

3.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project is the adoption and implementation of a comprehensive amendment and update to the Westminster Gardens Specific Plan (WGSP). The current WGSP was adopted by the City of Duarte on November 27, 1990, and minor modifications were approved administratively in 1998. This chapter describes the proposed amendment to Westminster Gardens Specific Plan and the various components and actions addressed throughout the EIR. As explained by CEQA Guidelines Section 15124 (Project Description), the project description that follows has been detailed to the extent needed for adequate evaluation of potential environmental impacts.

3.1 PROJECT LOCATION

Regionally, the project site is located in the City of Duarte (City of Duarte) in Los Angeles County. Duarte is located in the northcentral portion of the San Gabriel Valley, approximately 21 miles northeast of the City of Los Angeles. Duarte is situated at the base of the San Gabriel Mountains and is bordered by the City of Irwindale to the south, the City of Monrovia the City of Bradbury to the west, the and the Angeles National Forest to the north, and the City of Azusa to the east; refer to **Exhibit 3-1, Regional Vicinity**.

Locally, the project site is bordered by Huntington Drive to the north, Central Avenue to the south, Santo Domingo Avenue to the west and Bradbourne Avenue to the east. The site is located on the eastern edge of the recently adopted Town Center Specific Plan and in proximity to the Gold Line Station and the Duarte Station Specific Plan. A portion of the eastern boundary is immediately adjacent to an existing townhome development; refer to **Exhibit 3-2, Local Vicinity**.

