

## Appendix C Clearwater Specific Plan Existing Conditions Report

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# CLEARWATER

## SPECIFIC PLAN



## Existing Conditions Report

February 2024

Prepared by:



**DRAFT**

With: EPS, JMD, Ganddini Group



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# Introduction and Planning Context

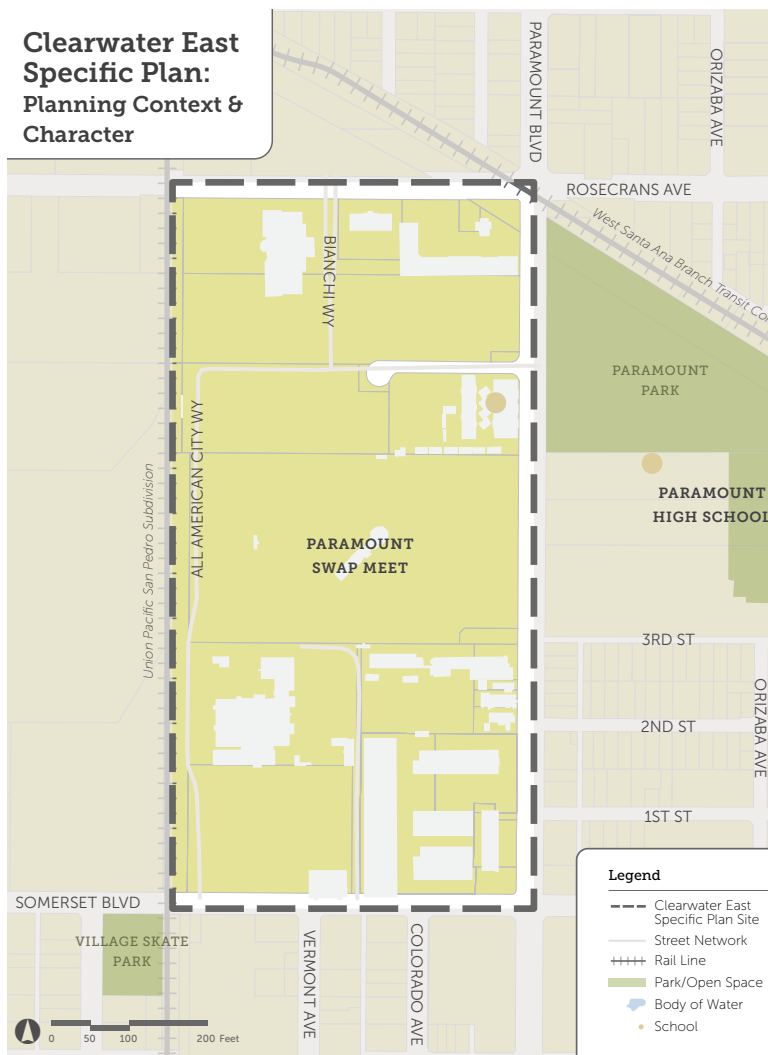
The starting point for the existing conditions analysis was an inventory and review of prior and on-going planning within the City of Paramount. Many of these documents include detailed existing conditions information as well as provide policies, design concepts, and implementation recommendations that become current existing conditions as the plans are implemented. This ensured the Clearwater Specific Plan (CSP) was working with and integrated with the most up-to-date conditions within the City. In addition to planning within the City of Paramount, this existing conditions report also accounted

for updated regional and statewide planning developments (e.g, Regional Housing Needs Assessment - RHNA, and Regional Transportation Plan - RTP). Generally, existing planning within the City and region is oriented towards improving quality of life outcomes for local populations, which requires integrating topics ranging from equity and environmental justice, economic conditions, sustainability, transportation, housing, and public services. As the City and Region is predominately "built-out," there is an emphasis on utilizing planning policies that make efficient use of land (for redevelopment), transportation facilities, and environmental improvements.

The area for the CSP is shown in the map to the right. The Specific Plan area is bounded by major roadways Rosecrans Ave (north), Paramount Blvd (east), Somerset Blvd (south) and Union Pacific rail corridor (west). The primary prior planning projects influencing this project are summarized on the following page.

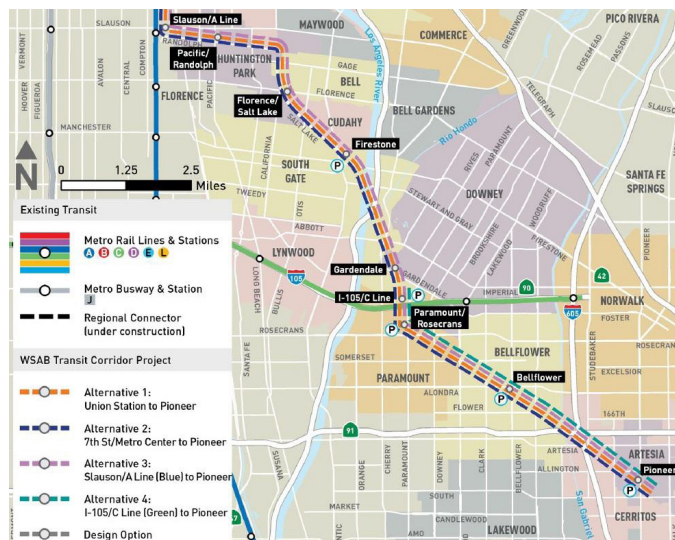
Finally, other planning projects that will be completed concurrently with the Specific Plan include:

- Citywide Objective Design Standards
- Art Master Plan





## Southeast Gateway Line



The Southeast Gateway Line (formerly known as the West Sanat Ana Branch - WSAB) is a light rail line planned to directly connect the Gateway cities with Downtown Los Angeles (DTLA). The planning, construction and operations of the line will be completed by Los Angeles Metro.

