



City of Sierra Madre

Office of the City Clerk

232 W. Sierra Madre Blvd.,

Sierra Madre, CA

(626) 355-7135

THE BROWN ACT PROVIDES THE PUBLIC WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE PUBLIC COMMENTS AT ANY PUBLIC MEETING.

THE FOLLOWING WRITTEN COMMENTS WERE RECEIVED IN ADVANCE OF THIS MEETING AND WILL BE POSTED ONTO THE CITY'S WEBSITE FOR PUBLIC ACCESS AND TRANSPARENCY.

THE COMMENTS ATTACHED ARE SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC. THE CITY DOES NOT CONFIRM THE VERACITY OF THE STATEMENTS PROVIDED BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

Draft EIR Comments

I have reviewed the draft EIR, Zoning Amendment, Appendices and Specific Plan for the Monastery Project and make the following comments for inclusion into the public record.

Project Impacts – It is the role of the Planning Commission and City Council to ‘determine if the potential significant impacts of the project have been fully mitigated below a level of significance and if any alternative meets the key objectives of the Project while reducing environmental impact’. While the Draft EIR overwhelmingly claims that most project impacts are insignificant and the 6 that are potentially significant can be reduced through mitigation to insignificant, detailed information is presented that disproves this. A discussion of the Project Impacts follows:

There are eight objectives of the proposed project. The Project does not meet five of them as outlined below:

Objective 1: Plans have not been submitted for ‘long range development’ as stated. This is a short term, one phase project. For many reasons which will be discussed further, this Project should not be considered a model for future development. The Project does not ‘ensure community compatibility with our small town character’ as the zoning and development standards proposed are significantly different from our residential zoning code and design standards.

Objective 4: The objective of a ‘high quality community sensitively sited within the sites existing natural topography’ and ‘minimizes traffic impacts to adjacent sites’ fails on both counts. The project will destroy all existing natural topography and replace it with three levels of grading for three rows of concrete pads; the widening of two roads and the addition of three; and will remove over 100 mature trees and all vegetation and wildlife habitat from the site. Critically, the Project provides no information, no traffic studies, no plans, no recommendations, nothing to minimize traffic impacts to adjacent streets. In a glaring omission, the Project fails to mention impacts on neighbouring streets.

Objective 5: This objective purports to ‘dedicate approximately 30 acres of hillside open space directly behind the Retreat Center in order to preserve Colby Canyon.’ This objective fails on two points: a) Portions of the land to be donated do not belong to the Monastery property, but to Pasadena and Sierra Madre. And b) Colby Canyon is located in the Angeles National Forest approximately 24 miles north of the property and has no discernible relationship to the Monastery.

Objective 6: The Project fails to provide ‘street improvements for safe efficient access from North Sunnyside Avenue’. North Sunnyside Ave begins at Sierra Madre Blvd and runs for 6 blocks north before entering private Monastery property. Per the Project Plan, street improvements are only made to North Sunnyside after it enters the private Monastery property, ignoring the 6 blocks south of the Project that will be used as the primary access to the property. The Project seeks only ‘safe, efficient access’ at the property line – not before, where it is needed the most.

Objective 7: This objective claims a ‘net zero impact on local water supplies to minimize burdens on existing City, infrastructure and environmental impact’. The project provides no details other than pre-purchasing 50 years of water at today’s price and storing it for future use. The Project provides no details on how it will meet real ‘net zero’ impact guidelines established by the US Department of Energy. <https://www.energy.gov/eere/femp/net-zero-water-building-strategies>. The Project fails

to provide details on how it 'minimizes burdens on City's infrastructure' and 'minimizes impact on the environment'.

It is recommended that the Planning Commission and City Council request the missing supporting details and information from the developer before discussing the Discretionary Actions that are required as the Project does not realistically and honestly assess the projects impacts on the community.

The Project discusses the following potentially significant impacts and purports to address them to less than significant thru mitigation. Attempts to do so fail in the following areas.

Aesthetics

Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

Yes, the Project would block current views of the San Gabriel Mountains from the neighbouring homes on the west and south side of the development. The Project is comprised of a majority of two story homes that would compromise the views that the homeowners now enjoy. The vista from the park area would be minimal as it is the lowest point of the project. When the park trees are mature, they would block visibility to the mountains.

Biological Resources:

Would the Project have a 'substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive or special status species in local or regional plans, policies or regulation, or by the Ca Dept of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service'?

To answer this, a Dudek biologist conducted one field survey on May 29, 2020. Time unknown. The survey methodology is flawed as it only occurred on one day, time and duration both unknown. It is likely, however, that it was conducted during normal business hours 9 to 5. Many animals are visible in early morning, evening hours and at night. It is highly unlikely that a quick snapshot of any meadow area during our working hours will result in animal/bird sightings. For example, bats are off in the evening 20 minutes before dusk and the biologist would have to have bat detection devices that record the sonar pitch - which is different for each species. Townsend's Big Eared Bat is listed by the State of California. All bats need insects and water. If their survey was not done during the bat flight, it needs to be stated. Bats are not present if there are no insects to feed on. As noted below, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) recommends a 'project-level biological resources survey provide a thorough discussion and adequate disclosure of potential impacts to bats and roosts from project construction and activities including (but not limited to) ground-disturbing activities (e.g., mobilizing, staging, drilling, and excavating) and vegetation removal'.

In addition, in December 2019, the project area was heavily sprayed with chemicals by the Monastery ostensibly to kill tumbleweeds. The result transformed a once beautiful green meadow occupied by ground squirrels, rabbits, snakes, gophers, deer, birds and coyote into a barren

uninhabitable wasteland. The pictures below show before and after the devastating impacts of destroying the food source and habitat of local wildlife.



It is not surprising that no wildlife or plant materials were found five months after the application of chemicals.

Further, the survey did not address seed bank or lasting roots of native plants that are found at this elevation all across the foothills.

Appendix C1 lists 43 special-status wildlife species with recorded occurrences in the project site, with 37 listed under federal and/or California endangered species acts, noting that there is a low potential for occurrence due to lack of suitable habitat as illustrated above. Concerns about project impact on wildlife corridors, such as along the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains were not addressed. CDFW notes that development occurring adjacent to natural habitat areas such as wildlife corridors could have direct or indirect impacts on wildlife. Impacts result from increased human presence, traffic, noise, and artificial lighting. Increased human-wildlife interactions could lead to injury or mortality of wildlife. For instance, as human population and communities expand into wildland areas, there has been a commensurate increase in direct and indirect interaction between mountain lions/bears and people. As a result, the need to relocate or humanely euthanize mountain lions and bears may increase for public safety. CDFW recommends that the developer thoroughly analyze whether the project may impact wildlife corridors. Impacts include habitat loss and fragmentation, narrowing of a wildlife corridor, and introduction of barriers to wildlife movement. Additional analysis is needed of the projects direct and indirect impacts on wildlife resulting from increased human presence, traffic, noise, and artificial lighting.

Eleven bat species were noted with low occurrence due to lack of habitat and noted that the pallid bat which roosts in trees 'would be expected to leave if the tree is disturbed'. No doubt, removing over 100 trees would result in loss of habitat and nesting for many birds and give them no other option but leaving. CDFW advises that numerous bat species are known to roost in trees and structures throughout Los Angeles County (Remington and Cooper 2014). In urbanized areas, bats use trees and man-made structures for daytime and night-time roosts. Accordingly, CDFW recommends the project provide measures to avoid potential impacts to bats. Bats are considered non-game mammals and are afforded protection by state law from take and/or harassment (Fish & G. Code, § 4150; Cal. Code of Regs., § 251.1). Project construction and activities, including (but not limited to) ground disturbance, vegetation removal, and any activities leading to increased noise levels may have direct and/or indirect impacts on bats and roosts. CDFW recommends a project-level biological resources survey provide a thorough discussion and adequate disclosure of potential impacts to bats and roosts from project construction and activities including (but not limited to) ground-disturbing activities (e.g., mobilizing, staging, drilling, and excavating) and vegetation removal. If necessary, to reduce impacts to less than significant, a project-level environmental document should provide bat-specific avoidance and/or mitigation measures [CEQA Guidelines, § 15126.4(a)(1)].

The impacts to Nesting Birds was labelled a '**potentially significant impact**' and could occur 'if vegetation clearing and tree removal is undertaken during the breeding season from February 1 through August 31'. In addition, 'these activities would also affect herbaceous vegetation that could support and conceal ground-nesting species' 'Project activities that result in the loss of bird nests, eggs and young would be in violation of one or more of California Fish and Game codes and be potentially significant'.

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife recommends that the project 'avoid potential impacts to nesting birds. Project activities occurring during the bird and raptor breeding and nesting season could result in the incidental loss of fertile eggs or nestlings, or otherwise lead to nest abandonment'. They also recommend that 'measures be taken to fully avoid impacts to nesting birds and raptors. Ground-disturbing activities (e.g., mobilizing, staging, drilling, and excavating) and vegetation removal should occur outside of the avian breeding season which generally runs from February 15 through August 31 (as early as January 1 for some raptors) to avoid take of birds, raptors, or their eggs'.

There are no plans to follow these recommendations in the Draft EIR.

The CDFW states 'the biggest threat to birds is habitat loss and conversion of natural vegetation into another land use such as development (e.g., commercial, residential, industrial). In the greater Los Angeles region, urban forests and street trees, both native and some non-native species, provide habitat for a high diversity of 13 birds (Wood and Esaian 2020). Some species of raptors have adapted to and exploited urban areas for breeding and nesting (Cooper et al. 2020). For example, raptors (Accipitridae, Falconidae) such as red-tailed hawks (*Buteo jamaicensis*) and Cooper's hawks (*Accipiter cooperii*) can nest successfully in urban sites. Red-tailed hawks commonly nest in ornamental vegetation such as eucalyptus (Cooper et al. 2020).

The CDFW recommends surveys by a qualified biologist with experience conducting breeding bird and raptor surveys. Surveys are needed to detect protected native birds and raptors occurring in suitable nesting habitat that may be disturbed and any other such habitat within 300 feet of the project disturbance area, to the extent allowable and accessible. For raptors, this radius should be expanded to 500 feet and 0.5 mile for special status species, if feasible. Project personnel, including all contractors working on site, should be instructed on the sensitivity of the area. Reductions in the nest buffer distance may be appropriate depending on the avian species involved, ambient levels of human activity, screening vegetation, or possibly other factors.

The developer proposed the implementation of **MM-BIO-1** to reduce the impacts to nesting birds during construction as follows:

MM-BIO-1: Nesting Bird Avoidance. Initiation of construction activities (i.e., initial vegetation clearing) should avoid the migratory bird nesting season (February 1 through August 31), to reduce any potential significant impact to birds that may be nesting on the project site. If construction activities must be initiated during the migratory bird-nesting season, an avian nesting survey of the project site and contiguous habitat within 500 feet of all impact areas must be conducted for protected migratory birds and active nests. The avian nesting survey shall be performed by a qualified wildlife biologist within 72 hours prior to the start of construction in accordance with the MBTA and California Fish and Game Code. If an active bird nest is found, the nest shall be flagged and

mapped on the construction plans along with an appropriate no disturbance buffer, which shall be determined by the biologist based on the species' sensitivity to disturbance (typically 50 feet for common, urban-adapted species, 300 feet for other passerine species, and 500 feet for raptors and special-status species). The nest area shall be avoided until the nest is vacated and the juveniles have fledged. The nest area shall be demarcated in the field with flagging and stakes or construction fencing. A qualified biologist (with the ability to stop work) shall serve as a construction monitor during those periods when construction activities will occur near active nest areas to ensure that no inadvertent impacts on these nests occur.

We would argue that this is another example of a mitigation measure that does not conform to CEQA Guidelines that is feasible, effective, manageable and fully enforceable in order to be effective and successfully implemented to achieve the desired result.

In conclusion, the Biological Resources Report failed to provide a thorough discussion of direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts affecting project biological resources. There was no discussion regarding Project-related indirect impacts on biological resources, including resources in nearby public lands, open space, adjacent natural habitats or riparian ecosystem. Impacts on, and maintenance of, wildlife corridor/movement areas, including access to undisturbed habitats in adjacent areas were not discussed or evaluated. There was no discussion of the potential adverse impacts from lighting, noise, use of chemicals or temporary and permanent human activity.

Would the project conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?

The Project response is that the removal of 10 protected trees onsite would result in 'potentially significant impacts'. However, after mitigation, it is reduced to 'less than significant'.

Removing over 100 trees is a significant environmental impact, not only to the Monastery property, but to the neighbouring community as well. Four goals and objectives of the City's General Plan relative to trees support this position:

Goal 1: Continued preservation and protection of existing trees.

Goal 2: Increase of the City's community forest.

Objective R10: Maintaining and enhancing the City's significant tree resources.

Policy R10.2. Continue to develop tree preservation and protection measures.

The project fails to meet these critical goals and responds with the same sentence: "The Specific Plan includes a Tree and Planting Plan which includes the planting of new trees and will adhere to the City's Tree Preservation and Protection Ordinance," which includes replacing only 10 trees as they are protected. The Project does not value the contribution that the remaining 90+ trees have for the environment and the community. This does not mean they do not have unique qualities or declining numbers and are very likely important to our environment. Mature trees have deeper roots established over decades and deeper roots are more resistant to drought and to other effects of climate change. As this Project is in a very high fire zone, it is important to note that mature trees

of any kind are much more resistant to fire given their thick bark and elevated crowns. Young coast live oaks cannot survive fire, but old mature ones can.

The project disregards Goal 1 completely by removing over 100 mature trees, making it impossible to preserve and protect them. It appears that 100% of the trees on the project will be removed. No attempts to preserve and integrate them into the project have been made. All of the 101 trees are part of an ecosystem developed over decades. Removing them will have a negative effect on other plants and animals that has not been thoroughly studied in this DraftEIR.

Would the project conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?

Yes, the Project conflicts with the LA County Sustainability Plan as it fails to ensure a climate-appropriate, healthy urban tree canopy that is equitably distributed. The urban forest is an essential part of a healthy community, made up of trees on both public and private lands. Spread equitably and supported by other urban greening measures, a well-managed urban forest throughout LA County can deliver healthier soils, biodiversity, habitats, shading from heat, and greater community health and well-being. The Plan prioritizes resilient, climate-appropriate trees, understory vegetation, and native biodiversity. The plan conserves mature trees and properly manages resources to ensure that trees thrive in our urban environment. Removing over 100 trees conflicts with this plan.

Would the project have a cumulative effect on biological resources?

The Project has a cumulative effect on biological resources. This property is the largest undeveloped parcel of land left in Sierra Madre. With the approval of the Stonegate Project to build 29 homes at the base of the foothills to the east, the value of this parcel in its present state has increased significantly.

If it is developed, this parcel will destroy the natural habitats of the native plants and animals that have depended on this area for almost 100 years. If approved, this development will be situated on *the very last large parcel of land in the Eastern San Gabriel foothills, a significant loss for all of us.* The Water Conservation Authority ranked the Monastery property very in high in conservation value in their Foothills Open Space Acquisition Study due to its watershed value, adjacency to protected lands, and potential for habitat restoration.

Cultural Resources

Would the Project have a cumulative effect on cultural resources?

As the Project area is at the base of the foothills on sloping land, there is a distinct possibility that indigenous people lived in this area and have left behind evidence of their presence that will give us

greater insights into them. Historical maps show the existence of springs. The area hasn't been surveyed. The age of the soil, gentle slope and access to water make it likely the area was inhabited. Sensitivity mapping of local foothill areas show high sensitivity in the Monastery area and the site is a high priority for a cultural resource study. Bulldozing the area and building 42 homes, roads, driveways and sidewalks would destroy the opportunity to learn more about the cultural resources this area may offer.

Energy

Would the project result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation? Would the project conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?

Yes, the Project fails to incorporate high performance building standards for new County buildings beyond the current LEED Gold standard, such as Passive House, Zero Net Energy, Net Zero Water, Net Zero Waste, the Living Building Challenge and the WELL Building Standard. The Project incorporates the minimum standards required by current building codes and does not work to elevate the Project.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Would the project conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?

Yes, the project conflicts with the LA County Sustainability Plan. The 2015 LA County Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory, a component of the LA County Sustainability Plan, states that Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Transportation total 42% of all emissions. The project does not address the reduction of these emissions in its project as its occupants would be totally dependent on vehicles for transportation, as the project runs counter to current state wide efforts to construct housing with ½ mile of public transportation.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Would the project violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?

