

## **3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING**

This section provides a general overview of the environmental setting for the proposed ordinance. More detailed descriptions of the environmental setting germane to each environmental issue area can be found in Section 4.0, *Environmental Impact Analysis*.

### **3.1 REGIONAL SETTING**

Huntington Beach is located in Orange County and is approximately 32 square miles in size. The City is bordered by the Pacific Ocean on the southwest, by Seal Beach on the northwest, by Costa Mesa on the east, by Newport Beach on the southeast, by Westminster on the north, and by Fountain Valley on the northeast. Huntington Beach contains a variety of land uses, including residential (single- and multi-family), commercial, industrial, office, and public facilities.

Huntington Beach has a Mediterranean climate, with mild, moist winters and comfortably warm, very dry summers. The City is located within the South Coast Air Basin (Basin), named so because its geographical formation is that of a basin, with the surrounding mountains trapping the air and its pollutants in the valleys or basins below. The Basin includes all of Orange County and the non-desert portions of Los Angeles, San Bernardino, and Riverside counties. The regional climate within the Basin is considered semi-arid and is characterized by warm summers, mild winters, infrequent seasonal rainfall, moderate daytime onshore breezes, and moderate humidity. The annual average temperature varies little throughout the Basin, ranging from the low to middle 60s, measured in degrees Fahrenheit (°F). Coastal areas have a more pronounced oceanic influence, and show less variability in annual minimum and maximum temperatures than inland areas. The City of Huntington Beach is located in northern coastal Orange County, which is in the southern portion of the Basin. The annual average temperature in the City ranges from approximately 47.0°F in December and January to 73.5°F in August (Western Regional Climate Center 2008).

The current population of Huntington Beach is 191,677 (California Department of Finance, 2011). Based on existing conditions, the proposed Single-Use Carryout Bag Ordinance is expected to apply to approximately 133 retailers in Huntington Beach. Definitions of the store categories are included in Appendix D.

### **3.2 CUMULATIVE PROJECTS SETTING**

CEQA defines cumulative impacts as two or more individual actions that, when considered together, are considerable or will compound other environmental impacts. Cumulative impacts are the changes in the environment that result from the incremental impact of development of the proposed project and other nearby projects. For example, traffic impacts of two nearby projects may be insignificant when analyzed separately, but could have a significant impact when analyzed together. Cumulative impact analysis allows the EIR to provide a reasonable forecast of future environmental conditions and can more accurately gauge the effects of a series of projects.



Although CEQA analysis typically lists development projects in the vicinity of a project site, this document analyzes the environmental impacts associated with a proposed ordinance and does not include development or construction activity. As such, the cumulative significance of the proposed Single-Use Carryout Bag Ordinance has been analyzed within the context of other carryout bag ordinances that are approved or pending throughout California. Table 3-1 lists current adopted and pending ordinances in California. These ordinances are considered in the cumulative analyses in Section 4.0, *Environmental Impact Analysis*. As shown in Table 3-1, 17 carryout bag ordinances have been adopted or are proposed or pending (not including the proposed Huntington Beach Single-Use Carryout Bag Ordinance) throughout California.

**Table 3-1  
 Planned and Pending Carryout Bag Ordinances in California**

Ordinance Location	Proposed Action	Status
City of Berkeley	This ordinance would prohibit retail product stores from making plastic bags available at checkout stands, and would require a mandatory charge of 25 cents on each paper checkout bag. Paper checkout bags would be required to have minimum post consumer recycled content.	On hold
City of Calabasas	This ordinance bans the issuance of plastic carryout bags and imposes a ten (10) cent charge on the issuance of recyclable paper carryout bags at regulated stores.	Adopted February 2011 Effective July 2011
City of Fairfax	This ordinance allows all stores, shops, eating places, food vendors and retail food vendors, to provide only recyclable paper or reusable bags as checkout bags to customer.	Adopted August 2007 After legal challenge, adopted by voter initiative November 2008
City of Long Beach	This ordinance bans plastic carryout bags at all supermarkets and other grocery stores, pharmacies, drug stores, convenience stores, food marts, and farmers markets and would place a ten (10) cent charge on the issuance of recyclable paper carryout bags by an affected store, as defined. The ordinance would also require a store to provide or make available to a customer only recyclable paper carryout bags or reusable bags.	Ordinance adopted and Addendum to the County of Los Angeles Final EIR certified May 2011 Effective August 2011
City of Los Angeles	The Los Angeles City Council voted to ban plastic carryout bags in the city's supermarkets and stores by July 2010 -- but only if the state fails to impose a 25-cent fee on every shopper who requests them.	Pending
City of Malibu	This ordinance bans the use of non-compostable and compostable plastic shopping bags for point-of-sale distribution.	Adopted May 2008 Effective November 2009
City of Manhattan Beach	This ordinance bans the distribution of plastic bags at the point-of-sale for all retail establishments in Manhattan Beach.	Adopted July 2008 On hold pending lawsuit