Exhibit 3-1
Regional Vicinity

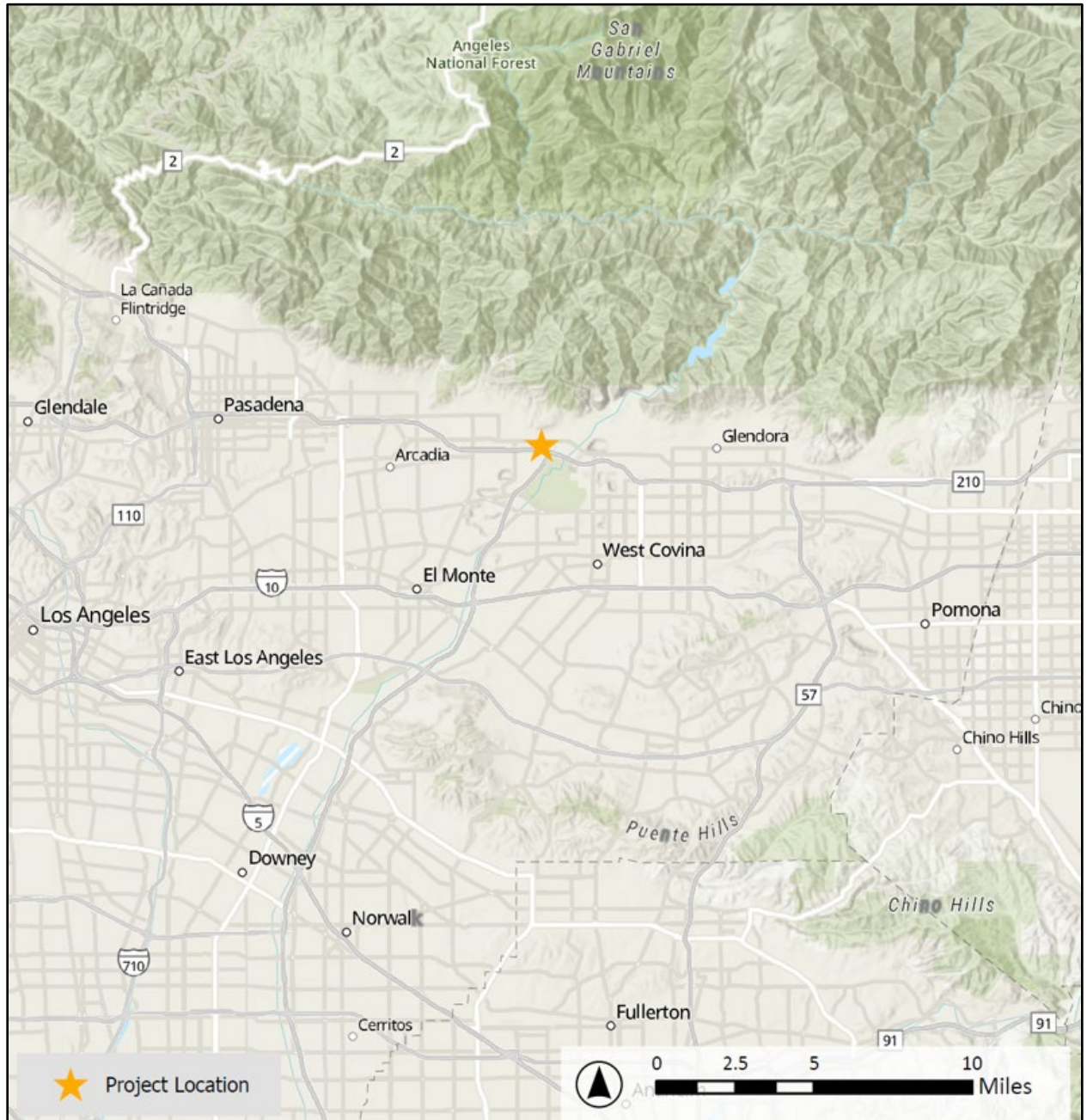
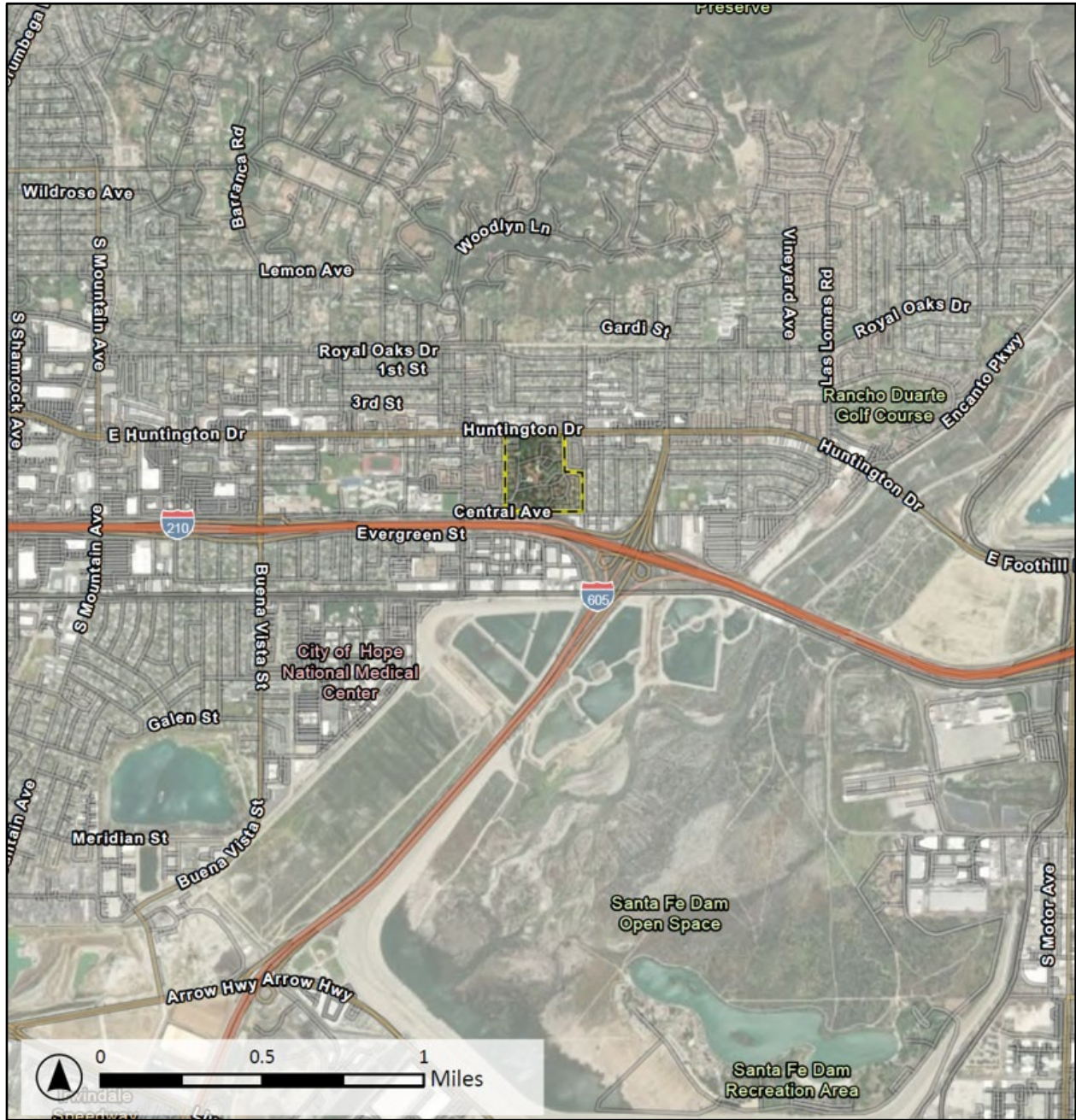


