



Chapter 3.0

Context and Conditions

The Arboretum Specific Plan area is located in the northern portion of the City of Fontana, in west San Bernardino County, approximately 50 miles east of the City of Los Angeles and 16 miles north of the City of Riverside. Interstates 10 (I-10) and 15 (I-15) and Highway 210 provide regional access to The Arboretum and to the City of Fontana. Figure 3.1, *Regional Location*, shows the regional location of the Arboretum community.



3.1 Regional Context

Situated within an area containing a mixture of developed properties and undeveloped natural areas, The Arboretum is a substantial component of the remaining development context of northern Fontana. The Arboretum Specific Plan area is located adjacent to established residential neighborhoods in northern Fontana, eastern Rancho Cucamonga, and western Rialto. Undeveloped hills and single-family residential properties characterize the majority of surrounding land uses. Northwest of the Specific Plan area are the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains and to the northeast lie the foothills of the San Bernardino Mountains—both major landforms in northern Fontana as well as Southern California. The Lytle Creek Wash is another major geographical feature northeast of the project area.

3.2 Local Context

Figure 3.2, *Local Vicinity*, shows the property boundaries of the Arboretum community and the local vicinity. The property encompasses approximately 531.3 gross acres bounded on the northwest by a utility easement corridor, on the east by Sierra Avenue, on the south by Casa Grande Avenue, on the west by Citrus Avenue, and on the north by Grapeland Street.

3.3 Existing Circulation and Site Accessibility

Access to individual development areas within The Arboretum Specific Plan area will be made possible predominantly from existing roads, including Citrus Avenue, Sierra Avenue, Duncan Canyon Road and Casa Grande Avenue, and the completion of new collector streets. Grapeland Street also runs to the northwest of the project area.



Views of the existing project area

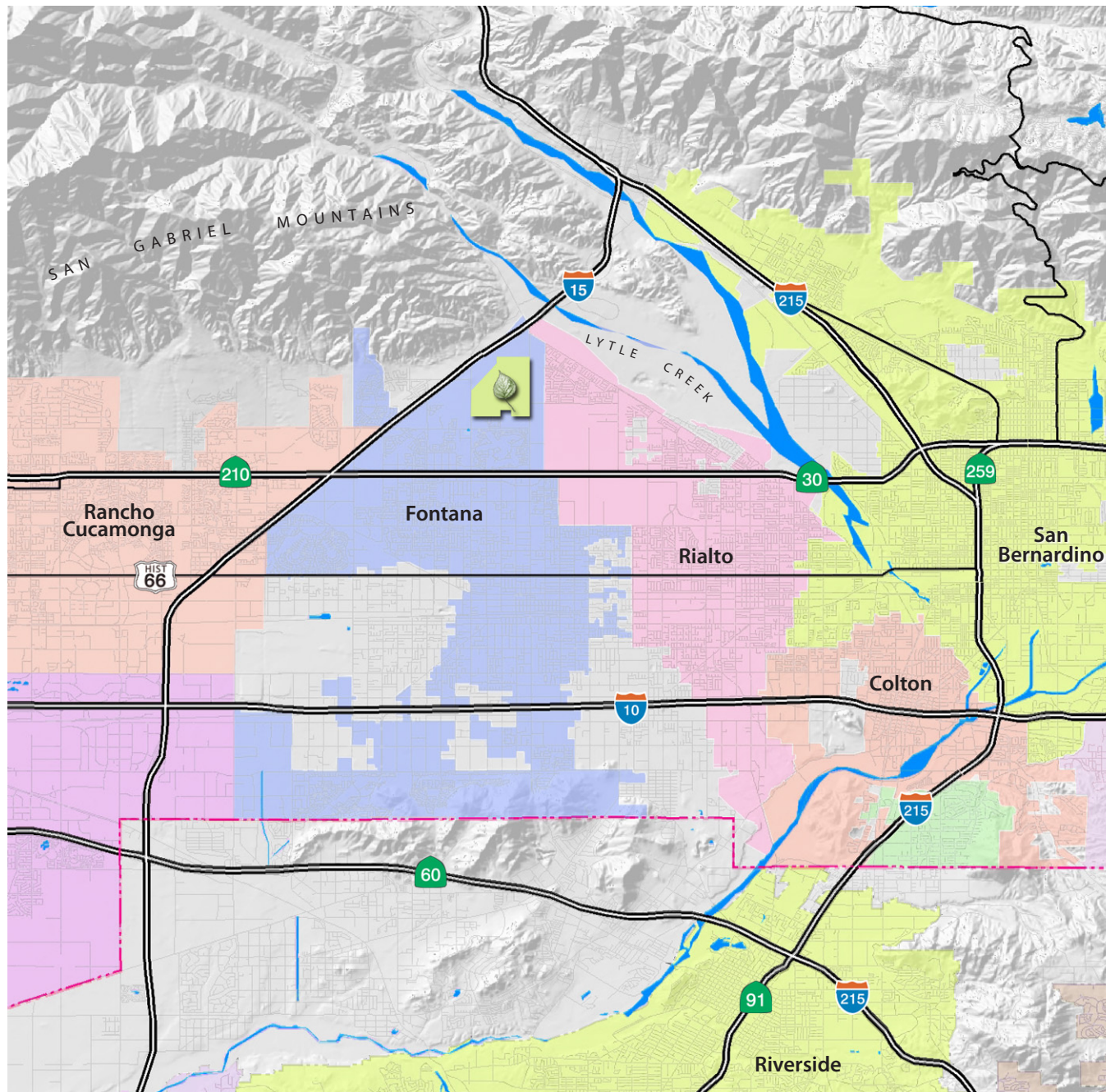
3.4 Surrounding Land Uses and Development

