

June 2015 | Final Environmental Impact Report
State Clearinghouse No. 2015051088

SIERRA MADRE GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

for City of Sierra Madre

Prepared for:

City of Sierra Madre

Contact: Leticia Cardoso, Senior Planner
Planning and Community Preservation Department
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Prepared by:

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1. Introduction

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) has been prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as amended (Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.) and CEQA Guidelines (California Administrative Code Section 15000 et seq.).

According to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15132, the FEIR shall consist of:

- (a) The Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) or a revision of the Draft;
- (b) Comments and recommendations received on the DEIR either verbatim or in summary;
- (c) A list of persons, organizations, and public agencies comments on the DEIR;
- (d) The responses of the Lead Agency to significant environmental points raised in the review and consultation process; and
- (e) Any other information added by the Lead Agency.

This document contains responses to comments received on the DEIR for the Sierra Madre General Plan Update during the public review period, which began May 11, 2015, and closed June 24, 2015. This document has been prepared in accordance with CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines and represents the independent judgment of the Lead Agency. This document and the circulated DEIR comprise the FEIR, in accordance with CEQA Guidelines, Section 15132.

1.2 FORMAT OF THE FEIR

This document is organized as follows:

Section 1, *Introduction*. This section describes CEQA requirements and content of this FEIR.

Section 2, *Response to Comments*. This section provides a list of agencies and interested persons commenting on the DEIR, copies of comment letters received during the public review period, and individual responses to written comments. To facilitate review of the responses, each comment letter has been reproduced and assigned a number (A-1 through A-5 for letters received from agencies and organizations). Individual comments have been numbered for each letter and the letter is followed by responses with references to the corresponding comment number.

1. Introduction

Section 3. *Revisions to the Draft EIR.* This section contains revisions to the DEIR text as a result of the comments received by agencies and interested persons as described in Section 2, and/or errors and omissions discovered subsequent to release of the DEIR for public review.

The responses to comments contain material and revisions that will be added to the text of the FEIR. The City of Sierra Madre staff has reviewed this material and determined that none of this material constitutes the type of significant new information that requires recirculation of the DEIR for further public comment under CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5. None of this new material indicates that the project will result in a significant new environmental impact not previously disclosed in the DEIR. Additionally, none of this material indicates that there would be a substantial increase in the severity of a previously identified environmental impact that will not be mitigated, or that there would be any of the other circumstances requiring recirculation described in Section 15088.5.

1.3 CEQA REQUIREMENTS REGARDING COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

CEQA Guidelines Section 15204 (a) outlines parameters for submitting comments, and reminds persons and public agencies that the focus of review and comment of DEIRs should be “on the sufficiency of the document in identifying and analyzing possible impacts on the environment and ways in which significant effects of the project might be avoided or mitigated. Comments are most helpful when they suggest additional specific alternatives or mitigation measures that would provide better ways to avoid or mitigate the significant environmental effects. At the same time, reviewers should be aware that the adequacy of an EIR is determined in terms of what is reasonably feasible. . . . CEQA does not require a lead agency to conduct every test or perform all research, study, and experimentation recommended or demanded by commenters. When responding to comments, lead agencies need only respond to significant environmental issues and do not need to provide all information requested by reviewers, as long as a good faith effort at full disclosure is made in the EIR.”

CEQA Guidelines Section 15204 (c) further advises, “Reviewers should explain the basis for their comments, and should submit data or references offering facts, reasonable assumptions based on facts, or expert opinion supported by facts in support of the comments. Pursuant to Section 15064, an effect shall not be considered significant in the absence of substantial evidence.” Section 15204 (d) also states, “Each responsible agency and trustee agency shall focus its comments on environmental information germane to that agency’s statutory responsibility.” Section 15204 (e) states, “This section shall not be used to restrict the ability of reviewers to comment on the general adequacy of a document or of the lead agency to reject comments not focused as recommended by this section.”

In accordance with CEQA, Public Resources Code Section 21092.5, copies of the written responses to public agencies will be forwarded to those agencies at least 10 days prior to certifying the environmental impact report. The responses will be forwarded with copies of this FEIR, as permitted by CEQA, and will conform to the legal standards established for response to comments on DEIRs.

2. Response to Comments

Section 15088 of the CEQA Guidelines requires the Lead Agency (City of Sierra Madre) to evaluate comments on environmental issues received from public agencies and interested parties who reviewed the DEIR and prepare written responses.

This section provides all written responses received on the DEIR and the City of Sierra Madre's responses to each comment.

Comment letters and specific comments are given letters and numbers for reference purposes. Where sections of the DEIR are excerpted in this document, the sections are shown indented. Changes to the DEIR text are shown in underlined text for additions and ~~strikeout~~ for deletions.

The following is a list of agencies and persons that submitted comments on the DEIR during the public review period.

Number Reference	Commenting Person/Agency	Date of Comment	Page No.
Agencies & Organizations			
A1	Los Angeles County Fire Department	June 17, 2015	2-3
A2	California Department of Fish and Wildlife	June 24, 2015	2-9
A3	Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy	June 24, 2015	2-15
A4	California Department of Transportation	Error! Reference source not found. 23, 2015	2-19
A5	County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County	June 23, 2015	2-25

2. Response to Comments

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2. Response to Comments

LETTER A1 – Los Angeles County Fire Department (3 pages)



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

FIRE DEPARTMENT

1320 NORTH EASTERN AVENUE
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90063-3294

DARYL L. OSBY
FIRE CHIEF
FORESTER & FIRE WARDEN

June 17, 2015

RECEIVED

JUN 23 2015

CITY OF SIERRA MADRE
PLANNING & BUILDING

Leticia Cardoso, Senior Planner
City of Sierra Madre
Planning Division
232 West Sierra Madre Boulevard
Sierra Madre, CA 91024

Dear Ms. Cardoso:

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT AND PUBLIC MEETING, "CITY OF SIERRA MADRE GENERAL PLAN UPDATE DEIR", THE PROPOSED PROJECT IS THE UPDATE OF THE SIERRA MADRE GENERAL PLAN, WILL GUIDE THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE CITY 20 YEARS OR MORE INTO THE FUTURE, INVOLVES A REVISION TO THE CURRENT LAND USE MAP AND ALL ELEMENTS EXCEPT HOUSING, SIERRA MADRE (FFER 201500107)

The Notice of Availability of a Draft Environmental Impact Report and Public Meeting has been reviewed by the Planning Division, Land Development Unit, Forestry Division, and Health Hazardous Materials Division of the County of Los Angeles Fire Department. The following are their comments:

PLANNING DIVISION:

1. The subject property is entirely within the City of Sierra Madre, which is not a part of the emergency response area of the Los Angeles County Fire Department (also known as the Consolidated Fire Protection District of Los Angeles County). Therefore, this project does not appear to have any impact on the emergency responsibilities of this Department.

A1-1

SERVING THE UNINCORPORATED AREAS OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY AND THE CITIES OF:

AGOURA HILLS	CALABASAS	DIAMOND BAR	HIDDEN HILLS	LA MIRADA	HALIBU	POMONA	SIGNAL HILL
ARTESIA	CARSON	DUARTE	HUNTINGTON PARK	LA PUENTE	MAYWOOD	RANCHO PALOS VERDES	SOUTH EL MONTE
AZUSA	CERRITOS	EL MONTE	INDUSTRY	LAKEWOOD	NORWALK	ROLLING HILLS	SOUTH GATE
BALDWIN PARK	CLAREMONT	GARDENA	INGLEWOOD	LANCASTER	PALMDALE	ROLLING HILLS ESTATES	TEMPLE CITY
BELL	COMMERCE	GLENDALE	IRVINDALE	LAWDALE	PALOS VERDES ESTATES	ROSEMEAD	WALNUT
BELL GARDENS	COVINA	HAWAIIAN GARDENS	LA CANADA FLINTRIDGE	LOWITA	PARAMOUNT	SAN DIMAS	WEST HOLLYWOOD
BELLFLOWER	CUDAHY	HAWTHORNE	LA HABRA	LYNWOOD	PICO RIVERA	SANTA CLARITA	WESTLAKE VILLAG
BRAEBURY							WIBTIER

2. Response to Comments

Leticia Cardoso, Senior Planner
June 17, 2015
Page 2

LAND DEVELOPMENT UNIT:

1. This project is located in the City of Sierra Madre. Therefore, the City of Sierra Madre Fire Department has jurisdiction concerning this project and will be setting conditions. This project is located in close proximity to the jurisdictional area of the Los Angeles County Fire Department. However, this project is unlikely to have an impact that necessitates a comment concerning general requirements from the Land Development Unit of the Los Angeles County Fire Department.
2. The County of Los Angeles Fire Department's Land Development Unit appreciates the opportunity to comment on this project.
3. The statutory responsibilities of the County of Los Angeles Fire Department's Land Development Unit are to review and comment on all projects within the unincorporated areas of the County of Los Angeles. Our emphasis is on the availability of sufficient water supplies for firefighting operations and local/regional access issues. However, we review all projects for issues that may have a significant impact on the County of Los Angeles Fire Department. We are responsible for the review of all projects within contract cities (cities that contract with the County of Los Angeles Fire Department for fire protection services). We are responsible for all County facilities located within non-contract cities. The County of Los Angeles Fire Department's Land Development Unit may also comment on conditions that may be imposed on a project by the Fire Prevention Division, which may create a potentially significant impact to the environment.
4. Should any questions arise regarding subdivision, water systems, or access, please contact the County of Los Angeles Fire Department's Land Development Unit's Inspector Claudia Soiza at (323) 890-4243.

