

4. *Environmental Setting*

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, Section 15125, 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.” 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 located in the southwestern part of Orange County in the City of Newport Beach (see previous Figure 3-1, *Regional Location*). Orange County is bordered by the Pacific Ocean to the west, Los Angeles County to the north and northwest, San Bernardino County to the northeast, Riverside County to the east, and San Diego County to the south. Orange County is comprised of approximately 798 square miles; it has approximately 40 miles of coastline and extends inland approximately 20 miles. The City of Newport Beach is 13,062 acres at the southwestern edge of Orange County, adjacent to the Pacific Ocean. Generally, Newport Beach is bordered by Costa Mesa to the northwest, Huntington Beach to the west, Irvine to the northeast, and Laguna Beach and unincorporated portions of Orange County to the southeast.



The natural setting of Orange County provides a combination of mountains, hills, flatlands, and shoreline. Orange County lies predominantly on an alluvial plain, which is generally less than 300 feet in elevation in the west and central sections. The western portion of the County is comprised of a series of broad sloping plains (Downey and Tustin Plains) formed from alluvium transported from the mountains by the Santa Ana River, Santiago Creek, and other local streams. Several low-lying mesas interrupt the plain along the northern coast. Orange County is semienclosed by the Puente and Chino Hills to the east. The Puente and Chino Hills, which identify the northern limit of the plain, extend for 22 miles and reach a peak height of 1,780 feet. To the east and southeast of the plain are the Santa Ana Mountains, which have a peak height of 5,691 feet.

4.2.2 *Regional Planning Considerations*

Southern California Association of Governments Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is a council of governments representing Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura Counties. SCAG is a regional planning agency and serves as a forum for addressing regional issues concerning transportation, the economy, community development, and the environment. Policies and programs adopted by SCAG to achieve regional objectives are expressed in its Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide (RCPG). Some of these policies are advisory in nature. SCAG also serves as the regional clearinghouse for projects requiring environmental documentation under federal and state law. In this role, SCAG reviews proposed development and infrastructure projects to analyze their impacts on regional planning programs. However, this project is not a project of regionwide significance pursuant to SCAG Intergovernmental Review (IGR) criteria (SCAG 1995) and CEQA Guidelines (Section 15206). The project is not a residential development of more than 500 units and, therefore, this DEIR need not address the project’s consistency with the RCPG.

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Airport Environs Land Use Plan

The project site is located approximately 3.5 miles south of the John Wayne Airport (JWA). In 1975, the Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) of Orange County adopted an Airport Environs Land Use Plan (AELUP) that included John Wayne Airport (formerly Orange County Airport). The AELUP is the authoritative planning document for the ALUC. The ALUC is an agency authorized under state law to assist local agencies in ensuring compatible land uses in the vicinity of airports. Primary areas of concern for ALUCs are noise, safety hazards, and airport operational integrity. ALUCs are not implementing agencies in the manner of local governments, nor do they issue permits for a project such as those required by local governments. The project site is located within the AELUP for JWA and could potentially result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area. The AELUP for JWA contains policies governing the land uses within the JWA area. Specifically, these policies establish development criteria that protect sensitive receptors from airport noise, persons from risk of operations, and height guidelines to ensure aircraft safety. The proposed project would be required to implement the guidelines contained in the AELUP. The project's consistency with the AELUP for JWA is analyzed in detail in Section 5.8, *Land Use and Planning*, of this DEIR.

4.3 LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

4.3.1 Project Location

The project site (APNs 440-132-40 and 440-132-41) is located at 1107 Jamboree Road, on the northwest corner of Jamboree Road and Back Bay Drive, City of Newport Beach, County of Orange, California. The project site has frontage on Jamboree Road and Back Bay Drive. Previous Figure 3-1, *Regional Location*, and Figure 3-2, *Local Vicinity*, show the location of the project site within the regional and local contexts of Orange County and the City of Newport Beach, respectively.