The foothills of the San Gabriel and San Bernardino Mountains provide a striking natural backdrop to the north and east of the Arboretum site. Surrounding residential properties are characterized primarily by single-family detached homes. Other uses surrounding The Arboretum include a water reservoir tank located southwest of the project site near the intersection of Citrus Avenue and Summit Avenue, and two utility corridors, one gas and one electric, forming the northwestern border of the project area. An existing Southern California Gas facility is situated within the project area northeast of the intersection of Duncan Canyon Road and Citrus Avenue.

3.4.1 Nearby Specific Plans

Several specific plans are located near the Arboretum Specific Plan area, as shown on Figure 3.2, *Local Vicinity*. The Ventana at Duncan Canyon Specific Plan is located directly to the west of the Arboretum Specific Plan project area and is approximately 103 acres. The Ventana project provides for the development of a mixed-use community with 842 residential condominium units and approximately 387,500 square feet of retail commercial uses. In addition, 187,000 square feet of business park, corporate office, hotel, restaurant, and research and development uses are proposed along the northwestern boundary of the site, north of Duncan Canyon Road. The Citrus Heights North Specific Plan (now called Shady Trails) is located





REGIONAL LOCATION
FIGURE 3.1

to the southwest of the Arboretum Specific Plan and is 210 acres. This community contains approximately 1,100 homes, several parks, and a recreation center. The Summit at Rosena Specific Plan is located adjacent to the Arboretum Specific Plan project area and is 185 acres. The Summit at Rosena project shares a common boundary with the Arboretum Specific Plan along the southeastern edge of the site and includes 900 homes, a 19-acre passive park, a 750-student elementary school, and an 8-acre mixed-use community commercial area. The Sierra Lakes Specific Plan is located south of the Summit at Rosena project and is approximately 700 acres. This community contains 1,850 homes surrounding a golf course and clubhouse, 62 acres of retail, and a 20-acre park.