The Watershed Conservation Authority (WCA), states that imported water is not as sustainable as ground water. Building structures will compromise the ability to sustain the water. Reducing the amount of land and increasing the amount of storm water if this water has to be imported; will have to be cleaned, which is expensive for the taxpayers.

Create an integrated and resilient water system Water management in LA County today reflects a historically siloed view that failed to recognize the interconnectedness of all water, including groundwater, surface water, rainwater, and wastewater. This approach has led to a complex, disjointed system that is not well-suited to adapting to the needs of a rapidly growing region and changing climate. Building on the successful passage of the Safe Clean Water Program (Measure W), which promises to support an integrated and holistic approach to storm water management, the region must invest in a 21st-century water system that prioritizes multi-benefit management strategies that restore and mimic natural processes and cycles.

Would the project substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?

The Watershed Conservation Authority (WCA) advises that this development is situated on *the very last large parcel of land in the Eastern San Gabriel foothills which retains a connection between the canyons and the alluvial fan*. Alluvial fans have particularly high rates of infiltration as water can sink deep into the ground and recharge aquifers. Protecting the remaining recharge areas such as the Monastery undeveloped is a critical part of protecting our region's watersheds. This land was ranked very in high in conservation value in the agency's Foothills Open Space Acquisition Study due to its watershed value, adjacency to protected lands, potential for habitat restoration, and for public access. The Project will cover the existing 20 acre parcel with 42 building pads, driveways, sidewalks and roads that will substantially impact the percolation of rainfall levels into the ground. Collecting water in two 36 inch drains and discharging it into a water gallery at the southernmost end of the property interferes with groundwater recharge. Any excess will be sent into the city's storm water system.

Would the project substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on or off site;

Would the project have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?

No, at this time the city cannot buy any additional water for this project under the NetZero Impact Plan. The entire State of California is in a drought, reservoirs are at an all time low and mandatory water conservation is in effect in many cities at this time. It is expected that more cities will be making conservation demands of their communities with no extra water available for purchase in the foreseeable future. Even if water were available, the Net Zero Plan is misleading as it gives the impression that there is no water use and the impact on the City will be zero. This is not true. As the Project argues the value of its 'net zero' water usage, the project will have double the impact on water usage as it plans to now buy all the water it needs for the next 50 years and store it for future use, while homeowners will still use and pay for municipal water going forward. At the present time there is no water available for purchase. Given the present drought conditions, there is no guarantee

that this is a viable option going forward. California is in a drought, reservoirs are at an all time low and mandatory water conservation is in effect currently in many cities. It is just a matter of time before the Governor implements restrictions in southern California. The Project fails to provide a convincing argument that storing water today results in net zero water usage, as homeowners will still use and pay for municipal water going forward.

Land Use and Planning

Would the project physically divide an established community?

Despite its efforts to be Sierra Madre compatible and seamlessly integrate the Project into the community, the Project fails to do so in its attempts. Its design creates four physical 'buffers' on all sides of the property that create artificial barriers distancing the Project from its neighbours. Despite frequent use of the word connectivity, the Project fails to show discernible linkages for pedestrians and bicyclists. Even the park has no pedestrian linkage to the Sunnyside neighbourhood to the south or the Bailey Canyon Park to the east. The Project sidewalks end at the Project resulting in pedestrians walking a narrow street with no sidewalks to access the park. The Project result is a Project that sets itself apart from the established community and gives the impression of a gated community without the gate. The Project failed to accept the challenge of creating a cohesive, complementary development with a vision that is truly 'Sierra Madre quality'.

Transportation

Would the project result in inadequate emergency access? The project results in inadequate emergency access from Carter Avenue. The road has no sidewalks and is not wide enough to accommodate the confluence of cars leaving the area during an emergency and the emergency vehicles trying to enter.

Wildfire

Would the project substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, would the project exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?

One of the goals of the LA County Sustainability Plan is to 'Limit development in high climate-hazard areas'. Development locations should be carefully scrutinized with consideration for climate hazards such as wildfire, flooding, extreme heat, and sea level rise. Climate science allows us to identify the areas that are most at risk, including floodplains and the urban-wildland interface at the edge of developed areas. Wildfire is an integral component of ecological processes in LA County, but it is also on the rise due to hotter temperatures and changing precipitation patterns, posing a risk to

lives. LA County is already seeing longer droughts punctuated by intense rain events, which not only increases fire risk, but leads to flood vulnerability. In planning for these climate-related hazards, it is important to ensure large-scale development avoids areas prone to these risks.

As personally witnessed by residents, the western portion of the Monastery field is recognized as an emergency landing site by both Search and Rescue and responding fire departments. The Search and Rescue statistician estimates that they use this important staging area for their vehicles and attendant air rescue helicopters once every two years.

Objective Hz7 – “Avoid expanding development into undeveloped areas in a Very High Fire Severity Zone.” The Project is inconsistent with this objective of the General Plan and precludes the development of this parcel below the Monastery. This objective is crystal clear and no development should be considered in this location for the safety of all Sierra Madre residents.

Would the project expose people or structures to significant risks, including down slope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?

Yes, it is highly likely that the Project area would be the victim of flooding or landslides following heavy rain after a fire has destroyed the hillsides.

Would the project have a cumulative effect on wildfire?

The Project would have a cumulative effect on wildfire as it provides a new fuel source for a hungry fire that would endanger the rest of the community. To try and reduce the fuel for future fire events, the California Conservation Corp has spent weeks clearing brush and trees from the Bailey Canyon area adjacent to the property. As of the morning of October 4th, crews from LA County were working the debris basin removing brush and trimming trees in Bailey Canyon. It seems counter intuitive to spend thousands of man hours removing fuel from the area and then approve a 42 unit fuel-intensive project that would replace an open meadow that has little to no fuel. The Project would provide a ‘gateway’ for a fire to flow south down the mountain by prevailing winds, ignite homes and because of the large amount of fuel, and endanger all homes on nearby streets.

Project’s Consistency with City of Sierra Madre’s General Plan Goals and Policies

The Draft EIR responded to selected General Plan Goals, Policies and Objectives and responded that the Specific Plan is consistent with the majority of them as noted in Section 4.11.1 Projects Consistency with City of Sierra Madre’s General Plan Goal and Policies. The Project believes it is Consistent with all but three of the City’s General Plan Goals. These include importing water from SGVMWD, no bicycle facilities and removing over 100 mature trees on the property. The following review and comments show that there are a number of inconsistencies between the General Plan and the Project Specific Plan.

Chapter One: Land Use

The Zoning Map Amendment which is required to change the zoning from institutional to residential states that 'The subject property is currently surrounded by single family residential land uses to the west and south. As such, the proposed project is consistent with existing adjacent land uses'. The Project is not consistent with existing adjacent land uses as the subject property is bordered by an institutional facility and open space to the north on 71 acres as well as a Wilderness Park, debris basin and open space to the East.

Goal 2: ' Preserve and enhance the diversity in the character of residential neighbourhoods ensuring that new development is compatible in its design and scale with older established development in the surrounding neighbourhood without attempting to replicate or mass produce a style of development'.

DraftEIR Response: 'The Specific Plan would assist in the implementation of this Goal through the provision of development regulations and design guidelines, which would be compatible with existing surrounding neighbourhoods'.

My Response: The majority of lot sizes and square footage of the houses do not enhance or preserve the diversity of the adjacent residential community as it is not compatible in design or scale with established nearby homes. There are 51 one story and only 4 two story houses in the neighbourhood. The opposite is currently planned for the Project, with the majority being two story and the rest one story as shown in the picture below. Neighbouring homes have larger setbacks, no sidewalks or parkways, mature trees and many design styles, not four. The resulting look and feel of the project will be 'cookie cutter' and stand out noticeably on the hillside.



Goal 3: 'Ensure that development is done in harmony with its neighbourhood, and preserves and protects privacy and mountain views of neighbouring properties'.

Draft EIR Response: 'Consistent. The Specific Plan includes development regulations and design guidelines for the project site created to be compatible with the surrounding neighbourhood. The development will be designed in a manner that is sensitive to scenic viewpoints and/or view sheds through building design, site layout and building heights'.

The project is not harmonious or compatible with the nearby neighbourhoods in lot and home sizes and is deliberately isolated on all four sides with 'buffer zones' that create physical barriers from the community. The Project is very similar to a gated community but without the gate. There is little to no integration with the neighbourhood. The project claims it is 'sensitive' to scenic viewpoints but fails to provide any supporting details. 'Sensitive' is not the same as 'consistent.' The Project is not consistent with this goal without convincing detail.

Goal 4: 'Ensure that development is done to maximize water conservation practices to reduce and minimize the impact on the City's local water supply and the ability to serve its water customers'.

DraftEIR Response: 'Consistent. The development would comply with City requirements by having net zero water usage for the first 50 years after construction. Additionally, the project would include the incorporation of green infrastructure into the design to promote water conservation'.

As the project argues the value of its 'net zero' water usage, the project will have double the impact on water usage as it plans to now buy all the water it needs for the next 50 years and store it for future use, while homeowners will still use and pay for municipal water going forward. At the present time there is no water available for purchase. Given the present drought conditions, there is no guarantee that this is a viable option going forward. California is in a drought, reservoirs are at an all time low and mandatory water conservation is in effect currently in many cities. It is just a matter of time before the Governor implements restrictions in southern California. The Project fails to provide a convincing argument that storing water today results in net zero water usage, as homeowners will still use and pay for municipal water going forward.

More to the point, the Project fails to implement the strategies established by the Department of Energy in their Net Zero Water Requirements as follows: A net zero water building is designed to:

- Minimize total water consumption
- Maximize alternative water sources
- Minimize wastewater discharge from the building and return water to the original water source.

Net zero water creates a water-neutral building where the amount of alternative water used and water returned to the original water source is equal to the building's total water consumption.

However, if the building is not located within the watershed or aquifer of the original water source, then returning water to the original water source will be unlikely. In those cases, a net zero water strategy would depend on alternative water use. Alternative water is a sustainable water source not derived from fresh-, surface-, or groundwater sources. Alternative water includes:

- Harvested rainwater, storm water, sump-pump (foundation) water
- Gray water
- Air-cooling condensate
- Rejected water from water purification systems
- Reclaimed wastewater
- Water derived from other water reuse strategies.

A net zero water building uses alternative water sources to offset the use of freshwater.

A net zero water building closes the loop on the water system by returning water to the original water source. Wastewater can be treated and recharged. Storm water can also recharge the original water source.

'Net zero water usage' is a moving target that seeks a solution that will stick. First, it was encouraging all city residents to use 'low flow' devices to reduce their water consumption, but the City Manager advised that it would be too difficult and time consuming to implement and manage. Then, it was defined that the project would buy (at today's prices) all the water needed for the next 50 years based on today's consumption. As clarified later in this document, the Project fails to

incorporate the Department of Energy's guidelines on Net Zero Water into the development. As of today, net zero water usage still seeks a valid, practical solution that can be implemented to meet this goal.

Goal 5: 'Institute conservation measures so that the demand for water matches the City's local supply'.

The Project repeatedly uses the following sentence: "The project would achieve a net-zero impact on local water supplies to offset the demand placed on existing supplies and provides supplemental water to the City, available to serve the public".

That sentence is used to answer all the following Policies and was discussed in detail above:

Policy L1.6 "...new residential development... .. reduces and minimize the impact on the City's water supply and its ability to serve its water customers"

Policy L4.3: "Ensure new development... .. incorporate water conservation measure that reduce and minimize the impact on the city's water supply and its ability to serve its customers"

Policy L8.3: "Consider a water impact fee to apply to new residential dwelling units... .. to fund water fixture retrofits of existing homes and other water conservation measures"

In addition to answering using the above sentence, no water impact fee is being assessed.

Goal 8: 'Preserve existing and provide additional constructed and natural open space'.

DraftEIR Response: Consistent. The project would comply with the City's Goal of providing additional open space. The Specific Plan establishes open spaces zones on the project site, including the incorporation of a public park at the southern area of the Plan area, and includes the dedication to the City or other perpetual conservation of approximately 45 acres of open space hillside land.

The Project is not consistent because it reduces the amount of open space by destroying the 17 acres of meadow open space in order to construct 42 homes, streets, parkways, driveways and sidewalks. The project further misleads by defining open space as individual balconies. An over-developed 'park' of less than 3 acres sandwiched between two residential areas as a 'buffer zone' is on the low end of meeting criteria for 'open space'. Further, it is known that portions of the 45 acre donation of open space are already owned by the city of Sierra Madre and another section is within the boundary of the city of Pasadena.

Goal 9: 'Preserve the hillside areas in order to protect the environment and mountain views, obtain a balance between developed areas and the hillside wilderness, and establish the role of the hillside as an entry point into wildland areas'.

DraftEIR Response: Consistent. The Specific Plan includes the dedication to the City or other perpetual conservation of approximately 45 acres of open space hillside land to the north of the Mater Dolorosa Retreat Center.

The Project is not consistent because the hillside areas are unbuildable and not pertinent to the developer's response. The dedication of 45 acres does not meet this goal as there is no 'balance'

between the project and the hillside wilderness; there is an institution on 23 acres between the project and the wilderness. In addition, nowhere does the project establish the role of the hillside as an entry point into wildland areas. In fact, it presents misinformation in its project objectives to preserve Colby Canyon and Trail for wildlife movement as Colby Canyon is located in the Angeles National Forest approximately 24 miles north of the property and has no discernible relationship to the Monastery.

Objective L1: ‘Continuing the existing pattern of residential housing development’.

Draft EIR Response: Consistent. The Specific Plan assists with the implementation of this Objective as it creates similar low-density residential and open space land uses as compared to those surrounding the Plan area.

The Project is not consistent with this Objective as existing neighbourhood housing patterns feature a preponderance of one story homes. This Project features a majority of two story homes. The Project contains sidewalks, parkways and full size streets. (46 feet) Surrounding streets patterns contain several road widths from small (20 feet) wide (Carter Avenue) to medium size () Grove Street.

Only within its project boundaries is there a noticeable pattern of repetitive housing styles.....cookie cutter homes.....similar square footage on similar lot sizes on same size streets.

Objective L4 – The Project is not consistent as it fails to ‘conserve the existing tree canopy or increase shade tree canopy’ or ‘preserve and enhance community aesthetics and property values thru increased canopy cover’ as per the City’s Community Forest Management Plan. The project does, in fact, remove over 100 of the existing trees, some of which are close to 100 years old. The proposed project trees are a poor replacement for the existing mature trees as the majority are small to medium size trees with limited canopy. Several species require high water to survive. The project is inconsistent as it purports to dedicate land that does not belong to them.

Policy L4.2 – The project is inconsistent with both the General Plan and current zoning, in that it requires substantial amendments to both. So much so, that it necessitates creation of a Specific Plan that overrides the General Plan that was created by over 100 Sierra Madre citizens over a 5 year period.

Policy L5 and Policy L5.1– The Project is inconsistent with existing grid patterns as it establishes an inverted ‘U’ pattern criss-crossed by 3 horizontal, same size roads A, B and C. This pattern does not exist at the northern part of the city.

Policy L6 and L6.2 – The Project is not consistent, ‘harmonious or compatible with the nearby neighbourhoods’ in both lot and home sizes. Being ‘sensitive’ to scenic viewpoints is not the same as protecting privacy and mountain views of neighbours. What does this mean? Sensitive is not the same as consistent. The EIR states that the Project would ‘appear to be consistent’ with the visual environment. It does not as neighbourhoods have mature trees throughout and the Project puts more homes in the same amount of space. It seeks to cram twice as many homes into space as neighbouring streets. ‘Appears to be’ is not the same as ‘is consistent’.

Policy L7 – Development is not consistent with neighbouring homes which are mostly one story. . The project shows only pictures of 2 story homes and does not provide location of any possible one story homes.

Policy L7.2 Project is inconsistent with General Plan as it disregards the General Plan and substitutes its own Specific Plan.

Policy L7.4 – Project is not consistent with General Plan as it ignores established setbacks and creates its own. ‘Complement’ is not the same as ‘consistent’. Landscaping is not consistent and does not reflect Sierra Madre vegetation patterns as the project removes all mature trees that would help facilitate the integration of this project into the surrounding neighbourhood.

Policy L8.3 - Project is not consistent as it fails to ‘implement a water impact fee to fund retrofits of existing homes.’ As the project argues the value of its ‘net zero’ water usage, the project will have double the impact on water usage as it plans to now buy all the water it needs for the next 50 years and store it for future use. At the present time there is no water available for purchase. Given the present drought conditions, there is no guarantee that this is a viable option going forward. Homeowners will still use and pay for municipal water going forward. The Project fails to provide a convincing argument that storing water today results in net zero water usage.