## Station Area Vision Plan (2019)

### Paramount / South Gate Station Area Plan

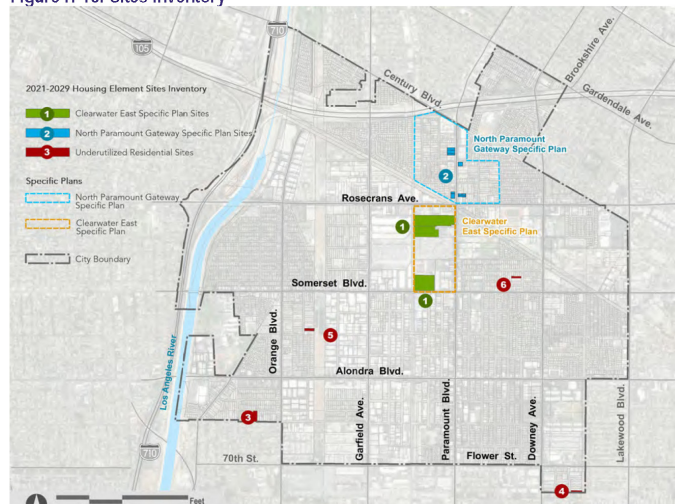
FIGURE 4.7 - BIRDEYE VIEWS



A station for the Southeast Gateway Line is planned for the northwest corner of Rosecrans/Paramount intersection. Due to this, a planning study was completed in 2019 to assess the existing conditions and provide various recommendations to accommodate future development around the station.

## General Plan Housing Element (2022)

Figure H-13: Sites Inventory



Following State Law, the City completed an update to its General Plan Housing Element (HE) in 2022. This chapter of the General Plan identifies sites and policies for housing development in the City. The HE identifies 264 housing units that can be developed within the CSP area, which meets recent RHNA requirements.

## North Paramount Gateway Specific Plan (2023)

### 4.3.1 MASSING

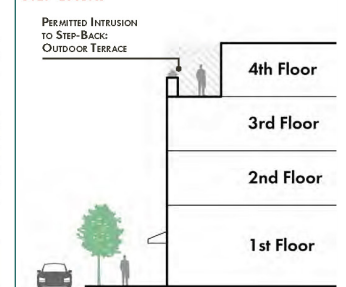
#### A. Upper Story Step-backs.

- Maximum Stories without Step-back.** No building shall be erected within the SPA which has 3 or more stories without providing a floor step-back at all stories above the third story.
- Minimum Required Step-back Depths.** Building stories above the maximum number of permitted stories without a step-back shall apply the following minimum step-back depths along the respective frontages as measured from the outermost edge of the building façade associated with the topmost story without street step-back:

Street Frontage	Minimum Step-back Depth	Minimum % of Building Façade
Paramount Boulevard	10 ft min	85%
Rosecrans Avenue	10 ft min	85%
Other Roadways	10 ft min	100%

- Permitted Intrusions into Step-Back Areas.** The following are permitted intrusions into step-back areas:

FIGURE 4.2 - ILLUSTRATION OF UPPER STORY STEP-BACKS



Source: Gruen Associates



The North Paramount Gateway Specific Plan (NPGSP) was completed in 2023 to update the previous zoning requirements in order to be able to accommodate proposed development and policies of the updated HE. It will provide a model for the policies and design for the CSP.

# Community Engagement - Initial Summary and Future Plan

Community engagement for the CSP embodies current best practices for engaging the public in planning projects - community engagement should empower all community members to be a part of the process to determine their futures and they should be integrated with the technical development of the Specific Plan in all phases.

This approach was initiated as the technical existing conditions analysis was completed concurrently with the first phase of community engagement and outreach. The first phase of community engagement focused on the following activities:

- Introducing the project to the public and stakeholders through pop-up events, online and in-person advertising, and a public meeting
- Stakeholder interviews with business owners, property owners, and other interested groups as focus groups and one-on-one interviews
- Confirming data and analysis of existing conditions with the community
- Understanding the communities' feelings of opportunities, constraints, needs, and aspirations as part of what they envision for the future of the CSP area and City of Paramount

The first phase culminated with a public meeting on February 8th, 2024. The meeting included a presentation and collection of posters for community feedback. The purpose of this meeting was to present and confirm all of the technical development and activities identified during Phase 1 above. It also introduced the initial range of land use development standards and mobility elements that would be explored during the next phase of the CSP project.

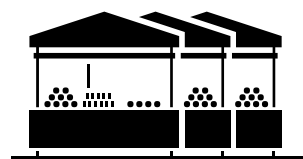
Highlights of key issues heard through Phase 1 engagement events:



Want more housing and want housing to be more affordable.



Want a variety of entertainment options they don't need to go to other cities for.



Want to keep the Swap meet, but also like to see it improved.



Improve overall safety and ability to walk around in the City for families



The second phase of the CSP project and community engagement will focus on two primary topics:

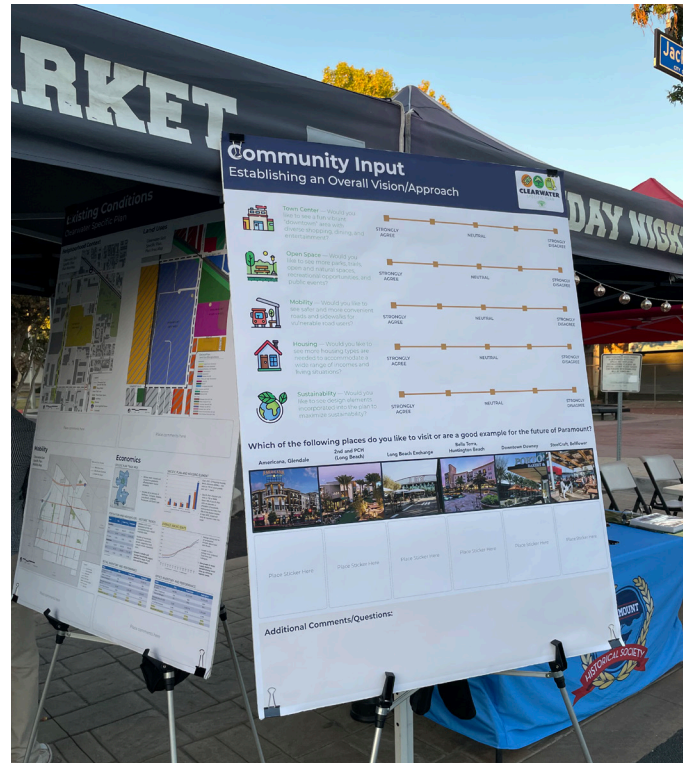
- receiving community feedback on the range of development standards (e.g., allowable heights, densities, urban design, etc.) and mobility elements (e.g., pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and vehicle infrastructure)
- educating the community on land use development standards and mobility elements to support their ability to provide informed feedback

Feedback from the community is planned to be collected through similar combination of events including pop-up events, interviews, and public meetings. Through these topics, engagement for phase 2 would establish community consensus around the alternatives explored during this phase.

