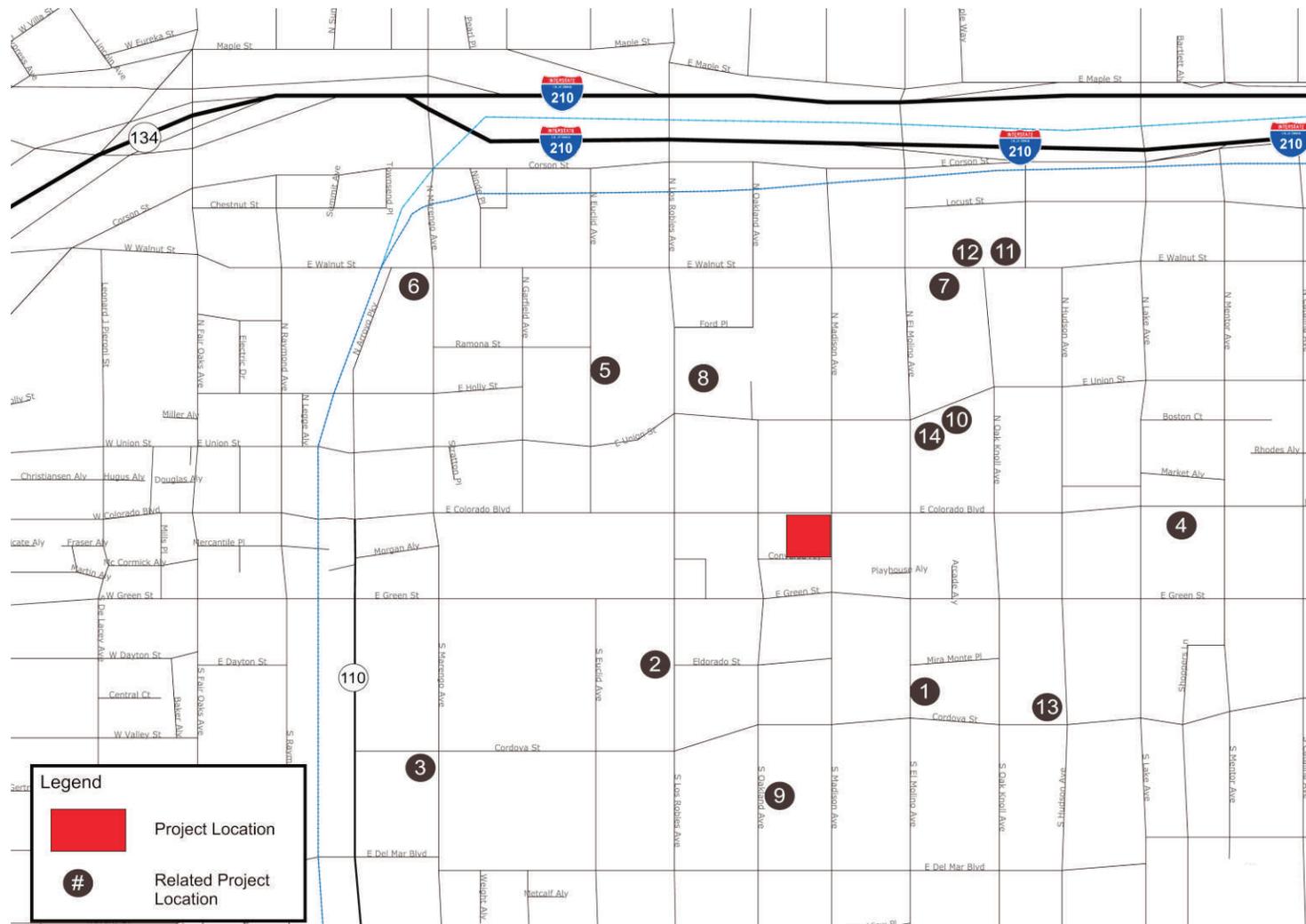
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## Related Projects Locations



NOT TO SCALE



Source: Iteris 2010

Crown City Medical Center Subsequent Draft EIR

The Planning Center | DC&E • Figure 4-2

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