Policy L17 – The project is inconsistent as it fails to protect existing views and uses the word ‘sensitive’ to describe its attention to the hillside without describing in concrete terms what this means; but appears to be a work around ‘consistent’

Policy 17.2 – The project is not consistent with this policy as it requires the use of detached garages and all of the home designs show the garage attached to the home.

Policy L 20 – The project is not consistent as it does not maintain ‘mass and scale with existing Sierra Madre homes’ on the south and west as project homes are larger and lots smaller.

Policy L 20.1 – The project is not consistent with surrounding development, as it does not ‘maintain existing front yard setbacks’ and creates smaller, alternate ones in the Specific Plan.

Historic Preservation

Objective L44 – The project is not consistent with ‘preserving natural open space areas’ because it proposes to destroy 17 acres of meadow open space in order to construct 42 homes, streets, driveways and sidewalks. An over-developed ‘park’ of less than 3 acres sandwiched between two residential areas as a ‘buffer zone’ is on the low end of meeting criteria for ‘open space’. Further, it is known that portions of the 45 acre donation of open space are already owned by the city of Sierra Madre and another section is within the boundary of the city of Pasadena.

Policy 44.1 – Project is not consistent with ‘support the purchase of hillside property’ and so states.

Objective 45 - The Project is not consistent as it does not ‘acquire additional natural open space area’. It, in fact, destroys 20 acres of current open space.

Housing:

Goal 1.0: The Project is not consistent as it does not 'maintain and enhance the quality of existing housing and ensure that new residential development is consistent with Sierra Madre's small town character' or Goal 2.0: 'Facilitate the provision of a range of housing types to meet community needs'. The Project will look oddly out of place as it is designed with buffers on all four sides that will isolate it from the community at large. The Project repetitively repeats four housing styles in a cookie cutter pattern that is not representative of existing housing. The Project puts larger homes on smaller lots and creates density that exceeds local housing standards.

Policy 1.1: Maintain sustainable neighbourhoods with quality housing, infrastructure and open space that fosters neighbourhood character and the health of residents.

Policy 2.1: The Project is not consistent with 'encouraging diversity in the type, size, price and tenure of residential development in Sierra Madre, while maintaining quality of life goals' as the Project provides only similar sizes and similar pricing in the range of \$3 to \$5 million. The Project does nothing to assist the City in meeting its regional housing numbers as it only addresses housing in the above moderate range and ignores 75% of the housing required. The Project proposes development that is now considered to be outdated and inconsistent with current housing goals.

Policy 2.2: The Project does not provide 'adequate housing sites through appropriate zoning and land use designations, consistent with Sierra Madre's regional housing growth needs'. The Project is not consistent with the intent of this state wide mandate as it only addresses one of the four housing needs - above moderate. It does nothing to address very low, low or moderate housing growth needs, so desperately needed in California.

Policy 2.5: The Project is not consistent with this Policy to 'encourage the construction of new, well designed second units in residential zones' as a means of addressing a portion of Sierra Madre's regional housing needs. The Project does not address the impact that second units would have on the Project.

Policy 5.3: The Project is not consistent as the proposed plan states that it is possible for any of the homes to use solar panels, however it is not the plan that they all have them or that any of them have them. So the proposed plan does not promote the use of such alternatives, and so is inconsistent with the General Plan policy.

Policy 5.4: The Project is inconsistent with this policy as it does not incorporate 'transit and other transportation alternative such as walking and bicycling' into the design. The project has a "mobility plan" which is simply roads and sidewalks within the new project. There is no plan for alternatives and no continuity with the neighbours.

Circulation:

Goal 1: The project is not consistent, as the 'balanced transportation system' only addresses vehicular and pedestrian travel with roads and sidewalks and on-street parking. There are no plans for bicycle lanes. The word 'system' implies connectivity with the surrounding neighbourhoods, but there is no pedestrian linkage as the surrounding streets do not have sidewalks and there is no practical access to transit systems.

Goal 2: The project is not consistent as it does not 'promote safe and well-maintained streets' and addresses only the streets within the project and does not address the many safety issues this project will cause for streets surrounding the project. It says nothing about the impact of safe and maintenance as the result of 3-400+ car trips on neighbouring streets and the residents of Carter, Lima, Grove and Sunnyside. A thorough analysis of these impacts needs to be completed to fully understand the projects safety issues on the neighbouring community. Two areas need to be addressed:

How the project would implement street sections that slow traffic.

How users would differentiate between the main Sunnyside entrance and the ingress/egress secondary access road, Carter Avenue.

Goal 3: The project is not consistent as it does not 'preserve quiet neighbourhoods with limited thru traffic'. It repeats the same cut and paste responses for the above two goals. In reality, the project does nothing to preserve quiet surrounding neighbourhoods to the west and south. It does, in fact, increase thru traffic by a minimum of 300-400+ car trips a day, an increase of over 300%. To get to the project, the cars will have to travel local streets including Sunnyside, Lima, Carter and Grove. There is no mention of the impact of traffic on these streets. A study needs to be conducted to study the impacts of the development on adjacent streets.

Once again, the response only addresses traffic within the project itself and not its impact on the community.

Objective L51: The project is not consistent as it does nothing to 'address cyclists or pedestrians in their 'balanced circulation system' and there is no connectivity for pedestrians or bicyclists from the project into the community at large. The Project is inconsistent as it fails to develop a multi-modal transportation system for pedestrians and cyclists.

The project is so far out of range of public transportation that it is not a viable option. Owners that are able to afford to live in his neighbourhood are not likely to use mass transit, preferring to use their cars necessitating increased usage of surrounding.

Policy L51.2: The Project is not consistent with the policy to 'limit the development of new roadways or the expansion of existing roadways', as it fails both objectives. It creates two new roadways and expands 100 % of the existing roads in the project.

Policy L51.5: The project is inconsistent with this policy to 'encourage and support the use of non-automotive travel throughout the City'. In reality, it is not addressing this in any way other than a limited myopic view of a 'circular system using non-vehicular modes of transportation in a system of pedestrian pathways within the project site'. Again, looking from the inside-out with no discernible impact on non-automotive travel throughout the City.

Policy L51.6: The project is inconsistent as it does nothing to address non-vehicular travel. EIR needs to provide details how a buffer along existing adjacent homes encourages residents to walk and bicycle through the area.

Policy L51.8: The Project is inconsistent with this policy to 'prioritize improvements for nonvehicular modes like bicycles, pedestrians, and transit to eliminate the need for new or expanded roadways

and intersection improvements like traffic signals'. There are no bicycle paths through the Project, no pedestrian connectivity with surrounding neighbourhood and the increased traffic on local roads will like require intersection improvements.

Objective L52: The project is inconsistent for its failure to 'improve streets to maintain levels of safety to vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians'. The proposed project is likely to result in transportation related hazards to both cyclists and pedestrians. The surrounding neighbourhood streets that feed into the project were not designed to handle an increase in traffic of 300-400+ additional car trips a day and the project does nothing to improve the safety of any of the existing residents of local streets nor does it address maintenance costs for those streets due to increased traffic. Per the LA County Sustainability Plan, total vehicle miles travelled is one indicator of an area's dependence on single-occupant vehicle travel. This mode of travel, while traditionally the most convenient option, is carbon- and resource-intensive. Average daily VMT has been trending upwards. In 2017 it was at nearly 21.9 miles per person per day.

Traffic fatalities and severe injuries are serious public health threats: on average, one person is killed every four days as a result of a traffic collision on unincorporated County roadways. Further, people walking and biking are the most vulnerable road users. In fact, traffic collisions are the leading cause of death for children in LA County and also place older residents at heightened risk. In 2015, there were 1,091 severe injuries or fatalities across LA County. (LA County Sustainability Plan)

It is also stated that the project would not result in impacts to existing levels of service at any nearby intersection. That is incorrect. It is highly likely that multiple stop signs will be required at the intersection of Carter and Grove to control traffic volume to prevent accidents.

Policy L52.8: The project is inconsistent as it fails to 'incorporate bicycle facilities into the design of land use'. The Project states that 'due to the small size and scope of this project, bicycle facilities would not be implemented. Although no bicycle facilities and improvements are proposed under the project, the project would not impact existing bicycle facilities in the vicinity of the project, including the existing bicycle lanes within Sierra Madre Boulevard. Nonetheless, because bicycle facilities would not be required, the project would be inconsistent with these policies'.

Policy L52.9: The project is inconsistent as it does nothing to implement 'sidewalk continuity with existing neighbourhoods'. There is no linkage from the project into the community. The lack of sidewalk continuity increases the isolation of the project from the rest of Sierra Madre and makes it inconsistent with the city's general plan.

Objective L53: The project is inconsistent, as it fails to 'protect local neighbourhoods from through traffic'. It does protect its future residents from through traffic - as the project is a stand-alone U-shaped community, but it ignores the tremendous impact on its residential neighbours. Interestingly, 'Carter Avenue would become an egress and ingress lane and would still allow access to the Mater Dolorosa Retreat Center'. This is a 100% change from its existing use as a small, 20 foot wide dead end road. 'unbelievably, there is no discussion of the increased traffic (300-400+ vehicle trips daily) caused by project residents on the surrounding residential neighbourhoods and how they will be protected from this intrusion of through traffic on Lima, Sunnyside, Carter and Grove. This is an unacceptable analysis of Objective L53.

Chapter Two: Resource Management

Hillside Preservation

Goal 3: The Project is not consistent because it does not 'provide public access to the San Gabriel Mountains via parks, trails and roads.' The project creates the illusion of connectivity from the project park to Bailey Canyon Park. In reality, because the project is next to the Park, connectivity is achieved by walking or driving down Carter Avenue and entering the park. There is no special pathway; in fact, the Project sidewalk ends at Project boundary, forcing walkers on Carter, a 20 foot street with no sidewalks.

Goal 4. - Energy Conservation The Project provides the bare minimum of 'sustainable development attributes for water and energy conservation' and stretches to be consistent with this Goal. The Project touts compliance with CALGreen, but mentions nothing about more stringent and environmentally-friendly LEED building standards.

Tree Preservation:

Goal 1 - Continued preservation and protection of existing trees.

Goal 2 - Increase of the City's community forest.

Objective R10 - Maintaining and enhancing the City's significant tree resources.

Policy R10.2 - Continue to develop tree preservation and protection measures.

The project is not consistent with these four simple, easy-to-understand goals in the General Plan. Removing over 100 trees is a significant environmental impact, not only to the Monastery property, but to the neighbouring community as well.

The project fails to meet these critical goals and responds with the same 'cut and paste' sentence: 'The Specific Plan includes a Tree and Planting Plan which includes the planting of new trees and will adhere to the City's Tree Preservation and Protection Ordinance', which includes replacing only 10 trees as they are 'protected'.

The project disregards Goal 1 completely by removing over 100 mature trees, making it impossible to preserve and protect them. It appears that 100% of the trees on the project will be removed. No attempts to preserve and integrate them into the project them have been made.

Goal 2, increasing the community forest - has been ignored by removing 100% of mature trees. Replacing fully grown trees that are food and habitat sources, with young, immature trees will not compensate for the loss of this irreplaceable community forest.

Objective R10.1 is disregarded by the project. Instead of maintaining and enhancing these valuable and priceless City resources, the developer has chosen to remove them. Instead of trimming and shaping these mature trees for future generations to enjoy, they will be cut down and destroyed, a whole-hearted, irreplaceable loss for a recognized 'Tree City USA'.

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) recommends that the project 'avoid removal of any native trees, large and dense-canopied native and non-native trees, and trees occurring in high density and recommends avoiding impacts to trees protected by the City's Tree Ordinance.

CDFW also recommends avoiding impacts to understory vegetation (e.g., ground cover, sub shrubs, shrubs, and trees).

The developer's plan to replace 'at least ten trees on site' for the 100 removed and planting new young trees falls woefully short of increasing the community's forest. In both cases, it will be decades before the baby trees grow into the mature trees that now gracefully adorn the Monastery property. Notably around the Monastery buildings to the north.

The developer states that the 10 trees would be subject to a 5 year monitoring effort by an independent 3rd party arborist. And that this 'may' result in recommendations of remedial actions for poor or declining health. This is vague as there are no details regarding the recipient of this report, the party required to take actions and fund the recommendations/replacements if needed or whether the findings are required as well as party responsible for overseeing the monitoring. As such, it falls short of meeting the following criteria:

As noted by the CDFW, mitigation measures must be feasible, effective, implemented, and fully enforceable/imposed by the lead agency through permit conditions, agreements, or other legally binding instruments (Pub. Resources Code, § 21081.6(b); CEQA Guidelines, §§ 15126.4, 15041). A public agency shall provide the measures that are fully enforceable through permit conditions, agreements, or other measures (Pub. Resources Code, § 21081.6). CDFW recommends that the City prepare mitigation measures that are specific, detailed (i.e., responsible party, timing, specific actions, location), and clear in order for a measure to be fully enforceable and implemented successfully via a mitigation monitoring and/or reporting program (CEQA Guidelines, § 15097; Pub. Resources Code, § 21081.6).

Policy R10.8: The Project is not consistent with the need to 'continue to monitor construction projects with regard to grading and construction effects on trees, tree removal and replacement' as all trees on the development site will be removed to facilitate construction.

Water Resources:

Goal 1: The Project is not consistent with 'conservation of the City's water resources'.

Consistent: The proposed project states it would 'incorporate water conservation measures guided by the development regulations and design guidelines of the Specific Plan'. These measures are insufficient to conserve our water resources. The Project again refers to the net zero impact plan which is unachievable in today's drought conditions. Their water conservation measures are those implemented by the bulk of Sierra Madre residents years ago and were inadequate to address needed conservation.

Goal 3: The Project is inconsistent with the goal to 'link growth to the availability of water'. The Project proposes to buy water now to achieve a net zero impact on local water supplies but fails to provide convincing details that support this as a viable response. Their proposal to buy water now is unattainable as water is not available to purchase and they have failed to provide an alternative that is workable and consistent with this Goal. There is no available water for purchase; therefore there should be no development growth.

Objective R14: The Project is inconsistent as that it provides no details on 'Ensuring adequate water availability for future growth in the City.' Their proposed plan to purchase water now fails because water is not available and proposed measures only partially address water conservation.

Goal 4: The Project is not consistent with the goal to 'use local sources of groundwater rather than imported water' for development needs. It again provides the unattainable goal of net zero by purchasing 50 years worth of water now (that is not available). The Project fails to meet the sustainability goals of Los Angeles County by using ground water and not water sourced from outside the region. The Metropolitan Water District advises that in '2017, approximately 59% of water used in LA County was sourced from outside the region. Only 9% came from local recycled water sources and 32% was sourced from local groundwater resources'. One of the goals of the LA County Sustainability Plan is to increase the use of groundwater and rely less on water from outside the region. The Project notes that because it would use imported water from SGVMWD, the project would be inconsistent with this goal.

Objective R12: The Project is not consistent with the objective to 'optimize the use of water resources' as it fails to provide water efficiency measures to reduce indoor and outdoor water use above current CALGreen standards.

Objective R15: The Project is not consistent with the objective to 'conserve water during times of drought' and provides the same disproved net-zero impact response and basic water conservation measures that not proven to be effective during a drought.

Air Quality:

Objective R23: The Project is inconsistent with this objective to 'reduce the amount of vehicular emissions in Sierra Madre'. The 2015 LA County Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory, a component of the LA County Sustainability Plan, states that Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Transportation total 42% of all emissions. The project does not address the reduction of these emissions in its project as its occupants would be totally dependent on vehicles for transportation, as the project runs counter to current state wide efforts to construct housing within a ½ mile of public transportation.

Policy 22.2: The Project is not consistent with the policy to 'Prohibit the development of land uses and land use practices which would contribute significantly to poor air quality'. The LA County Sustainability Plan advises that single family housing developments are a building practice of the past as they are not environmentally friendly, contribute to greenhouse gas emissions and fail to address current housing needs.