The third phase of community engagement will confirm the final recommendations of the Specific Plan with the community through review and adoption of the City's decision-makers including City Commissions and City Council.



The technical consultant team tours the Specific Plan area with City staff.



Tent and posters used during a pop-up community engagement event at Friday Night Paramount on November 3rd.



Public viewing poster boards of existing conditions and high-level visioning input during the first public meeting.

# Demographics

The City of Paramount, is predominantly Hispanic, with a growing Black population. According to the 2022 Census, the racial and ethnic makeup of Paramount was as follows:

- Hispanic or Latino: 83.0%
- White: 28.0%
- Black or African American: 7.7%
- Asian: 3.4%
- Two or more races: 14.1%

The median age in Paramount is 31.6 years old; the City's demographics skew younger than Trade Area and Subregion, though trends show an increase in median age over time for all areas. The median household income is \$60,456, which are lower than Trade Area and Subregion. Additionally, the City has the smallest share of residents with bachelors or other professional degrees within the trade area and subregion.

Between 2010-2021, population of City and surrounding region stayed relatively stable. The number of households increased in same time period, suggesting trend towards smaller household sizes.

Projecting population to 2040, SCAG projects all areas of the City, trade area, and subregion to grow over the next two decades. However, the City is projected to increase at the highest rate of the comparison geographies. Also, households in the City and Trade Area projected to increase at a significantly faster rate than the subregion as a whole.

## Housing Affordability

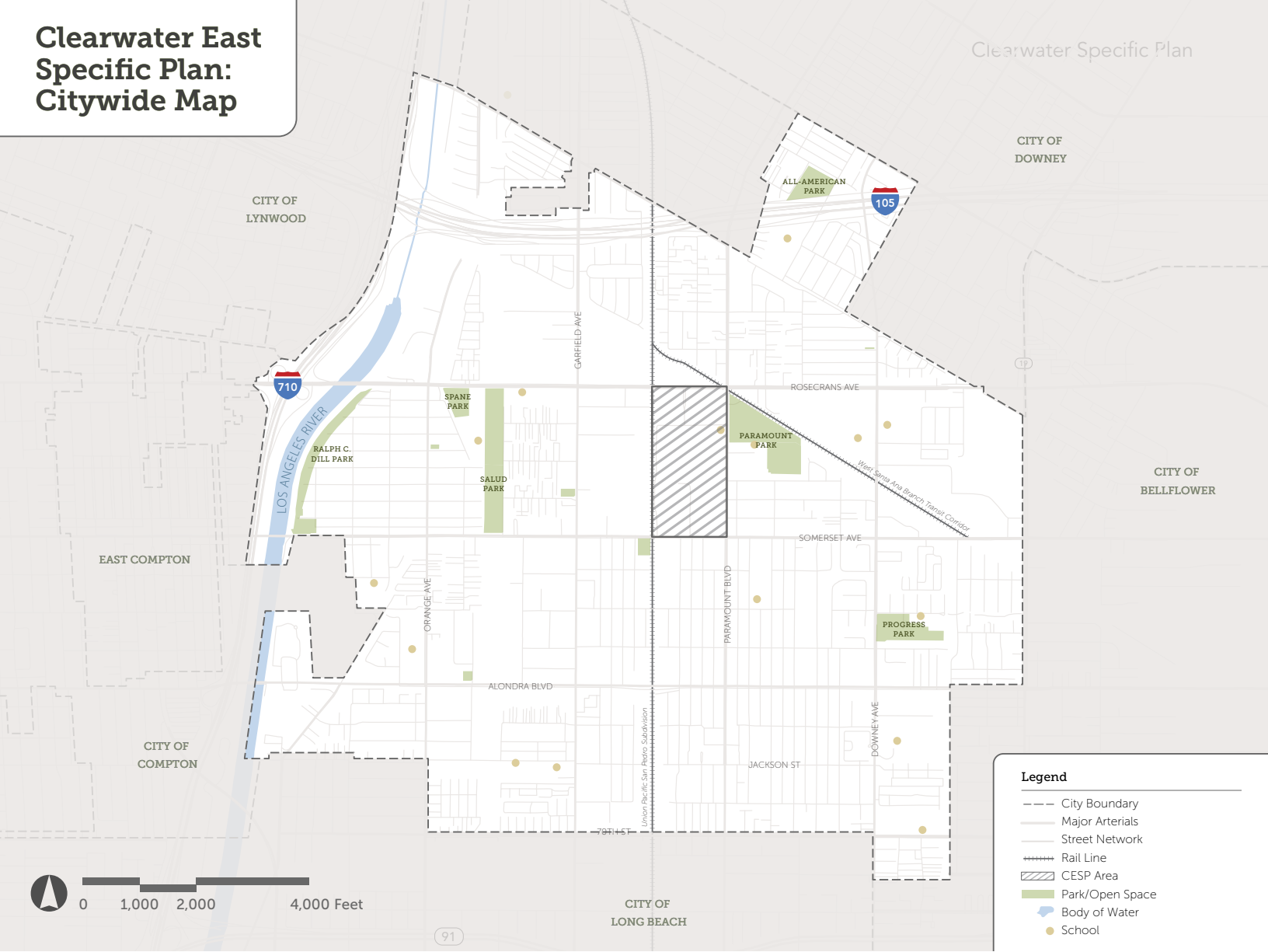
The City is split between single family and multi-family housing, however, according to the 2020 American Community Survey, 58.32% of housing units are renter-occupied. This is higher than the California state average of 46.8% and the national average of 35.8%. The high renter rate can be attributed to a convergence of multiple factors such as the low supply of housing and the high cost of housing in the Los Angeles metropolitan area. Given that the average home value in Paramount in 2022 was \$596,156, owning a home is out of reach for many families in the city given the current demographics and household income levels. Slow growth in rental supply relative to demand driving rental rates up, mirroring regional trends. Permits for new units over the past decade have been mostly for single-family detached units and, more recently, for accessory dwelling units.