4.3.2 Existing Land Use

The 25.7-acre project site is owned by Sunstone Hotel Properties, Inc., and is currently developed with the Hyatt Regency Newport Beach, a resort-style hotel. The hotel is situated on a north-south trending ridge along the east side of the Newport Back Bay. Current improvements include 403 hotel rooms (keys) and associated hotel lobby, restaurants, a banquet facility that consists of a 3,190-square-foot ballroom and meeting space (Terrace Ballroom), the Plaza Ballroom, an amphitheatre, a nine-hole golf course, three swimming pools, and maintenance and housekeeping sheds. The hotel rooms are located throughout four buildings. Additionally, the site contains ornamental and native landscaping, hardscape, and surface parking associated with the existing resort hotel.

4.3.3 Surrounding Land Uses

The project site is surrounded by a variety of land uses. The Palisades Tennis Club abuts the project site along the northeastern boundary. The remainder of the site's northern boundary abuts open space within the Newporter North Environmental Study Area, which contains various biological resource areas, including native coastal sage scrub, marsh, and riparian areas. North of the preserve is the existing gated residential community of Harbor Cove, which is located on a bluff across the preserve. Jamboree Road abuts the project site along the eastern boundary. East of Jamboree is the residential community of Sea Island. Back Bay Drive abuts the project site along the southern and western boundaries. South of Back Bay Drive is the senior apartment community of Bayview Landing. Southeast of the project site is the residential community of Villa Point. Southwest and west of Back Bay Drive are the Back Bay Science Center (Shellmaker Island), Newport Dunes, and Upper Newport Back Bay, which consists of a private beach area, vehicle and boat parking areas, docks, and boating areas. These surrounding land uses are shown in previous Figure 3-3, *Aerial Photograph*.

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Please refer to Section 5.8, *Land Use and Planning*, of this DEIR for a detailed discussion of existing and planned land use policies, and an analysis of land use compatibility issues.

4.4 ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

4.4.1 Biological Resources

The project site is a 25.7-acre parcel of developed land with on-site elevations ranging between 16 feet above mean sea level (msl) in the southwestern portion of the project site to 69 feet above msl along the northern portion of the project site. The site is currently developed with the Hyatt Regency Newport Beach, a resort-style hotel. Mature palm trees and other ornamental trees and shrubs are found throughout the project site, including the golf course area and the parking lot areas. There are no U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) critical habitats on-site and no native trees occur within the confines of the project boundary. The project site is developed and does not directly support native or riparian habitat, sensitive plants, or sensitive wildlife species. However, the northern boundary of the project site abuts open space within the Newporter North Environmental Study Area, which contains various biological resource areas, including native coastal sage scrub, marsh, and riparian areas. Please refer to Section 5.3, *Biological Resources*, of this DEIR for further information concerning existing biological resources that abut the northern boundary of the project site and an analysis of project impacts on biological resources.

4.4.2 Climate and Air Quality

The project site is located approximately 1.25 miles inland from the Orange County coast, within the western portion of the South Coast Air Basin (SoCAB). The SoCAB incorporates approximately 12,000 square miles within four counties: San Bernardino, Riverside, Los Angeles, and Orange. The climate in the SoCAB is mild, tempered by cool ocean breezes. Temperatures are normally mild (62° to 72°F), with rare extremes above 100°F or below freezing (32°F). Precipitation is typically 9 to 15 inches annually in the SoCAB. The climate of Orange County is typified by warm temperatures and light winds. The average monthly high temperatures range from about 52°F in the coastal areas in January to 72°F in the inland areas of the coastal plain in August. The average annual rainfall across the County is 14 inches, typically occurring in the winter months. The County's rainfall also exhibits characteristically wide variations annually, from a low of 3.6 inches to a high of 51.94 inches during the 2004–2005 seasons, as measured from the Santiago Peak station (County of Orange, Watershed & Coastal Resources Division).

Pollutants originating in Orange County are transported by the daytime onshore air flow and react to form ozone some distance from where the primary pollutants are emitted. The SoCAB is a “nonattainment” area for Ozone (O₃), Carbon Monoxide (CO), Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂), Total Suspended Particulates (TSP), and Lead (Pb). Nonattainment refers to the fact that the federal and state ambient air quality standards are violated in the region. An air quality analysis was performed for the project and the results are discussed in Section 5.2, *Air Quality*, of this DEIR.