Exhibit 3-2
Local Vicinity



3.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

3.2.1 EXISTING LAND USES AND DEVELOPMENT

The approximately 32-acre site is comprised of four parcels under single ownership (refer to **Exhibit 3-3, Specific Plan Area**) and is developed with a senior residential community known commonly as Westminster Gardens and identified by the applicant as a Life Plan Community (LPC). LPCs, also known as Continuing Care Retirement Communities (CCRCs) provide residential and assisted living housing options for adults age 60+ by providing a wide range of care, services, and activities in one place, offering residents a sense of stability and familiarity as their abilities or health conditions change. The Westminster Gardens LPC campus is currently licensed by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), which oversees the Senior Care Licensing Programs for both CCRCs and Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly (RCFE), for a capacity of 200. Three of the four parcels are developed with the remaining fourth parcel (parcel 3) undeveloped. A breakdown of the parcels is as follows:

- Parcel 1 (Assessor Identification Number [AIN] 8529-014-025), extends from the intersection of Santo Domingo and Central Avenues, running eastward along Central Ave to Bradbourne Avenue and northward to the borders of Parcels 2, 3, and 4, is approximately 26 acres in size. Parcel 4 (AIN 8529-014-026), south of Huntington Drive, and east of Parcel 2 is approximately 3 acres in size. Combined, these two parcels contain the majority of the LPC structures and improvements comprising a total of 165,171 square feet of building area (inclusive of 149 residential units/beds, offices, resident amenities, and maintenance buildings), 74 garage/carport parking spaces, 204 surface, unassigned parking spaces, a private street system, and related landscaped areas.
- Parcel 2 (AIN 8529-014-028), located north of Parcel 1 and south of Huntington Drive, between Parcel 3 and 4, is approximately 1.5 acres in size and has been improved as a private park with a small amphitheater, covered patio area, and shuffleboard courts for use exclusively by the residents of Westminster Gardens LPC.
- Parcel 3 (AIN 8529-014-029), is southeast of the intersection of Santo Domingo Avenue and Huntington Drive, is approximately 1.4 acres in size and is undeveloped. Vegetation is minimal consisting of pine trees, palm trees, and an oak tree in the center of the parcel. The parcel is bare level ground and is approximately four feet lower than Huntington Drive at the northeast corner and two feet lower at the northwest corner. The northwest corner of the site is at the same elevation as Santo Domingo Avenue and is approximately one foot lower at the southwest corner. The site slopes to the south. A vehicular access gate is located approximately 125 feet south of Huntington Drive.

Parcel 1 also includes the Morrison House and grounds, a historic building that is now used for a administrative offices, , mail room, library, offices, restrooms, and a social hall. The Morrison House and the surrounding grounds will remain as is and will not be modified as part of this project.

