3.0 Project Description
3.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

3.1 PROJECT LOCATION AND SETTING

PROJECT LOCATION

The proposed Downtown Lancaster Specific Plan Project (project) is located in the City of Lancaster, California. The City of Lancaster (City) is located in northern Los Angeles County along State Route 14, approximately 70 miles northeast of Downtown Los Angeles (Exhibit 3-1, Regional Vicinity). This high desert City is located in the Antelope Valley of the Mojave Desert, and is surrounded by the San Gabriel Mountains, Sierra Pelona and Tehachapi Mountains.

PROJECT SETTING (EXISTING CONDITIONS)

The Downtown Lancaster Specific Plan (DLSP) area encompasses approximately 140 acres in the “Downtown,” which is located within the City’s central urban core (Exhibit 3-2, Project Vicinity). The central urban core consists of a mix of land uses including older and newer single-family developments, multiple family uses and commercial retail and office uses, generally located between the Antelope Valley Freeway and 30th Street east and between Avenue H and Avenue K. The Downtown area (i.e., the DLSP) encompasses much of what was the City’s original settlement. It is generally bounded by Kettering Street on the north, the Union Pacific Railroad line on the east, Milling Street and Newgrove Street on the south and 10th Street West on the west. Refer to Exhibit 3-3, Project Aerial Photograph.

The land uses that exist within the DLSP area, which include a mixture of civic, cultural, commercial, office and residential uses, are outlined in Table 3-1, Summary of Existing Uses. As indicated in Table 3-1, the DLSP area contains approximately 475,879 square feet (s.f.) of retail/service uses, 640,020 s.f. of office/civic/public uses and 252 dwelling units (36 single-family and 216 multi-family). Prominent land uses located within the DLSP area include government offices, public buildings and the Metrolink station.

Table 3-1
Summary of Existing Uses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District1</th>
<th>Retail/Service (s.f.)</th>
<th>Office/Civic/Public (s.f.)</th>
<th>Residential (du)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cedar Avenue Arts</td>
<td>72,094</td>
<td>45,436</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Village</td>
<td>8,295</td>
<td>293,207</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td>93,119</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gateway</td>
<td>42,069</td>
<td>29,877</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Office</td>
<td>23,150</td>
<td>91,560</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boulevard</td>
<td>158,804</td>
<td>120,784</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transit</td>
<td>78,348</td>
<td>28,384</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total2</td>
<td>475,879</td>
<td>640,020</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Districts illustrated on Exhibit 3-3, Project Aerial Photograph.
2. Assumes 2030 buildout with 25 percent adjustment for future condition, includes existing development plus future.
3.2 BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

The City of Lancaster initiated a comprehensive planning process for Downtown Lancaster in August 2005, in an effort to revitalize Downtown and create a corridor that is a place of historic, cultural, social, economic and civic vitality for the Lancaster community, as well as the Antelope Valley. The DLSP provides policy, regulatory and design guidance for both public and private land that implement the community’s vision for the future of Downtown.

The planning process for the DLSP included three distinct phases. Phase 1 involved a review of existing documents and information, background and data research, and site reconnaissance and visual observations, by a team of planners and consultants in order to understand Downtown Lancaster. The initial phase of the planning process, which occurred from January 2006 to April 2006, allowed the design team to build a baseline understanding of Downtown Lancaster and surrounding neighborhoods.

Phase 2 of the process occurred from May 2006 to October 2006 and entailed the creation of community-based preliminary visions, concepts, plans and strategies for Downtown Lancaster based upon an intensive Downtown Immersion process. During this time, community members participated in walking tours, community workshops and a design charrette focused on the future of Downtown. The objective of this phase was to arrive at a single vision for Downtown Lancaster that had an optimal level of support from the community and provided the requisite framework for preparing the DLSP. On July 20, 2006, the draft Vision Plan to articulate the future of Downtown Lancaster was shared with the community for review, input and feedback. The Vision Plan was modified to reflect the input received.

Phase 3 involved preparation of the DLSP and a Downtown Vision Poster. On May 2, 2007, a workshop was held to present the final vision for Downtown and draft concepts of the DLSP. A presentation of the DLSP components and interactive exercises allowed community members to provide comments, which formed the basis for the final revisions of the DLSP document. On June 5, 2007 a workshop was held to present the DLSP and Vision Poster to the community.

The Draft Downtown Lancaster Specific Plan will be available for public review concurrent with the Draft EIR.

3.3 PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

The DLSP serves as a planning and regulatory link between the City of Lancaster General Plan and individual, project level development within the DLSP area. The DLSP provides area-specific land use regulations and development guidelines for seven districts within the Downtown. Refer to Exhibit 3-4, District Map.