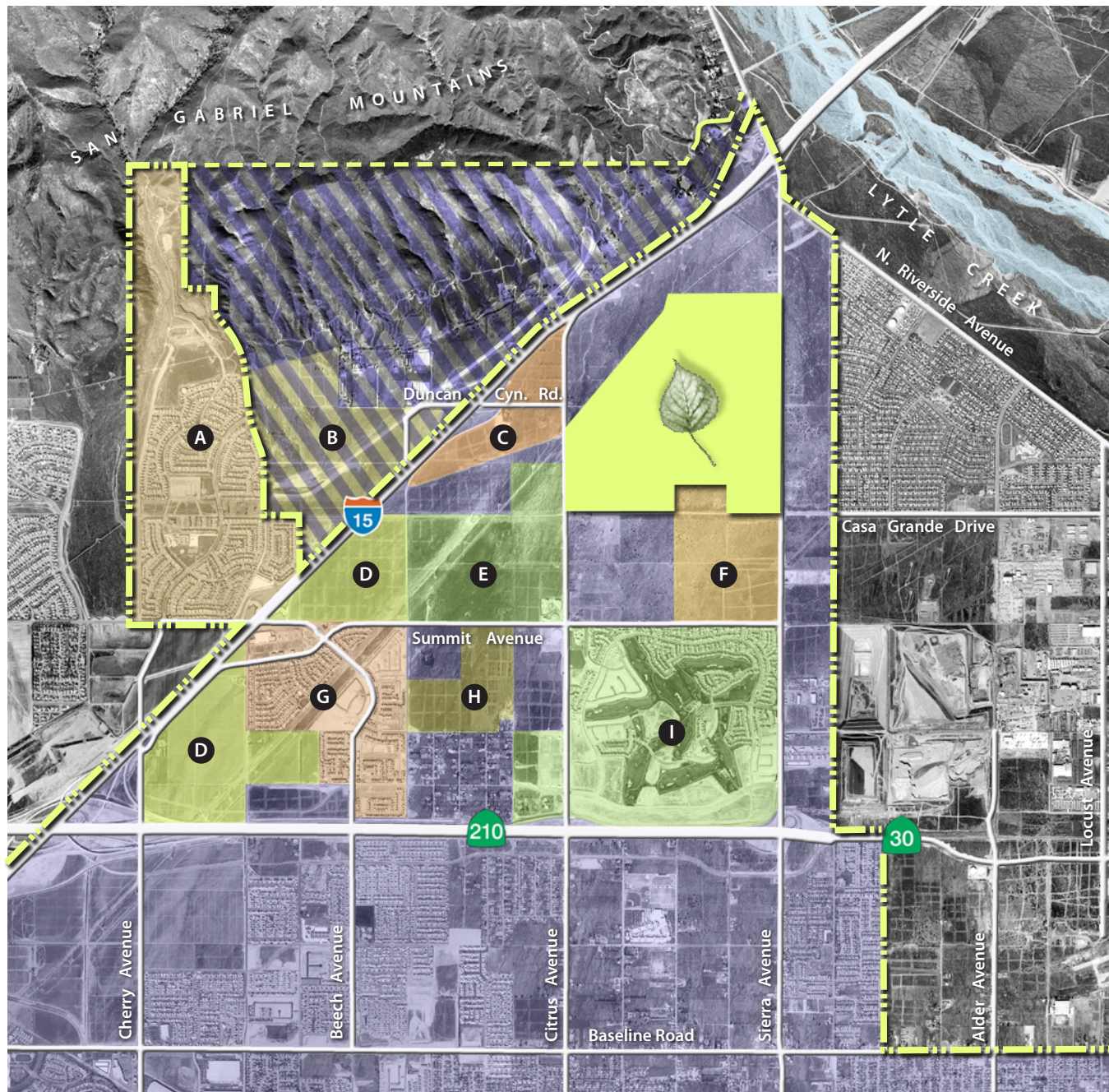
The Arboretum represents the largest remaining unentitled area in northern Fontana. The land uses proposed within the Arboretum are compatible with and complementary to the land uses identified within the specific plans mentioned above.

3.4.2 Proximity to Future Corporate Corridor

Located in the area between the Arboretum site and I-15, the Corporate Corridor is envisioned by City leaders as a collection of signature office and industrial uses. With high visibility from the freeway, the Corporate Corridor will promote the economic strength and employment base of the City. Residential uses in The Arboretum would provide housing opportunities near the Corporate Corridor, and the Corporate Corridor will provide local jobs and possibly retail commercial uses for the Arboretum community. In essence, rooftops are needed to support new jobs in the area and the proximity of the The Arboretum to the Corporate Corridor provides an opportunity to create an optimal jobs-housing balance within the City and region.

