

---

---

## IV. OVERVIEW OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

---

---

### EXISTING ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

#### Civic Center

The City's 1997 population is approximately 34,000 with an area of 2.27 square miles. The City is characterized as a residential beach community with approximately 2 miles of ocean frontage. The City's predominant commercial corridors are located along Sepulveda Boulevard, Rosecrans Avenue, Manhattan Beach Boulevard, Highland Avenue, and Manhattan Avenue.

The Civic Center site comprises the northern portion of the project site and is bounded by 15th Street to the north, Highland Avenue to the west, and Valley Drive to the east. The southern boundary of the Civic Center site is contiguous to the northern portion of the Metlox Property, which generally conforms to 13th Street. The Civic Center/Public Safety Facility site occupies approximately 4.0 acres of the entire project site area and includes the existing Fire Department, Police Department and Public Library Building and surface parking lot. Since no changes to the City Hall building are proposed under this project, that area of the Civic Center is excluded from the project.

The Civic Center property is located within the "PS" zoning district and is designated as a "Public Facility" by the City of Manhattan Beach General Plan and Local Coastal Program. The current Civic Center uses are consistent with the General Plan and zoning designations.

The Manhattan Beach Police Department (MBPD) building, located at 420 15<sup>th</sup> Street, was originally constructed in 1958 and was designed to support 58 employees. The total size of the original structure was 10,637 square feet with approximately 10,000 square feet added since construction. The MBPD currently utilizes a modular trailer for office space and leases additional off-site office space within the main Post Office. The needs assessment prepared for the MBPD has identified a need for approximately 42,000 square feet of space, twice the size of the existing facility.

The City of Manhattan Beach Fire Department's (MBFD) Fire Station No. 1, located at 400 15<sup>th</sup> Street, was originally constructed in 1960 and totals 10,567 square feet. The function of the MBFD has changed considerably since 1960 with the addition of such programs as paramedics, hazardous materials, and urban search and rescue operations. These operational changes have necessitated the need for additional space. The needs assessment prepared for the MBFD has identified a need for approximately 16,250 additional square feet of functional support space.

The City of Manhattan Beach is currently a member of the Los Angeles County Public Library System which currently operates one library in the community. The Civic Center Public Library was

constructed in 1975 and contains a total of 12,100 square feet. The passage of recent State legislation (i.e., Proposition 14 - California Library Construction and Renovation Bond Act) provides the opportunity for communities to withdraw from the County system and use the tax dollars for the operation of an independent library. The American Library Association's recommended square footage for a community the size of Manhattan Beach is 25,000 square feet of library space.

The Civic Center provides 180 public parking spaces in the surface parking lot fronting the City Hall and Public Library building (including the rear lot of the Fire and Police Department buildings). Public parking lot 5, located to the south of the Public Library building on 13<sup>th</sup> Street provides an additional 40 public parking spaces. Altogether the Civic Center site provides a total of 220 parking spaces.

### **Metlox Site**

The commercial component of the project will be developed on the former Metlox Potteries Manufacturing Plant site. The site is located at the northwest corner of Valley Drive and Manhattan Beach Boulevard and provides a gateway to the Downtown area. The site lies adjacent to the south end of the Civic Center site and is generally bounded by Manhattan Beach Boulevard on the south, Morningside Drive on the west, Valley Drive on the east, and the Manhattan Beach Civic Center on the north. The former "H20" site, located at the northeast corner of Manhattan Beach Boulevard and Morningside Drive, is not a part of this project. The Metlox Pottery site occupies approximately three acres.

The property is located within the "CD" zoning district and is designated as a "Downtown Commercial" area by the City of Manhattan Beach General Plan and Local Coastal Program (LCP). The site is located within the City of Manhattan Beach Coastal Zone, subject to the provisions of the certified LCP. The proposed uses are consistent with the General Plan zoning designation and LCP.

Metlox Potteries operated a pottery manufacturing plant on the project site between 1927 and 1989. Between 1927 and 1971, the City of Manhattan Beach issued 25 building permits for new construction and additions on the Metlox site. The total square footage of these buildings were 49,865. The former Metlox Potteries Manufacturing Plant closed in 1976. The site was subsequently vacated and remediated and currently remains undeveloped. However, the northern portion of the site, contiguous to the Civic Center, is currently being used as a temporary surface parking lot, which provides approximately 125 public parking spaces. This parking lot was approved as a temporary use and was not intended nor approved to be utilized as a permanent parking area. The temporary nature of the lot was reflected in the conditions of approval attached to the use permit and coastal development permit.

## **Surrounding Land Uses**

The project site is located at the east entrance to the Downtown Manhattan Beach Area. The Downtown area is generally bounded by 15<sup>th</sup> Street to the north, 8<sup>th</sup> Street to the south, Ocean Drive to the west, and Valley Drive to the east. The commercial businesses in this area include eating and drinking establishments, service-oriented commercial uses, retail commercial shops, commercial offices and residential uses.

The project site is bordered by the Valley Drive/Ardmore Drive corridor to the east. The southbound only lanes of Valley Drive and northbound only lanes of Ardmore Drive are separated by a raised median. This raised median includes a pedestrian trail and is landscaped to provide a buffer and transition between the Downtown Commercial area and the residential neighborhoods to the east. Medium density residential uses are located on the north side of 15<sup>th</sup> Street, across from the Civic Center site.

## **RELATED PROJECTS**

Discussions with the City's Community Development Staff indicate no major development projects are proposed within the sphere of influence of the project area. Current construction projects in the vicinity of the proposed project are limited to individual single-family redevelopment and remodeling projects and other low scale infill developments. One related project is the H20 Master Use permit – at 401 Manhattan Beach Boulevard, which is adjacent to the Metlox property. The H20 Master Use Permit includes redevelopment of an existing 8,414 square foot building to provide 2,500 square feet for general office use and approximately 6,000 square feet for restaurants/banquet room. The other project, currently under construction, is a 3,448 square foot 2-story commercial building at 1100 Highland Avenue, which is replacing an existing residential use. Because these projects provide for the modernization of existing uses and will not substantially intensify the development patterns in the area, their contribution to cumulative growth would be considered negligible. Therefore, for purposes of addressing cumulative impacts, no major related projects were identified as related projects.