Boulevard District. The Boulevard District would be the core of Downtown Lancaster, providing a variety of entertainment, retail, service and residential uses within existing and new buildings that range from one to five stories in height. Along Lancaster Boulevard, the buildings would be
built to the sidewalk to reinforce the street as a pedestrian friendly area. With the Lancaster Performing Arts Center (LPAC) as the anchor to this district, the area would be enhanced with new buildings, a public parking structure, public plazas and an outdoor amphitheater near the LPAC. Parking would be provided on the streets and to the rear of the buildings in surface lots and/or parking structures.

Commerce District. The Commerce District would involve a mix of new and existing office buildings with heights ranging from one to five stories. Buildings built along Lancaster Boulevard would be built to the sidewalk to reinforce the street as a pedestrian-friendly area. Parking would be provided both on the streets and in parking lots located behind buildings. Desired uses in the Commerce District focus on banks, other financial services, professional offices and supporting retail and residential uses.

Transit District. The Transit District would serve as a primary gateway to Downtown from the east. In an effort to connect the Downtown with the MetroLink station, a number of enhanced crosswalks and pedestrian paseos, as well as higher density development with mixed-use commercial and residential structures would occur. Building heights would range from one to five stories, with parking provided on the streets, as well as in parking structures and surface lots behind the buildings.

Gateway District. The Gateway District would serve as a primary gateway to Downtown Lancaster from the west, with a potential roundabout at 10th Street West and Lancaster Boulevard. The District would contain a mix of existing and new buildings ranging from one to four stories in height with primarily office and retail uses.

Neighborhood Office District. The Neighborhood Office District would be largely composed of detached homes and small offices that would provide an opportunity to convert single-family homes to commercial uses or a higher density residential building. This district would provide a transition between the Downtown core and the neighborhood to the south. Building heights would be between one and four stories and parking would be provided on streets and in private lots and driveways to the side or rear of buildings.

Civic Village District. The Civic Village District would involve a mix of existing civic/public and residential uses at a village scale. The District would have enhanced public plazas, parks and new residential uses. Building heights would range from one to five stories with parking provided on the streets and in surface lots located behind the buildings and a new parking structure would be potentially located near the library.

Cedar Avenue Arts District. The Cedar Avenue Arts District would involve a system of paseos and public spaces winding through a mix of existing and new buildings. The district would include a community theater, arts related uses, retail and offices and a complimentary mix of artist live/work lofts, studios and artisan manufacturing buildings ranging in height from one to five stories.

Development of the DLSP would allow for a mix of land uses including retail, office, residential and civic uses within the seven districts. The DLSP would retain existing uses within the DLSP area. Currently, the DLSP area contains approximately 475,879 s.f. of retail/service uses, 640,020 s.f. of office/civic/public uses and 252 dwelling units (36 single-family and 216 multi-family). Table 3-2, Development Plan Buildout Summary, identifies the maximum buildout potential for each of the seven districts within Downtown Lancaster. As indicated in Table 3-2,
the DLSP would allow a maximum of 924,848 s.f. of retail service uses, 973,956 s.f. of office/civic/public spaces and 3,525 dwelling units (single- and multiple-family) in the Downtown.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Retail/Service (s.f.)</th>
<th>Office/Civic/Public (s.f.)</th>
<th>Residential (du)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cedar Avenue Arts</td>
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<td>73,047</td>
<td>176</td>
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<td>Civic Village</td>
<td>115,606</td>
<td>292,187</td>
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<td>Commerce</td>
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<td>Gateway</td>
<td>69,364</td>
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<td>Neighborhood Office</td>
<td>23,121</td>
<td>73,047</td>
<td>264</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boulevard</td>
<td>254,333</td>
<td>146,093</td>
<td>599</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transit</td>
<td>208,091</td>
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<td>811</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>924,848</strong></td>
<td><strong>973,956</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,525</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Assumes 2030 buildout with 25 percent adjustment for future condition, includes existing development plus future.

The DLSP establishes a Regulating Code, which contains the development specifications, regulations and design guidelines for all development projects within the DLSP area. The Regulating Code focuses attention of the form, placement and appropriate use of buildings. Within the Regulating Code, a Regulating Plan has been established for each of the Downtown Districts. The Regulating Plan is a plan or map that designates how site and building design standards apply to individual properties.

**CIRCULATION PLAN**

The Circulation Plan in the Downtown provides a “Main Street” environment along Lancaster Boulevard, designed to incorporate traffic calming measures to reduce traffic speeds, enhance pedestrian safety and promote walkability of the area. As part of the Circulation Plan, the City is considering incorporation of a traffic circle at the intersection of 10th Street West and Lancaster Boulevard.

The proposed roadway network would involve a variety of cross-sections to provide opportunities for linkages to the proposed park to the north and the Metrolink station to the east. Traffic calming measures are proposed to slow traffic, reduce traffic noise and improve pedestrian safety. Traffic-calming methods include corner bump-outs, parallel and perpendicular parking areas and enhanced intersection paving areas.