## Future Needs

Documentation of macro housing conditions and trends across the State and region for the need for more housing is reinforced by the local socioeconomic conditions in Paramount. Younger, less affluent, and has lower education levels suggest need for lower cost housing. Projections suggest an expectation for intra-subregional migration towards the City and Trade Area, and associated demand for new housing. Growth in smaller and younger households suggest demand for range of unit sizes and tenure types.

Clearwater East  
Specific Plan:  
Citywide Map

Clearwater Specific Plan



AGE, EDUCATION, AND INCOME

Item (2021)	City	Trade Area	Subregion
<b>Age</b>			
19 and Under	31.2%	26.5%	26.3%
20-64	60.0%	62.2%	61.2%
65+	8.8%	11.3%	12.5%
Median Age	32	35	36
<b>Education</b>			
Associates Degree or Lower	88.4%	76.0%	76.2%
Bachelors/ Graduate Degree	11.6%	23.9%	23.7%
Median HH Income	\$60,456	\$69,262	\$72,126

Source: ACS; ESRI BAO; EPS  
Economic & Planning Systems

POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLDS

Item	City	Trade Area	Subregion
<b>Population</b>			
2021	53,904	970,415	1,785,390
2040	58,000	1,032,600	1,824,800
% Growth	7.6%	6.4%	2.2%
<b>Households</b>			
2021	14,347	306,600	541,305
2040	14,800	320,500	547,800
% Growth	3.2%	4.5%	1.2%

Source: ACS; ESRI BAO; EPS

Economic & Planning Systems



# Land Use

The General Plan applies a land use designation to each property in the city and provides a general description of allowable land uses within each land use designation. The Paramount General Plan Land Use Element, adopted in August 2007, and was revised in February 2022.

## General Plan Designations

The land uses designations surrounding the Clearwater East Specific Plan area largely consists of multi-family residential, industrial, and commercial uses.

- The **Multiple Family Residential** designation allows for higher density residential development at intensities of up to 22 dwelling units per acre.
- The **Industrial** designation includes those land uses involved in manufacturing, processing, and warehousing activities.
- The **Commercial** designation includes smaller neighborhood commercial establishments, community shopping centers, office developments, and other service-related activities.

Land uses within the CSP area provide both a representation of non-residential uses within the City, as well as a special land use - the Paramount Swap Meet. Together with the Bianchi Theater the Swap Meet is known as the Paramount Entertainment Center. It is an daily open air market comprised of individual vendors that attracts visitors from across the region. Along the north end of Paramount boulevard is a small shopping plaza with

restaurant and clothing shops, the Paramount Adult School, as well as the Our Lady of the Rosary Parish catholic church. To the south of Paramount boulevard, along Somerset boulevard, is the Somerset Business Park, which includes a variety of retail warehouse, as well as the Paramount Sherrif Station.

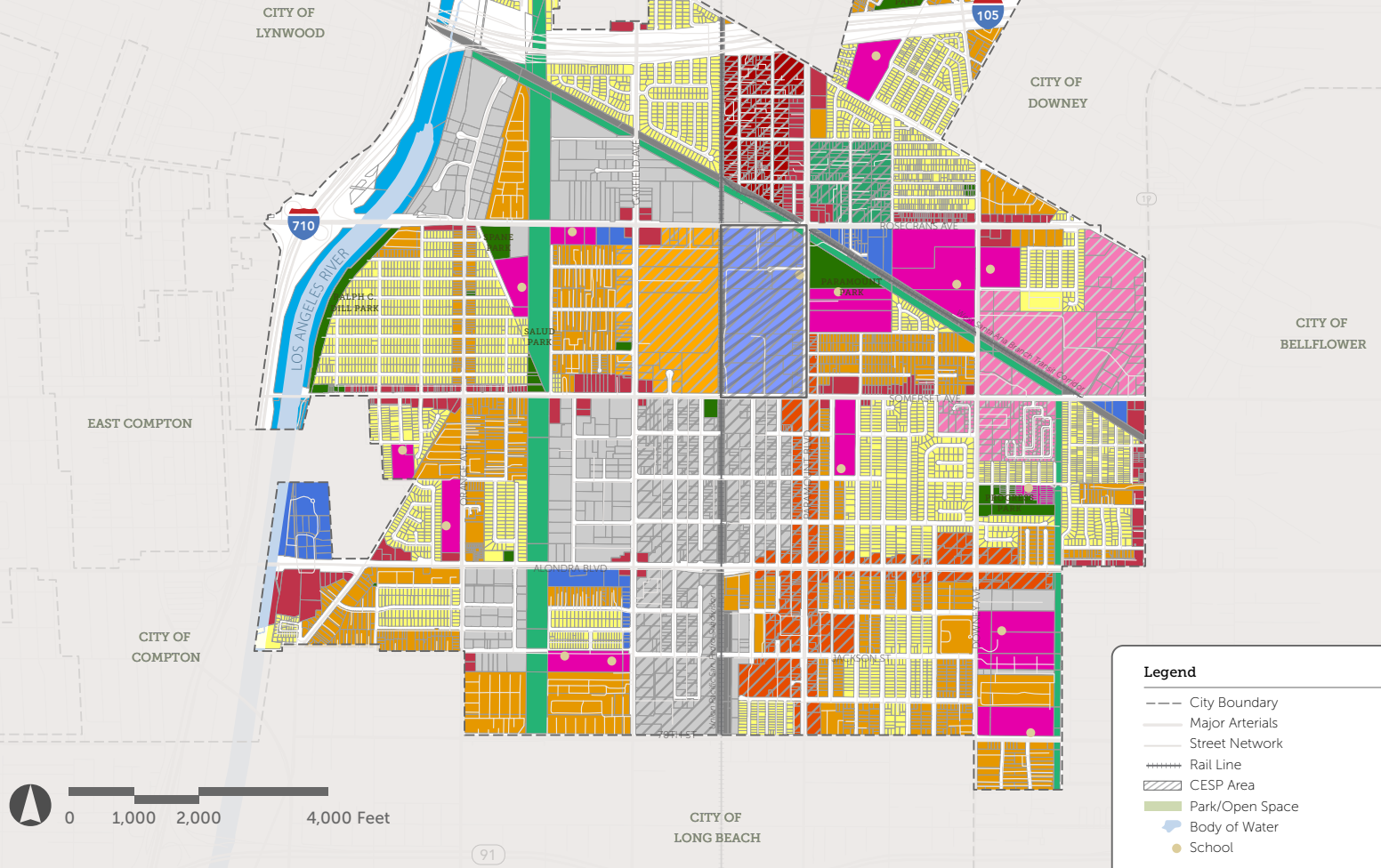
To the east of the CSP area, is Paramount Park, Paramount Park Middle School, and Paramount High School (West Campus). Immediately north of the CSP area across Rosecrans Ave. is a railway right-of-way, which is currently being identified as the Southeast Gateway Line corridor, LA Metro's new light rail transit line to Southeast LA County which will connect cities like Huntington Park, South Gate, Downey, Paramount, Bellflower, and Cerritos to the greater Metro rail network. South of the CSP area is a mix of commercial and residential properties. West of the CSP area is large an warehouse, logistics, light industrial, and commercial area.