Chapter Three: Hazard Prevention

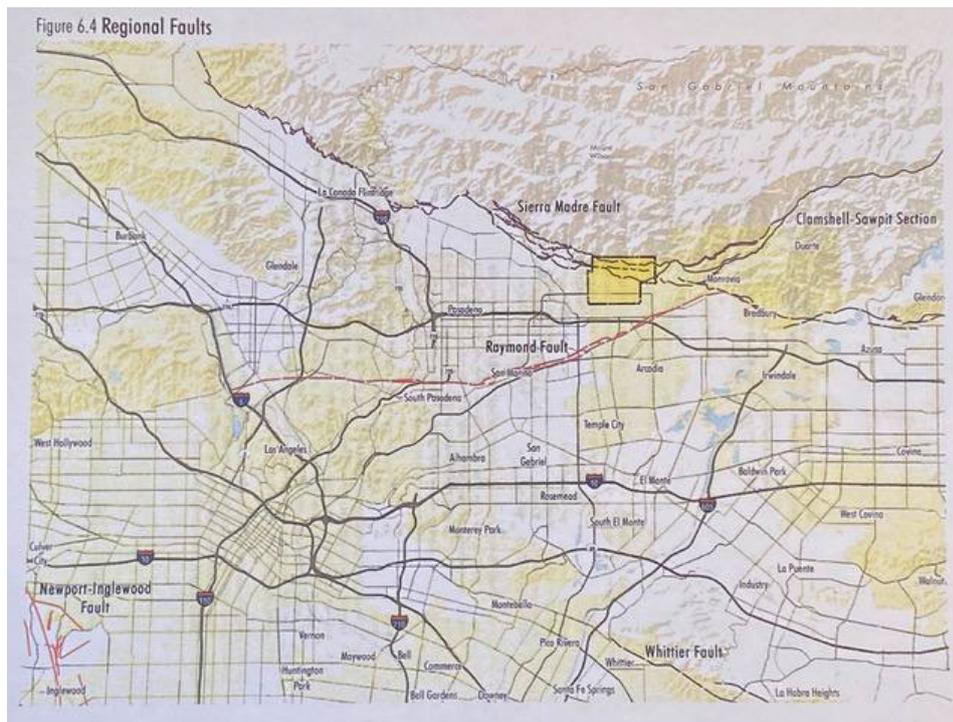
Fire Safety/WILDFIRES

Objective Hz7 – "Avoid expanding development into undeveloped areas in a Very High Fire Severity Zone."

Policy Hz2.5 Assess the impacts of incremental increases in development density and related traffic congestion on fire hazards and emergency response time, and ensure through the

by adding 42 non-permeable concrete pads, sidewalks, walkways, driveways, road and curbs which do not allow the natural percolation of water into the soil. The Project artificially forces water into two north/south storm drains that direct water to the southernmost portion of the property where it is expected to percolate into an area that is less than 20% of the previous open meadow. It provides for little percolation of the acreage above the park. The Project is inconsistent with this policy.

Seismic Safety: The Project lies in the Sierra Madre earthquake fault zone as seen in the map below:



Noise:

Policy Hz14.2: The Project is inconsistent as it provides no information on how it will ‘control the noise levels associated with transportation and general circulation patterns in the City to ensure the residential quality of the community’. The project is not consistent because it does not address additional noise levels from the 3-400+ new car trips a day on the neighbouring streets of *Sunnyside, Grove, Carter and Lima*.

Chapter Four: Community Service

Law Enforcement:

Policy C1.2: The Project provides the same ‘cut and paste’ response to all four General Plan Objectives and Policies that states that paying an impact fee will satisfactorily address all four General Plan goals. The Project is inconsistent as it fails to provide the required assessment or

analysis of the impact of the Project on police response times and service calls. The SMPD states that the Project would affect response times and service ratios. The Project argues that the payment of a one-time development fee in the amount of approximately \$2,000 per home (total of \$84,000) would offset the increased personnel or equipment required to maintain acceptable service ratios, but fails to provide details on how this amount over 50 years would do so.

Policy C4.3: The Project is inconsistent with this General Plan policy as it fails to provide any passive prevention measures being addressed by this development as required.

Recreation Services:

Objective C6: The Project is inconsistent with this objective to provide 'quality recreation, leisure and social programs and facilities for the various segments of the Sierra Madre community'. The proposed project struggles to convince us that the small 3 acre park that serves as a buffer between the project and homes on the south end of the project and also serves as a cover for the 63,500 cubic foot water retention storage gallery underneath meets this objective. There are no provisions for leisure and social programs for the community.

Policy C8.1: Continue a park maintenance program to secure the existing nature and beauty of the City Parks and open space areas.

The project is labelled as 'Consistent'. However, the proposed project has nothing to do with a future maintenance program for either the park or open space.

Policy C8.3: Install and replace existing landscape with native and drought resistant plants in City parks where deterioration has occurred.

The project is labelled as 'Consistent'. However, it will only install in the small 3 acre park.

Policy C11.2: The Project is inconsistent with this policy to 'maintain and update a maintenance and repair plan for existing and future City facilities' as it would neither maintain or update a maintenance and repair plan for the small park.

Transit Services:

Objective C30: The Project provides again provides a 'cut and paste' response to all three General Plan Objectives and Policies addressing public safety by stating improvements to Sunnyside and Carter and the creation of three new roads. The Project is inconsistent as it adds 3-400+ new car trips a day on the neighbouring streets of Sunnyside, Grove, Carter and Lima street and claims the proposed project "would not result in new traffic hazards..." and provides no analysis to support this statement. The Project would "implement street sections that slow traffic and create a safe and pleasant small neighbourhood environment". However, they are addressing only the roads within the Project boundaries, not the surrounding neighbourhoods. They have repeatedly failed to address the Project's many impacts on the city streets that will be utilized to access this project. A traffic and impact study of these streets as a result of this Project needs to be undertaken to evaluate the impact of over 400+ additional car trips on small local roads that were not designed or built to become access routes to a housing development. Two are dead end: Grove providing access to Bailey Canyon parking lot and Carter providing access to the debris basin. The Project has

further failed to do a safety analysis of the increased traffic on the pedestrians and bicyclists who use neighbouring streets daily as these streets do not have sidewalks.

Policy C30.2: The EIR and Project say they are consistent with this, using the same sentence describing the new roads and connections in the new project and profess to “implement street sections that slow traffic and create a safe and pleasant small neighbourhood environment”. Again, only referring to streets within the Project boundaries, not the surrounding neighbourhoods which will bear the brunt of traffic and suffer the negative consequences.

Policy C30.3: The Project is inconsistent with ‘maintaining safety and efficient circulation’; again, using the same cut and paste response. The Project has failed to initiate a Traffic Study incorporating the neighbouring streets that would be utilized to access this development. The village atmosphere that residents in the area now enjoy would be destroyed forever with no compensating value.

Public Services:

Policy C31.5: The Project is not consistent with this policy that ‘requires new development capture for percolation on site the maximum practical amount of storm water’. The Project states that it would ‘introduce more impervious area that would result in more surface runoff.’ It provides an inadequate response that ‘a new storm water drainage system would assist in reducing runoff velocities’ without providing a supportive analysis. It is obvious that the Project significantly alters the existing open meadow area by adding 42 non-permeable concrete pads, sidewalks, walkways, driveways, road and curbs which do not allow the natural percolation of water into the soil. The Project artificially forces water into two north/south storm drains that direct water to the southernmost portion of the property where it is expected to percolate into an area that is less than 20% of the previous open meadow. The Project is inconsistent with this policy.

Tree Preservation

Would the project conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?

It is obvious that removing over 100 trees is a significant environmental impact, not only to the Monastery property, but to the neighboring community as well. It is clear that the Project conflicts with the City’s tree ordinance as it fails to comply with the following goals:

Goal 1: Continued preservation and protection of existing trees.

Goal 2: Increase of the City’s community forest.

Objective R10: Maintaining and enhancing the City’s significant tree resources.

Policy R10.2. Continue to develop tree preservation and protection measures.

The project fails to meet these critical goals and responds with the same sentence: “The Specific Plan includes a Tree and Planting Plan which includes the planting of new trees and will adhere to the City’s Tree Preservation and Protection Ordinance,” which includes replacing only 10 trees as they are protected.

The project disregards Goal 1 completely by removing over 100 mature trees, making it impossible to preserve and protect them. It appears that 100% of the trees on the project will be removed. No attempts to preserve and integrate them into the project have been made.

Goal 2, increasing the community forest – has been ignored by removing 100% of mature trees. Replacing fully grown trees, that are food and habitat sources, with young, immature trees with not compensate for the loss of this irreplaceable community forest.

Objective R10.1 is disregarded by the project. Instead of maintaining and enhancing these valuable and priceless City resources, the developer has chosen to remove them. Instead of trimming and shaping these mature trees for future generations to enjoy, they will be cut down and destroyed, a whole-hearted loss for a recognize “Tree City USA.”

Cumulative effects

If this Project is developed, it will destroy the last large parcel of land in Sierra Madre. With the development of Stonegate, there will be no more open parcels of this size in our community.

The cumulative impact of losing both to development affects biodiversity and groundwater.

The Projects’ Biological Resources Report failed to provide a thorough discussion of direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts affecting project biological resources. There was no discussion regarding Project-related indirect impacts on biological resources, including resources in nearby public lands, open space, adjacent natural habitats or riparian ecosystem. Impacts on, and maintenance of, wildlife corridor/movement areas, including access to undisturbed habitats in adjacent areas were not discussed or evaluated. There was no discussion of the potential adverse impacts from lighting, noise, use of chemicals or temporary and permanent human activity.

The Project failed to discuss the property’s connection with the eastern San Gabriel foothills and investigate its roll in recharging the Raymond Basin. A noted earlier, this development is situated *on the very last large parcel of land in the Eastern San Gabriel foothills which retains a connection between the canyons and the alluvial fan*. Alluvial fans have particularly high rates of infiltration. There, water can sink deep into the ground and recharge aquifers. Keeping remaining recharge areas as undeveloped as possible are a critical part of protecting our region’s watersheds and creates an integrated and resilient water system. This Project fails to recognize the interconnectedness of all water, including groundwater, surface water, rainwater, and wastewater. It exacerbates a disjointed system that is not well-suited to adapting to the needs of a rapidly growing region and changing climate. Building on the successful passage of the Safe Clean Water Program (Measure W), which promises to support an integrated and holistic approach to storm water management, the region must invest in a 21st-century water system that prioritizes multi-benefit management strategies that restore and mimic natural processes and cycles.

It is important to note *that The Water Conservation Authority* ranked the Monastery property very in high in conservation value in their Foothills Open Space Acquisition Study due to its watershed value, adjacency to protected lands, and potential for habitat restoration.

In striving to meet the Paris Climate Agreement, we have an opportunity and urgency to design buildings that are more energy and water efficient, carbon conscious, and healthy and supportive to

their residents. LA County's new buildings should have a minimal impact on countywide emissions and the environment. This Project hasn't proven that its impact is minimal.

LA County's landscapes and ecosystems span islands, mountains, deserts, beaches, and coastlines. The region is home to the largest set of threatened and endangered plants and animals in the continental United States, and it is the most urbanized area to be designated one of Conservation International's global Biodiversity Hotspots. In addition to providing habitats for flora and fauna to thrive, the diverse landscapes throughout LA County offer residents and communities areas to be active and exercise or relax, greatly improving health and emotional well-being. The region's ecosystems, habitats, and biodiversity are under stress from development projects like this. If it is developed, this parcel will destroy the natural habitats of the native plants and animals that have depended on this area for almost 100 years.

Conclusion

The DraftEIR makes statements without supporting facts, analyses or documentation.

In order to provide a repetitious response of 'consistent', it provides responses for only a portion of the goal, objective or policy and ignores the rest.

When the Project struggles to be 'consistent', it substitutes words of other meaning, such as sensitive' or 'compliment.

The Project does not realistically and honestly assess the projects impacts on the community.

It makes a number of errors that should have been caught and corrected.

It provides repetitive 'cut and paste' responses that, in many cases, did not address the issue.

The Project fails to meet the objectives it set at the beginning of the Draft EIR.

The Project is not consistent with the General Plan goals and objectives and replaces it with its own 'Specific Plan' that is not in the community's best interests. It would be a mistake for the City to override the General Plan in favour of this Specific Plan for all the reasons previously noted in this review of the DraftEIR. It would be a 'defining' moment in Sierra Madre history to allow a Project of this poor design that is so contrary to 'Sierra Madre quality' in our community and allow the Specific Plan to set development design standards for future housing.

EIR REBUTTAL

Preserve Sierra Madre, a group of citizen volunteers, appreciates the opportunity to present the results of our review of the Meadows at Bailey Canyon DraftEIR done in the 60 days the residents of Sierra Madre were given, which was prepared by a professional team paid for by Mater Dolorosa. The proposed Meadows development will create 42 large, luxury homes on currently open space adjoining the Angeles National Forest and the Mater Dolorosa Retreat Center.

We have several serious concerns.

The proposed Meadows development will create 42 new homes on currently open space adjoining the Angeles National Forest, the Mater Dolorosa Retreat Center, and current neighborhoods along Sunnyside, Carter, and Lima streets. At current housing prices this represents well over \$200 Million in income for the developers. There will be a \$55k city fee for each house, which would total around \$2.3 Million. This is a one-time infusion of funds. Once the units are sold, the developers are done and the city has at least 42 individual new residential units to serve forever. The question is whether the \$2.3M in fees adequately remediates the lifetime impacts to the people of Sierra Madre, as assessed in this DraftEIR.

Some of us were members of the Sierra Madre General Plan Steering Committee, which worked from 2010 to 2015 to produce the current General Plan (GP). The GP was the result of door to door surveys, town hall meetings, and neighborhood meetings with groups from all over Sierra Madre. The resulting General Plan reflects the desires of the majority of residents of our community, and was reviewed, approved, and adopted by the Planning Commission and the City Council.

The proposed Meadows plan and DraftEIR violates dozens of key goals, objectives, and policies of the General Plan, in spite of its overwhelming claims to be consistent with it.

The DraftEIR for the most part is written from the perspective of the Project and its residents only, not on the city as a whole and the neighboring residents.

The greatest concerns are summarized here and detailed in the body of this document:

Zoning Change: The change of zoning from institutional to residential, contrary to what the developer states, is not consistent with adjacent land uses, and, in fact, sets up a new zone subject to different policies than the General Plan!

The proposed Specific Plan creates a new residential zone not subject to the provisions of Sierra Madre's regulations. to wit: "Whenever the Specific Plan contains provisions that establish regulations....which are different from, or more restrictive or permissive than would be allowed pursuant to the provisions of the Sierra Madre Municipal Code, the Specific Plan shall prevail and supersede the applicable provisions of the SMMC."

Circulation and Traffic: The impact of increased traffic (300-600trips a day) on residents of Sunnyside, Carter, Grove, and Lima streets is substantial, and violates several of the goals and policies of the General Plan. The Specific Plan and the DraftEIR erroneously state they are in compliance and do not mitigate or adequately address this, and, in fact, mostly addresses the internal layout of the development.

Water Use: The impact on the city’s water system, which the developers claim will have a “net zero impact” without explaining how or at what impact to the quality and availability of water to the rest of the city, especially as we are in a long term drought. This has not been subject to any public analysis or explanation and is therefore highly suspect. Especially when the city cannot buy any extra water at this time.

Biological Resources: The removal of 100 mature trees is an area the project admits is inconsistent with the General Plan. The plan to mitigate also is inconsistent with the General Plan. And does not cover other negative impacts on the property.

Geology and Soils: The DraftEIR ignores the effects of the 1991 Sierra Madre earthquake on this exact area, and the potential for substantial adverse effects on potential new residents. No mitigation of earthquake effects is described.

Population, Land Use and Housing: The proposed development violates several specific policies and Guiding Principles in the General Plan. “Ensure development is done in harmony with its neighborhood, while maintaining the character of the town and without unduly burdening existing city services and infrastructure or impacting the environment”

Law Enforcement: The DraftEIR states it is compliant; however, the SMPD stated the development would affect response times and service ratios. The impact to the police force; likely one additional officer would be needed at a cost likely to exceed the \$2.3M over 10 years.

Fire Services: The EIR states no impact. However, the development is being built in an extreme very high fire hazard severity zone. This does violate the General Plan. It states in the DraftEIR that the Fire Department needs a 50% increase in sworn personnel.

LAND USE AND PLANNING

“The General Plan shall be used as a guide by the City’s decision makers to achieve the community’s vision and preserve the history, character, and shared values of the community for future generations (City of Sierra Madre 2015)”

Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines states a significant impact related to land use and planning would occur if the project would “cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.”

Although the DraftEIR lists several of its aspects as “consistent” with the General Plan, they are evaluated from the point of view of the project itself, not of its impact on the surrounding community.

In contrast with the statements and conclusion regarding the project’s conflicts with the General Plan, the plan is inconsistent with the General Plan in several areas. In addition to requiring amendment of the General Plan and the various zoning codes and maps simply to redesignate the area as residential rather than industrial, the project is “inconsistent” with the General Plan the in the following policies, in spite of marking them as “Consistent,” as we will describe.