A1-2

FORESTRY DIVISION – OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS:

1. The statutory responsibilities of the County of Los Angeles Fire Department's Forestry Division include erosion control, watershed management, rare and endangered species, vegetation, fuel modification for Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones or Fire Zone 4, archeological and cultural resources, and the County Oak Tree Ordinance.
2. The County of Los Angeles Fire Department's Forestry Division has no further comments regarding the City of Sierra Madre General Plan Draft Environmental Impact Report.

A1-3

2. Response to Comments

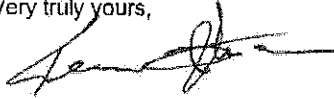
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HEALTH HAZARDOUS MATERIALS DIVISION:

1. The Health Hazardous Materials Division (HHMD) of the Los Angeles County Fire Department has no comment or objection to the project at this time. A1-4

If you have any additional questions, please contact this office at (323) 890-4330.

Very truly yours,



KEVIN T. JOHNSON, ACTING CHIEF, FORESTRY DIVISION
PREVENTION SERVICES BUREAU

KTJ:ad

2. Response to Comments

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2. Response to Comments

A1. Response to Comments from Los Angeles County Fire Department, Kevin T. Johnson, Acting Chief, Forestry Division, dated June 17, 2015.

- A1-1 The commenter stated that the entire City is not a part of the emergency response area of the Los Angeles County Fire Department (LACFCD) and that the project does not appear to have any impact on emergency responsibilities of LACFCD. The comment is acknowledged and no response is necessary.
- A1-2 The commenter stated that although the City is in close proximity to the jurisdictional area of LACFCD, the General Plan Update is unlikely to have an impact that necessitates comments concerning general requirements from the Land Development Unit of LACFCD. The commenter also provided a summary of the Land Development Unit's statutory responsibilities. The comment is acknowledged and no response is necessary.
- A1-3 The commenter provided a summary of the Forestry Division's statutory responsibilities. The commenter also stated that the Forestry Division has no comments at this time on the DEIR. The comment is acknowledged and no response is necessary.
- A1-4 The commenter stated that the Health Hazardous Materials Division of LACFCD has no comments or objections at this time on the DEIR. The comment is acknowledged and no response is necessary.

2. Response to Comments

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2. Response to Comments

LETTER A2 – California Department of Fish and Wildlife (4 pages)



State of California – Natural Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
South Coast Region
3883 Ruffin Road
San Diego, CA 92123
(858) 467-4201
www.wildlife.ca.gov

EDMUND G. BROWN JR., Governor
CHARLTON H. BONHAM, Director



June 24, 2015

Ms. Leticia Cardosa
City of Sierra Madre
232 West Sierra Madre
Sierra Madre, CA 91024
Email: lcardoso@cityofsierramadre.com

Subject: Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Report for City of Sierra Madre General Plan Update, City of Sierra Madre, Los Angeles County (SCH # 1995101004).

Dear Ms. Cardosa:

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) has reviewed the above-referenced Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (DPEIR). The City of Sierra Madre (City) is the lead agency for the DPEIR under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The Sierra Madre General Plan Update (Project) involves a revision to the current General Plan land use map and all elements except Housing. It will guide growth and development within the City by designating land uses in the proposed land use map and through implementation of the goals and policies of the General Plan Update. The Project proposes three alternatives:

- No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative – No change from existing provisions of current General Plan.
- Preferred Project Alternative – Proposes to accommodate approximately 5,244 residential dwelling units (5,123 existing plus 121 new) and 1,100,228 square feet of non-residential square footage (1,012,836 existing plus 87,392 new), which includes commercial, manufacturing and institutional land uses.
- Reduced Development Alternative – Includes minor reduction in dwelling units by 24 (5,244 under the General Plan Update versus 5,220 under this alternative), which would decrease the build out population by 55 residents. This alternative would also slightly reduce nonresidential development by 17,478 square feet (1,100,228 under the General Plan Update versus 1,082,750 under this alternative).

The Project is located in the City within the foothills of the San Gabriel Valley below the southern edge of the Angeles National Forest, approximately 17 miles northeast of downtown Los Angeles. The City is in the central region of Los Angeles County and is bounded by the cities of Arcadia to the east and south and Pasadena to the west and the Angeles National Forest to the north.

Conserving California's Wildlife Since 1870

2. Response to Comments

Leticia Cardoso
June 24, 2015
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The DPIER states "The City has approximately 610 acres, approximately 37 percent of the City's land area, zoned as hillside management which is mostly managed as open space. Vegetation types in this area of the City include grassland, coastal sage scrub, chaparral, southern oak woodland, and riparian forest/woodland."

The following comments and recommendations have been prepared pursuant to the Department's authority as a Responsible Agency under CEQA Guidelines section 15381 over those aspects of the proposed project that come under the purview of the California Endangered Species Act (Fish and Game Code § 2050 *et seq.*) and Fish and Game Code section 1600 *et seq.*, and pursuant to our authority as Trustee Agency with jurisdiction over natural resources affected by the project (California Environmental Quality Act, [CEQA] Guidelines § 15386) to assist the Lead Agency in avoiding or minimizing potential project impacts on biological resources.

Project Impacts to Biological Resources

General Provisions – The Department generally concurs with the provisions in the DPEIR which describe biological resource protection measures to be implemented during subsequent activities that will be conducted under the updated General Plan. The Department recommends the below additional considerations to be include in the Project:

A2-1

Impacts Native Birds – Page 5.3-28 in the Biological Resources Section of the DPEIR describes protection measures for native birds when development activities are performed under the Project and states: "Future development that would be accommodated by the General Plan update would be required to comply with the MBTA by either avoiding site clearing, demolition or grading activities during the breeding/nesting season (February 1 to September 1, as defined by the Department) or conducting a site survey for nesting birds prior to commencing such activities during the nesting season.

The Department concurs that measures to avoid impacting native birds should be included in the Project. Note that raptor species may commence nesting activities as early as December and January, especially great-horned owls (*Bubo virginianus*).

The Department recommends incorporating the Department's general native bird avoidance language (below) into the Project: Migratory nongame native bird species are protected by international treaty under the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) of 1918 (50 C.F.R. § 10.13). Sections 3503, 3503.5, and 3513 of the California Fish and Game Code prohibit take of all birds and their active nests including raptors and other migratory nongame birds (as listed under the Federal MBTA). The Department recommends the following measures to assist in avoidance of take of native birds:

A2-2

Proposed project activities (including, but not limited to, staging and disturbances to native and nonnative vegetation, structures, and substrates) should occur outside of the avian breeding season which generally runs from February 1 through August 31 (as early as January 1 for some raptors) to avoid take of birds or their eggs. Take means to hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill, or attempt to hunt, pursue, catch, capture or kill (Fish and Game Code § 86), and includes take of eggs and/or young resulting from disturbances which cause abandonment of active nests. Depending on the avian species present, a qualified biologist may determine that a change in the breeding season dates is warranted.