## General Plan Housing Element

The City of Paramount updated its General Plan Housing Element in 2022. As mentioned, current the CSP area does not include any housing within the boundaries. The CSP area was allocated 234 units (or 73% of RHNA allocation for the City of Paramount). About 70% of Specific Plan units are allocated as affordable to households earning equal to or less than 80% of Area Median Income. Given limited financial feasibility of inclusionary housing, a large LIHTC project will likely be require to meet the affordable housing target.

# Clearwater East Specific Plan: Land Use Map

General Plan Land Use Designations	
<b>Residential</b>	<b>Utility, Easement and ROW</b>
Single-Family Residential	Utility/Easement
Multi-Family Residential	Railroad ROW
<b>Commercial, Business, and Industrial</b>	<b>Area Plans</b>
Commercial (C)	Clearwater North (AP-CN)
Industrial (I)	Howe-Orizaba (AP-HO)
Business Park (BP)	Clearwater West (AP-CW)
<b>Schools, Parks, and Large Waterbodies</b>	Clearwater East (AP-CE)
School (S)	Somerset Ranch (AP-SR)
Park (P)	Central Industrial District (AP-CID)
Los Angeles River (LAR)	Central Business District (AP-CBD)



Somerset business park located at the southeast corner of the CSP area.



Our Lady of the Rosary located along Paramount Boulevard.

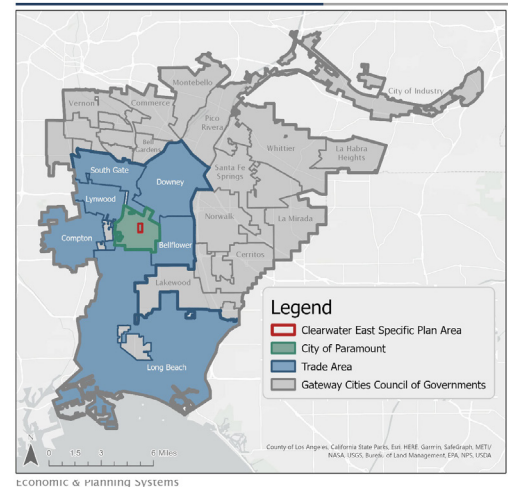
# Economics

The CSP area is within the Gateway Cities subregion; additionally for this plan a trade area was created to understand statistics for the most relevant and competitive geographies to the City of Paramount.

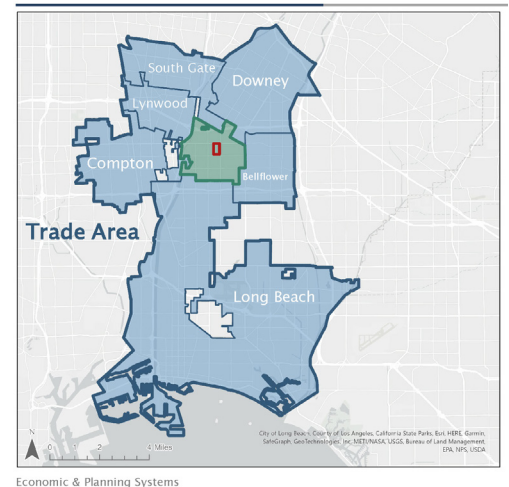
Within the CSP area, the Swap Meet is the largest land use and also provides the largest economic activity.

Similar to the State of CA, region, subregion, and trade area, housing provides a significant economic consideration for the City. Overall, the economics of housing are similar to other geographies within increasing home values and rent. This is similar to the current shortage of housing available due to low levels of housing development during the past few decades. The City of Paramount codified a low development approach through Proposition C in 1988 (and later HH), which capped Citywide dwelling unit per acre (du/ac) densities at 22 du/ac. Also of note, while home sales within Paramount have tracked the trends within larger geographies the past two decades, the average rent has increased faster than the trade area and sub region. Prior to 2015, rents were lower than surrounding areas, but began increasing faster and have been higher than surrounding areas since 2020.