3.4.3 Nearby Parks and Recreation

Located just southwest of The Arboretum is a public park called Fontana Park. Bounded by Lytle Creek Road on the west, Summit Avenue on the south and Knox Avenue on the east, the Fontana Park and Community Center provides 40 acres of recreational amenities to the Fontana community at large. This regional amenity will offer a skate park, state-of-the-art aquatic center, community center, and large formal park, all within close proximity to The Arboretum. These amenities also provide additional recreational opportunities that complement the project-specific amenities proposed in The Arboretum Specific Plan. Since the Fontana Park site is located adjacent to the same SCE easement that borders the Arboretum project area, The Arboretum provides a trail, located within the SCE easement, connecting the park to the community. Please see Figure 5-1, *Parks and Open Space Plan*, for further details.



LOCAL VICINITY

FIGURE 3.2

LEGEND

- Arboretum Project Area
- City of Fontana
- Fontana Sphere of Influence
- A Hunter's Ridge Specific Plan
- B Coyote Canyon Specific Plan
- C Ventana Specific Plan
- D Westgate Specific Plan
- E Citrus Heights North S.P.
- F Summit at Rosena S.P.
- G Summit Heights Specific Plan
- H Citrus Heights S.P.
- I Sierra Lakes Specific Plan





View of the existing project area

3.5 Existing Project Area

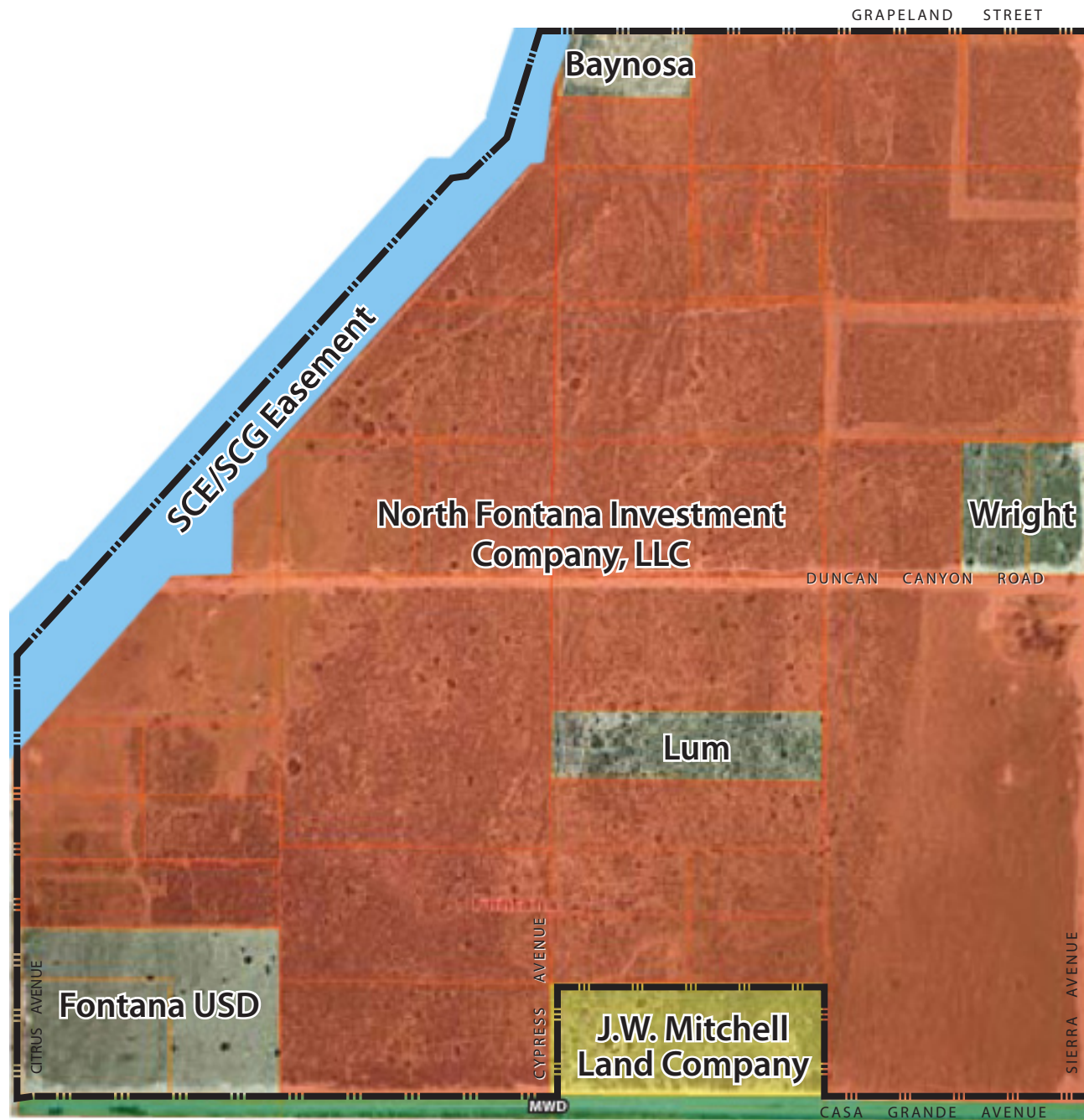
Located at the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains, the Arboretum Specific Plan site is, for the most part, characterized by the gently sloping alluvial plain on which it is situated. Mostly vacant and undeveloped, the site contains a few mature trees that dot the landscape as well as some areas containing scattered rocks, which are envisioned to be reused where feasible in landscape or park areas. These rocks were deposited by the Lytle Creek Wash that once extended into the site before it was diverted for agricultural and flood control reasons. Several opportunities enjoyed by the Arboretum project location are discussed below.