AIR QUALITY

Would the project result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is nonattainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?

Developer response: Less than significant.

According to Brian Sheridan, Director of Development, Clean Air Coalition, pollutants are getting worse for several reasons. The major polluter is vehicles. Building 42 houses that will result in 300-400+ (and possibly more) car trips per day through two narrow streets will exacerbate this. So will the 16 months of heavy equipment usage while construction is going on, and afterward, with 42 large houses, UPS, Fed Ex, landscapers, housekeepers and pool maintenance workers will be driving into the area. No study was conducted to determine how many of these vehicles would pass into a neighborhood, such as this one, that is up against the mountainside where the air is trapped.

Would the project expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

Developer response: Less than significant.

Building 42 homes that will take approximately 16 months will result in major problems in air quality. Our area is part of the South Coast Air Basin, the most polluted in the nation, substantially because the sea breezes push the pollutants toward the mountains, which trap them. Short term air pollution comes from equipment and dust generated during grading and site preparation. The EPA estimates that construction activities of a large development can add 1.2 tons of fugitive dust per acre of soil distributed per month of activity. Where will the water come from? Will it be part of the “net zero” water usage? Also, there are no plans to use reclaimed water to control fugitive dust. The developer says they can use Tier 4 materials “if available.” There is no plan to encourage the use of electric cars, such as adding charging stations either in garages of the homes or next to the parking spaces at the three acre park. Nor is there a plan to add 220 voltage in the garages for the car chargers, which are purchased with the electric vehicles.

Would the project have a cumulative effect on air quality resources?

Developer response: Less than significant.

Air quality standards are health based. Residents of the cities along the 710 freeway, nicknamed the Cancer Corridor by health officials, and particularly children have a much higher level of respiratory problems than those in other cities. While this project is certainly much smaller than a freeway, the homes will be 2700 to 4000 square feet. They will most certainly be more than two person households (estimate 3.2persons), resulting in how many cars, and how many trips per day? 300-400+ per day. According to Brian Sheridan, Director of Development, Clean Air Coalition, vehicles are the number one source of pollution (90%). Adding to that will be stationary polluters, such as landscapers with their leaf blowers and lawn mowers. The cost of these homes may be \$3 M - \$5 M, resulting in daily deliveries, especially if the pandemic continues. Particulates from trucks are the most dangerous health wise. With an addition of so many vehicles going through the previously quiet neighborhoods along Sunnyside, Carter, Lima, and Grove Streets, this presents a greater pollution danger for those residents. There has not been a study conducted of how many trucks – moving, UPS, FedEx, landscapers, food deliveries, and pool service would pass into a neighborhood, such as this one, which is up against the mountainside where the air is trapped.

The General Plan Policies it violates are:

L51.2 – Limit the development of new roadways or expansion of existing roadways.

The project is inconsistent with the General Plan because it adds two new roadways, and will expand two existing roads, Sunnyside and Carter.

L51.4 – Explore the development of new facilities for bicyclists, pedestrians and transit users. Encourage and support the use of nonautomotive travel throughout the City.

This would help with air quality with limited use of vehicles, but there is no plan to do so.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Would the project conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?

As noted in the DraftEIR, ‘the removal of 10 protected trees onsite

would result in potentially significant impacts that will be less than significant after mitigation measures.

Our Response: It is obvious that removing over 100 trees is a significant environmental impact, not only to the Monastery property, but to the neighboring community as well. Four goals and objectives of the City’s General Plan relative to trees support this position:

Goal 1: Continued preservation and protection of existing trees.

Goal 2: Increase of the City’s community forest.

Objective R10: Maintaining and enhancing the City’s significant tree resources.

Policy R10.2. Continue to develop tree preservation and protection measures.

The project fails to meet these critical goals and responds with the same sentence: “The Specific Plan includes a Tree and Planting Plan which includes the planting of new trees and will adhere to the City’s Tree Preservation and Protection Ordinance,” which includes replacing only 10 trees as they are protected.

The project disregards Goal 1 completely by removing over 100 mature trees, making it impossible to preserve and protect them. It appears that 100% of the trees on the project will be removed. No attempts to preserve and integrate them into the project have been made. Here’s the analysis from a Junior at UC Davis, studying trees and plants:

- Mature trees have deeper roots established over decades or even up to over 200 years. Deeper roots are more resistant to drought, obviously a major issue, and to other effects of climate change.
- This project is in the highest fire danger area according to the California Fire Marshall. Old trees are much more resistant to fire given their thick bark and elevated crowns. Young coast live oaks cannot survive fire, but old mature ones can.
- Young coast live oaks will not provide the shade cover of mature trees.

- All of the 101 trees are part of an ecosystem developed over decades if not hundreds of years. Removing them will have a great effect on other plants and animals that is not even attempted to be understood in this report.

- Coast live oaks are affected by sudden oak death, a pathogen that has been killing them off in certain areas across the state. These trees are becoming more and more rare. It should not be considered a replacement to kill mature coast oaks and put in young oaks without fire resistance and mature root structures.

- The EIR does not address whether the young coast live oaks will come from trees grown from acorns sourced from a different region or from the trees that are to be cut down? If they are from a different region, this would reduce the genetic diversity of the species.

- It is unlikely that the 10 young coast live oak trees will all live through the first few years, which means this area is certain to have less coast oak trees in the near future.

- What is also certain is that the 10 young trees will be much smaller, so the biomass of these young trees will be far less than the mature trees there now.

- Bringing in nursery trees grown in other regions may bring in the sudden oak death pathogen possibly leading to the death of far more of our trees.

In addition, the Arborist Report is flawed on a few major concerns regarding the presence of Coast Live Oak on the subject site. Ten Coast Live Oaks are referred to in the descriptive report but **11** are listed on the tree inventory. Although these oak trees are scattered among non-native trees to the eastern edge of the project site, the Arborist Report fails to recognize the grouping of **11** *Quercus agrifolia*--Coast Live Oak--as an important extension of the intact oak woodland to the immediate east into Sierra Madre's Bailey Canyon Wilderness Park. They also connect to the Passions of the Cross garden to the immediate north.

Oak woodlands are a complex ecosystem, home to an abundance of wildlife species—insects, birds and mammals—that cannot exist without the food source and shelter of oak trees. These are well covered by the concerns expressed in the Fish and Wildlife report on the Biological values of the site. As one segment of 11 trees in an adjacent oak woodland is removed it puts greater pressure on the next exposed edge and as such, marches on to the decrease this valuable habitat. These are not simply **11** individual trees. In the report they are mentioned only as somewhat weakened in health but not what they present in value as a group but in the inventory are given a good or fair status. Taken as individual trees they are graded by the significance of diameter at breast height (DBH) for the highest replacement value. Replacement of oak trees scattered about the new housing development creates nothing more than garden specimens that do not hold the same value as a grouping of trees in an intact woodland.

The replacement metric is only referred to in the report as one to one. This falls far short of the replacement metric in the City Tree Ordinance, which can go as high as 6 to one depending on the health of the tree. With only a one to one replacement a calculation cannot possibly be accurate for mature oaks that have been on the Monastery property before the 1920s. Tree #61 is 54" DBH with a height of 40 ft and a spread of 50 ft. The smallest DBH oak of 2" and a height of 8 ft and width of 6 ft does not allow for an observation of recruitment. Over the years this area has been plowed over for brush control and no doubt lost many, many oak seedlings that would have been beneficial to wildlife.

The city tree replacement matrix allows for additional evaluation for specimen trees. In the past the Tree Commission had found, with the city arborist's expert advice. Tree replacement values as high as 7 to 1.

A calculation for replacement of removed *Q. agrifolia* on the subject property should go from a 1/1 which would equal 11 trees to approximately 36 (26) replacement of boxed specimen *Q. agrifolia* or possibly *Q. engelmannii*, the city oak tree not found on the site but which would do very well there.

The property should be required to keep the oak trees in situ and work the proposed housing lots around them. They should not be removed.

Goal 2, increasing the community forest – has been ignored by removing 100% of mature trees. Replacing fully grown trees that are food and habitat sources, with young, immature trees will not compensate for the loss of this irreplaceable community forest. Cooper Ecological Monitoring, Inc prepared a report for the Watershed Conservation Authority regarding the watershed area from Sierra Madre to Claremont. Page 41 of the Cooper Ecological Monitoring, Inc., WCA property assessment lists in Figure 14, of Sierra Madre, Monrovia Subregion, the Mater Dolorosa area states, “The largely undeveloped ‘Mater Dolorosa Retreat Center’ (red arrow; APN 5761-002-008) supports a surprisingly large area of undeveloped land, including open/cleared oak woodland that could be restored to more native habitat.”

Objective R10.1 is disregarded by the project. Instead of maintaining and enhancing these valuable and priceless City resources, the developer has chosen to remove them. Instead of trimming and shaping these mature trees for future generations to enjoy, they will be cut down and destroyed, a whole-hearted loss for a recognized “Tree City USA.”

The developer's plan to replace “at least ten trees on site” for the 100 removed and planting new young trees falls woefully short of increasing the community's forest. In both cases it will be decades before the baby trees grow into the mature trees that now gracefully adorn the Monastery property.

The developer states that the 10 trees would be subject to a five year monitoring effort by and independent third party arborist. And that this “may” result in recommendations of remedial actions for poor or declining health. This is vague as there are no details regarding the recipient of this report, the party required to take actions and fund the recommendations/replacements if needed or whether the findings are required as well as party responsible for overseeing the monitoring. As such, it falls short of meeting the following criteria:

As noted by the CDFW, mitigation measures must be feasible, effective, implemented, and fully enforceable/ imposed by the lead agency through permit conditions, agreements, or other legally binding instruments (Pub. Resources Code, Section 21081.6(b); CEQA Guidelines, Sections 15126.4, 15041). A public agency shall provide the measures that are fully enforceable through permit conditions, agreements, or other measures (Pub. Resources Code, Section 21081.6). CDFW recommends that the City prepare mitigation measures that are specific, detailed (i.e., responsible party, timing, specific actions, locations), and clear in order for a measure to be fully enforceable and implemented successfully via a mitigation monitoring and/or reporting program (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15097; Pub. Resources Code, Section 21081.6).

Would the project have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or plans, policies or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?

The Project does note that there are potentially significant impacts to nesting birds if vegetation clearing is undertaken during the breeding season and the following mitigation measures Nesting Bird Avoidance. Initiation of construction activities (i.e., initial vegetation clearing) should avoid the migratory bird nesting season (February 1 through August 31), to reduce any potential significant impact to birds that may be nesting on the project site. If construction activities must be initiated during the migratory bird-nesting season, an avian nesting survey of the project site and contiguous habitat within 500 feet of all impact areas must be conducted for protected migratory birds and active nests. The avian nesting survey shall be performed by a qualified wildlife biologist within 72 hours prior to the start of construction in accordance with the MBTA and California Fish and Game Code. Level of Significance after Mitigation: Less than significant.

Would the Project have a ‘substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive or special status species in local or regional plans, policies or regulation, or by the Ca Dept of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service’?

To answer this, a Dudek biologist conducted **one** field survey on May 29, 2020. Time unknown. The survey methodology is flawed as it only occurred on one day, time and duration both unknown. It is likely, however, that it was conducted during normal business hours 9 to 5. Many animals are visible in early morning, evening hours and at night. It is highly unlikely that a quick snapshot of any meadow area during our working hours will result in animal/bird sightings. For example, bats are off in the evening 20 minutes before dusk and the biologist would have to have bat detection devices that record the sonar pitch - which is different for each species. Townsend's Big Eared Bat is listed by the State of California. All bats need insects and water. If their survey was not done during the bat flight, it needs to be stated. Bats are not present if there are no insects to feed on. As noted below, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) recommends a ‘project-level biological resources survey provide a thorough discussion and adequate disclosure of potential impacts to bats and roosts from project construction and activities including (but not limited to) ground-disturbing activities (e.g., mobilizing, staging, drilling, and excavating) and vegetation removal’.

In addition, in December 2019, the project area was heavily sprayed with chemicals by the Monastery ostensibly to kill tumbleweeds. The result transformed a once beautiful green meadow occupied by ground squirrels, rabbits, snakes, gophers, deer, birds and coyote into a barren uninhabitable wasteland. The pictures below show before and after the devastating impacts of destroying the food source and habitat of local wildlife.



It is not surprising that no wildlife or plant materials were found five months after the application of chemicals.

Further, the survey did not address seed bank or lasting roots of native plants that are found at this elevation all across the foothills.

Appendix C1 lists 43 special-status wildlife species with recorded occurrences in the project site, with 37 listed under federal and/or California endangered species acts, noting that there is a low potential for occurrence due to lack of suitable habitat as illustrated above. Concerns about project impact on wildlife corridors, such as along the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains were not addressed. CDFW notes that development occurring adjacent to natural habitat areas such as wildlife corridors could have direct or indirect impacts on wildlife. Impacts result from increased human presence, traffic, noise, and artificial lighting. Increased human-wildlife interactions could lead to injury or mortality of wildlife. For instance, as human population and communities expand into wildland areas, there has been a commensurate increase in direct and indirect interaction between mountain lions/bears and people. As a result, the need to relocate or humanely euthanize mountain lions and bears may increase for public safety. CDFW recommends that the developer thoroughly analyze whether the project may impact wildlife corridors. Impacts include habitat loss and fragmentation, narrowing of a wildlife corridor, and introduction of barriers to wildlife movement. Additional analysis is needed of the projects direct and indirect impacts on wildlife resulting from increased human presence, traffic, noise, and artificial lighting.

Eleven bat species were noted with low occurrence due to lack of habitat and noted that the pallid bat which roosts in trees 'would be expected to leave if the tree is disturbed'. No doubt, removing over 100 trees would result in loss of habitat and nesting for many birds and give them no other option but leaving. CDFW advises that numerous bat species are known to roost in trees and structures throughout Los Angeles County (Remington and Cooper 2014). In urbanized areas, bats use trees and man-made structures for daytime and night-time roosts. Accordingly, CDFW recommends the project provide measures to avoid potential impacts to bats. Bats are considered non-game mammals and are afforded protection by state law from take and/or harassment (Fish & G. Code, § 4150; Cal. Code of Regs., § 251.1). Project construction and activities, including (but not limited to) ground disturbance, vegetation removal, and any activities leading to increased noise levels may have direct and/or indirect impacts on bats and roosts. CDFW recommends a project-level biological resources survey provide a thorough discussion and adequate disclosure of potential impacts to bats and roosts from project construction and activities including (but not limited to) ground-disturbing activities (e.g., mobilizing, staging, drilling, and excavating) and vegetation removal. If necessary, to reduce impacts to less than significant, a project-level environmental document should provide bat-specific avoidance and/or mitigation measures [CEQA Guidelines, § 15126.4(a)(1)].

The impacts to Nesting Birds was labelled a '**potentially significant impact**' and could occur 'if vegetation clearing and tree removal is undertaken during the breeding season from February 1 through August 31'. In addition,' these activities would also affect herbaceous vegetation that could support and conceal ground-nesting species' 'Project activities that result in the loss of bird nests, eggs and young would be in violation of one or more of California Fish and Game codes and be potentially significant'.

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife recommends that the project ‘avoid potential impacts to nesting birds. Project activities occurring during the bird and raptor breeding and nesting season could result in the incidental loss of fertile eggs or nestlings, or otherwise lead to nest abandonment’. They also recommend that ‘measures be taken to fully avoid impacts to nesting birds and raptors. Ground-disturbing activities (e.g., mobilizing, staging, drilling, and excavating) and vegetation removal should occur outside of the avian breeding season which generally runs from February 15 through August 31 (as early as January 1 for some raptors) to avoid take of birds, raptors, or their eggs’.

There are no plans to follow these recommendations in the Draft EIR.

The CDFW states ‘the biggest threat to birds is habitat loss and conversion of natural vegetation into another land use such as development (e.g., commercial, residential, industrial). In the greater Los Angeles region, urban forests and street trees, both native and some non-native species, provide habitat for a high diversity of 13 birds (Wood and Esaian 2020). Some species of raptors have adapted to and exploited urban areas for breeding and nesting (Cooper et al. 2020). For example, raptors (Accipitridae, Falconidae) such as red-tailed hawks (*Buteo jamaicensis*) and Cooper’s hawks (*Accipiter cooperii*) can nest successfully in urban sites. Red-tailed hawks commonly nest in ornamental vegetation such as eucalyptus (Cooper et al. 2020).