2. Response to Comments

Leticia Cardoso
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If avoidance of the avian breeding season is not feasible, the Department recommends that, beginning thirty days prior to the initiation of project activities, a qualified biologist with experience in conducting breeding bird surveys conduct weekly bird surveys to detect protected native birds occurring in suitable nesting habitat that is to be disturbed and (as access to adjacent areas allows) any other such habitat within 300 feet of the disturbance area (within 500 feet for raptors). The surveys should continue on a weekly basis with the last survey being conducted no more than 3 days prior to the initiation of project activities. If a protected native bird is found, the project proponent should delay all project activities within 300 feet of on- and off-site suitable nesting habitat (within 500 feet for suitable raptor nesting habitat) until August 31. Alternatively, the qualified biologist could continue the surveys in order to locate any nests. If an active nest is located, project activities within 300 feet of the nest (within 500 feet for raptor nests) or as determined by a qualified biological monitor, must be postponed until the nest is vacated and juveniles have fledged and there is no evidence of a second attempt at nesting. Flagging, stakes, and/or construction fencing should be used to demarcate the inside boundary of the buffer of 300 feet (or 500 feet) between the project activities and the nest. Project personnel, including all contractors working on site, should be instructed on the sensitivity of the area. The project proponent should provide the City the results of the recommended protective measures described above to document compliance with applicable State and federal laws pertaining to the protection of native birds.

A2-2
cont'd

If the biological monitor determines that a narrower buffer between the project activities and observed active nests is warranted, he/she should submit a written explanation as to why (e.g., species-specific information; ambient conditions and birds' habituation to them; and the terrain, vegetation, and birds' lines of sight between the project activities and the nest and foraging areas) to the City, to allow a narrower buffer.

The biological monitor should be present on site during all grubbing and clearing of vegetation to ensure that these activities remain within the project footprint (i.e., outside the demarcated buffer) and that the flagging/stakes/fencing is being maintained, and to minimize the likelihood that active nests are abandoned or fail due to project activities. The biological monitor should send weekly monitoring reports to the City during the grubbing and clearing of vegetation, and should notify the CEQA lead agency immediately if project activities damage active avian nests.

Impacts From Wildfire Reduction Practices – The DPEIR describes measures that the City proposes to implement in the proposed Project to reduce wildfire risk including: Chapter 5 of the DPEIR describing Public Services – *Fire Safety Implementation Measure IM-6* which states “The City shall oversee the maintenance of adequate brush clearance in the Wildland/Urban Interface within the High Severity Fire Zone through annual brush inspections.”; Title 8 (Health and Safety), Chapter 8.36 (*Hazardous Brush Clearance*) of the Sierra Madre Municipal Code which states: “Ensures that all landowners remove hazardous refuse or weeds, trees, and other vegetation, which, by reason of proximity to a building or structure, constitutes a fire hazard. In cases where property is undeveloped or larger than five acres, a vegetation management plan shall be required.” and Policy Hz2.8 which states: “Develop vegetation management plans that manage chemise and chaparral to ensure adequate firebreaks, to provide adequate access for fire protection water systems, and access for firefighting.”

A2-3

Wildfire risk reduction activities including brush clearing can significantly adversely impact biological resources held in public trust by the Department. These impacts are often done during brush clearing activities by property owners or their contractors who are not familiar with federal, state, and local laws that protect special status species and jurisdictional waters of the state or

2. Response to Comments

Leticia Cardoso
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U.S. Impacts to biological resources related to wildfire risk reduction practices may also be overlooked during CEQA impact analysis in general plans adopted by lead agencies.

The Department recommends the biological resource section in the Final PEIR include a discussion that describes biological and botanical resource impacts from wildfire risk reduction activities. Specific biological resources to include in this assessment should include but not be limited to: jurisdictional waters of the state and U.S. and nesting birds including coastal cactus wren (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus sandiegensis*) and coastal California gnatcatcher (*Poliioptila californica californica*) as well as other special status species listed in the PDIER which could occur in the Project area. Areas proposed for brush clearing or other fuel buffer disturbances should be assessed by experienced biologists and botanists in order to determine the presence or absence of special status species and plan for avoidance and mitigation measures. This assessment should be addressed in sufficient detail as described in the Biological Resources section of the DPEIR for other Project related impacts and included in the final updated Project.

A2-3
cont'd

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments. Please contact Mr. Scott Harris, Environmental Scientist, at (626) 797-3170 or Scott.P.Harris@wildlife.ca.gov if you should have any questions and for further coordination on the proposed project.

Sincerely,



Betty J Courtney
Environmental Program Manager I
South Coast Region

cc: Ms. Erinn Wilson, CDFW, Los Alamitos
Ms. Kelly Schmoker, CDFW, Laguna Niguel
Mr. Scott Harris, CDFW, Pasadena
Ms. Victoria Chau, CDFW, Los Alamitos
Ms. Sarah Rains, CDFW, Thousand Oaks
State Clearinghouse, Sacramento

2. Response to Comments

A2. Response to Comments California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Betty J. Courtney, Environmental Program Manager I, dated June 24, 2015.

A2-1 The commenter stated that the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) generally concurs with the provisions in the DEIR, which describes biological resource protection measures to be implemented during subsequent activities under the General Plan Update. The comment is acknowledged and no response is necessary.

The commenter also stated that CDFW recommends additional considerations, which are outlined in Comments A2-2 and A2-3, be included in the DEIR. See responses to Comments A2-2 and A2-3 below.

A2-2 The commenter stated that they concur that the measures outlined in the DEIR to avoid impacting native birds should be included in the project. As concluded in the DEIR, impacts to migratory birds were determined to be less than significant with adherence to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), whose implementation would be ensured through the City's development review process. However, the commenter recommended incorporating CDFW's general native bird avoidance language outlined in the comment and also recommended an additional measure to further assist in the avoidance of take of native birds. In response to the commenter, the requested language and additional measure (which has been added as a mitigation measure) have been added under the discussion of Impact 5.3-4 in Chapter 5.3, *Biological Resources*, of the DEIR, as described in more detail in Section 3, *Revisions to the Draft EIR*, of this FEIR. However, it should be noted that the provision of this additional mitigation measure would not alter the impact significance conclusion (less than significant) disclosed in the DEIR regarding impacts to native birds.

A2-3 The provision of the City's Municipal Code mentioned in this comment regarding wildfire risks (Title 8 [Health and Safety], Chapter 8.36 [Hazardous Brush Clearance]) is an existing provision that residents in the hillside areas designated as High Severity Fire Zones are required to adhere to; it is not a new provision that is being considered as a part of the General Plan Update or DEIR. Additionally, Fire Safety Implementation Measure IM-6 (which states, "The City shall oversee the maintenance of adequate brush clearance in the Wildland/Urban Interface within the High Severity Fire Zone through annual brush inspections.") of the Implementation Program (Chapter 5 of the General Plan Update) is not a new implementation measure being considered in the General Plan Update; it is an implementation measure of the 1996 General Plan Implementation Program that is being carried forward to the General Plan Update Implementation Program. Specifically, the 1996 General Plan includes a Weed Abatement program, which states "Due to Sierra Madre's proximity to wildland areas, it is critical to conduct a proactive weed abatement program. The annual weed abatement effort includes education to property owners, notification of property owners, adequate time for voluntary compliance and enforcement as necessary."

2. Response to Comments

Furthermore, the requirements outlined in Chapter 8.36 of the City's Municipal Code and Fire Safety Implementation Measure IM-6 are in conformance with the requirements of the Sierra Madre Fire Department (SMFD) with regards to brush clearing near residential structures, as applicable to the hillside areas of the City designated as High Fire Hazard Severity Zones.

Finally, any future development that would be accommodated under the General Plan Update in the City's hillside areas where brush clearing could occur would be required to go through the City's development review process, at which time a site-specific analysis of potential impacts to biological resources from project-related grading, construction, or clearing activities would be required. The impacts to biological resources of potential site-specific development projects is not known at this time, as the General Plan Update is a regulatory document that sets forth the framework for future growth and development (e.g., infill development, redevelopment, and revitalization/restoration) in the City and does not directly result in development in and of itself. Therefore, it would be difficult and speculative at best to provide any kind of site-specific analysis at this time.