The backdrop of the Arboretum project area is defined by the views of the San Gabriel and San Bernardino Mountains. The mountains provide a dramatic setting for the community and a rich visual experience for its residents.

The Arboretum Specific Plan area is highly accessible within the development context of North Fontana. With access to Interstate 15 provided by major corridors that bound the project area, such as Citrus and Sierra Avenues, a circulation hierarchy already exists on a local scale that connects the project to the local and regional circulation network. Thus, existing roadways serve as the project boundaries for the four easily identifiable villages within the project, and create an efficient roadway network. In addition, the size of the villages framed by the existing circulation pattern allow for walkability and efficient pedestrian circulation within each village. Figure 6.1, *Circulation*, identifies the boundaries and circulation system for The Arboretum.

3.6 Property Ownership

There are seven different property entities in The Arboretum project area. Figure 3.3, *Property Ownership*, displays the ownership pattern as of April 2008.



PROPERTY OWNERSHIP
FIGURE 3.3

Prepared: 4/9/08 Source: North Fontana Investment Company, LLC



3.7 Topography and Hydrology

The topography of the site slopes gently at approximately 3.2 percent north to south, as shown in Figure 3.4, *Existing Topography*, and is part of a flat to gently sloping alluvial plain. The elevation of the site ranges from approximately 1,710 feet to 1,905 feet above mean sea level. No significant surface water resources cross the site and stormwater generally drains down-gradient from the northeast to the southwest following the gently sloping topography. No active faults cross the property and there are no areas within the site that are susceptible to rockfalls, small slides, slumps, or liquefaction.

Soils and geologic conditions present no significant constraints to grading. Grading is expected to balance on-site and will not require import or export of materials. Thus, the topography of the Arboretum site can be seen as an opportunity, as stable development pads for residential structures and amenities will be easily accomplished. For more detailed information on grading within the Arboretum, see Chapter 9, *Phasing and Infrastructure*.