4.4.3 Geology and Landform

The project site is located within the Newport Mesa portion of the Orange County Coastal Plain of the Central Block of the greater Los Angeles Basin. The Los Angeles Basin represents the transition between the Transverse Ranges geomorphic province on the north and the Peninsular Ranges geomorphic province on the south. The Transverse Ranges province is characterized by roughly east–west trending, convergent (compressional) deformational structural features in contrast to the predominant northwest–southeast structural trend of the Peninsular Ranges and other geomorphic provinces in California.



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Holocene-age alluvium and colluvium are the dominant lithology in the gentle topography found in the southern portion of the project site. The northern portion of the project site is comprised of Pleistocene-age marine and nonmarine terrace deposits underlain by marine sedimentary deposits of the Miocene-age Monterey Formation.

The project site is situated on a north-south-trending ridge along the east side of the Newport Back Bay. On-site elevations range between 16 feet above msl in the southwestern portion of the project site to 69 feet above msl along the northern portion of the project site. The project site is not located within an Alquist-Priolo Special Study Zone and no known faults traverse the project site. However, the project site is located in seismically active southern California (Seismic Zone 4, encompassing most of southern California). The closest known active fault is the Newport-Inglewood Fault located approximately two miles southwest of the project site. The project's impacts on soils and geology are analyzed in Section 5.5, *Geology and Soils*, of this DEIR.

4.4.4 Hydrology and Water Quality

The project site is located within the Newport Bay Watershed. This watershed covers 13.2 square miles along the coast of central Orange County. It includes portions of Costa Mesa and Newport Beach, and San Diego Creek drains into the Upper Newport Bay. The East Costa Mesa, Santa Isabel, and other smaller channels also drain into Newport Bay. More specifically, the project indirectly discharges to the Upper Newport Bay, which ultimately discharges into the Lower Newport Bay and the Pacific Ocean. Because Upper Newport Bay currently experiences problems regarding water quality, it is listed as water quality impaired due to nutrients and sediment, pursuant to Section 303(d) of the federal Clean Water Act. As required by Section 303(d), standards for nutrients, sediment, and fecal coliforms have already been developed for the Newport Bay/San Diego Creek Watershed.

Currently, drainage for the project site is via surface flow. The golf course and central portion of the project site drain southerly toward Jamboree Road. The western and southwestern portions of the project site drain to Back Bay Drive. Off-site flows from an existing storm drain on the south side of Jamboree Road are discharged to the site near the parking lot and surface flow to a collection drain in Back Bay Drive.

The project's impacts on hydrology and water quality are analyzed in Section 5.7, *Hydrology and Water Quality*, of this DEIR.

4.4.5 Noise

Community noise levels are measured in terms of the "A-weighted decibel" (dBA). A-weighting is a frequency correction that correlates overall sound pressure levels to the frequency response of the human ear. The noise rating scale used in California for land use compatibility assessment is the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL). The CNEL scale represents a time-weighted, 24-hour average noise level based on the A-weighted decibel. Noise levels in the project area are influenced primarily by motor vehicle traffic on Jamboree Road, which is a steady source of ambient noise. Takeoffs and landings at John Wayne Airport, a commercial airport located 3.5 miles north of the project site, contribute to the intermittent aircraft noise in the project area.

Please refer to Section 5.9, *Noise*, in this DEIR for further information concerning existing noise conditions in the project area and an analysis of this project's impacts on the local noise environment.

4.4.6 Transportation and Traffic

The project site fronts Jamboree Road along its eastern boundary and Back Bay Drive along its southern and western boundaries. Jamboree Road is a north–south divided major arterial with three lanes in each direction. Jamboree Road terminates 0.2 mile south of the project site at Pacific Coast Highway. Back Bay Drive is a four-lane undivided secondary arterial roadway. Primary access to the project site is provided via Jamboree Road on the east. The project site also contains two gated entry drives that provide secondary access from Back Bay Drive on the southern and western boundaries. A detailed discussion of the existing traffic conditions and the project’s impacts to the circulation system is provided in Section 5.8, *Traffic and Circulation*, of this DEIR.

4.4.7 Public Services and Utilities

The project is located in an urbanized area with existing public services and utilities available to the project site. Local utilities and service systems that serve the existing hotel are available to serve the hotel expansion. Fire protection services are provided by the City of Newport Beach Fire Department via eight fire stations. Station 3, the closest station to the project site, is located at 868 Santa Barbara Drive, less than 0.6 mile northeast of the project site. Law enforcement services are provided by the City of Newport Beach Police Department, located at 870 Santa Barbara Drive.