Also, before any development can occur in the City, all such development is required to be analyzed for conformance with the City's General Plan and Municipal Code requirements, as well as other applicable local and state requirements; comply with the requirements of CEQA (e.g., preparation of site-specific environmental documentation in accordance with CEQA); and obtain all necessary approvals, clearances, and permits. For example, the provisions of Chapter 17.52 (Hillside Management Zone) of the City's Municipal Code have and would continue to not only protect the natural environment of the City's hillside areas from change, but to protect the hillside areas from hazards such as fires. Any development that would occur in the City's hillside areas would be required to adhere to the provisions of Chapter 17.52. For example, as stated in Chapter 17.52, some of the purposes of this chapter include:

- Ensure that development in the hillside areas is located so as to result in the least environmental impact.
- Correlate intensity of development to steepness of terrain to minimize grading, removal of natural vegetation; and to prevent the creation of land instability or fire hazards.

Therefore, in response to the commenter and based on the preceding, the additional biological resources impact analysis requested has not been included in the DEIR.

2. Response to Comments

LETTER A3– Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (1 page)

STATE OF CALIFORNIA—THE NATURAL RESOURCES AGENCY

EDMUND G. BROWN, JR., Governor

SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY

RAMIREZ CANYON PARK
5750 RAMIREZ CANYON ROAD
MALIBU, CALIFORNIA 90265
PHONE (310) 589-3200
FAX (310) 589-3207
WWW.SMMC.CA.GOV



June 24, 2015

Leticia Cardoso, AICP
Senior Planner
City of Sierra Madre
232 West Sierra Madre Boulevard
Sierra Madre, California 91024

**Support for the City of Sierra Madre General Plan Update and
Draft Environmental Impact Report**

Dear Ms. Cardoso:

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (Conservancy) commends the City of Sierra Madre for its protective Open Space element as contained in the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) of the City's General Plan Update, furthering the commitment to Open Space protection on the part of the Sierra Mountain Conservancy.

The City, as a Wildlife Sanctuary, should strive to maximize its extent of natural open space and achieve a co-existence with wildlife as envisioned in its General Plan. As such, the City's continued efforts to enforce the Hillside Management Zone Ordinance, efforts to amend the Open Space Ordinance to include more stringent standards for preserving natural open space, and overall efforts to involve the Sierra Mountain Conservancy on open space preservation, are integral to maintaining its identity as a Wildlife Sanctuary.

Furthermore, the need to protect the remaining natural open space in the City's northern region has never been greater in light of the rapid rate of development encroaching into the upper foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains. Thus, the Conservancy supports the City's proposed Open Space element in DEIR for the City's General Plan Update.

A3-1

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Edelman".

PAUL EDELMAN
Deputy Director
Natural Resources and Planning

2. Response to Comments

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2. Response to Comments

A3. Response to Comments from Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, Paul Edelman, Deputy Director, dated June 24, 2015.

A3-1 The commenter outlined their support for the General Plan Update and associated Draft Environmental Impact Report and commended the City for its efforts to protect the natural open space in the City's norther region. The comment is acknowledged and no response is necessary.

2. Response to Comments

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2. Response to Comments

LETTER A4 – California Department of Transportation (2 pages)

STATE OF CALIFORNIA – CALIFORNIA STATE TRANSPORTATION AGENCY

EDMUND G. BROWN Jr., Governor

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
DISTRICT 7-OFFICE OF TRANSPORTATION PLANNING
100 S. MAIN STREET, MS 16
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012
PHONE (213) 897-9140
FAX (213) 897-1337
www.dot.ca.gov



*Serious drought.
Help save water!*

June 23, 2015

Ms. Leticia Cardoso
City of Sierra Madre
232 W. Sierra Madre Blvd.
Sierra Madre, CA 91024

RE: Sierra Madre General Plan Update
Vic. LA-210 Citywide
SCH # 2015051088
IGR/CEQA No. 150531AL-DEIR

Dear Ms. Cardoso:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above referenced project. The proposed project is the update of the Sierra Madre General Plan. The General Plan Update is an opportunity to take a comprehensive look at the City as a system and in a regional context, to address contemporary conditions, laws, and reflect the largest aspirations for the future of the community.

From the Sierra Madre General Plan Traffic Impact Study Draft Report, prepared in March 2015, Table 4-3 (Page E-33), indicated that by 2035, the City projects to build 57 single family units, 64 multi-family units, 43,700 square feet of commercial, and 43,700 square feet of industrial. These developments will generate 3,335 daily traffic trips, 165/319 AM/PM peak hour trips. The City boundary is within 3,000 feet away from the State facilities.

A4-1

If the City allows a sizable development that will have significant traffic impacts in the future, then the traffic analysis should include off-ramp queuing analysis, and the latest version of the 2010 Highway Capacity Manual (HCM) should be utilized.

Caltrans encourages the City to work with neighboring developing cities such as the City of Pasadena and the City of Arcadia to resolve any cumulative significant traffic impacts on State transportation facilities. The plan to work with the neighboring cities should be discussed in the Circulation Element of the General Plan or a new Resolution/Policy should be passed such as follows:

A4-2

- The City will work with neighboring cities to address cumulative significant traffic impacts on the I-210 freeway including on/off ramps as a result of build out of the General Plan.

*"Provide a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system
to enhance California's economy and livability"*

2. Response to Comments

Ms. Leticia Cardoso
June 23, 2015
Page 2

- The City will work with Caltrans to identify potential cumulative traffic impacts and mitigation measures.
- The City will form a fair share fee program working with neighboring cities to improve State transportation facilities.
- The City's existing traffic impact fees will include any State facility improvements as part of the cumulative traffic impact. Procuring funds toward freeway segments, freeway interchanges, freeway on/off-ramps, as well as for bus and rail transit facilities will be included in the goals of the City.
- The City will participate with the City of Pasadena to implement the I-210 Connected Corridors project involving Caltrans owned intersections at freeway ramp termini in the development of the future transportation impact fee.
- The City will make any necessary effort to include the addition of "Bike Lanes" to close the gap between the adjacent cities.

A4-2
confd

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Alan Lin the project coordinator at (213) 897-8391 and refer to IGR/CEQA No. 150531AL.

Sincerely,



DIANNA WATSON
Branch Chief
Community Planning & LD IGR Review

cc: Scott Morgan, State Clearinghouse

*"Provide a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system
to enhance California's economy and livability"*

2. Response to Comments

A4. Response to Comments from California Department of Transportation, Dianna Watson, Branch Chief, Community Planning & LD IGR Review, dated June 23, 2015.

A4-1 The commenter stated that if the City allows a sizable development that will have a significant traffic impact in the future, then the traffic analysis should include an off-ramp queuing analysis. Given the existing land uses within the City and its built-out nature (see Figure 3-3, *Existing Land Uses*, of the DEIR), limited growth is anticipated within the City except for the growth associated with the infill opportunity sites (see Figure 3-5, *Infill Opportunity Sites*, of the DEIR). Based on the type and amount of development that would be accommodated within the infill opportunity sites by the General Plan Update, development that could occur on these sites is not anticipated to be of a sizable development that would have a significant impact on Caltrans' facilities, including freeway on-/off-ramps. Additionally, any future development projects accommodated by the General Plan Update would be required to go through the City's development review process, which would include an analysis of the project's potential traffic impacts on the local and regional transportation system. At the time of formal submittal of a development application, the City would determine what level of traffic analysis would be required for the development project, which if determined necessary by the City's traffic engineer, would require the analysis of the project's traffic impacts on Caltrans' facilities, including freeway on-/off-ramps.

A4-2 The commenter stated that Caltrans encourages the City of Sierra Madre to work with neighboring cities to resolve any cumulative significant traffic impacts on state transportation facilities and that this plan of working together should be discussed in the Circulation Element of the General Plan or a new resolution/policy should be passed to include the bulleted items outlined in this comment.

As stated in Section 4.4, *Assumptions Regarding Cumulative Impacts*, of Chapter 4, *Environmental Setting*, of the DEIR, Section 15130 of the CEQA Guidelines states that cumulative impacts shall be discussed when a project's incremental effect is cumulatively considerable. Section 15355 of the CEQA Guidelines defines cumulative impacts to be "two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts." Cumulative impacts represent the change caused by the incremental impact of the proposed project when added to effects of past projects, other current projects, and probable future projects in the vicinity. CEQA Guidelines Section 15130 (b)(1) states that the information utilized in an analysis of cumulative impacts should come from one of two sources, either:

- 1) A list of past, present and probable future projects producing related cumulative impacts, including, if necessary, those projects outside the control of the agency; or
- 2) A summary of projections contained in an adopted general plan or related planning document designed to evaluate regional or area-wide conditions.