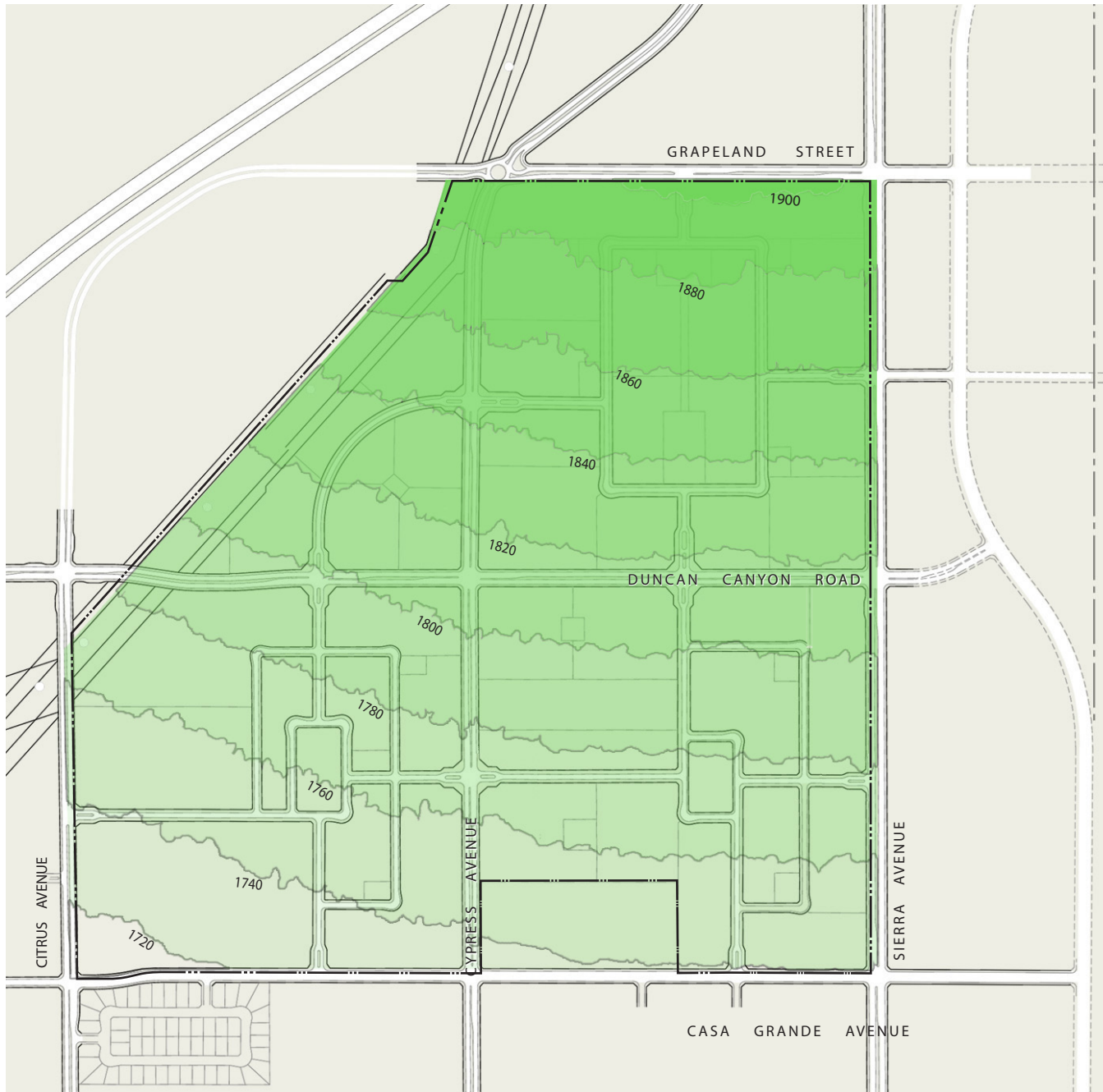
3.8 Geology and Soils

According to the City of Fontana General Plan, the Arboretum site is situated on geologically young alluvium emanating from the San Gabriel Mountains and forming the Lytle Creek Fan. These young sediments are underlain by older alluvial fan deposits, and at great depth, by crystalline bedrock similar to that exposed in the nearby mountains. Scattered, slightly elevated remnants of the older fans are exposed at the surface where they have not been buried by the younger sediments and consist primarily of poorly to crudely stratified sand, gravel, and small boulders. The geology and soils of the Arboretum project site do not present risk for slope instability, collapse, settlement, expansion, or subsidence. However, according to the Fontana General Plan, portions of development at the base of the San Gabriel mountains may be susceptible to runoff, sedimentation, and small slope failures from adjacent hills. Thus, the site may be subject to mountain drainages that, under the right geologic and climatic conditions, can produce destructive debris flows, especially in winters following wildfires.



EXISTING TOPOGRAPHY

FIGURE 3.4





View of the existing project area with the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains in the background.