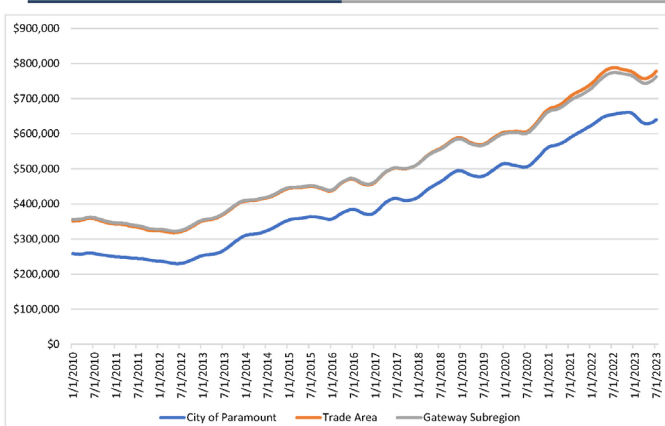
## GATEWAY SUBREGION



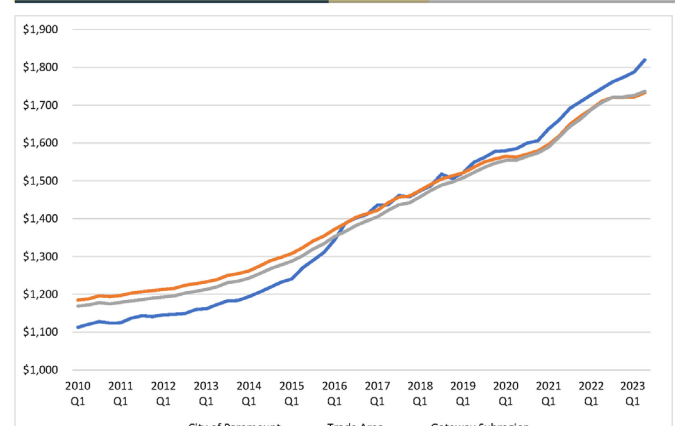
## SPECIFIC PLAN TRADE AREA



## MEDIAN SALES PRICES



## AVERAGE ASKING RENTS





The office, retail, and industrial markets within the City of Paramount share some similarities when compared to the trade area and subregion. For all three categories, the annual rent (rent per square foot) is significantly lower than the trade area and subregion - between 48% to 33% less. While the average annual rent may be lower, the vacancy rate for all three markets is also lower than the trade area and subregion. Additionally, they all represent a small proportion of the overall inventory of each market in the trade area and subregion (less than 5%), except for industrial uses, for which the City of Paramount represents 12% of the trade area inventory.

Overall, these common statistics indicate a positive for existing businesses, but limit opportunities for new development of those uses. Office vacancy is modest, but slow growth, low rents, and pandemic related trends suggest limited near-term opportunity in Specific Plan. Low vacancy rates but minimal new deliveries suggest stable / static retail market. City's proportion of subregional industrial inventory is high relative to its size; low vacancy rate in City suggests strong demand relative to supply opportunities. If SCAG population projections are realized, residential development likely to represent the highest land use demand type in City going forward.



Image of the Paramount Swap Meet, which is the largest daily swap meet in California, with more than 800 vendor spaces and more than 2.5 million annual visitors. It is open every day, with the busiest days on Tuesday and weekends.

## OFFICE INVENTORY AND PERFORMANCE

Item	City	Trade Area	Subregion
Inventory (sq. ft. as of Q2 2023)	438,961	22,133,284	37,619,322
Share of Trade Area	2%	N/A	N/A
Share of Subregion	1%	59%	N/A
Deliveries since Q1 2010 (sq. ft.)	2,580	1,935,716	2,401,045
% of Total Inventory	0.6%	8.7%	6.4%
Vacancy	4.0%	12.0%	4.8%
Annual Rent (per sq. ft.)	\$21.75	\$30.21	\$29.11

## RETAIL INVENTORY AND PERFORMANCE

Item	City	Trade Area	Subregion
Inventory (sq. ft. as of Q2 2023)	1,935,491	38,005,596	84,509,731
Share of Trade Area	5%	N/A	N/A
Share of Subregion	2%	45%	N/A
Deliveries since Q1 2010 (sq. ft.)	39,999	2,265,368	3,756,953
% of Total Inventory	0.8%	6.0%	4.4%
Vacancy	2.0%	3.5%	4.2%
Annual Rent (per sq. ft.)	\$17.25	\$28.13	\$26.04

## INDUSTRIAL INVENTORY AND PERFORMANCE

Item	City	Trade Area	Subregion
Inventory (sq. ft. as of Q2 2023)	9,405,816	80,035,351	368,562,629
Share of Trade Area	12%	N/A	N/A
Share of Subregion	3%	22%	N/A
Deliveries since Q1 2010 (sq. ft.) since '10	10,408	4,814,256	21,309,681
% of Total Inventory	0.1%	6.0%	5.8%
Vacancy	1.8%	3.1%	2.6%
Annual Rent (per sq. ft.)	\$15.61	\$21.71	\$20.56