Exhibit 3-3
Specific Plan Area

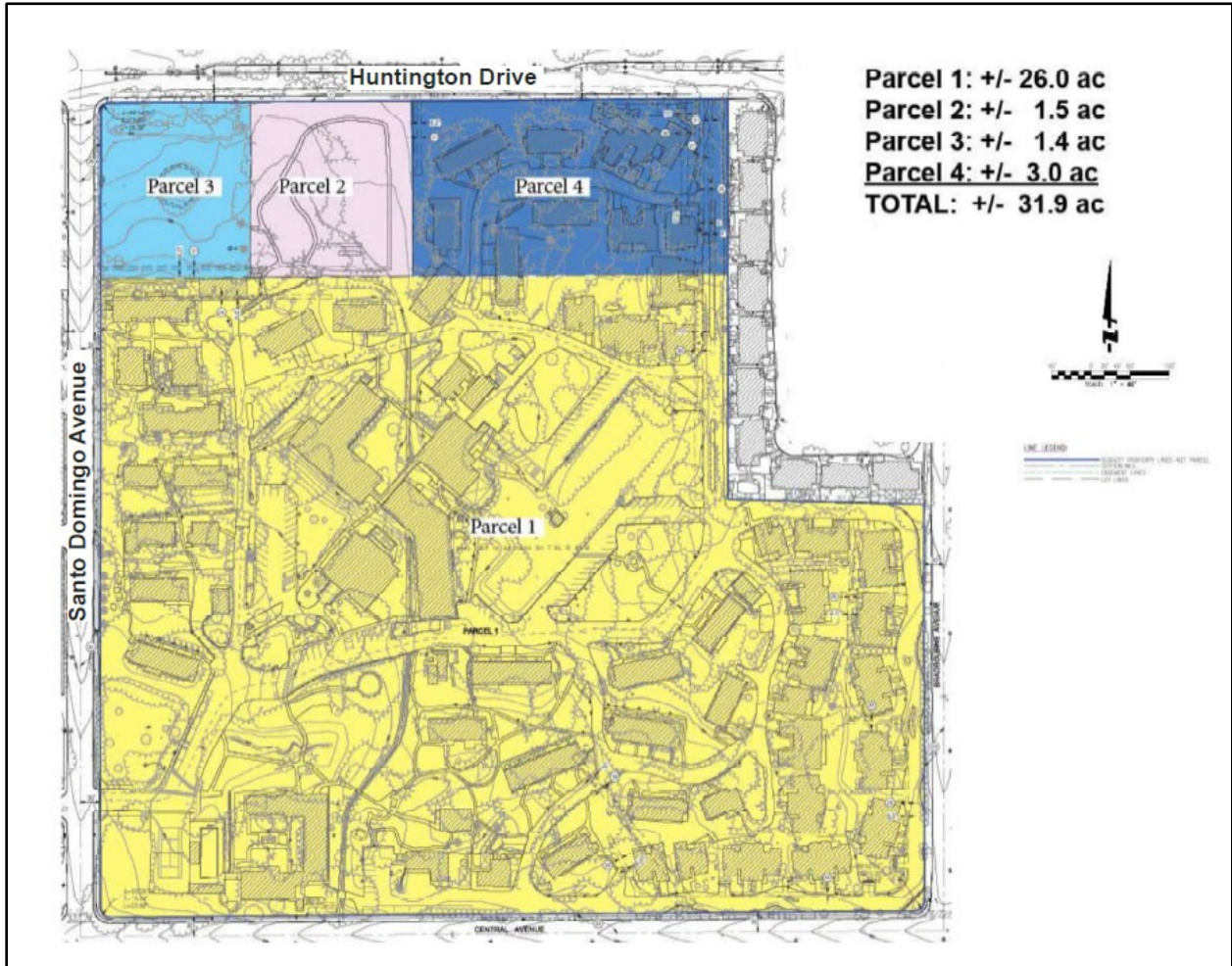


Exhibit 3-4, Existing Westminster Gardens LPC Campus Map, illustrates the distribution of the existing buildings, identifying them by building number or name, the general location of parking areas, and the private street system. **Table 3-1, Westminster Gardens LPC Existing Building Inventory** provides a corresponding list of the existing buildings as of 2023, by building number or name and indicates the use(s), square footage, and where applicable, the number of housing units/beds.

Exhibit 3-4
Westminster Gardens LPC Campus Map



**Table 3-1
Westminster Gardens LPC Existing Building Inventory**

Building Number or Name	Land Use(s)	Unit Type	Number of Units or Beds	Square Footage
Morrison House	Office & Library		0	5,650
Pool Changing Room	Resident Amenity		0	560
El Sueno	Resident Amenity		0	2,926
Dining Room	Resident Amenity		0	6,175
Fitness Center	Resident Amenity		0	979
Shu Lodge	Residential Care Facility	Assisted	16	10,646
Memorial Lodge	Residential Care Facility	Assisted	16	9,152
Packard Hall	Resident Amenity		0	6,532
Units 15-78	Residential - Senior Housing	Independent	26	23,203
Unit 64 (Cape Cod House)	Resident Amenity		0	950
Units 21-29	Residential - Senior Housing	Independent	9	11,868
Units 300-318	Residential - Senior Housing	Independent	19	25,160
Units 109-127	Residential - Senior Housing	Independent	12	10,957
Units 131-141	Residential - Senior Housing	Independent	11	10,408
Units 200-227	Residential - Senior Housing	Independent	21	18,968
Units 229-250	Residential - Senior Housing	Independent	9	12,889
Hacienda	Residential Care Facility	Memory Care	10	4,257
Ancillary Buildings	Utility and Maintenance		0	3,891
TOTALS			149	165,171