3.9 Biological Resources

The Arboretum site is primarily vacant or undeveloped with a few mature trees and rocks scattered throughout the project area. As identified in the City of Fontana General Plan, the majority of the property contains Riversidean alluvial fan sage scrub (RAFSS). RAFSS vegetation grows on the sandy, rocky deposits of streams that experience infrequent episodes of flooding at the base of the San Gabriel Mountains. Typical plant types found within RAFSS include California sagebrush, California buckwheat, yerba santa, yucca, cholla cactus, white sage, and scalebroom. The RAFSS plant communities or habitats found within the City and its sphere of influence are considered a sensitive biological resource by several regulatory and conservation agencies, including USFWS, CDFG, and CNPS. The foothills of the San Gabriel and San Bernardino Mountains to the northwest and northeast of the property contain some Riversidean sage scrub (RSS); however, no RSS is found within the project area.

Other portions of the property contain nonnative annual grasslands, which are disturbed areas in which the native plant species have been replaced over time with opportunistic, nonnative plants. These species include wild oat, brome, and Mediterranean schismus, as well as some native wildflowers, such as popcorn flower and fiddleneck. This habitat is particularly valuable as foraging area for several species of bird, such as Northern harriers, burrowing owls, horned larks, red-tailed hawks, ferruginous hawks, loggerheaded shrikes, and Western tanagers.

The City has developed a Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) for north Fontana to address possible impacts to federally listed species potentially occurring on vacant lands in north Fontana. USFWS has designated Critical Habitat for SBKR and the California Gnatcatcher that includes portions of north Fontana. The proposed MSHCP will include most of the vacant lands north of Summit Avenue, including lands designated as open space within the City's Sphere of Influence north of the Coyote Canyon Specific Plan area. The project shall be in accordance with the City's Interim Program until the MSHCP has been adopted.

3.10 Environmental Considerations

There are several environmental considerations for the Arboretum project site. The following issues are addressed in more detail, where appropriate, within the Arboretum Specific Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

3.10.1 100-year Flood Hazard Area

Due to the project area's proximity to the Lytle Creek Wash, a large portion of the Arboretum property is located within a 100-year flood hazard area as identified by Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate maps (FIRM). A Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) was obtained for this project in December of 2007.

3.10.2 Potential Habitat for Sensitive Wildlife

As identified in the City of Fontana General Plan, the Arboretum project area is designated as critical habitat by the California Natural Diversity Database (CND-DB) for both California Gnatcatcher and San Bernardino Kangaroo Rat. Respective studies were completed on June 12, 2007, and June 19, 2007, which found that there was no occurrence of these two species within the Specific Plan area. The site is also listed as potential habitat for sensitive wildlife for raptors.

3.10.3 Earthquake Faults

As identified in the City of Fontana General Plan, an inferred fault or groundwater barrier, known as Barrier J, runs along the north east portion of the site. Barrier J is not a known active earthquake fault nor does it have surface expression. However, it is important to note that the presence of Barrier J is characteristic of the overall seismic character of the north Fontana area, referred to as the “Fontana Seismic Trend” in the Fontana General Plan. Implications for development are discussed in more detail within the Arboretum Specific Plan EIR.

3.10.4 Wind

The Arboretum site experiences occasional strong, gusty winds from the Cajon pass north of the project site. Design techniques such as landscape plantings in the form of windrows and building orientation can help to offset the impact of the strong winds.

3.11 Program and Partnership Opportunities

Many opportunities to establish programs and partnerships exist in conjunction with the Arboretum project. Programs and grassroots community health initiatives, such as the Norton Neighborhoods program of Loma Linda Medical Center (formerly known as Healthy Cities, Healthy Communities) and the Healthy Fontana program directly align with the project’s objectives of creating a sustainable community. Additional programmatic opportunities that support recreation, lifelong learning, and community involvement will be encouraged.

There are also numerous partnership opportunities that can be explored to provide unique community features within The Arboretum. Examples of potential community partners include groups and businesses such as: The Fontana Unified School District; Rain Bird; Sunset Magazine; The Red Cross; Boys & Girls Club; Library Services; and Fontana Community Services and Recreation Department. In addition, the Master Developer will coordinate with SCE for recreational and other community-serving uses within the existing utility corridor that borders the project site on the northwest. Partnerships with entities such as Monrovia Nursery or organic farming operations are envisioned in this area.



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