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 Planned and Pending Carryout Bag Ordinances in California**

Ordinance Location	Proposed Action	Status
City of Oakland	This ordinance bans the use of plastic bags within the City.	Adopted July 2007 In April 2008, a judge sided with a challenge to the ordinance filed by an industry group
City of Palo Alto	This ordinance bans large grocery stores in Palo Alto from distributing single-use plastic check out bags. Only reusable bags (preferred) or paper bags can be distributed. Single-use plastic bags can still be used in produce and meat departments.	Adopted March 2009 Effective September 2009
City of San Francisco	Retail stores governed by the ordinance can only provide the following types of bags:  a. compostable plastic b. recyclable paper c. reusable bag of any material	Adopted April 2007
City of San Jose	This ordinance prohibits the distribution of single-use carryout paper and plastic bags at the point of sale (i.e., check-out) for all commercial retail businesses in San José except restaurants. An exception is made for “green” paper bags containing at least 40 percent recycled content, accompanied by a charge of 10 cents to the customer, with the charge retained by the retailer.	Adopted January 2011 Effective January 2012
City of Santa Monica	This ordinance: (1) prohibits retail establishments in Santa Monica from providing “single-use plastic carryout bags” to customers at the point of sale; (2) prohibits the free distribution of paper carryout bags by grocery stores, convenience stores, mini-marts, liquor stores and pharmacies; and (3) requires stores that make paper carryout bags available to sell recycled paper carryout bags to customers for not less than ten cents per bag.	Adopted January 2011 Effective September 2011
City of Sunnyvale	This ordinance would prohibit specified retail establishments Sunnyvale from providing single-use plastic carryout bags to customers at the point of sale, and would create a mandatory 10 cent (\$0.10) charge for each paper bag distributed by these stores.	Adopted December 2011 Effective June 2012
County of Alameda	This ordinance would prohibit the distribution of single-use carryout paper and plastic bags at the point of sale (i.e., check-out) for all commercial retail businesses in Alameda County. Exception would be made for “green” paper bags containing a specified minimum	Pending environmental review under CEQA



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 Planned and Pending Carryout Bag Ordinances in California**

Ordinance Location	Proposed Action	Status
	percentage of recycled content, which can only be provided to customers for a nominal charge to cover the cost to the business of providing the bags.	
County of Los Angeles	This ordinance would ban the issuance of plastic carryout bags and impose a ten (10) cent charge on the issuance of recyclable paper carryout bags at all supermarkets and other grocery stores, pharmacies, drug stores, convenience stores, and foodmarts, in unincorporated Los Angeles County. The ordinance would require a store to provide or make available to a customer only recyclable paper carryout bags or reusable bags. The ordinance would also encourage a store to educate its staff to promote reusable bags and to post signs encouraging customers to use reusable bags in the unincorporated areas of the County of Los Angeles.	Adopted November 2010 Effective July 2011
County of Marin	This ordinance prohibits the distribution of plastic carryout bags and would charge at least \$0.05 for a recycled paper bag.	Adopted January 2011 Effective January 2012
County of Santa Clara	This ordinance allows affected retail establishments to distribute either a 'green' paper bag or a reusable bag. Reusable bags may be given away or sold and are initially defined (until January 2013) as bags made of cloth or other machine washable fabric that has handles; or a durable plastic bag with handles that is at least 2.25 mils thick and is specifically designed and manufactured for multiple use. 'Green' paper bags may be sold to customers for a minimum charge of \$0.15 and are defined as paper bags that are 100% recyclable and are made from 100% recycled material.	Adopted April 2011 Effective January 2012

*Source: Californians Against Waste, [http://www.cawrecycles.org/issues/plastic\\_campaign/plastic\\_bags/local](http://www.cawrecycles.org/issues/plastic_campaign/plastic_bags/local), accessed July 2011 ; City of San Jose, City of Palo Alto, City of Berkeley, City of Los Angeles, County of Los Angeles, City of Malibu, City of Manhattan Beach, City of San Francisco, Marin County, City of Santa Monica, City of Calabasas, Santa Clara County, City of Long Beach Homepages, December 2011.*