3.2.2 CIRCULATION – ACCESS AND PARKING

The site perimeter is fenced and gated, with one primary controlled vehicular/pedestrian access from Santo Domingo Avenue located at the southeastern edge of the site. An emergency secondary access point (gated) is located on the northeast edge of the site, providing access to Huntington Drive, with signage indicating the entrance to the property is on Santo Domingo Avenue. There are two existing, fenced, unused curb cut locations along Santo Domingo Avenue near Huntington Drive and one existing, unused and fenced curb cut location on Central Avenue. There are a total of 278 parking spaces located throughout the site, 204 of which are open and unassigned available for use by residents, visitors, and staff; and 74 garage/carport spaces assigned or attached to an Independent Living Unit.

3.2.3 OTHER EXISTING SITE IMPROVEMENTS

Fencing around Westminster Gardens varies between metal chain link fencing with shrubbery growing over it along Santo Domingo Avenue and concrete/block walls along Central Avenue and Bradbourne Avenue, and a combination of concrete walls and metal fencing along Huntington Drive. Mature landscape/hardscape features are located throughout the community, serving as passive open space, pedestrian pathways, community gardens, with a large private open space amenity in the north central

portion of the site (Parcel 2). Mature trees and shrubs are located throughout the campus. An uncovered drainage channel runs north to south through the middle of the property, with segments running below ground.

3.2.4 OPERATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

In 2023, Westminster Gardens LPC typically had a total of 67 full time employees to provide services to the residents, and manage and maintain the campus. Daily operations average an employee peak of 45 between the hours of 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. Overnight staffing currently consists of six employees.

3.2.5 SURROUNDING LAND USES AND DEVELOPMENT

The surrounding area is characterized primarily by its relatively flat topography and mix of low-rise residential development, including single-family homes, duplexes, and apartment buildings, often set in tract developments, dating from the 1950s through 1990s. Westminster Gardens is surrounded by residential uses to the north, east, and west: single- and multi-family residences are located immediately to the west; apartment buildings are located immediately to the north; and a single-family residential tract development is located immediately to the east. The property is bounded by Central Avenue and Interstate 210 (I-210) to the south, and two industrial buildings to the southeast.

3.3 EXISTING GENERAL PLAN AND ZONING DESIGNATIONS

The Duarte General Plan (2005-2020) Land Use Map designates the project site Specific Plan. According to the General Plan Land Use Element, the City has prepared and adopted 20 specific plans for various areas within the City. Each of these plans were in compliance with the respective General Plan land use designation at the time they were adopted. Table LU-2 (Approved Specific Plans) of the Land Use Element describes the WGSP as a senior community with a combined total capacity of 195 Independent and Assisted Living Units, developed at a density of 7.8 residents per acre. Table LU-2 also indicates that the WGSP is consistent with the “Medium Density Residential (MDR)” land use designation, which allows for denser multiple family dwellings, mixed detached and attached residential developments up to a maximum of 21 dwelling units per acre, including senior housing. This Amendment to the WGSP will increase the number of senior housing units from current (2023) conditions within the allowable density limit identified in the General Plan Land Use Element, and therefore, does not require an amendment to the General Plan. Development standards have been drafted as part of the specific plan amendment to be unique to fit the type of land uses desired within the boundaries of the WGSP.

The City’s updated 6th cycle Housing Element (2021-2029) identifies the WGSP area as an “Opportunity Site” to accommodate new residential multifamily units to meet the City’s allotment of regional housing need. Table H 4-1 (Summary of Potential Housing Units) describes the potential for the WGSP area to provide a minimum total of 300 additional units, divided into income distribution consisting of 75 Very-Low, 75 Moderate, and 150 above Moderate -income households. This Amendment to the WGSP is consistent with this objective and includes a provision to require at least 150 affordable units with rents affordable to lower and moderate-income households within the initial phase of the campus expansion plan.