The CDFW recommends surveys by a qualified biologist with experience conducting breeding bird and raptor surveys. Surveys are needed to detect protected native birds and raptors occurring in suitable nesting habitat that may be disturbed and any other such habitat within 300 feet of the project disturbance area, to the extent allowable and accessible. For raptors, this radius should be expanded to 500 feet and 0.5 mile for special status species, if feasible. Project personnel, including all contractors working on site, should be instructed on the sensitivity of the area. Reductions in the nest buffer distance may be appropriate depending on the avian species involved, ambient levels of human activity, screening vegetation, or possibly other factors.

The developer proposed the implementation of **MM-BIO-1** to reduce the impacts to nesting birds during construction as follows:

MM-BIO-1: Nesting Bird Avoidance. Initiation of construction activities (i.e., initial vegetation clearing) should avoid the migratory bird nesting season (February 1 through August 31), to reduce any potential significant impact to birds that may be nesting on the project site. If construction activities must be initiated during the migratory bird-nesting season, an avian nesting survey of the project site and contiguous habitat within 500 feet of all impact areas must be conducted for protected migratory birds and active nests. The avian nesting survey shall be performed by a qualified wildlife biologist within 72 hours prior to the start of construction in accordance with the MBTA and California Fish and Game Code. If an active bird nest is found, the nest shall be flagged and mapped on the construction plans along with an appropriate no disturbance buffer, which shall be determined by the biologist based on the species’ sensitivity to disturbance (typically 50 feet for common, urban-adapted species, 300 feet for other passerine species, and 500 feet for raptors and special-status species). The nest area shall be avoided until the nest is vacated and the juveniles have fledged. The nest area shall be demarcated in the field with flagging and stakes or construction fencing. A qualified biologist (with the ability to stop work) shall serve as a construction monitor during those periods when construction activities will occur near active nest areas to ensure that no inadvertent impacts on these nests occur.

We would argue that this is another example of a mitigation measure that does not conform to CEQA Guidelines that is feasible, effective, manageable and fully enforceable in order to be effective and successfully implemented to achieve the desired result.

In conclusion, the Biological Resources Report failed to provide a thorough discussion of direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts affecting project biological resources. There was no discussion regarding Project-related indirect impacts on biological resources, including resources in nearby public lands, open space, adjacent natural habitats or riparian ecosystem. Impacts on, and maintenance of, wildlife corridor/movement areas, including access to undisturbed habitats in adjacent areas were not discussed or evaluated. There was no discussion of the potential adverse impacts from lighting, noise, use of chemicals or temporary and permanent human activity. According to Cooper Ecological Monitoring, Inc: WCA property assessment dated July 22, 2021, Table 4 “Summary of high counts of selected migratory bird species from eBird “Hotspots” with the study area of Bailey Canyon are:

Western Wood-pewee 1;	Pacific-slope Flycatcher 10;	Orange-crowned Warbler 2
Nashville Warbler 2;	Black-throated Gray Warbler 4;	Wilson’s Warbler 2;
Western Tanager 2;	Black-headed Grosbeak 4	

We believe these species will be adversely affected with the impact of the loss of trees.

CIRCULATION

Table ES – 1. Summary of Project Impacts

Goal 1: A balanced transportation system which accommodates all modes of travel including automobiles, pedestrians, bicycles, and transit users.

The project is labelled ‘Consistent’. However, the balanced transportation system only addresses vehicular and pedestrian travel with roads and sidewalks and on-street parking. There are no plans for bicycle lanes. The word ‘system’ implies connectivity with the surrounding neighborhoods, but there is no pedestrian linkage as the surrounding streets do not have sidewalks. The project is oddly isolated and self serving.

Goal 2: Safe and well-maintained streets.

The project is labelled ‘Consistent’. As we cannot comment on how well the streets will be maintained, as it is unknown; we can comment on ‘Safe’ streets. The ‘consistency’ addresses only the streets within the project and does not address the many safety issues this project will cause for streets surrounding the project. It says nothing about the impact of safety and maintenance due to the additional 300-400+ car trips on the streets and residents of Carter, Lima, Grove, and Sunnyside.

A thorough analysis of these impacts needs to be completed to fully understand the projects 'safety issues on the neighboring community. Two areas need clarification:

Clarify how the project would implement street sections that slow traffic.

Clarify the difference between the main Sunnyside entrance and the ingress/egress secondary access road, Carter Avenue.

Goal 3: Preservation of quiet neighborhoods with limited thru traffic.

The project is labeled 'Consistent' by repeating the same responses for above two goals. In reality, the project does nothing to preserve quiet surrounding neighborhoods to the west and south. It does, in fact, increase thru traffic by a minimum of 300-400+ car trips a day, an increase of over 100%. To get to the project, the cars will have to travel local streets including Sunnyside, Lima, Carter and Grove. There is no mention of the impact of traffic on these streets.

Once again, the response only addresses traffic within the project itself and not its impact on the community.

Table 4.11.1 Project's Consistency With The City of Sierra Madre's General Plan Goal and Policies

Goal 1: "A balanced transportation system which accommodates all modes of travel including automobiles, pedestrians, bicycles, and transit users."

The project only allows for automobiles and sidewalks. There is no practical access to transit systems.

Objective L51: Developing a balanced and multimodal transportation system to serve the needs of all roadway users, including motorists, public transit patrons, pedestrians, and cyclists.

The project is labelled 'Consistent'. The project is inconsistent as it does nothing to address cyclists or pedestrians in their 'circulation system' as there is no connectivity from the project into the community at large.

The project is so far out of range of public transportation that it is not a viable option. The EIR responds with the same sentence and descriptions of the existing bus stops which will be much farther away for the new residents, who will be affluent people, not likely to use mass transit, rather they will drive their cars thru existing neighborhoods.

Policy L51.2: Limit the development of new roadways or the expansion of existing roadways.

The project is again labelled 'Consistent' even though it fails both objectives and is inconsistent with the City's general plan. See paragraph above. It creates 3 new roadways and expands 100 % of the existing roads in the project, and increases the thru traffic by 300-400 car trips a day. No mention is given of the delivery trucks, landscapers, and other service people who usually travel to neighborhoods such as this upper middle class one. 'However, because the additions and expansions are within the boundaries of project site', the project is labelled 'consistent' by Dudek. But if 'the proposed project would result in expansion of these roadways

beyond the boundaries of the project site, it would then be inconsistent'. Some clarification of this confusing statement is required.

Policy L51.5: Encourage and support the use of non-automotive travel throughout the City.

The project is labeled 'Consistent'. In reality, it is not addressing this in any way other than a limited myopic view of a 'circular system using non-vehicular modes of transportation in a system of pedestrian pathways within the project site. Again, looking from the inside – out with no discernible impact on non-automotive travel throughout the City.

Policy L51.6: Encourage City staff, employees, residents and visitors to walk and bicycle as often as possible.

The project is labelled 'Consistent', but is inconsistent as it does nothing to address non-vehicular travel.

Clarify how a buffer along existing adjacent homes encourages residents to walk and bicycle.

Policy L51.7: Utilize non-automotive transportation solutions as a tool to further goals related to environmental sustainability and economic development.

The project is labeled 'Inconsistent'. Agree, as the project does nothing to implement this goal.

Objective L52: Improving streets to maintain levels of service, vehicular, cyclist and pedestrian safety.

The project is labeled 'Consistent, but it is inconsistent for its failure to maintain levels of safety to vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians. Once again, this 'consistent' label applies only to the streets within the project and not those surrounding it and impacted heavily by it. It is stated that 'the proposed project would not result in transportation related hazards including to cyclists and pedestrians'. In addition, the proposed project would improve both North Sunnyside Avenue and Carter Avenue. Again, the project is only 'consistent' within the project boundary and not the adjacent neighborhood. The proposed project is likely to result in transportation related hazards to both cyclists and pedestrians. The surrounding neighborhood streets that feed into the project were not designed to handle an increase in traffic. It is also stated that the project would not result in impacts to existing levels of service at any nearby intersection. That is a misstatement. It is highly likely that multiple stop signs will be required at the intersection of Carter and Grove to control traffic volume to prevent accidents.

Policy L52.8: Require the incorporation of bicycle facilities into the design of land use plans and capital improvements, including bicycle parking within new multi-family and non-residential sites or publicly accessible bicycle parking.

Inconsistent. Due to the small size and scope of this project, bicycle facilities would not be implemented. Although no bicycle facilities and improvements are proposed under the project, the project would not impact existing bicycle facilities in the vicinity of the project, including the existing bicycle lanes within Sierra Madre Boulevard. Nonetheless, because bicycle facilities would not be required, the project would be inconsistent with these policies.

Policy L52.9: Explore the possibility of sidewalk continuity where feasible.

The project is labeled as 'Consistent'. However, again, only within the project boundaries. There is no continuity with existing neighborhoods. There is no linkage from the project into the community. The lack of sidewalk continuity increases the isolation of the project from the rest of Sierra Madre and makes it inconsistent with this policy.

Objective L53: Protecting residential neighborhoods from the intrusion of through traffic.

The project is labeled as 'Consistent', but should be re-labelled as inconsistent as it fails to protect local neighborhoods from through traffic. It does protect its future residents from through traffic - as the project is a stand-alone U-shaped community, but has tremendous impact on its residential neighbors. Interestingly, 'Carter Avenue would become an egress and ingress lane and would still allow access to the Mater Dolorosa Retreat Center'. 'Because no existing residential uses would use Carter Avenue or North Sunnyside Avenue for access, the proposed project would not result in intrusive through traffic'. Again, for the project residents only and as stated 'these proposed circulation improvements (on Sunnyside north and Carter north) would be used to serve the proposed project residents and would also allow access to the Mater Dolorosa Retreat Center'.

Unbelievably, there is no discussion of the increased traffic (300-400 vehicle trips daily) caused by project residents on the surrounding residential neighborhoods and how they will be protected from this intrusion of through traffic on Lima, Sunnyside south, Carter east and Grove. This is an unacceptable analysis of Objective L53.

GEOLOGY AND SOILS

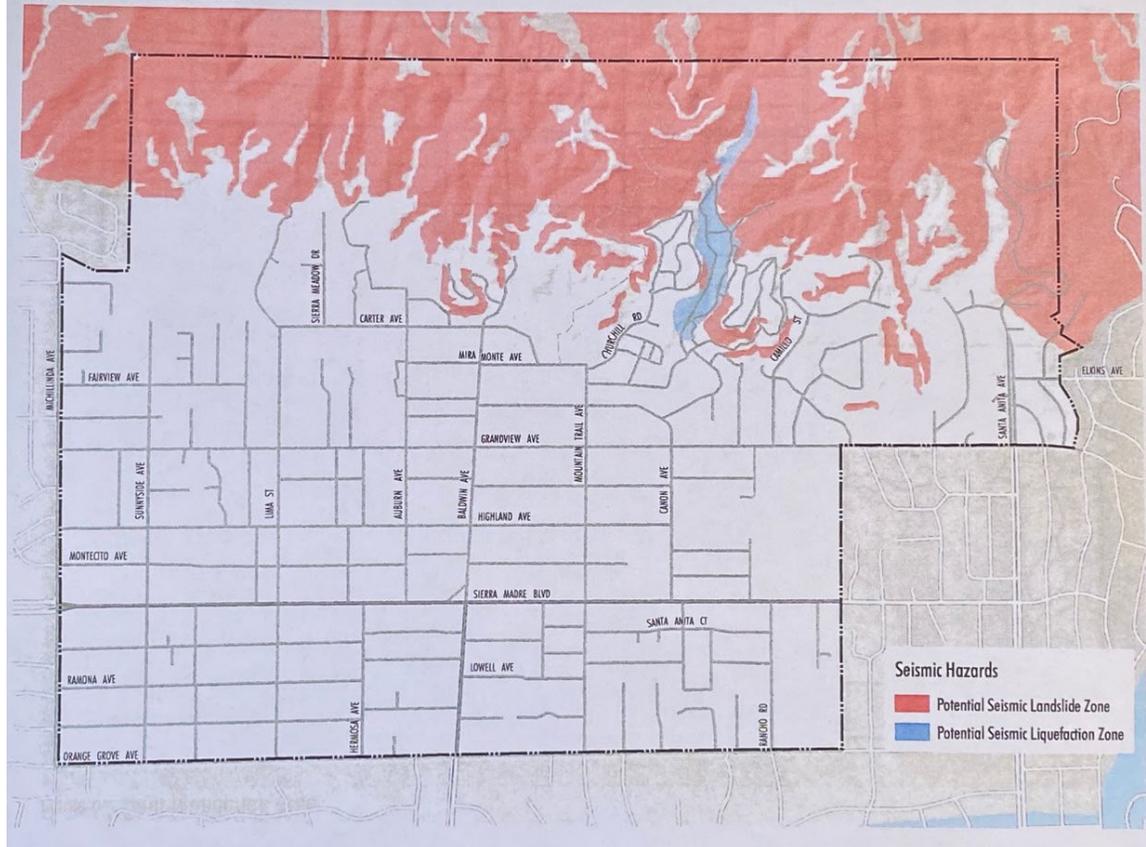
Would the project directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss injury or death involving rupture of a known earthquake fault?

Developer response: Less than significant.

The project is located near the Sierra Madre Fault as well as the Raymond and Clamshell Faults. In 1991 the Sierra Madre earthquake damaged one of the Monastery buildings beyond repair, and it was torn down. 22 homes in the proximity of Sunnyside were condemned, with damage to 403 structures, resulting in \$12.5

million in damages.

Figure 6-3 Seismic Hazards



POPULATION AND HOUSING

Would the project induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, but proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?

Developer response: Less than significant.

This violates Vision and Guiding Principle #5 – Ensure development is done in harmony with its neighborhood, while maintaining the character of the town and without unduly burdening existing city services and infrastructure or impacting the environment. The Specific Plan states that the houses will be 2700 to 4000 square feet on a minimum lot of size of 7800 square feet. These houses are significantly larger than the average homes on the surrounding streets, Gatewood, Sunnyside, Carter, Oak Crest, Fairview, Sierra Keys, and Crestvale. Sierra Madre’s municipal code states that new construction of homes over 3500 square feet requires a Conditional Use Permit, to be authorized by the Planning Commission. According to The Meadows Specific Plan, “Whenever the Specific Plan contains provisions that establish regulations....which are different from, or more restrictive or permissive than would be allowed pursuant to the provisions of the Sierra Madre Municipal Code, the Specific Plan shall prevail and supersede the applicable provisions of the SMMC.”

Policy 2.5: **“Encourage the construction of new, well designed second units in residential zones as a means of addressing a portion of Sierra Madre’s regional housing needs.”**

The proposed plan is consistent with this, however the assessed impacts of traffic, etc., do not consider the additional load that these added housing units would cause. New State laws such as SB 9 may impact this as well, allowing for lot splitting.

Policy 5.3: “Promote the use of alternative energy sources such as solar energy...”

In the proposed plan it is possible for any of the homes to use solar panels, however, it is not the plan that they all have them or that any of them have them. So the proposed plan does not promote the use of such alternatives, and so is inconsistent with the General Plan policy.

Policy L6.3 – Ensure new and remodeled structures in residential neighborhoods to minimize placement of windows and decks with direct lines of sight inside neighboring homes and back yards.

The four different cookie cutter type housing plans also call for balconies in the back, which will overlook existing neighboring properties, decreasing their right to privacy.

The character of the town is an eclectic mixture of homes (houses, apartments, condos, skilled nursing facility), ages and income levels. These houses may sell for \$3-\$5 million per house, with no plans to make any of them in the lower income category.

Policy L6.1 – Require that all adjoining neighbors of new or expanded existing structures in residential areas be notified and be made aware of the appeal process for any new construction that will exceed one story in height or significantly increase the volume and/or footprint of the overall structure.

The Specific Plan states “The City of Sierra Madre Municipal Code Chapter 17.04, Section 17.04.120, Community Redevelopment Plans-Specific Plans, establishes that any standards relating to land usage shall be determined by the adopted Specific Plan. Therefore, the Specific Plan will serve as the zoning code for the Plan area.” This violates Policy L6.1.

Policy L7.3 – Limit the height of new buildings to reflect the prevailing height patterns on the street and within the Sierra Madre community.

As can be seen by the aerial map below of the surrounding neighborhood, there are **51 one story** and only **4 two story** houses. There is nothing in the Specific Plan as to how many two story and how many one story houses will be built. Two story homes will command a greater selling price, so it is not a stretch to believe this project would have all or mostly two story homes.



Policy L5.1 – Prohibit the use of cul-de-sacs and require through streets in new subdivisions except when no other is physically feasible due to property ownership, parcel location or other physical features.

Developer response: Consistent. The Specific Plan incorporates a Mobility Plan that is designed in grid pattern typical of Sierra Madre’s existing grid pattern.

Although the grid pattern will be maintained inside the project, this is the ultimate cul-de-sac, in that there is one main way in, Sunnyside, and one secondary access, Carter. In essence, this project is walled off, away from City life – the Monastery is to the north, with its fence (or wall, to be built) and locked gate, Bailey Canyon Park, and another fence, to the east, walls cutting off the Sunnyside homes to the south, and another fenced in, no access area, cutting off Gatewood to the west.

Policy L4.1 – Ensure that the expansion of existing uses is reflective of and complements the overall pattern of development without changing the character of existing development.

This violates our General Plan, in that these homes are larger than those in the surrounding neighborhoods, which consist of 47 one story and 4 two story homes. We have asked several times how many and where the one story (if any) homes will be, without an answer, as stated above.

Per State law, the City must build a certain percentage of housing that is considered for lower and middle income. This does not comply.

PUBLIC SERVICES

WILDFIRES - The project site is located in a very high fire hazard severity zone, according to the Cal Dept of Forestry and Fire Protection. It is inconsistent with our General Plan that we not build in a very high fire zone.

Objective Hz5.a – “Limit risk of wildfire through public education and development planning.”

Development planning would be to stay out of a high fire zone, rather than build 42 large homes.

Objective Hz7 – “Avoid expanding development into undeveloped areas in a Very High Fire Severity Zone.”

Local streets can’t support emergency equipment. Parts of Sierra Madre have been evacuated three times in the last 35 years, and the incidence and intensity of wildfires has been increasing.

Our Bobcat Fire occurred just a year ago, and some residents north of Grand View were evacuated. Wildfires are increasing in frequency and intensity.

In 2020, in California, there were 9,639 total fires. The fires destroyed 10,488 homes, charred 4.4 million acres, and resulted in a cost of \$12 billion. Most importantly, and tragically, 31 people lost their lives, which you can’t put a price on. Annual, re-occurring wildfires across Southern and Northern California even resulted in former California Attorney General Xavier Becerra (now Secretary of Health and Human Services), stating in March 2021, “devastating wildfires have become the norm in recent years, with dozens of deaths and whole towns forced to evacuate.” “That’s why local governments must address the wildfire risks associated with new developments at the front end.” In 2020, in San Diego County, where several devastating fires occurred **in 2020**, there were ten housing development projects proposed in very high-risk fire areas, they were all stopped either by prudent local government action or lawsuits. In September several streets north of Grand View were evacuated.

2008 Sierra Madre Fire

That fire, originating in the Angeles National forest, which runs right into our foothills, grew to 400 acres and forced the evacuation of 1,000 people from their homes.



The 2003 Southern California Fires

Going back almost twenty years, the fall of 2003 marked the most destructive wildfire season in California history up to that point. In a ten day period, 12 separate fires raged across Southern California in Los Angeles, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego and Ventura counties. The massive “Cedar” fire in San Diego County alone consumed 2,800 homes and burned over a quarter of a million acres.

What is Susceptible to Wildfire?

Growth and Development in the Interface

The hills and mountainous areas of Sierra Madre are considered to be interface areas (geographical point where the wilderness and urban area meets). **The development of homes and other structures is encroaching onto the wildlands and is expanding the wildland/urban interface.** (pulled directly from the City of Sierra Madre website). The interface neighborhoods are characterized by a diverse mixture of varying housing structures, development patterns, ornamental and natural vegetation and natural fuels.

In the event of a wildfire, vegetation, structures and other flammables can merge into unwieldy and unpredictable events. Factors important to the fighting of such fires include access, firebreaks, proximity of water sources, distance from a fire station and available firefighting personnel and equipment. Reviewing past wildland/urban interface fires shows that many structures are destroyed or damaged for one or more of the following reasons:

- Combustible roofing material

- Wood construction Structures with no defensible space

- Fire department with poor access to structures, such as would be the case, if 42 homes are built on the Monastery property

- Subdivisions located in heavy natural fuel types

Structures located on steep slopes covered with flammable vegetation. While these proposed 42 homes won't be on steep slopes, they will back up nearly to the edges of these slopes, which are even too steep for hiking trails.

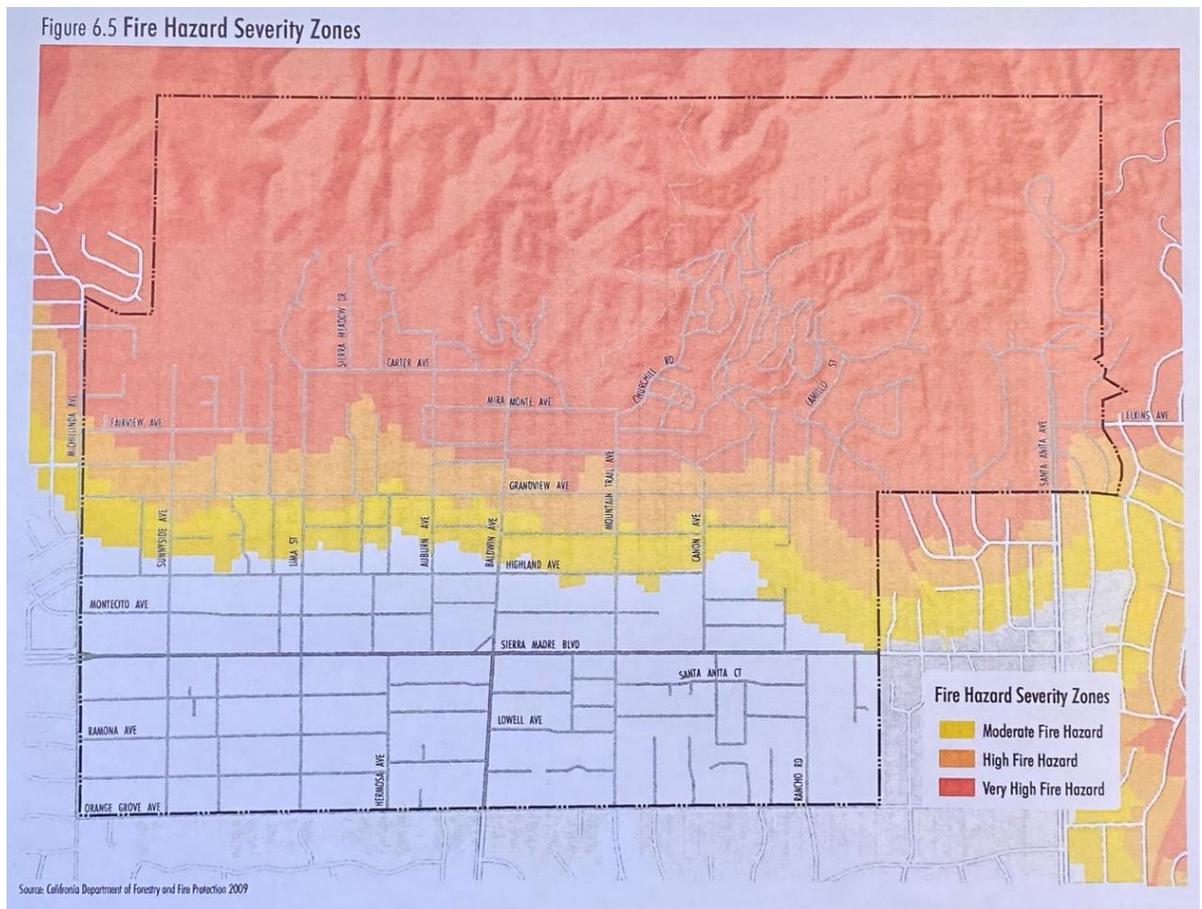
Limited water supply. Of course, this is going to be further exacerbated by the extreme drought conditions California is already experiencing.

Winds over 30 miles per hour

Road access would be problematic, and dangerous because Sunnyside, the road that leads up to the monastery, would quickly become congested, limiting the access for emergency vehicles.

Water Supply

This would be very problematic with the increasing drought conditions in California. For the reasons above, we strongly believe it is not in the public interest of Sierra Madre to exacerbate fire risk in the highest designated "extreme" fire risk area in Sierra Madre. New Urban West will argue that they will use fire retardant building supply materials. As everyone has seen, there have been many new housing developments built in Southern California (including many of the over 10,000 homes burnt and lost in California in 2020) and across our state with "fire retardant" materials, and the communities still went up in smoke and ash.



HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY Would the project substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?

Developer Response: Less than significant. The developer is guaranteeing 50 years of net zero water usage payment, to be paid upon approval of the project.

This violates Objective R12 Optimizing the use of water and water resources.

It also violates Policy L4.3 Ensure that the new development and the expansion of existing uses incorporate water conservation measures that reduce and minimize the impact on the City's water supply and its ability to serve its customers.

We would argue that there is no way to predict "net zero" into 50 years in the future.

As the project argues the value of its "net zero" water usage, the project will have doubled the impact on water usage as it plans to now buy all the water it needs for the next 50 years and store it for future use, while homeowners will still use and pay for municipal water going forward. At the present time there is no water available for purchase. Given the present drought conditions, there is no guarantee that this is a viable option going forward. California is in a drought, reservoirs are at an all time low and mandatory water conservation is in effect in many cities. It is just a matter of time before the "public opinion driven" Governor implements restrictions in southern California. The project fails to provide a convincing argument that storing water today results in net zero water usage, as homeowners will still use and pay for municipal water going forward.

The Project fails to implement the strategies established by the Department of Energy in the Net Zero Water Requirements as follows: A net zero water building is designed to:

- Minimize total water consumption

- Maximize alternative water sources

- Minimize wastewater discharge from the building and return water to the original water source.

Net zero water creates a water-neutral building where the amount of alternative water used and water returned to the original water source is equal to the building's total water consumption.

However, if the building is not located within the watershed or aquifer of the original water source, then returning water to the original water source will be unlikely. In those cases, a net zero water strategy would depend on alternative water use. Alternative water is a sustainable water source not derived from fresh-, surface, or groundwater sources. Alternative water includes:

- Harvested rainwater, stormwater, sump-pump (foundation) water

- Graywater

- Air-cooling condensate

- Rejected water from water purification systems

- Water derived from other water reuse strategies

A net zero water building uses alternative water sources to offset the use of freshwater.

A net zero building closes the loop on the water system by returning water to the original water source. Wastewater can be treated and recharged. Stormwater can also recharge the original water source.

According to Jane Tsong, Project Manager for the Watershed Conservation Authority (WCA), imported water is not as sustainable. Building structures (such as 42 large homes) will compromise the ability to sustain the water. Reducing the amount of land and increasing the amount of stormwater if this water has to be imported, will have to be cleaned, which is expensive for the taxpayers.

Would the project conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?

Developer response: Less than significant.

There does not seem to be a plan to capture groundwater when (if) it rains. Landscaping takes up the biggest residential use of water. The developer does not seem to have a plan regarding lawns or swimming pools, equally high in water usage. The Specific Plan is to use “low water use plants” but “in areas where high water use plants are needed they should be limited in number, grouped together in adjacent areas to simplify irrigation strategies....” Why would “high irrigation plants” be needed anywhere? The roadways through the project could be made of permeable materials, rather than tar or asphalt, which exacerbates runoff. There is no mention of that either.

Jane Tsong, Project Manager for the Watershed Conservation Authority in her letter to City Council, dated September 28, 2021 said: “This development will be situated on *the very last large parcel of land in the Eastern San Gabriel foothills which retains a connection between the canyons and the alluvial fan*. Alluvial fans have particularly high rates of infiltration. There, water can sink deep into the ground and recharge aquifers. Keeping remaining recharge areas as undeveloped as possible is a critical part of protecting our region’s watersheds. This land was ranked very in high in conservation value in our agency’s Foothills Open Space Acquisition Study due to its watershed value, adjacency to protected lands, potential for habitat restoration, and for public access.

The opportunity to optimize the recharge potential on any remaining undeveloped alluvial fan land has the potential to benefit all users of the Raymond Basin far into the future. It may also serve as a buffer to absorb flows from the mountains above in an era of climate change uncertainty. If this land is covered by houses and roads, it would be prohibitive to regain all these functions in full. Please give full consideration to an alternative scenario: to acquire the land for regional public benefit and to optimize its capacity to enhance biodiversity, aquifer recharge, as well as provide flood control.”

Again, quoting Ms Tsong, when consulted about the water issues, if the project goes through, the biodiversity will be disturbed. Experts have pointed out that this is a successful restoration site. This site is uniquely situated, in that it is next to protected lands which will be distressed. There is no other parcel like this between Sierra Madre and Claremont, on an alluvial fan. The springs that used to provide water have disappeared. There is a focus on restoration of the LA River and the San Gabriel River, which begins in the foothills, anywhere that water can sink into the ground. This will be disturbed with the addition of 42 large homes and road infrastructure.

Policy Hz2.4 – Consider water availability in terms of quantity and water pressure for safety purposes when considering the size and location of new residential construction.

There is a retention storage gallery underneath the proposed park of three acres. There will be a problem if it floods. There is no reason to believe we will have more water in the future, per Ms Tsong.

Would the project have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry, and multiple dry years?

No, at this time the city cannot buy any additional water for this project. . The entire State of California is in a drought, reservoirs are at an all time low and mandatory water conservation is in effect in many cities at this time. It is expected that more cities will be making conservation demands of their communities with no extra water available for purchase in the foreseeable future.

Policy Hz2.2.5 Assess the impacts of incremental increases in development density and related traffic congestion on fire hazards and emergency response time, and ensure through the development review process that new development will not result in a reduction of fire protection services below acceptable levels.

Governor Newsom has requested everyone cut back their water usage by 15%, and when one expert on NPR was asked how it could be done, because Southern California residents have already installed low flow toilets, put in drought tolerant landscaping, the expert said we may already be there. Increasing the hardscape by 138,600 square feet, (42 homes times the median of 2700-4000 sq ft) plus roads, less 100 mature trees (or 90 if the Oaks are replanted properly) for the canopy *in a high fire zone*, is not only foolhardy, it is dangerous.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the addition of 42 luxury homes as planned in the Meadows project is an inappropriate use of Sierra Madre resources, violates the will of the people of Sierra Madre as codified in the General Plan, and further takes advantage of the people of Sierra Madre for decades for the short term profit of the Mater Dolorosa and their hired developers.

We believe the project as proposed and its DraftEIR fails to properly assess the impact to the Sierra Madre community and so fails to justify the conversion of the zone from institutional to residential and especially the establishment of an area separate and contrary to the guidelines in the Sierra Madre General Plan and the will of the people of Sierra Madre.

On behalf of Preserve Sierra Madre and its followers.

To the City Council

The below information was sent to the Planning Commission when they studied the Meadows Project.

Though they impacted BOTH the Specific Plan AND the DEIR, none of those concerns were addressed - or even mentioned by the Planning Commission!

These matters affect the SAFETY of the Citizens of the City, especially in the wake of increasingly intensifying weather events.

The Drainage Plan in the DEIR had been ENTIRELY replaced with a new (concerning) one. The Planning Commission approved an EIR that never considered this plan and therefore proposed NO studies or mitigations of the issues raised!

They MUST be addressed before either the EIR OR the Specific Plan are approved!

Re: Serious Concerns of Drainage and Flooding

An important purpose of an Environmental impact report is to identify potential adverse impacts of the Developers planned project.

A report in the DEIR of the original Detention Basin plan identified the need for a study of the location of that basin TO AVOID ADVERSE IMPACTS to adjacent homes. No study has been done and the location remains the same in the present Plan, with more water potentially reaching the basin than in the studied plans. The drainage and hydrology of the Meadows project has been significantly changed since the EIR and there is no oversight for the current plan. .

Concern #1

Emails received through a Public records request show that Sierra Madre's Public Works Director objected to the Developer's plan for overflow to be directed to Crestvale via a surface pipe onto the street several feet below the proposed park. He said then that [The easterly storm drain will need to be connected to the storm drain on Lima St.](#)

The Developers engineer objected because that plan **“requires analysis and verify capacity of all the impacted drainage systems as a result of the diversion”** and that they would like to avoid that.

(Emails included #1 Below)

We would like to think that analysis of and verifying capacity of all impacted drainage systems would be EXACTLY what the City should require for protection of all citizens living below the planned development!

Any future discussions with our Public Works director and our City Engineer were apparently not documented as they were not provided in public document requests.