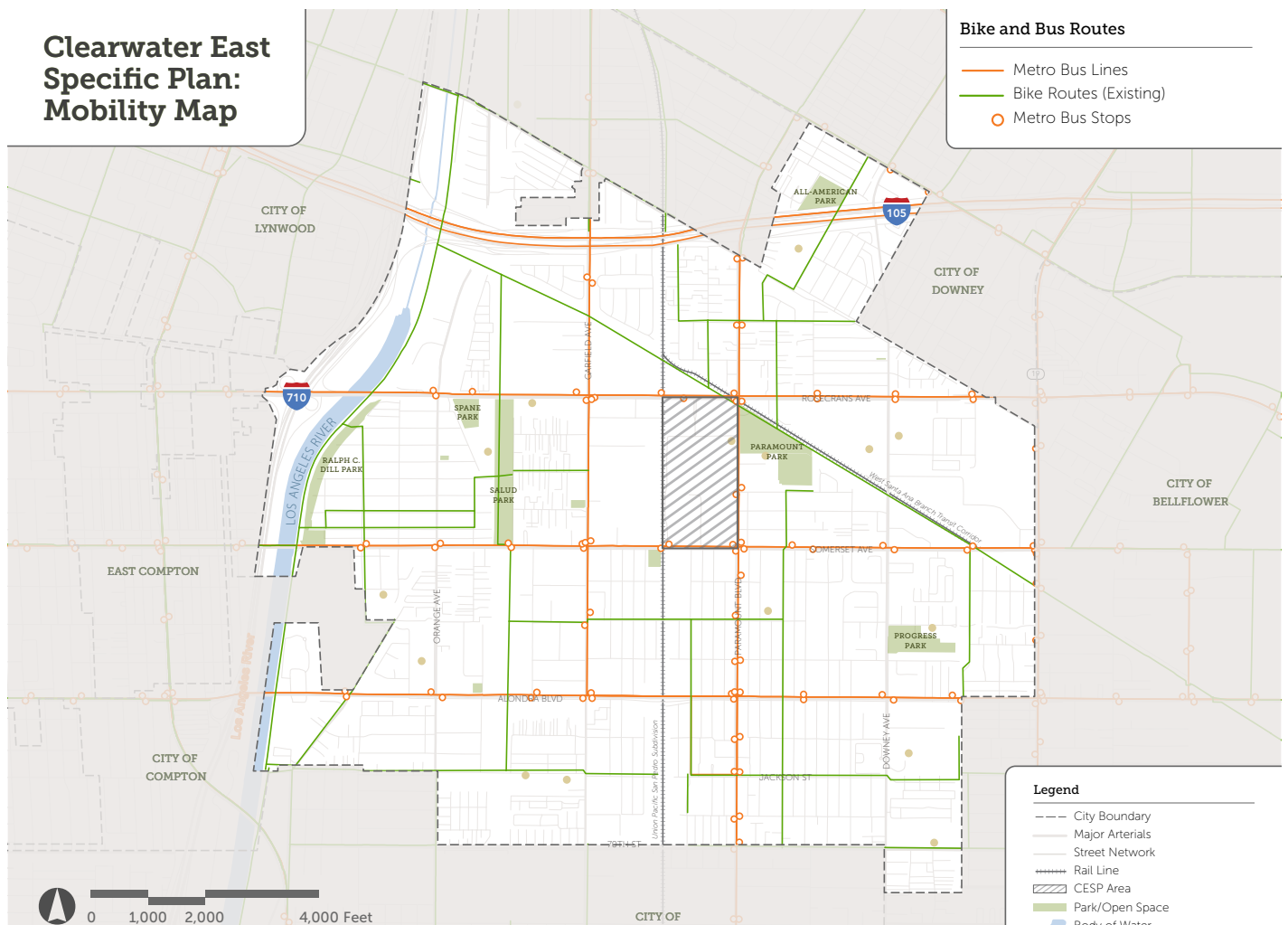
# Mobility

Overall, mobility conditions within and surrounding the CSP are typical of the Gateway Cities region, and have not substantially changed from prior localized and citywide planning (Paramount/Rosecrans Station Area Vision Plan, City General Plan, etc.). Reliance upon automobiles is the primary characteristic of the mobility network in the City.

## Pedestrian and Bicycle

There are basic pedestrian facilities throughout the City, and emerging development of a bicycle network, but they typically serve trips of limited duration and distance and are often

combined with driving. Of note, while the Swap Meet provides a large pedestrian area during operations, the CSP plan area has minimal dedicated pedestrian circulation within the plan area. Crosswalks at the signal-controlled intersections of Paramount Boulevard/All America City Way and Paramount Boulevard/3rd Street provide connectivity to Paramount Park and Paramount High School. A rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB) provides enhanced pedestrian safety at the cross-street stop-controlled intersection Paramount Boulevard/2nd Street.





There are currently no bicycle facilities along the CESP-adjacent roadways.

### Transit and Truck Routes

The CSP is served by Los Angeles Metro Bus Line 125 (20 minute peak period headways) along Rosecrans Avenue, Line 265 (60 minute peak period headways) along Paramount Boulevard, and Line 127 (40 minute peak period headways) along Somerset Boulevard; Long Beach Transit Route 71 (45 minute peak period headways) runs along Rosecrans Avenue. While there is existing bus routes on main streets (Somerset, Paramount, and Rosecrans), existing infrequent headways and the overall ability to connect to destinations throughout the LA Region make transit a limited mobility option currently.

Rosecrans, Somerset, and Paramount (north of Rosecrans) Boulevards are all truck routes, which connect with additional truck routes throughout the City.

### Southeast Gateway Line Light Rail

The most significant mobility condition is the planned Southeast Gateway (formerly West Santa Ana Branch - WSAB) light rail station at the northwest corner of Rosecrans and Paramount, which will connect directly to Downtown LA (DTLA). As observed in cities throughout LA County, introduction of a light rail line, and particularly the direct connection to DTLA with its job center and other transit connections, can have a significant influence to more multimodal travel behaviors in a City. This is especially significant for the CSP area as the entire study area is within a 1/2 mile distance of the proposed station location. This creates the opportunity to prioritize first-last mile facilities within the CSP area to reduce vehicle dependency for the plan area, as well as the plan area acting as the center for an expanding multimodal network throughout the City.



Example of existing bus shelter along Paramount Blvd.



Location of sidewalks and crosswalks in plan area.



# Open Space, Recreation, and Public Facilities

There are no officially designated public open spaces or public facilities within the CSP area. There are a few uses and areas that partially contribute to open space and recreation, however they lack any natural surfaces (e.g., grass). Larger of the two spaces include the Paramount Swap Meet, which during operating hours provides a pedestrian area among the vendors on a asphalt parking lot. The second space is a plaza located in front of the entrance to the Bianchi Theatre; it includes a pedestrian area with some landscaping, but is within the interior of the CSP area with limited access.

The most significant open space within the CSP area is the landscaped berm along along Paramount Blvd. This narrow strip includes mature trees that provide ample shade and grass surface.

Adjacent to the Clearwater East Specific Plan Site is Paramount Park, one of Paramount's largest parks. The park includes the following amenities:

- 2 Playgrounds
- Exercise Stations
- Gymnasium
- Lighted Baseball Diamonds
- Lighted Basketball Court
- Picnic Shelters/Barbecues
- Pool
- Restrooms
- Soccer Mini-Pitch (2)
- Walking Path

Paramount Park is also the site to the City's Farmers' Market, which is held every saturday and features fresh produce, farm-fresh eggs, a variety of packaged and prepared food, as well as artisan craft items.

Along Somerset boulevard is the Village Skate Park, a 12,500 sq. ft. city-sponsored skateboarding nook, featuring a playground, picnic areas & a lighted basketball court.



Landscaped berm along Paramount Boulevard that includes some grass area and mature shade trees.



# Clearwater East Specific Plan: Open Space, Recreation and Public Facilities



# Ownership and Character

The CSP area is characterized by private land ownership with a few major landowners. With exception of approximately 550 feet of All America City Way from Paramount Blvd. west into the site, all of the plan is privately owned. A brief description of each major owner is summarized below:

1. Bianchi Family: largest landowner with contiguous area that includes the Swap Meet and majority of the northern half of the plan area, as well as a parcel along Somerset Blvd.
2. CWA Local 9400: small parcel with single building along Rosecrans Blvd.
3. Shopping Center: two separate parcels for the strip shopping center and parking and the other for the Jack in the Box.
4. SoCal Edison: corner of Paramount and Rosecrans Blvd. where existing electric transmission wires are located
5. Paramount Unified School District: single parcel fronting Paramount Blvd.
6. Our Lady of the Rosary Church: a combination of five parcels fronting Paramount Blvd.
7. Somerset Business Park: multiple parcels combined together to form a business park with multiple buildings; the buildings include multiple tenants, which are owned condominium style
8. HoneyBee International: a single parcel in the interior of the site, but with access to Somerset Blvd.; unknown environmental quality
9. Union Pacific: multiple parcels along the west edge of the plan area for the Union Pacific rail right-of-way

Overall, based on edge conditions (at-grade rail tracks and large arterial roads) the plan area is largely isolated from surrounding areas.