Electricity and natural gas services are provided by Southern California Edison and The Gas Company, respectively. Telephone and cable services are provided by ATT and Cox Communications, respectively. Domestic and reclaimed water service is provided by the City of Newport Beach. Wastewater services to the project site are provided by the City of Newport Beach and treated by the Orange County Sanitation District. Solid waste disposal is provided by the Integrated Waste Management District and Waste Management of Orange County.

For more information concerning existing public services and utilities that could be affected by this project, please refer to Sections 5.10, *Public Services*, and 5.12, *Utilities and Services Systems*, of this DEIR.

4.4.8 Applicable Local Plans

City of Newport Beach General Plan

Future development of all land within the City of Newport Beach is guided by the City’s General Plan. The City’s General Plan Update was approved by the City Council on July 25, 2006, and approved by voters in accordance with City Charter Section 423 on November 7, 2006. City Charter Section 423 requires voter approval for amendments that exceed specific development thresholds.

The General Plan consists of a series of state-mandated as well as optional “elements” to direct the City’s physical, social, and economic growth. Elements within the City of Newport Beach General Plan include Land Use, Harbor and Bay, Housing, Historical Resources, Circulation, Recreation, Arts and Cultural, Natural Resources, Safety, and Noise. The Land Use Element of the City’s General Plan designates the project site as Visitor Serving Commercial (CV). Both the existing resort use and proposed expansion are consistent with this designation, which is primarily intended to provide accommodations, goods, and services to visitors to the City of Newport Beach. A full discussion of the proposed project’s relationship and consistency with the General Plan is contained in Section 5.8, *Land Use and Planning*, of this DEIR.



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City of Newport Beach Zoning Classification

The City of Newport Beach Zoning Code ensures consistency between the City's General Plan and proposed development. The zoning code identifies land use categories, boundaries, and development standards. The project site is designated as Retail and Service Commercial (RSC) per the City's Zoning Code. The RSC zoning classification provides for areas that are predominantly retail in character but allow some service office uses. The project's consistency with the City's Zoning Code is analyzed in detail in Section 5.8, *Land Use and Planning*, of this DEIR.

Local Coastal Program

The California Coastal Act (California State Public Resources Code, Division 20, Sections 30000 et seq.) directs each local government lying wholly or partly within the Coastal Zone, as defined by the Coastal Act, to prepare a Local Coastal Program for its portion of the Coastal Zone. According to the City of Newport Beach General Plan Update EIR (July 2006), more than 63 percent of the City is located in the coastal zone. Local Coastal Programs are used to carry out the policies and requirements of the Coastal Act by local governments. Local Coastal Programs must be reviewed and certified by the California Coastal Commission (CCC) before being implemented by a local government.

The Local Coastal Program is divided into two components: (1) a coastal land use plan (CLUP) and (2) an implementation program. The CLUP provides a technical synopsis of the resources located within the Coastal Zone. The document discusses resources in the context of a coastal zone overview; subarea description and land use plan; shoreline and coastal resource access; public recreational and visitor-serving commercial facilities; visual resources; historical and cultural resources; water and marine resources; environmentally sensitive habitats; energy facilities; water, sewer, and drainage facilities; and hazards. Issues, goals, objectives, and policies related to each of these areas are also provided. The Implementation Program provides the mechanism to implement each of the identified policies. On February 8, 2006, the Coastal Commission certified the CLUP. The next step in the certification process is the adoption of the Implementation Plan. Once certified, the City will be able to issue most Coastal Development Permits, a process currently under the jurisdiction of the CCC.

The project site is located within the Local Coastal Zone of the City of Newport Beach and is thus within the jurisdictional guidance of the CCC. Project implementation is subject to the approval of a Coastal Development Permit through the CCC. The project's consistency with the Local Coastal Program is analyzed in detail in Section 5.8, *Land Use and Planning*, of this DEIR.

4.5 ASSUMPTIONS REGARDING CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Section 15130 of the CEQA Guidelines states that cumulative impacts shall be discussed where they are significant. It further states that this discussion shall reflect the level and severity of the impact and the likelihood of occurrence, but not in as great a level of detail as that necessary for the project alone. Section 15355 of the Guidelines defines cumulative impacts to be "...two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts." Cumulative impacts represent the change caused by the incremental impact of a project when added to other proposed or committed projects in the vicinity.