2. Response to Comments

The cumulative impacts analysis contained in Chapter 5, *Environmental Analysis*, of the DEIR uses method No. 2. Consistent with Section 15130(b)(1)(B) of the CEQA Guidelines, the DEIR analyzes the environmental impacts of developments in accordance with buildout of the General Plan Update, which is designed to evaluate area-wide conditions. As a result, the DEIR addresses the cumulative impacts of development within the city of Sierra Madre and the larger region surrounding it, as appropriate. Potential cumulative impacts related to traffic, which have the potential for impacts beyond the city boundary, were addressed through use of a traffic model. The city uses SCAG's Regional Travel Demand Model to forecast cumulative growth in the city and regionally. Regional growth outside of the city has accounted for traffic impacts through use of this model, which is a socioeconomic traffic model that uses regional growth projections to calculate future traffic volumes. The growth projections adopted by the city and surrounding area were used for the cumulative impact analyses of the DEIR.

Since the Sierra Madre General Plan Update is cumulative in nature and is a document designed to evaluate area-wide conditions, the DEIR considered the cumulative impacts (including traffic) of hypothetical buildout of the General Plan Update in each respective topical section of the DEIR. As demonstrated in the analysis contained in Section 5.12, *Transportation and Traffic*, of the DEIR, which was based on the traffic impact study prepared by Fehr & Peers (provided as Appendix E of the DEIR), future development that would be accommodated by the General Plan Update would not result in any significant cumulative traffic impacts, including impacts on state transportation facilities. Therefore, the DEIR accounted for the General Plan Update's cumulative traffic impacts and determined that no such impacts would occur.

Additionally, the General Plan Update analysis provided in the DEIR was performed using typical evaluation methods appropriate for a general plan level of analysis. Traffic impact analysis required for individual development projects in the City that would be accommodated under the General Plan Update would be required to identify the project study area where potential traffic impacts associated with the proposed development could occur, including any impacts to state transportation facilities potentially affected. Traffic impacts identified by individual development projects in the City of Sierra Madre would be required to implement or contribute to improvements to any state transportation facilities impacted by the project. Future projects that contribute to impacts in adjacent cities would also be required to assess their fair share of traffic impacts on state transportation facilities. Likewise, development projects within adjacent cities would be required to implement or contribute to improvements to any state transportation facilities impacted by the project.

2. Response to Comments

Furthermore, the commenter's request that the City of Sierra Madre work together with neighboring cities to resolve any cumulative significant traffic impacts on state transportation facilities be discussed in the Circulation Element of the General Plan or a new resolution/policy be passed to include the bulleted items outlined in this comment is not directed at the adequacy of the analysis contained in the DEIR. CEQA Guidelines Section 15204 (a) outlines parameters for submitting comments, and reminds persons and public agencies that the focus of review and comment of DEIRs should be "on the sufficiency of the document in identifying and analyzing possible impacts on the environment and ways in which significant effects of the project might be avoided or mitigated. When responding to comments, lead agencies need only respond to significant environmental issues and do not need to provide all information requested by reviewers, as long as a good faith effort at full disclosure is made in the EIR." Therefore, no formal response is necessary to the commenter's request. However, the comment is acknowledged, included in the official environmental record of the proposed project, and will be forwarded to the appropriate City of Sierra Madre decision-makers for their review and consideration.

Finally, the City of Sierra Madre will work and coordinate with neighboring cities (to the extent feasible) to identify and resolve any cumulative significant traffic impacts on state transportation facilities that may arise from future development projects that would be accommodated by the General Plan Update or cumulative development projects in neighboring cities. This would be ensured through each cities development review process of individual development projects, at which time each project would be assessed for their potential traffic impacts to the local and regional transportation system.

2. Response to Comments

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2. Response to Comments

LETTER A5 – County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County (3 pages)



COUNTY SANITATION DISTRICTS
OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY

1955 Workman Mill Road, Whittier, CA 90601-1400
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 4998, Whittier, CA 90607-4998
Telephone: (562) 699-7411, FAX: (562) 699-5422
www.lacsds.org

GRACE ROBINSON HYDE
Chief Engineer and General Manager

June 23, 2015

Ref File No.: 3312230

Ms. Leticia Cardoso, AICP, Senior Planner
Planning and Community Preservation
Department
City of Sierra Madre
232 West Sierra Madre Boulevard
Sierra Madre, CA 91024

Dear Ms. Cardoso:

The City of Sierra Madre General Plan Update

The County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County (Districts) received a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the subject project on May 11, 2015. The City of Sierra Madre is located within the jurisdictional boundaries of District No. 15. We offer the following comments:

- 1. Previous comments submitted by the Districts in correspondence dated October 22, 2013 (copy enclosed), to Mr. Danny Castro of your agency, still apply to the subject project with the following updated information. A5-1
- 2. The San Jose Creek Water Reclamation Plant (WRP) currently processes an average flow of 71.3 million gallons per day (mgd). The Whittier Narrows WRP currently processes an average flow of 8.0 mgd. A5-2
- 3. All other information concerning Districts' facilities and sewerage service contained in the document is current. A5-3

If you have any questions, please contact the undersigned at (562) 908-4288, extension 2717.

Very truly yours,

Grace Robinson Hyde

Adriana Raza
Customer Service Specialist
Facilities Planning Department

AR:ar
Enclosure

DOC: #3359445 D15

Recycled Paper

2. Response to Comments



COUNTY SANITATION DISTRICTS OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY

1955 Workman Mill Road, Whittier, CA 90601-1400
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 4998, Whittier, CA 90607-4998
Telephone: (562) 699-7411, FAX: (562) 699-5422
www.lacsd.org

GRACE ROBINSON CHAN
Chief Engineer and General Manager

October 22, 2013

Ref File No.: 2735033

Mr. Danny Castro
Director of Development Services
City of Sierra Madre
232 West Sierra Madre Boulevard
Sierra Madre, CA 91024

Dear Mr. Castro:

The City of Sierra Madre General Plan Update

The County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County (Districts) received a Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the subject project on September 20, 2013. The City of Sierra Madre is located within the jurisdictional boundaries of District No. 15. We offer the following comments regarding sewerage service:

1. The Districts own, operate, and maintain only the large trunk sewers that form the backbone of the regional wastewater conveyance system. Local collector and/or lateral sewer lines are the responsibility of the jurisdiction in which they are located. As such, the Districts cannot comment on any deficiencies in the sewerage system in the City of Sierra Madre (City) except to state that presently no deficiencies exist in Districts' facilities that serve the City. For information on deficiencies in the City sewerage system, please contact the City Department of Public Works and/or the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works. A5-4
2. The City's wastewater is treated at the San Jose Creek Water Reclamation Plant (WRP) located adjacent to the City of Industry, which has a design capacity of 100 million gallons per day (mgd) and currently processes an average flow of 74.5 mgd, or the Whittier Narrows WRP located near the City of South El Monte, which has a design capacity of 15 mgd and currently processes an average flow of 8.1 mgd. A5-5
3. In order to estimate the volume of wastewater future developments will generate, go to www.lacsd.org, Wastewater & Sewer Systems, Will Serve Program, and click on the [Table 1. Loadings for Each Class of Land Use](#) link for a copy of the Districts' average wastewater generation factors. A5-6
4. The Districts are empowered by the California Health and Safety Code to charge a fee for the privilege of connecting (directly or indirectly) to the Districts' Sewerage System or increasing the strength or quantity of wastewater attributable to a particular parcel or operation already connected. This connection fee is a capital facilities fee that is imposed in an amount sufficient to construct an incremental expansion of the Sewerage System to accommodate individual proposed A5-7

DOC #2735033 D15

Recycled Paper

2. Response to Comments

Mr. Danny Castro

-2-

October 22, 2013

projects. Payment of a connection fee will be required before a permit to connect to the sewer is issued. For a copy of the Connection Fee Information Sheet, go to www.lacsd.org, Wastewater & Sewer Systems, Will Serve Program, and click on the appropriate link. For more specific information regarding the connection fee application procedure and fees, please contact the Connection Fee Counter at extension 2727.