The Zoning Map designates the WGSP area as Specific Plan #5. Duarte Development Code Section 19.22.010 describes the Specific Plan zone (SP zone) as a zone that provides for flexibility, innovative use of land resources and development, a variety of housing and other development types, and an effective

and safe method of pedestrian and vehicular circulation. This Amendment to the WGSP does not propose a change to the boundaries the specific plan or a change to the zoning district designation. The comprehensive update to the WGSP addresses the master land use plan, allowable uses, development regulations, circulation, and infrastructure within the WGSP area.

3.4 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Section 15124(b) of the State CEQA Guidelines requires “[a] statement of objectives sought by the proposed project. The statement of objectives should include the underlying purpose of the project.”

The following objectives have been identified for the Project:

- Redevelop the Life Plan Community to provide a high-quality and safe residential development containing an integrated mix of Independent Living, Assisted Living and Memory Care Units and skilled nursing, that would respond to the growing demand and cater to the existing and future needs of the senior segment of the local population.
- Create a self-sufficient community that will provide services and amenities to enhance livability for the resident population, including establishing areas of mixed-use development by allowing compatible office and retail uses as part of, or immediately adjacent to, residential units.
- Create affordable Independent Living Units in support of the City’s Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) and to provide an additional housing option for Very-Low- and Moderate-income senior residents.
- Implement a community that remains compatible with and respectful to the surrounding land uses, physically and aesthetically.
- Provide additional site access and improve pedestrian connectivity both within community and to the greater surrounding community.
- Implement an updated development plan, including specific development and design standards consistent with the City’s General Plan and with minimal deviation from the City’s Zoning Code regulations for setbacks, height, parking, etc.
- Retain the historic Morrison House and associated grounds for administrative support functions and as a Community Hub.

3.5 PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

3.5.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The proposed project will amend the WGSP to provide a comprehensive update of the Specific Plan. The updated WGSP identifies the long-term vision and objectives for private redevelopment, new residential and non-residential development capacity, and associated public and private improvements within the WGSP area over a 15-to-20-year span. The WGSP update establishes the general type, parameters, and

character of the development aimed at transforming the current Westminster Gardens LPC campus into a vibrant and dynamic environment with senior-centric amenities, services, and multiple housing and continuum of care options at various price points, providing aging Duarte residents a destination to continue to reside within the Duarte city limits.

Redevelopment under the updated WGSP is intended to address the unmet demand for senior housing and services within Duarte and the surrounding communities. Implementation of this amendment allows for redevelopment of the Westminster Gardens LPC campus to allow build-out capacity of the following major components:

- A maximum of 310 Independent Living Units (market rate)
- A minimum of 150 Independent Living Units (affordable)
- A maximum of 90 Assisted Living/Memory Care Units/Beds
- A maximum of 65,000 square feet of Resident Amenity space
- A maximum of 15,000 square feet of Retail
- A maximum of 25,000 square feet of Office

This will allow for continued availability of both market-rate and rent-restricted housing, while maintaining and refurbishing parking, open space, and on-site amenities to retain a high-quality living environment. Through multiple phases of redevelopment, the amended WGSP development plan proposes to significantly increase capacity in the overall number of units and provide additional retail and office space. The development plan also provides for a corresponding increase in the square footage and areas devoted to administrative, and on-site resident amenities, including improvements to upgrade existing infrastructure, and provide additional vehicular and pedestrian access.

Another major goal of amending the WGSP is to achieve a coordinated, cohesive environment and character within the Westminster Gardens LPC by updating development and design standards. The updated Specific Plan reorganizes the existing Specific Plan to be more effectively implemented and is organized as follows:

- Specific Plan Setting
- Development Plan
- Development and Design Standards
- Infrastructure and Services
- Administration and Implementation
- Appendices (General Plan Consistency Analysis, Definitions, etc.)

As used in this EIR, the terms "Westminster Gardens Specific Plan," "WGSP," "Specific Plan," "Plan" (when specifically distinguished from another plan), and "project" are synonymous and refer to all aspects of the Westminster Gardens Specific Plan amendment.