Interior of the Paramount Swap Meet parcel from the western boundary of the site looking east.



Southern entrance to the Paramount Swap Meet from Paramount Blvd.



Gated entrance to Honeybee International property from access road/alley.

# Clearwater East Specific Plan: Plan Area Map





# Infrastructure

The General Plan applies a land use designation to each property in the city and provides a general description of allowable land uses within each land use designation. The Paramount General Plan Land Use Element, adopted in August 2007, and was revised in February 2022.

## Sewer Systems

- **Existing Condition:** text
- **Recommendation:** pending analysis of future build-out potential.

## Water Systems

- **Existing Condition:** text
- **Recommendation:** The City of Paramount's available water supply is estimated to adequately meet the Clearwater SPA's existing and proposed development build out scenarios.

## Storm Drain Systems

- **Existing Condition:** text
- **Recommendation:** Overall, existing land use, drainage patterns, and drainage areas tributary to the Clearwater SPA are mostly developed and impervious and are not expected to change much to affect existing and proposed hydraulic capacities of existing drainage facilities. However, significant changes from pre-development to new development that increase drainage runoff will require the calculation of treatment flows and retention volumes to be mitigated and must follow environmental regulations set forth by

Federal, State and local government agencies having jurisdiction.

## Electrical Systems

Existing conditions data not received from Utility provider as of Existing Conditions Report submittal date.

## Natural Gas Systems

Existing conditions data not received from Utility provider as of Existing Conditions Report submittal date.

## Telecommunication Systems

Existing conditions data not received from Utility provider as of Existing Conditions Report submittal date.

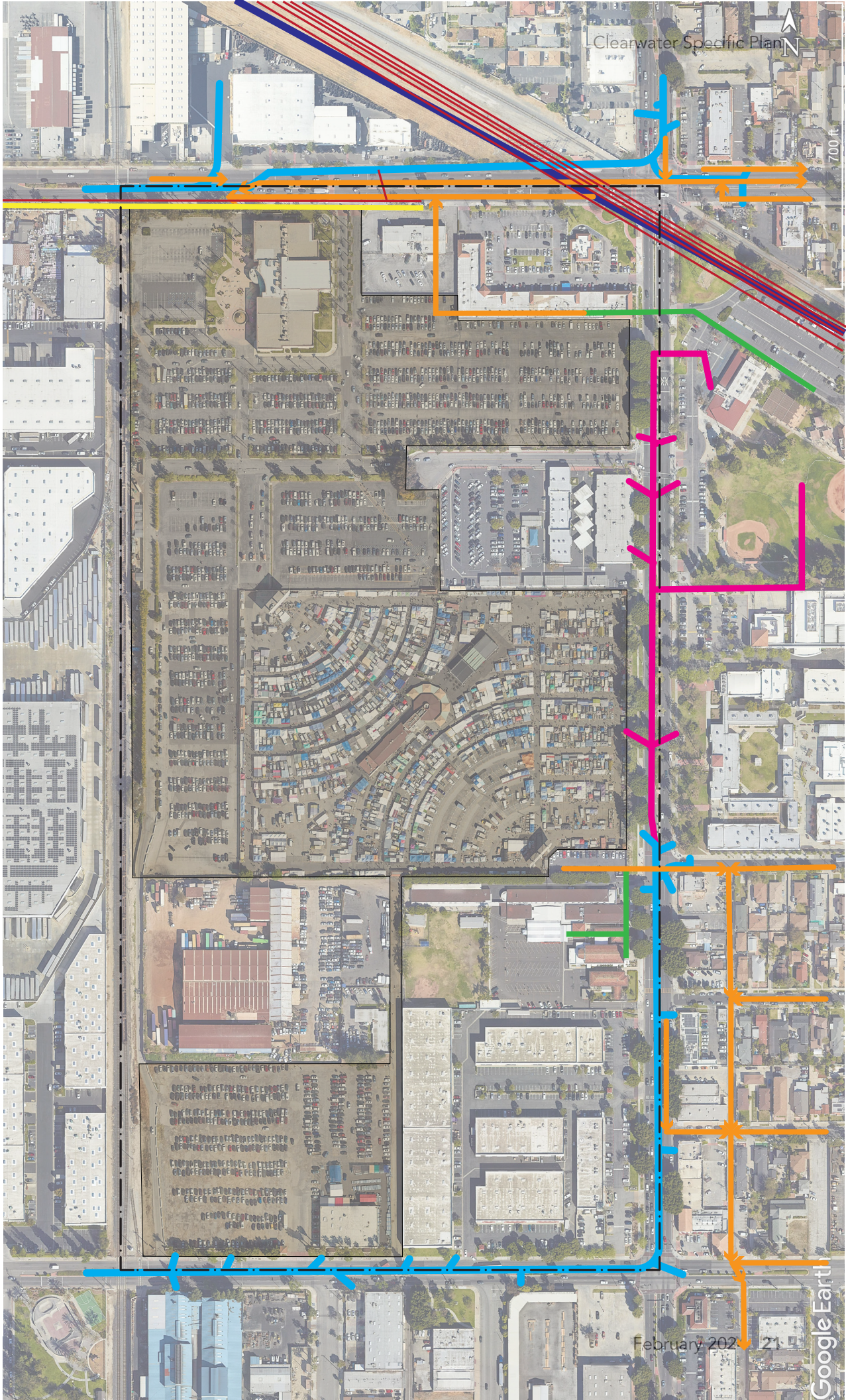






700 ft

- Telecom (overhead)
- Electric (overhead)
- Sewer
- Sewer
- Storm drain - City
- Storm drain - County
- Water







# Existing Conditions Report

February 2024

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