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, either:

- (A) A list of past, present and probable future projects producing related cumulative impacts, including, if necessary, those projects outside the control of the agency; or

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- (B) A summary of projections contained in an adopted general plan or related planning document designed to evaluate regional or area-wide conditions.

The cumulative impact analyses contained within Chapter 5, *Environmental Analysis*, of this DEIR uses Method A, as described above for quantified impacts such as traffic impacts, and Method B for other impacts. The City of Newport Beach compiled a list of approved and reasonably foreseeable projects that are located within the project study area. Table 4-1 provides a list of “Approved Projects” that have been included by the City for analysis pursuant to the City’s Traffic Phasing Ordinance (TPO). The location of these projects is shown in Figure 4-1, *Approved Projects – Traffic Phasing Ordinance*. As noted in Table 4-1, some of these projects have already been built. They have been included in this table for purposes of the traffic analysis. Available City traffic counts for some intersections were conducted in 2004 and 2005, prior to completion of these projects. Trip generation for these projects, therefore, was added to baseline traffic information. Other reasonably foreseeable, cumulative projects identified by the City are listed in Table 4-2, and mapped on Figure 4-2, *Cumulative Projects*.

**Table 4-1
Approved Projects (Traffic Phasing Ordinance)**

<i>Project Name</i>	<i>City Project Number</i>	<i>Land Use(s)/Status (February 2007)</i>
Fashion Island Expansion	148	Approx. 192,846 sq. ft., remaining entitlement
Temple Bat Yahm Expansion	154	Building not yet completed
Ford Redevelopment	157	998 units constructed, some remaining custom lots to be built
Hoag Hospital Phase II	168	Built
CIOSA-Irvine Project	555	Entitlements constructed with exception of Hyatt expansion
Newport Dunes	910	275 rooms remaining
1401 Dove Street	936	26,982 sq. ft. office, not yet constructed
Olsen Townhome Project	938	Built
Bayview Landing Senior	939	Built
494/496 Old Newport Boulevard	941	12,500 sq. ft. office space, under construction
401 Old Newport Boulevard	942	Built
Newport Technology Center	943	Conversion of office/R&D to medical
1901 Westcliff Surgical	944	12,628 sq. ft.
Hoag Hospital Phase III	945	130,000 outpatient facilities, not built
Newport Lexus	946	Built
Birch Medical Office	947	18,885 sq. ft., built
Saafar Fine Indian Cuisine	948	Improvements completed
St. Mark Presbyterian	949	26,667 sq. ft. church, 5,206 sq. ft. school, under construction
St. Andrews Presbyterian	950	15,000 sq. ft., not built
Corporate Plaza West	951	42,012 sq. ft., not built
Mariner’s Mile Gateway	952	56,000 sq. ft., not built