3.5.2 DEVELOPMENT PLAN, STANDARDS AND DESIGN

The amended WGSP includes a Development Plan for the redevelopment of Westminster Gardens LPC. **Exhibit 3-5, Proposed Development Concept**, illustrates broadly the overall plan for redevelopment, generally depicting building locations, and distribution of land uses throughout the 32-acre site. Two additional gate-controlled vehicular access points are proposed to connect to Santo Domingo Avenue and

the unused existing curb cut along Central Avenue will be relocated eastward and serve as access to the Affordable Independent Living Units. Existing vehicular access will be retained at the main entrance on Santo Domingo Avenue, and the Huntington Drive access will serve as emergency vehicle access. All connections with the public right-of-way would also have access-controlled pedestrian gates.

Allowable uses, intensity and density of development, and specific development and design standards are defined for each of the respective land use categories contained within each building of the WGSP. The categories include Residential (both market-rate and affordable Independent Living Units), Residential Care Facilities (Assisted Living/Memory Care Units/Beds), Resident Amenity, Office, Maintenance, Private Park, and Mixed-Use (combining residential, office, and retail uses). Buildings may contain a single use or multiple land use categories specific to the unique function and operations of an LPC.

Redevelopment of Westminster Gardens LPC will result in multiple buildings ranging from single-story to a maximum of four stories with associated parking areas located within structures, partially subterranean, or at surface. Resident amenities may be located within residential buildings or in stand-alone buildings throughout the campus and would include areas for dining, activities, health and wellness, education, social, recreational, and other senior-centric functions. Mixed-Use buildings and associated parking would be developed within the northwest portion of the amended WGSP, with ground floor retail combined with either office and/or residential living units on upper floors (vertical) or immediately adjacent (horizontal).

Exhibit 3-5
Proposed Development Concept



3.5.3 GROWTH OVER EXISTING CONDITIONS

Table 3-2, Growth Relative to Existing Conditions, shows the anticipated growth in both the residential and non-residential components beyond existing 2023 conditions within the WGSP area. This net increase breaks down as follows:

- Increase of 353 Independent Living Units (market rate and/or affordable)
- Increase of 48 Assisted/Memory Care Units/Beds
- Increase of 46,878 square feet of Resident Amenity space
- Increase of 3,109 square feet of Utility and Maintenance space
- Increase of 19,350 square feet of Office space
- Addition of 15,000 square feet of Retail space

**Table 3-2
Growth Relative to Existing Conditions**

Land Use	Residential (units/beds)	Residential (square feet)	Non-Residential (square feet)
Existing			
Independent Living Unit (market-rate)	107	113,453	
Independent Living Unit (affordable)	0		
Assisted Living/Memory Care Unit	42	24,055	
Resident Amenity			18,122
Utility and Maintenance			3,891
Office			5,650
Retail			0
Total	149	137,508	27,663
Proposed Build-Out Assumptions			
Independent Living Unit (market-rate)	310	539,500	
Independent Living Unit (affordable)	150	142,500	
Assisted Living/Memory Care Unit	90	81,000	
Resident Amenity			65,000
Utility and Maintenance			7,000
Office			25,000
Retail			15,000
Total	550	763,000	112,000
Net Difference Between Existing Conditions and Specific Plan Assumptions - TOTALS	+401	+625,492	+84,337

3.6 PROJECT TIMELINE

The WGSP does not define any specific project phasing for redevelopment. It is anticipated that redevelopment within the Specific Plan area will occur gradually in multiple phases with build-out assumed within 20 years (2045). Thus, the project site will gradually transition over time from the existing

development to the expanded facility envisioned by the WGSP. Each new phase of development will be provided with adequate parking per the ratios required by the amended WGSP.

3.7 PERMITS AND APPROVALS

The City of Duarte is the Lead Agency for the project and has discretionary authority which includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Certification of the Final EIR;
- Adoption of a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP);
- Adoption of the amendment to the Westminster Gardens Specific Plan;
- Approval of any required subdivision maps, or lot line adjustments;
- Discretionary review as necessary, including any applicable CEQA review, for other current and future development proposals within the Specific Plan area.

Future development proposals within the Specific Plan area would be expected to also require review or approvals from other jurisdictional agencies, including, but not limited to:

- California Department of Social Services (CDSS)
- California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC)
- California Department of Transportation (Caltrans District 7)
- County of Los Angeles
- Duarte Unified School District
- Los Angeles County Fire Department
- Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department
- County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County (LASCD)
- Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (METRO)
- South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD)
- Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB District 4)
- California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC)
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Housing and Community Development
- Native American Heritage Commission
- Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG)