

## **3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING**

This section describes the current general environmental conditions in Malibu and on, and in the vicinity of, the candidate sites for rezoning to allow multi-family residential development at a density of 25 units/acre. More detailed descriptions of the setting for each environmental issue area are found in Section 4.0.

### **3.1 REGIONAL SETTING**

The City of Malibu lies within the coastal and foothill areas on the south side of the Santa Monica Mountain range (generally south of the Rancho Topanga Malibu Sequit line). The City has a 2011 estimated population of 12,699 residents (California Department of Finance, 2012) within an approximately 19.6 square mile area. Malibu is situated roughly midway between Santa Monica and Oxnard on Pacific Coast Highway (PCH) and is bounded by unincorporated Los Angeles County to the west, unincorporated Los Angeles County areas of the Santa Monica Mountains to the north, the City of Santa Monica to the east, and the Pacific Ocean to the south.

Malibu spans approximately 27 miles along the Pacific coastline, ranging from one to eight miles wide. This provides for a variety of terrain consisting of beaches and relatively narrow coastal terrace and lowland areas along the Pacific Ocean; and the hillsides, canyons, and creek areas that form the foothills of the Santa Monica Mountains. The topography of the area ranges from the steeply mountainous areas of the parklands on the north and east to gently sloping and in places almost flat areas to the south. Drainage is generally to the southwest toward the Pacific Ocean. Similar to much of Southern California, Malibu is located within a seismically active region.

Located on the Pacific Ocean, Malibu has a mild climate characterized by cool winters and moderate summers. Ocean breezes cool the region in the summer and warm it in the winter. Average daytime summer temperatures in the area are usually in the 70s to 80s (Fahrenheit). Nighttime low temperatures during the summer are typically in the high 50s to low 60s, while the winter high temperature tends to be in the 60s. Characteristic of Malibu's marine microclimate, the winter low temperatures are in the low 50s. Annual average rainfall in Malibu is about 16.5 inches.

As discussed in Section 2.0, Project Description, three of seven "candidate sites" for rezoning to allow multi-family residential development at a density of 25 units/acre (Candidate Sites #1, #2, and #7) are part of the proposed project studied in this EIR.

Candidate Sites #1 and #2 are located in Ramirez Canyon. As described in the General Plan, The Ramirez Canyon is a 2,880 acre watershed between Kanan Dune Road and Escondido Canyon. The topography of the area ranges from the stream bed and flood plain area, to steep mountains. The canyon has a relatively small floor, bounded by relatively steep hills on both the East and West sides.

Ramirez Creek is the major drainage course into the Paradise Cove area. With the construction of the "Roosevelt Highway" during the early part of this century, the Ramirez watershed was divided into two almost equal parts, with the mouth of the floodplain located in Paradise Cove. The Ramirez Canyon Watershed also drains many smaller drainage courses and arroyos. Ramirez Creek is a significant stream with a thriving native riparian habitat lining the creek,



and includes many native tree species of oak and sycamore. Although development has disturbed native plant communities adjacent to the stream bed, the hillsides still contain coastal sage scrub.

The flora of the upper, undeveloped watershed areas consists of abundant native plant communities, such as chaparral, coastal sage scrub and grassland habitat. These remain relatively undisturbed. The lower portions of the watershed also contain exotic annual grasslands. The abundance of vegetation and a natural watercourse provides an ideal home to a number of species of wildlife, including deer, bobcat, raccoon, badger, gray fox, coyote and cougar. Additionally, many species of birds inhabit the area, including hawks, eagles, owls and roadrunners, and there are a variety of snakes, lizards and frogs.

The floodplain portion of the watershed is a liquefaction zone. Water damage has occurred in the area as a result of runoff from excavated, unstable hillsides. Historically, the residents in the flood plain have not suffered any damage from severe winter storms, with the exception of locations where the water has been rechanneled, causing erosion to some stream banks and to the sides of the road, and water from excavated channels to enter some homes.

The area's geology is complex and contains both ancient and active slides. There are four mapped slides in the watershed, as well as active debris flow areas located in the upper watershed. In addition, four splays of the Malibu Coast Fault traverse the watershed in an easterly/westerly configuration.

Ramirez Canyon is an area of archaeological and cultural importance, as it is an extension of the Chumash village of "Sumo" located in Paradise Cove. There are sites identified as many thousands of years old, and there are ancient burial grounds, as well. It is believed that the canyon was used by the Chumash Indians for at least 9,000 years, until the early 19th century.

Candidate Site # 7 is located in the City's Civic Center in Eastern Malibu. According to the Malibu General Plan, the Civic Center contains the majority of commercial and office development, as well as the largest concentration of multifamily residential development in the City. The Civic Center is surrounded by Malibu Knolls on the northern and part of the western border. The Malibu knolls neighborhood consists of 65 residential parcels at an average elevation of approximately 200 feet above the flat land below.

Candidate Site #7 is located approximately 1,000 feet west of Malibu Creek and falls within the Malibu Creek Watershed. The Malibu Creek Watershed is part of the greater Northern Santa Monica Bay watershed. Malibu Creek Watershed covers 109 square miles and drains into the Santa Monica Bay via Malibu Creek, which runs 25 miles through Malibu Creek State Park and Malibu Lagoon. The majority of this watershed is undeveloped public land.

The Malibu Creek Watershed is located on the south side of the Santa Monica Mountain Range, which is in the western part of the Transverse Ranges Geomorphic Province of California. The valleys and mountains of the Transverse Ranges are typically bounded by a series of east-west trending, generally north dipping reverse faults with left-lateral, oblique movement. Bedrock beneath this area consists of Miocene geologic-aged volcanic and marine sedimentary rocks. This province is considered seismically active.



## 3.2 CANDIDATE SITE SETTING

As noted above, three individual parcels (known as Candidate Sites #1, #2, and #7) are proposed to be rezoned to allow multi-family residential development at a density of 25 units/acre. Candidate Sites # 1 and # 2 are located adjacent to each other at 28517 PCH and 28401 PCH, respectively. These sites are approximately one mile north of Dume Cove and one mile southwest of Central Malibu. Both sites affront the PCH, which borders the sites to the southeast. The overall topography of both sites is relatively flat with moderate to steep slopes along the northeastern edge of Candidate Site #1 and northwestern edge of Candidate Site #2. Surrounding properties have similar topography consisting of moderately sloped hills with a trend of increasing elevation heading north towards the Santa Monica Mountains. The base of the Santa Monica Mountains is approximately one mile north of Candidate Sites #1 and #2.

Candidate Sites #1 and #2 are primarily undeveloped with the exception of one single family residence on each site. Candidate Site #1 contains grassland, scrub brush, southern California black walnut woodland, native and ornamental woodland. Candidate Site #2 contains grassland, eucalyptus woodland, and ornamental woodland.

Candidate Site #1 is approximately 5.8 acres in size (3.66 developable acres) with a current development potential of 22 units. The overall development potential would increase to 91 units with the proposed rezone from Multifamily Residential (6 units/acre) to Multifamily - High (25 units/acre). Candidate Site #2 is approximately 3.25 acres (2.59 developable acres) in size with a current development potential of 16 units. The overall development potential would increase to 64 units pursuant to the proposed rezone from Multifamily Residential (6 units/acre) to Multifamily - High (25 units/acre).

Land uses surrounding Candidate Sites #1 and #2 are primarily rural residential, with limited multifamily and single family residential as well as some light commercial in the vicinity. Existing housing developments are directly east and west of both sites. Directly adjacent to the sites to the east and west are existing multistory housing developments. Development to the north and south of the sites consists of substantially lower density rural residential housing units. Across PCH to the southwest resides a mobile home park.

Candidate Site #7 encompasses about 2.3 acres and is located at 3700 La Paz Lane, approximately 6.5 miles east of Candidate Sites #1 and #2 and 1.5 miles southeast of Pepperdine University. It is located in the City's Civic Center directly adjacent to Los Angeles Superior Court Malibu Courthouse, Los Angeles District Attorney, and the Malibu Library. PCH is located approximately 0.15 miles to the south of Candidate Site #7. The overall topography of the site is relatively flat, with some moderate to steep slopes near the northern portion of the property. Surrounding topography is similar with a trend of increasing elevation heading north towards the Santa Monica Mountains.

Candidate Site #7 is currently undeveloped land. Several scattered trees are located onsite while the rest of the site is mostly covered by shrubs and grassland. Candidate Site #7 is currently zoned Community Commercial/Commercial Visitor Serving. Adjacent properties are designated Commercial, Institutional, and Rural Residential. The majority of surrounding land is vacant with the exception of commercial development to the south and east of the site, which primarily includes the Los Angeles County Courthouse. Additionally, properties are located



approximately 500 feet north of the site and are currently occupied by single-family housing units.

### 3.3 CUMULATIVE PROJECTS

CEQA requires a discussion of cumulative impacts. Section 15130 of the *CEQA Guidelines* states that discussion of related or cumulative projects may be drawn from a “list of past, present, and reasonably anticipated future projects producing related or cumulative impacts...” Table 3-1 summarizes the build out potential of planned and pending projects in the City.

Table 3-1 lists currently approved and pending projects in Malibu that are considered in the cumulative impact analysis contained in this EIR. There are currently 29 proposed development projects in Malibu totaling 84 units of residential development and 748,460 square feet of non-residential development. Two of the approved/pending residential projects are located within one mile of Candidate Sites #1 and #2. Eight of the planned/pending projects are located within one mile of Candidate Site #7. The majority of these are commercial developments located within the Civic Center.

It should be noted that some impacts are not necessarily cumulatively considerable in relation to development that occurs further from candidate sites. For example, aesthetic impacts associated development of one or more of the candidate sites are not likely to add to cumulative effects in the western portion of the City. This is reflected in the cumulative impact discussions of the EIR.

**Table 3-1  
 Pending and Approved Development in the City of Malibu**

<b>Project Name Description</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Residential</b>	<b>Non-Residential</b>
<b>Trancas Town</b>	6155 TCR	32 townhomes	
<b>HOWS/Trancas Country Market</b>	30745 PCH (at TCR)		25,728 SF new commercial space
<b>Malibu Sycamore Village</b>	23575 Civic Center Way		37,698 SF retail; 12,302 SF office; 10,000 SF restaurant
<b>Rancho Malibu Hotel (0.9 mi from Candidate Site #7)</b>	4000 MCR (NW corner of MCR and PCH, along Winter Canyon Rd)		146-room luxury hotel with related facilities, totaling 40,777 SF
<b>La Paz Shopping Center (borders Candidate Site #7 across Civic Center way)</b>	23465 Civic Center Way		112,058 SF retail and office; 20,000 SF institutional
<b>Whole Foods Shopping Center (500ft from Candidate Site #7)</b>	23401 CCW		34,425 SF retail; 2,500 SF high turnover restaurant; 1,500 SF fast food restaurant
<b>Santa Monica College (500ft from Candidate Site #7)</b>	23555 CCW		25,000 SF school facility
<b>Pepperdine Campus Life Project</b>	24255 PCH		394,137 SF of net new development on the campus
<b>Pierview</b>	22716 PCH		7,100 SF restaurant



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 Pending and Approved Development in the City of Malibu**

<b>Project Name Description</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Residential</b>	<b>Non-Residential</b>
Windsail	22706 PCH		5,904 SF restaurant
Hajian	24903 PCH		9,685 SF office
N/A	22959 PCH		2,630 SF office and 4,517 SF retail
N/A (1 mi from Candidate Site #7)	22729 PCH		2,499 SF office
Carbon Condos	22065 PCH	8 condo units	
N/A	18805, 18807 & 18809 PCH	3 single family residences	
N/A	22301, 22303, 22305 and 22309 PCH	4 single family residences	
N/A	21997 and 22003 PCH	2 single family residences	
Serra Retreat (0.75 mi from Candidate Site #7)	3314 Serra Rd	3 single family residences	
N/A	20624 and 20630 PCH	2 single family residences	
Seaboard	21100 Seaboard	1 single family residence	
Sea Star Estates	6270, 6304, 6312, 6282, and 6398 Sea Star Dr	5 single family residences	
28811 PCH Subdivision	28811 PCH	3 single family residences	
Galahad Subdivision (2300ft from Candidate Sites # 1 & #2)	6061 Galahad Rd	4 single family residences	
Zuma Mesa (2400ft from Candidate Sites #1 & #2)	6271 and 6277 Zuma Mesa Dr	2 single family residences	
Sea Level	31864 and 31866 Sea Level Dr	2 single family residences	
N/A	5905 and 5909 Latigo Canyon Rd	2 single family residences	
N/A	27535 PCH	2 single family residences	
Crummer (0.7 mi from Candidate Site #7)	24120 PCH	5 single family residences	
Towing Subdivision (0.6 from Candidate Site #7)	23915 Malibu Rd	4 single family residences	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>84 units</b>	<b>748,460 SF</b>

Source: City of Malibu, 2012  
 SF= Square feet.