Additionally, the DLSP acknowledges the potential for Lancaster Boulevard to be narrowed from four lanes to a two-lane Main Street between 10th Street West and Sierra Highway.

**DOWNTOWN PARKING PLAN**

The DLSP area would include a variety of parking opportunities through incorporation of various design solutions, which include providing on-site commercial and residential parking opportunities, tuck under to structured parking facilities and parallel and perpendicular parking along the Main Street.
DOWNTOWN WATER SYSTEM PLAN

Based on the anticipated increase in water demand, current-day fire flow standards and the age of existing pipelines, a new looped distribution system would be constructed. Coordination with Los Angeles Department of Public Works Waterworks Division 40 would be necessary to verify transmission capacity and that adequate storage would be available or planned to support development.

DOWNTOWN WASTEWATER SYSTEM PLAN

Development within the North Downtown Transit Village area of the City would involve a reduction in the number of pipelines conveying flow northwest to Avenue I, as a result of the proposed park and realignment of Beech Avenue. The proposed system for the DLSP shows a backbone sewer system primarily conveying flow to the Fern Avenue Trunk Sewer. In addition a 10-inch sewer pipeline in Sierra Highway would be constructed between Lancaster Boulevard and Avenue I.

DESIGN REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES

The DLSP establishes design regulations and design guidelines for all new development projects within Downtown Lancaster. Individual development projects would be required to comply with all applicable design regulations, as they define the minimum or baseline standards for urban design. The design guidelines further define the desired character and image of development in Downtown Lancaster. Design regulations and guidelines address a variety of areas including, but not limited to, building facades, roofs, signs, mechanical equipment, landscaping, lighting, plazas, pedestrian walkways and courtyards and parking.

3.4 PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Downtown Lancaster Specific Plan Project seeks to achieve project specific goals, as well as contribute to achieving the goals and objectives established by the Redevelopment Agency and associated redevelopment planning documents, including the Redevelopment Plans for the Lancaster Central Business District Redevelopment Project and City of Lancaster Redevelopment Project No. 5.

The following goals and objectives have been identified for the proposed project:

- Provide a mix of uses within the Downtown including residential, retail, office, public, and civic uses that will encourage activity in the Downtown into the evening.
- Provide a mix of uses within the Downtown and an enhanced streetscape environment that will encourage people to walk and utilize local transit.
- Develop vacant and underutilized sites with a variety of uses and intensities that can be supported by market conditions.
- Provide a pedestrian friendly environment with attractive storefronts, landscaping and sidewalks, as well as public plazas and paseos.
• Provide consistent and compatible development within the Downtown through the establishment of specifications, regulations and guidelines.

• Provide enhanced pedestrian connections to surrounding areas including residential uses to the south, the North Downtown Lancaster Transit Village and the Northeast Gateway Corridors area.

• Provide opportunities for existing public/civic uses to be expanded and development of new public/civic uses to occur.

• Increase development around the Lancaster Metrolink Station to serve existing transit users and encourage increased transit use.

3.5 PHASING

It is anticipated that the proposed Downtown Lancaster Specific Plan Project would occur over several years based upon market conditions. For analysis purposes, a buildout year of 2030 is utilized.

3.6 AGREEMENTS, PERMITS AND APPROVALS

The City of Lancaster, as the Lead Agency for future development and improvements within the DLSP area, has discretionary authority over the proposed project that includes, but is not limited to, the following:

• **Specific Plan.** Recommendation by the City Planning Commission and adoption of the proposed Downtown Lancaster Specific Plan by the City Council is required for the proposed project.

• **Environmental Review.** A certified Environmental Impact Report (EIR) required by CEQA, as described in Section 1.0, Introduction and Purpose. This EIR requires a recommendation for certification by the City Planning Commission. This EIR would then be presented to the City Council for certification. Additional environmental review for future uses is not anticipated, but will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

• **General Plan Amendment.** Recommendation by the City Planning Commission and approval by the City Council to change the General Plan land use designation of the proposed project area to Downtown Lancaster Specific Plan on the Lancaster General Plan Land Use Map.

• **Zone Change.** Recommendation by the City Planning Commission and approval by the City Council to change the zoning of the proposed project area to Downtown Lancaster Specific Plan on the Lancaster Zoning Map.

• **Site Plan Review.** Individual site plans within the DLSP area would be subject to review of plans and approval by the City.

• **Conditional Use Permits.** Development of certain uses may require approval of a conditional use permit by the City Planning Commission.
• **Tentative Parcel or Tract Maps and Master Plans.** Individual tentative parcel or tract maps and master plans may also be processed at a future time for smaller parcels with particular development characteristics or needs.

• **Grading Permits.** Future grading for development within the DLSP area would be subject to the review of grading plans and issuance of grading permits by the City.

• **Building Permits.** Future construction of structures within the DLSP area would be subject to the review of architectural plans and approval of building permits by the City.