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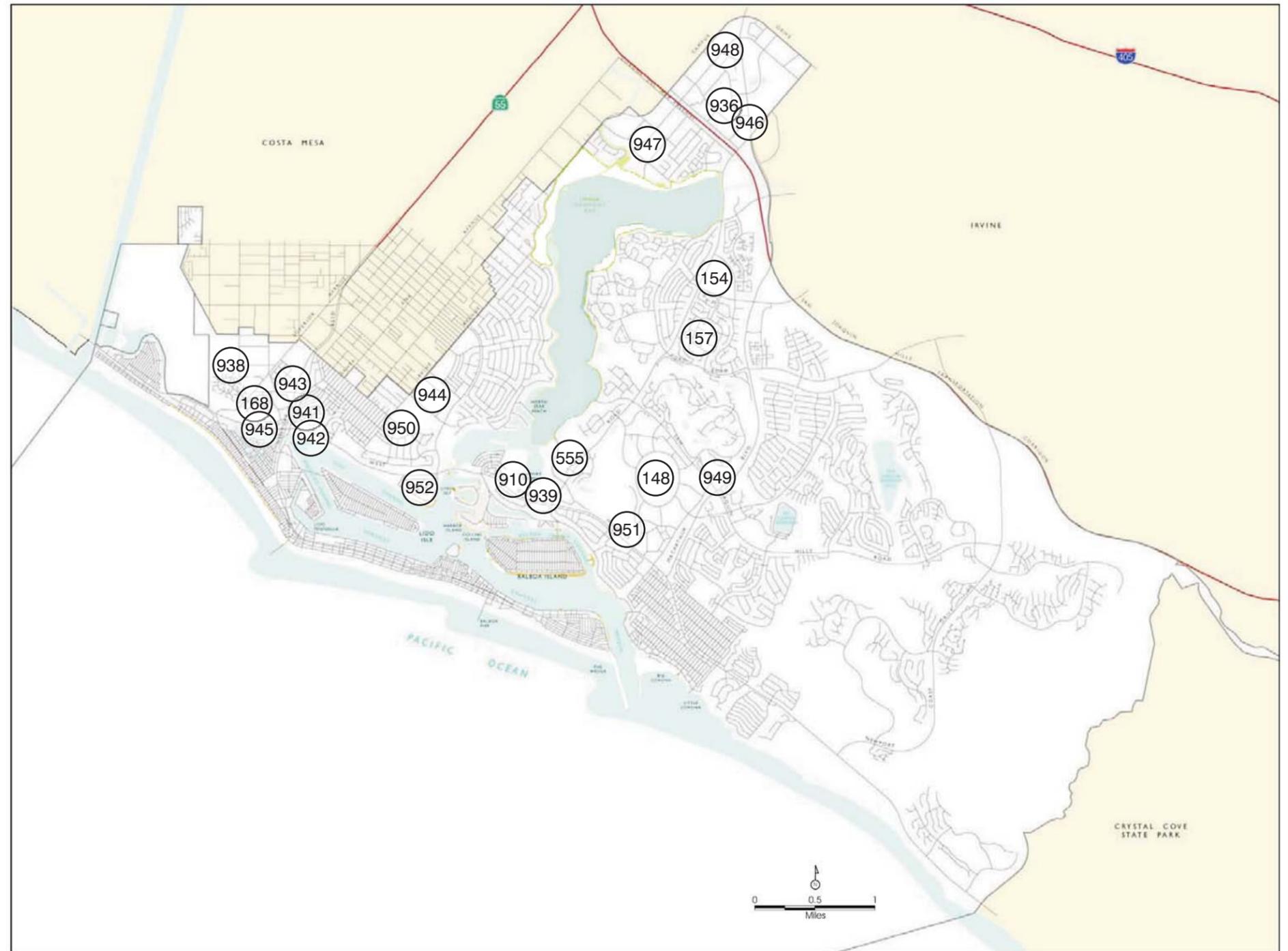
**Table 4-2
Cumulative Projects**

No.	Project Name Project Location	Land Use(s)/Status (February 2007)
1	South Coast Shipyard 223 21 st Street	
2	Mormon Temple 2300 Bonita Canyon Drive	Church 17.46 TSF
3	Our Lady Queen of Angels 2046 Mar Vista Drive	Church/Classrooms 18.5 TSF 250 Students
4	Mariners Church 5001 Newport Coast Drive	35 TSF Health Club 328.5 TSF Church
5	Exodus Community Center Bonita Canyon Drive and Newport Coast Drive	48.83 TSF Health Club 83.49 TSF Church 320 High School Students 160 Elementary Students 27.78 TSF
6	Newport Coast Development Off of Newport Coast Drive	3,180 SF Residential (954 future) 1,880 MF Residential (564 future)
7	Bonita Canyon Bonita Canyon Drive	436 Apartments
8	Newport Ridge Development Newport Coast Drive and Bonita Canyon Drive	2,107 SF Residential (632 future) 1,218 MF Residential (384 future) 102.969 TSF Commercial

Approved Projects - Traffic Phasing Ordinance

Approved Projects

City Project No.	Project Name
148	Fashion Island Expansion
154	Temple Bat Yahm Expansion
157	Ford Redevelopment
168	Hoag Hospital Phase II
555	CIOSA-Irvine Project
910	Newport Dunes
936	1401 Dove Street
938	Olsen Townhome Project
939	Bayview Landing Senior
941	494/496 Old Newport St.
942	401 Old Newport Blvd.
943	Newport Technology Center
944	1901 Westcliff Surgical
945	Hoag Hospital Phase III
946	Newport Lexus
947	Birch Medical Center
948	Saafar Fine Indian Cuisine
949	St. Mark Presbyterian
950	St. Andrews Presbyterian
951	Corporate Plaza West
952	Mariner's Mile Gateway

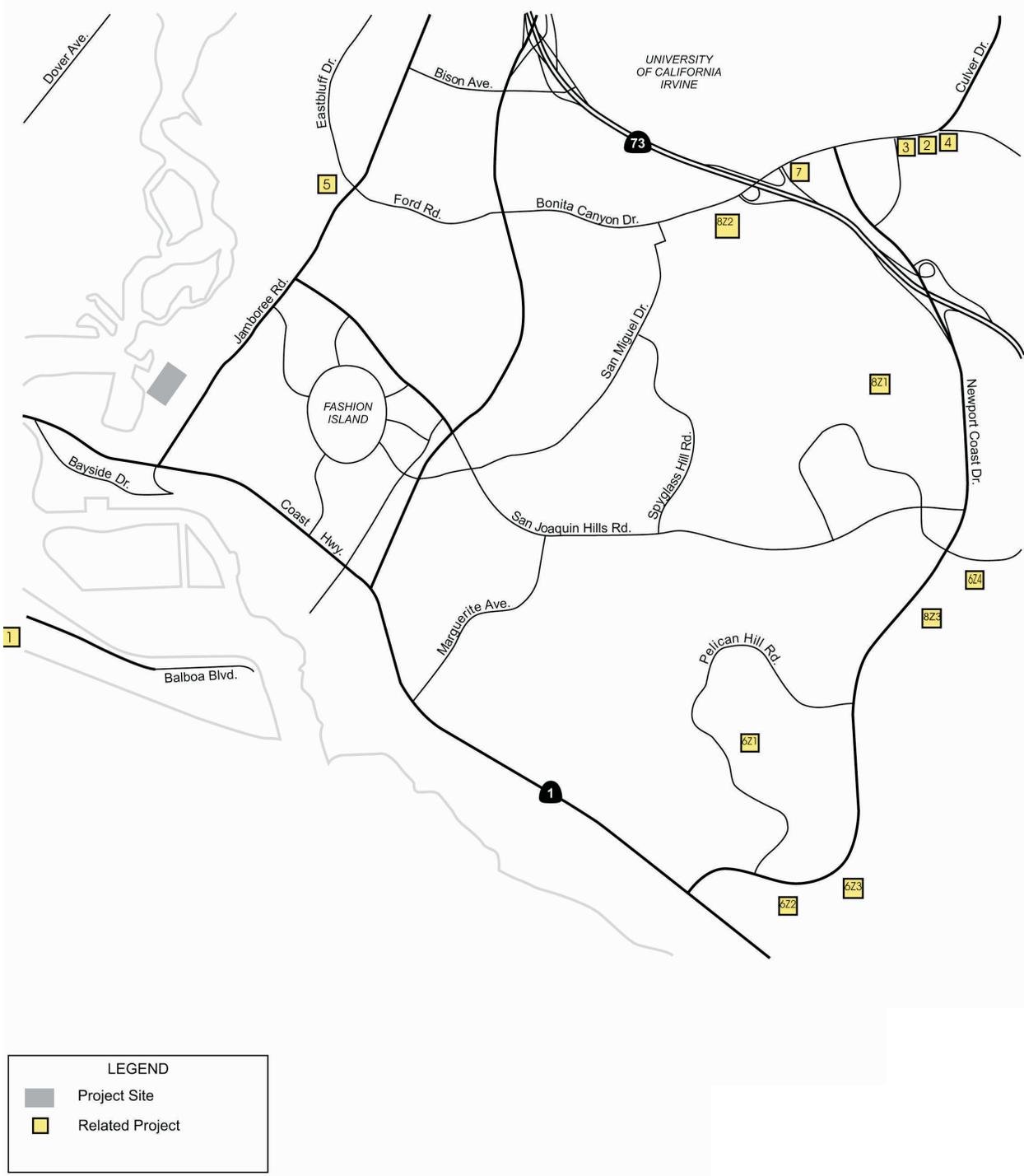


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