A5-7
cont'd

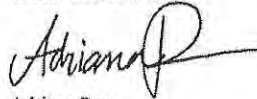
5. In order for the Districts to conform to the requirements of the Federal Clean Air Act (CAA), the design capacities of the Districts' wastewater treatment facilities are based on the regional growth forecast adopted by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG). Specific policies included in the development of the SCAG regional growth forecast are incorporated into clean air plans, which are prepared by the South Coast and Antelope Valley Air Quality Management Districts in order to improve air quality in the South Coast and Mojave Desert Air Basins as mandated by the CCA. All expansions of Districts' facilities must be sized and service phased in a manner that will be consistent with the SCAG regional growth forecast for the counties of Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, Riverside, Ventura, and Imperial. The available capacity of the Districts' treatment facilities will, therefore, be limited to levels associated with the approved growth identified by SCAG. As such, this letter does not constitute a guarantee of wastewater service, but is to advise you that the Districts intend to provide this service up to the levels that are legally permitted and to inform you of the currently existing capacity and any proposed expansion of the Districts' facilities.

A5-8

If you have any questions, please contact the undersigned at (562) 908-4288, extension 2717.

Very truly yours,

Grace Robinson Chan



Adriana Raza
Customer Service Specialist
Facilities Planning Department

AR:ar

DOC. #2735023 D15

2. Response to Comments

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2. Response to Comments

A5. Response to Comments from County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County, Grace Robinson Hyde, Chief Engineer and General Manager, dated June 23, 2015.

- A5-1 The commenter stated that the comments submitted by the County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County (Districts) in their correspondence dated October 22, 2013, still apply to the General Plan Update. The comment is acknowledged and no response is necessary.
- A5-2 The commenter provided current average flow numbers of the San Jose Creek Water Reclamation Plant (SJCWRP) and Whittier Narrows Water Reclamation Plant (WNWRP), which serve the City of Sierra Madre's wastewater treatment needs. In response to the commenter, the current average flow numbers have been added under the discussion of Subsection 5.13.1, *Wastewater Treatment and Collection Systems*, in Chapter 5.13, *Utilities and Service Systems*, of the DEIR, as described in more detail in Section 3, *Revisions to the Draft EIR*, of this FEIR.
- A5-3 The commenter stated that all other information concerning the Districts' facilities and wastewater service contained in the document attached to the comment letter is current. The comment is acknowledged and no response is necessary.
- A5-4 The commenter stated that the Districts cannot comment on any deficiencies in the wastewater system in the City of Sierra Madre except to state that presently there are no deficiencies in the Districts' facilities that serve the City. The comment is acknowledged and no response is necessary.
- A5-5 See response to Comment A5-2, above.
- A5-6 The commenter provided a link to the Districts' website where estimated volumes of wastewater by development type can be found. The comment is acknowledged and no response is necessary.
- A5-7 The commenter stated that the Districts are empowered by the California Health and Safety Code to charge a fee for the privilege of connecting (directly or indirectly) to the Districts' sewerage system or increasing the strength or quantity of wastewater attributed to a particular parcel or operation already connected. The connection fee is a capital facilities fee that is required to be paid before a permit to connect to a sewer is issued. At the time that individual development projects under the General Plan Update are submitted to the City of Sierra Madre for review and approval, all applicable development fees, including the Districts connection fee (if applicable), will be required to be paid by the individual project applicants. Payment of all applicable development fees will be ensured through the City's development review and building plan check process.

2. Response to Comments

- A5-8 The commenter stated that the design capacities of the Districts' wastewater treatment facilities are based on the regional growth forecast adopted by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), and that the available capacity of these facilities are therefore limited to levels associated with the approved growth identified by SCAG. The commenter also stated that the comment letter does not constitute a guarantee of wastewater service, but is to advise the City that the Districts intend to provide this service up to the levels that are legally permitted and to inform the City of the current existing capacity and any proposed expansion of the Districts' facilities. The comment is acknowledged and no response is necessary.

3. Revisions to the Draft EIR

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This section contains revisions to the DEIR based on (1) additional or revised information required to prepare a response to a specific comment; (2) applicable updated information that was not available at the time of DEIR publication; and/or (3) typographical errors. This section also includes additional mitigation measures to fully respond to commenter concerns as well as provide additional clarification to mitigation requirements included in the DEIR. The provision of these additional mitigation measures does not alter any impact significance conclusions as disclosed in the DEIR. Changes made to the DEIR are identified here in ~~strikeout text~~ to indicate deletions and in underlined text to signify additions.

3.2 DEIR REVISIONS IN RESPONSE TO WRITTEN COMMENTS

The following text has been revised in response to comments received on the DEIR.

Page 1-16, Table 1-1, *Summary of Environmental Impacts, Mitigation Measures and Levels of Significance After Mitigation*, Chapter 1, *Executive Summary*. The following text has been modified in response to Comment A2-2 from Betty J. Courtney of California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Table 1-1 Summary of Environmental Impacts, Mitigation Measures and Levels of Significance After Mitigation

Environmental Impact	Level of Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Level of Significance After Mitigation
5.3 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES			
<i>Impact 5.3-4:</i> Implementation of the General Plan Update would not have a significant impact on wildlife movement corridors, <u>but could have an impact on migratory birds.</u>	Less Than Significant Potentially Significant	No mitigation measures are required. 3.1 <u>Activities of future development accommodated by the General Plan Update (activities include but are not limited to staging and disturbances to native and nonnative vegetation, structures, and substrates) shall occur outside of the avian breeding season in accordance with the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and California Department of Fish and Wildlife Code, which generally runs from February 1 through August 31 (as early as January 1 for some raptors) to avoid take of birds or their eggs. Take means to hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill, or attempt to hunt, pursue, catch, capture or kill (Fish and Game Code Section 86), and includes take of eggs and/or young resulting from disturbances that cause abandonment of active nests. Depending on the avian species present, a qualified biologist may determine that a change in the</u>	Less Than Significant

3. Revisions to the Draft EIR

Table 1-1 Summary of Environmental Impacts, Mitigation Measures and Levels of Significance After Mitigation

Environmental Impact	Level of Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Level of Significance After Mitigation
		<p><u>breeding season dates is warranted.</u></p> <p><u>If avoidance of the avian breeding season is not feasible, beginning 30 days prior to the initiation of project activities, a qualified biologist with experience in conducting breeding bird surveys shall conduct weekly bird surveys to detect protected native birds occurring in suitable nesting habitat that is to be disturbed and (as access to adjacent areas allows) any other such habitat within 300 feet of the disturbance area (within 500 feet for raptors). The surveys shall continue on a weekly basis with the last survey being conducted no more than 3 days prior to the initiation of project activities. If a protected native bird is found, the project proponent shall delay all project activities within 300 feet of on- and offsite suitable nesting habitat (within 500 feet for suitable raptor nesting habitat) until August 31. Alternatively, the qualified biologist shall continue the surveys in order to locate any nests. If an active nest is located, project activities within 300 feet of the nest (within 500 feet for raptor nests) or as determined by a qualified biological monitor, must be postponed until the nest is vacated and juveniles have fledged and there is no evidence of a second attempt at nesting. Flagging, stakes, and/or construction fencing shall be used to demarcate the inside boundary of the buffer of 300 feet (or 500 feet for raptors) between the project activities and the nest. Project personnel, including all contractors working onsite, shall be instructed on the sensitivity of the buffer area. The project proponent shall provide the City of Sierra Madre Planning and Community Preservation Department the results of the recommended protective measures described above to document compliance with applicable state and federal laws pertaining to the protection of native birds.</u></p> <p><u>If the biological monitor determines that a narrower buffer between the project activities and observed active nests is warranted, he/she should submit a written explanation as to why (e.g., species-specific information; ambient conditions and birds' habituation to them; and the terrain, vegetation, and birds' lines of sight between the project activities and the nest and foraging areas) to the City, to allow a narrower buffer.</u></p> <p><u>The biological monitor shall be present onsite during all grubbing and clearing of vegetation to ensure that these activities remain within the project footprint (i.e., outside the demarcated buffer) and that the flagging/stakes/fencing is being maintained, and to minimize the</u></p>	

3. Revisions to the Draft EIR

Table 1-1 Summary of Environmental Impacts, Mitigation Measures and Levels of Significance After Mitigation

Environmental Impact	Level of Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Level of Significance After Mitigation
		likelihood that active nests are abandoned or fail due to project activities. The biological monitor shall send weekly monitoring reports to the City during the grubbing and clearing of vegetation, and shall notify the City immediately if project activities damage active avian nests.	

Pages 5.3-26 and 5.3-28, Section 5.3, *Biological Resources*. The following text has been modified in response to Comment A2-2 from Betty J. Courtney of California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Impact 5.3-4: Implementation of the General Plan Update would not have a significant impact on wildlife movement corridors, but could have an impact on migratory birds. [Threshold B-4]

Impacts to Migratory Birds

Future development that would be accommodated by the General Plan Update would involve the removal of some trees and other vegetation in currently developed parts of the city. The type and amount of trees and vegetation that could be removed is not known at this time, as no actual development project is being considered in this DEIR or as a part of the General Plan Update. However, the removal of such trees and vegetation may provide suitable habitat, including nesting habitat, for migratory birds¹ under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and under Section 3513 et seq of the CDFW Code. CDFW Code Section 3513 provides protection to the birds listed under the MBTA, essentially all native birds. Migratory nongame native bird species are also protected by international treaty under the MBTA (50 CFR Section 10.13). Additionally, section 3503 of the CDFW Code makes it unlawful to take, possess, or needlessly destroy the nest or eggs of any bird. Furthermore, Section 3503.5 of the CDFW Code makes it unlawful to take, possess, or destroy any birds of prey or to take, possess, or destroy the nest or eggs of any such bird. In summary, Sections 3503, 3503.5, and 3513 of the CDFW Code prohibit take of all birds and their active nests including raptors and other migratory nongame birds, as listed under the MBTA.

The MBTA implements the United States’ commitment to four treaties with Canada, Japan, Mexico, and Russia for the protection of shared migratory bird resources. The MBTA governs the taking, killing, possession, transportation, and importation of migratory birds, their eggs, parts, and nests. Under the provisions of the MBTA, it is unlawful “by any means or manner to pursue, hunt, take, capture (or) kill” any migratory birds except as permitted by regulations issued by USFWS. The term “take” is defined by USFWS regulation to mean to “pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture or collect” any migratory bird or any

¹ Migratory birds include all native birds in the United States, as listed in 50 CFR (Code of Federal Regulations) Section 10.13 (List of Migratory Birds).

3. Revisions to the Draft EIR

part, nest or egg of any migratory bird covered by the conventions, or to attempt those activities. USFWS administers permits to take migratory birds in accordance with the MBTA.

Activities of future development that would be accommodated by the General Plan Update (activities include but not limited to staging and disturbances to native and nonnative vegetation, structures, and substrates) would be required to comply with the MBTA by either avoiding site clearing, demolition or grading activities during the breeding/nesting season (February 1 to ~~September 1~~ August 31, as defined by CDFW; as early as January 1 for some raptors) or conducting a site survey for nesting birds prior to commencing such activities during the nesting season, as outlined in Mitigation Measure 3-1. Per CDFW, raptor species may commence nesting activities as early as January, especially great-horned owls (*Bubo virginianus*). Adherence to the MBTA regulations and implementation of Mitigation Measure 3-1 would ensure that if construction occurs during the breeding/nesting season, appropriate measures would be taken to avoid impacts to nesting birds, if any are found. Additionally, adherence to the MTBA regulations and implementation of Mitigation Measure 3-1 would be ensured through the city's development review and building plan check process.

For these reasons, future development that would be accommodated by the General Plan Update, any land use changes proposed under the General Plan Update, and any new or updated policies of the General Plan Update are not anticipated to create a significant impact.

Page 5.3-31, Section 5.3, *Biological Resources*. The following text has been modified in response to Comment A2-2 from Betty J. Courtney of California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

5.3.6 Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Upon compliance with the regulatory requirements and implementation of the General Plan Update policies and Implementation Program measures, the following impacts would be less than significant: ~~5.3-1 through 5.3-6; 5.3-1, 5.3-2, 5.3-3, 5.3-5, and 5.3-6.~~

Without mitigation, the following impacts would be **potentially significant**:

- Impact 5.3-4 Implementation of the General Plan Update could have an impact on migratory birds.

3. Revisions to the Draft EIR

5.3.7 Mitigation Measures

No significant adverse impacts were identified and no mitigation measures are necessary.

Impact 5.4-1

3-1 Activities of future development accommodated by the General Plan Update (activities include but are not limited to staging and disturbances to native and nonnative vegetation, structures, and substrates) shall occur outside of the avian breeding season in accordance with the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and California Department of Fish and Wildlife Code (which generally runs from February 1 through August 31; as early as January 1 for some raptors) to avoid take of birds or their eggs. Take means to hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill, or attempt to hunt, pursue, catch, capture or kill (Fish and Game Code Section 86), and includes take of eggs and/or young resulting from disturbances that cause abandonment of active nests. Depending on the avian species present, a qualified biologist may determine that a change in the breeding season dates is warranted.

If avoidance of the avian breeding season is not feasible, beginning 30 days prior to the initiation of project activities, a qualified biologist with experience in conducting breeding bird surveys shall conduct weekly bird surveys to detect protected native birds occurring in suitable nesting habitat that is to be disturbed and (as access to adjacent areas allows) any other such habitat within 300 feet of the disturbance area (within 500 feet for raptors). The surveys shall continue on a weekly basis with the last survey being conducted no more than 3 days prior to the initiation of project activities. If a protected native bird is found, the project proponent shall delay all project activities within 300 feet of on- and offsite suitable nesting habitat (within 500 feet for suitable raptor nesting habitat) until August 31. Alternatively, the qualified biologist shall continue the surveys in order to locate any nests. If an active nest is located, project activities within 300 feet of the nest (within 500 feet for raptor nests) or as determined by a qualified biological monitor, must be postponed until the nest is vacated and juveniles have fledged and there is no evidence of a second attempt at nesting. Flagging, stakes, and/or construction fencing shall be used to demarcate the inside boundary of the buffer of 300 feet (or 500 feet for raptors) between the project activities and the nest. Project personnel, including all contractors working onsite, shall be instructed on the sensitivity of the buffer area. The project proponent shall provide the City of Sierra Madre Planning and Community Preservation Department the results of the recommended protective measures described above to document compliance with applicable state and federal laws pertaining to the protection of native birds.

If the biological monitor determines that a narrower buffer between the project activities and observed active nests is warranted, he/she shall submit a written explanation as to why (e.g., species-specific information; ambient conditions and birds' habituation to them; and the terrain, vegetation, and birds' lines of sight between the project activities and the nest and foraging areas) to the City in order to allow a narrower buffer.

3. Revisions to the Draft EIR

The biological monitor shall be present onsite during all grubbing and clearing of vegetation to ensure that these activities remain within the project footprint (i.e., outside the demarcated buffer) and that the flagging/stakes/fencing is being maintained, and to minimize the likelihood that active nests are abandoned or fail due to project activities. The biological monitor shall send weekly monitoring reports to the City during the grubbing and clearing of vegetation, and shall notify the City immediately if project activities damage active avian nests.

5.3.8 Level of Significance After Mitigation

No significant adverse impacts were identified relating to biological resources. The mitigation measure identified above would reduce potential impacts associated with migratory birds to a level that is less than significant. Therefore, no significant unavoidable adverse impacts relating to biological resources have been identified.

Pages 5.13-3 and 5.13-4, Section 5.13, *Utilities and Service Systems*. The following text has been modified in response to Comment A5-2 from Grace Robinson Chan of California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Wastewater Treatment Facility

Under contract with the City, the Sanitation Districts provides treatment and disposal of wastewater generated in the City. The Sanitation Districts operate 11 wastewater treatment facilities, 10 of which are classified as water reclamation plants (WRPs); all of the Sanitation Districts wastewater treatment facilities are regulated under an NPDES permit. These 11 facilities serve approximately 5.5 million people in 78 cities and unincorporated areas within Los Angeles County, including the City of Sierra Madre. Effluent quality from the WRPs ranges from disinfected secondary to filtered, disinfected tertiary (Sanitation Districts 2013).

The wastewater from the City's service area, which is estimated at approximately one million gallons per day (mgd) or 365 million gallons annually (or 1,120 acre feet per year), primarily flows to (via the City's wastewater collection system and Sanitation Districts regional trunk lines) and receives tertiary treatment at the Whittier Narrows WRP (WNWRP) located in South El Monte or the San Jose Creek Water Reclamation Plant (SJCWRP) located in unincorporated Los Angeles County adjacent to the City of Industry (Sierra Madre 2011). The WNWRP, which is owned and operated by the Sanitation Districts, is regulated under NPDES Permit No. CA0053716, issued by the Los Angeles RWQCB (LARWQCB) in 2009 under Order No. R4-2009-0077 (WNWRP Order). The SJCWRP, also owned and operated by the Sanitation Districts, is regulated under NPDES Permit No. CA0053911, issued by LARWQCB in 2009 under Order No. R4-2009-0078 (SJCWRP Order). Although the current WNWRP and SJCWRP Orders expired on May 10, 2014, the terms and conditions of the WNWRP and SJCWRP Orders have been automatically continued and remain in effect until new Waste Discharge Requirements and NPDES permit are adopted by LARWQCB pursuant to this Order.

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The WNWRP has a treatment capacity of approximately 15 mgd (currently processes an average flow of 8.1 mgd) and provides coagulated, filtered and disinfected tertiary effluent; the SJCWRP has a treatment capacity of approximately 100 mgd (currently processes an average flow of 74.5 mgd) of primary, secondary, and tertiary treatment. WNWRP receives wastewater (which is a mixture of residential, commercial and industrial wastewater) from the cities of Alhambra, Arcadia, Azusa, Bradbury, Industry, Duarte, El Monte, Glendale, Irwindale, La Cañada Flintridge, Los Angeles, Monrovia, Monterey Park, Pasadena, Rosemead, San Gabriel, San Marino, Sierra Madre, South El Monte, South Pasadena, and Temple City. The SJCWRP receives wastewater (which is a mixture domestic and industrial wastewater) from the Cities of Arcadia, Azusa, Baldwin Park, Bradbury, Industry, Covina, Diamond Bar, Duarte, El Monte, Monte, Glendora, Irwindale, La Puente, La Verne, Monrovia, Pasadena, Pomona, Rosemead, San Dimas, San Gabriel, San Marino, Sierra Madre, Temple City, Walnut, and West Covina. The current and projected volume of wastewater collected and treated at the WNWRP is shown in Table 5.13-1.

Approximately 99 percent of the WNWRP reclaimed water is beneficially reused, mostly for groundwater replenishment and landscape irrigation (Sanitation Districts 2013). Treated recycled water (non-recycled water) that is not used is discharged to the San Gabriel River/Rio Hondo and eventually flows into the Pacific Ocean. Approximately 56 percent of the SJCWRP reclaimed water is reused for groundwater recharge and irrigation of parks, schools, and greenbelts. The remainder is discharged to the San Gabriel River (Sanitation Districts 2015).

Page 5.13-6, Section 5.12, *Utilities and Service Systems*. The following text has been modified in response to Comment A5-2 from Grace Robinson Chan of California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Impact 5.13-1: Wastewater generated from future development that would be accommodated by the General Plan Update would not exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the Regional Water Quality Control Board. [Threshold U-1]

Impact Analysis: While the City of Sierra Madre operates the local wastewater collection system that serves the various land uses in the City, wastewater generated in the City flows through this system and is discharged via the Sanitation Districts regional trunk lines to the WNWRP in South El Monte or the SJCWRP in unincorporated Los Angeles County adjacent to the City of Industry, which is are owned and operated by the Sanitation Districts. The WNWRP and SJCWRP is are required by federal and state law to meet applicable standards of treatment plant discharge requirements. Specifically, the WNWRP is regulated under NPDES Permit No. CA0053716, issued by LARWQCB in 2009 under Order No. R4-2009-0077; the SJCWRP is regulated under NPDES Permit No. CA0053911, issued by LARWQCB in 2009 under Order No. R4-2009-0078. The NPDES permits regulates the amount and type of pollutants that the WNWRP and SJCWRP can discharge into receiving waters, which include the San Gabriel River/Rio Hondo. Although the current WNWRP and SJCWRP Orders expired in May 2014, the terms and conditions of the Orders have been automatically continued and remain in effect until new Waste Discharge Requirements and NPDES permit are adopted by LARWQCB pursuant to ~~this~~ these Orders.

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The WNWWRP and SJCWRP ~~is~~ are operating and would continue to operate subject to state waste discharge requirements and federal NPDES permit requirements, as set forth in the aforementioned permit and order numbers. The additional wastewater that would be generated by future development that would be accommodated by the General Plan Update and treated by the Sanitation Districts would not impede the Sanitation Districts ability to continue to meet its wastewater treatment requirements, which include not only the treatment of wastewater, but also the beneficial reuse of treated wastewater for groundwater replenishment and landscape irrigation.

For these reasons, impacts on the Sanitation Districts wastewater treatment requirements are not anticipated to be significant with implementation of the General Plan Update.

Pages 5.13-6 and 5.13-7, Section 5.13, *Utilities and Service Systems*. The following text has been modified in response to Comment A5-2 from Grace Robinson Chan of California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Impact 5.13-2: Future development that would be accommodated by the General Plan Update would result in an increase in wastewater generation; however, additional generation would be adequately collected and treated, respectively, by the City of Sierra Madre and Sanitation Districts. [Thresholds U-2 (part) and U-5]

Impact Analysis: Sierra Madre does not have wastewater treatment capacity or facilities, only a wastewater collection system, which is primarily comprised of pipelines eight inches in diameter or less, and is managed, operated, and maintained by the City's Sewer Division. The City's wastewater collection system connects and discharges to sewer mains in the City of Arcadia and to Los Angeles County trunk mains in Baldwin Avenue, Sierra Madre Boulevard and East Orange Grove Avenue.

The wastewater from the City's service area, which is estimated at approximately one million gallons per day (mgd) or 365 million gallons annually (equates to 1,120 acre feet per year), primarily flows to (via the City's wastewater collection system and Sanitation Districts regional trunk lines) and receives ~~tertiary~~ treatment at the WNWWRP located in South El Monte or the SJCWRP in unincorporated Los Angeles County adjacent to the City of Industry (Sierra Madre 2011), which ~~is~~ are owned and operated by the Sanitation Districts.

Wastewater Treatment

Buildout of the General Plan Update would increase wastewater generation compared to existing conditions. In order to calculate the estimated project-generated wastewater, CalEEMod wastewater generation rates for each of the proposed land uses were used. As shown in Table 5.13-2, future development that would be accommodated by the General Plan Update would generate approximately 21.2 million gallons of wastewater per year. This equates to approximately 65.1 acre feet per year.

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Table 5.13-2 Projected Wastewater Generation under the General Plan Update

Land Use	Net Buildout Under the General Plan Update	Wastewater Generation Rate (Gallons Per Year)	
		Rate	Total
Residential	121 units	65,154 per unit	7,883,634
Commercial	43,696 SF	74,073 per 1,000 SF	3,236,694
Industrial	43,696 SF	231,250 per 1,000 SF	10,104,700
TOTAL	—	—	21,225,028

Source: South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD). 2013. California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod), Version 2013.2.2, Appendix D.
Notes: SF = square feet; GPD = gallons per day

The 21.2 million gallons of wastewater generated per year (or approximately 58,000 gallons per day) under the General Plan Update would be transported to and treated by the WNWRP or SJCWRP, which ~~has a~~ have treatment ~~capacity~~ capacities of 15 mgd and 100 mgd, respectively. The additional wastewater would account for approximately 0.4 percent of WNWRP's wastewater treatment capacity or .06 percent of SJCWRP's wastewater treatment capacity. For example, As shown in Table 5.13-1, Whittier Narrows Water Reclamation Plant – Current and Projected Wastewater Treatment (In Acre Feet Per Year), the current and projected volume of wastewater collected and treated at the WNWRP is 8,000 acre feet per year through 2035, which equates to approximately 7.1 mgd. The current and projected capacity (volume of wastewater collected and treated) of the WNWRP is well within the established limits; in fact, the WNWRP is operating at approximately half its maximum capacity. Additionally, of its 15 mgd treatment capacity, the WNWRP currently processes an average flow of 8.1 mgd; of its 100 mgd treatment capacity, the SJCWRP currently processes an average flow of 74.5 mgd.

Therefore, the amount of wastewater generated under the General Plan Update would be more than adequately accommodated by the WNWRP and SJCWRP since it has a remaining of approximately 7.9 mgd both have more than adequate treatment capacity available. Implementation of the General Plan Update would not require construction of future wastewater treatment facilities, or the expansion of existing facilities.

Chapter 13, *Bibliography*. The following text has been modified in response to Comment A5-2 from Grace Robinson Chan of California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County (Sanitation Districts). 2015. San Jose Creek Water Reclamation Plant. http://www.lacsd.org/wastewater/wvfacilities/joint_outfall_system_wrp/san_jose_creek.asp.

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