Current plans include even more water to be diverted to the Detention Basin, as the proposed “term sheet” for the first time suggests diverting all waters from the pipes on Sunnyside, to the Retention Basin located immediately above a home below, on Crestvale.

Concern #2

In its original comments to the NOP (Notice of Preparation) of the EIR, in 2020, the County Flood Control District through its department of public works, identified Flooding and debris flow concerns for the project, based on the Hillside terrain.

"The Los Angeles County Flood Control District (LACFCD) has reviewed the NOP and offers the following comments for your consideration:

1. Project components affecting the LACFCD's facilities or right of way will require a flood permit, storm drain plans approval, and hydrology study approval from the LACFCD through EPIC-LA at epicla.lacounty.gov. The LACFCD should be disclosed and included as a responsible permitting agency in the DEIR.

2. The hillsides above the proposed housing project are highly erosive and subject to severe burn from wildfires. Debris flows can result afterwards due to storm water run-off. Flood and debris control facilities may be required to protect the proposed housing project.

NOT ONE of the County's concerns (including other requests that the DEIR address traffic impacts to their ability to maintain their Bailey Debris Basin) were ever even mentioned let alone mitigated in the DEIR or the FEIR, nor was LA County Flood Control District disclosed as a permitting agency, as they stated they should be.

Rather the Developer, in its email to the City's Public Works Director said that they wanted to avoid the oversight of the County Flood Control District.

The County's Concerns include a possibility of a Debris Flow, a subject not addressed in the EIR. Some residents remember the deaths of a Sierra Madre father and son in a sudden debris flow in Bailey Canyon - adjacent to the proposed development. There are signs in the park now, warning of that danger. The mountains above the retreat center are dry and a fire danger. After a fire those areas would be very prone to mud and debris slides from rain events in the mountains. The Sierra Madre Hazard Map identifies that area as a “landslide zone”

(County Comments included #2 Below)

The Hydrology plan before the Planning Commission bears no semblance to what was included in the DEIR and FEIR. The Berm, the Sunken Park and sending all Sunnyside water to the detention basin are entirely new elements of the project and its critical drainage plan.

They were never presented or studied in the DEIR or by the City or County and are contrary to the Hydrology design and maps in the DEIR and FEIR.

The Developer's consultant has presented figures to assure the committee that their NEW plan is adequate for the safety and protection of the City. But it was the SAME consultant that presented the Hydrology Plan in the EIR without the berm they now say is essential for drainage. Their current (revised) plan acknowledges that it is subject to presenting an LID (Low Impact Development) plan which must be reviewed and accepted by the City Engineer. They have not shown that the City Engineer has seen, reviewed and accepted their present plan to send all excess storm waters, from the entire development, that are not held in the ground or the "retention basin", down Crestvale (or any city Streets at a lower elevation than the park.)

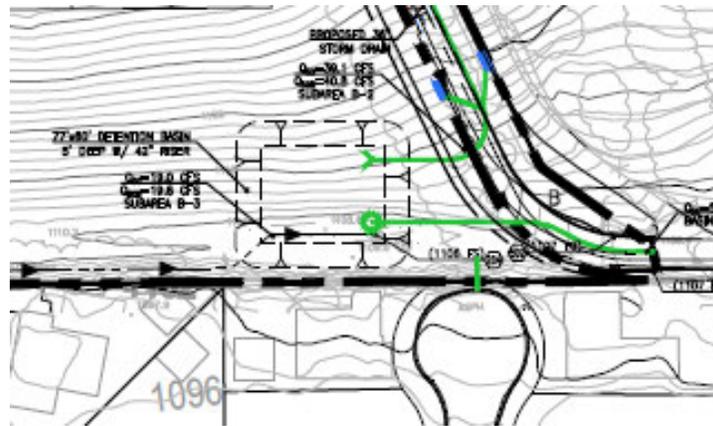
Concern # 3

The DEIR included a Geo Tech study which presented concerns of potential adverse impacts to adjacent properties, based on the placement of the planned retention basin.

The DEIR GeoTech study required "Any infiltration systems shall be setback a sufficient distance from proposed structures and adjacent properties to avoid adverse impacts. These distances shall be determined with future studies."

The DEIR states that "Stormwater that is not retained and cleaned in the storage gallery or infiltrated into the ground will be routed to the southeast corner of the park and exit to Crestvale drive via a 24-inch surface culvert."

Despite having had that Geotech report (that the system should be setback a sufficient distance fromadjacent properties") for many months before the release of the DEIR, the developer's current proposed design, in the DEIR and the FEIR **still** shows the detention basin located directly adjacent to nearby homes on Crestvale and still plans to divert all excess water to Crestvale via a surface culvert. There is no reference in any NUW document of a plan to study what the potential impacts might be, or to relocate the setback of the infiltration system to avoid the POSSIBILITY of adverse impacts to the homes below.



The potential for “Adverse Impacts” could easily be diminished, or removed entirely, by moving the retention basin to the Northern side of the park area and including a connection with the County Storm drain on the Corner of Carter and Lima which would also allow drainage from any significant storm BEFORE it flooded the public park and before it flooded any City street. It would also remove the berm as an impediment to the views of the homes below, as it would be at the base of an existing planned slope.

If the County approves the Developers plan to widen Carter Avenue, the Developer would already be required to move the existing Storm drain at the intersection of Carter, Lima and Oak Crest. The plan already is to connect water lines from the project to a pipe running under West Carter Avenue to a drain on Lima, and the City Manager has said that the Developer would be responsible for all repairs to the existing West Carter road.

The ONLY impediment to their making this change which would protect the existing citizens of Sierra Madre is the statement by the Developers consultant that connection to the County Storm Drain: **“requires analysis and verify capacity of all the impacted drainage systems as a result of the diversion... If possible, we would like to match existing hydrology boundaries as much as possible to avoid diversion.”**

If the Developer is confident in its latest (new) plan to keep from flooding the park and the rest of the City, he should easily be able to comply with the requirements of a Storm Drain connection to convey that water that would otherwise flood City Streets.

The Developer’s statement that they plan a “Sunken Park” has also raised a question, as that term has never been previously used. How much of the Park will be sunken and how deep? If only a portion will be sunken, where will it be located?

The Question of one of the Commissioners as to how much the planned berm would take from the usable portion of the park is reasonable - we would likewise like to learn how much is sloped towards the first tier of homes. The depiction shows a strip of land, developed with walkways and other amenities. Please ask the developer how many acres of the 3 acre park will be developed with those features.

RE Concern #1

From: Winnie Tham

Sent: Friday, October 9, 2020 9:18 AM

To: CCimino <CCimino@cityofsierramadre.com>; John Olivier <[REDACTED]>

Subject: Sunnyside - Proposed Storm Drain

Hi Chris,

In our call last Monday, you had noted that you did not want us to continue taking storm water to Crestvale Drive (cul de sac), rather divert the storm water to an new county drain to Lima. Is there a reason we cannot continue to drain towards Crestvale Drive? Our intention is to detain the proposed flow onsite and only outlet the same existing Q to Crestvale Drive, under the proposed condition. Based on this concept, is there a reason we can't continue to outlet to Crestvale Drive? Typically County frowns upon diversion to the drainage areas and requires analysis and verify capacity of all the impacted drainage systems as a result of the diversion, as indicated by Vilong in the Tuesday conf. call. If possible, we would like to match existing hydrology boundaries as much as possible to avoid diverstion.

From: Winnie Tham <[REDACTED]>

Sent: Friday, October 09, 2020 3:25

To: Chris Cimino <CCimino@cityofsierramadre.com>; John Olivier <[REDACTED]>

Subject: RE: Sunnyside - Proposed Storm Drain

Hi Chris,

I forgot to ask in my earlier email, if you can review the attached exhibit and confirm the County vs. City storm drain system. Per Vilong, he said that since this project is in the City jurisdiction, then the County will review the "overall" hydrology and City will review the "subdivision" hydrology. Based on this, I've marked up the proposed storm drain system, with what I think would be County owned and maintained, vs. City. Can you please confirm if this is accurate?

Also at the entitlement level, will the hydrology report need to be approved by County for approval of the TTM?

Cris Cimino's Response

Good morning Winnie,

The reason I do not want you to design the storm water to go to Crestvalle is there is no storm drain on Crestvalle. Currently the storm water sheds to the street. The easterly storm drain will need to be connected to the storm drain on Lima St.

I am including our contract Engineer Kev Tcharkhautian, he will be able to answer all you question related to Storm drain and LID for this project.

(No further emails were provided based on Public Records Requests)

RE Concern #2

(On June 24, 2020, weeks after the MOU was signed, the City of Sierra Madre sent a Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report - NOP - to CEQA. One of the agencies required to be given notice, Los Angeles County Flood Control District, responded with their concerns, to be addressed in the EIR)

Among the Comments

“The Los Angeles County Flood Control District (LACFCD) has reviewed the NOP and offers the following comments for your consideration:

1. Project components affecting the LACFCD’s facilities or right of way will require a flood permit, storm drain plans approval, and hydrology study approval from the LACFCD through EPIC-LA at epicla.lacounty.gov. The LACFCD should be disclosed and included as a responsible permitting agency in the DEIR.

2. The hillsides above the proposed housing project are highly erosive and subject to severe burn from wildfires. Debris flows can result afterwards due to storm water run-off. Flood and debris control facilities may be required to protect the proposed housing project.

6. The DEIR should address the project impacts to the operation and maintenance of Bailey Debris Basin and include all required mitigations including, but not limited to the following:

6.1. Potential complaints from current and future residents about the impact from work at the basin such as cleanout activities and trucking.

6.2. Increases in traffic affecting operation efficiency during basin cleanout.

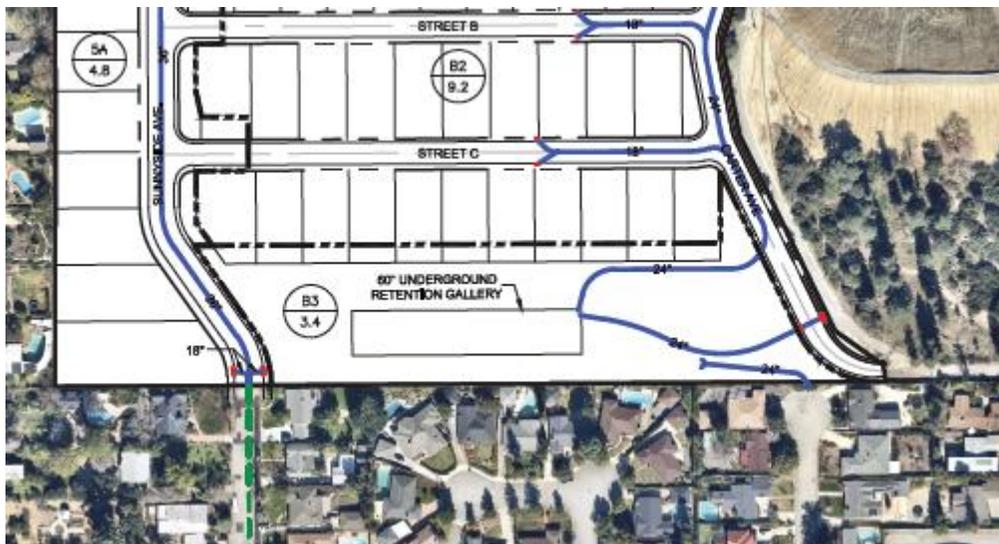
(NOT ONE of their concerns were ever even mentioned let alone mitigated in the DEIR or the FEIR, nor were they disclosed as a permitting agency, as they asked“

RELEVANT EXHIBITS FROM THE EIR

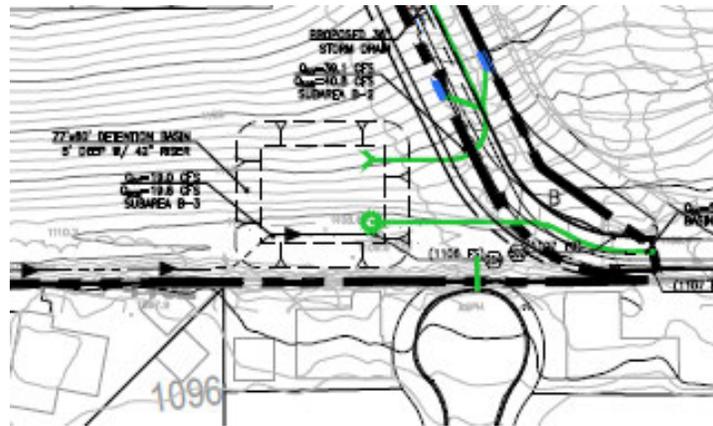




Page 54 FEIR



Page 55 FEIR



We Citizens have tried to keep up with all the thousands of pages of relevant documents - not an easy task. The DEIR and all its attached studies, the FEIR and its hundreds of redlined changes, the amendments Volume 1 and Volume II and all the Agenda Packets and the Staff Reports - and now the Development Agreement, the Term Sheet and the Redlined Specific Plan. The Specific Plan no longer matches what was studied in the EIR.

It is a Gargantuan, constantly shifting “target” of information. Much of what exists now is entirely in conflict with the plan presented by the DEIR. We do not even know if we have all the information. Their current “plan” includes references to the LID (have they submitted a plan, has it been reviewed?)

The “proposed Specific Plan” by law, can not be adopted unless it is found consistent with the City’s existing General Plan. The Developer has an analysis saying that it is consistent - the Citizens from two groups have submitted analyses that say it is not. The “independent reviewer” MIG, hired by the City for Peer Review of the Developer’s documents, in many instances, said that elements did NOT show consistency, but their comments too, were often ignored. (Interestingly, a comment from the City to an early draft version of their plan requested that parking be moved to the north side of the streets - the Developer declined)

Many times our requests to the City have been met with the response that we need to do a records request. Most times the requested documents are not provided until several weeks later than allowed by law.

We are VERY appreciative of the Planning Commission’s thorough review of this very complex project and ESPECIALLY grateful to feel that we are being “heard”.

At the Joint meeting of the Planning Commission and the City Council, in March, Commissioner Dennison asked if you would be able to do a “deep dive” into the Specific Plan when it came before you. We are happy (and relieved to see that you are doing just that) Thank you

Barbara Vellturo
for Protect Sierra Madre

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment for 9/15/22 meeting
Date: Wednesday, September 14, 2022 1:44:03 PM

CAUTION: This message is from an EXTERNAL SENDER - be CAUTIOUS, particularly with links and attachments.

Please forward this public comment to the City Council

As a resident of Sierra Madre for over 20 years, I am shocked by this City Council's determination to move the deeply flawed meadows project forward despite significant and legitimate citizen concern. You must let this go to a ballot in November and respect the democratic process.

The impacts on safety, pollution, water usage and supply, the environment, and traffic are too dire to rush this through. Fire safety ALONE required that this project not be approved this week. I suspect members of the council may feel very differently about this project if they lived in this quadrant of town.

Do the right thing and defer a decision until after the citizens have their rightful say in the November election.

Maria Karafilis
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: Meadow - Comments
Date: Wednesday, September 14, 2022 9:13:15 PM

CAUTION: This message is from an EXTERNAL SENDER - be CAUTIOUS, particularly with links and attachments.

Thank you for considering my comments attached:

Hi, I just spoke with Vincent Gonzalez over the phone briefly and outlined my 3 major concerns, see below for my questions and his responses:

1. Water Mitigation

- As this is an extremely sloped site, with a large buildable square footage proposed, I am concerned at proper water mitigation given our extreme drought and the adjacent properties below.

He said that they had planned enough underground retention to plan for a 100 year storm.

I would like to see the calculations proposed, as well as how the water from all of the properties would properly feed into this underground retention. I am also seeing ~30,000 SF proposed of above ground storage directly in the park plan, and would be interested in what that design is.

2. Landscaping

- In order to level out the properties, they have proposed tiering the site, leaving landscaped areas for the city to maintain at a 2:1 slope. This is commonly the maximum allowed slope for landscaped areas, and when asked how they intend to maintain it, Vincent's response was through a combination of HOA and city management. He also said this is similar to how they are going to deal with Stonegate at One Carter, which he told me is starting construction again now.

Have the increased load imposed on the city by these two massive developments been looked at in tandem?

3. Angled Plane Height Requirement

- As you know, in the canyon, they are very strict on not encroaching into the angle plane height, as this is meant to minimize obstructed views onto our mountains. Vincent says two of their styles (Farmhouse and Craftsman) will have eaves encroaching into this plane because of their style of architecture. This would be up to the community to decide, as I'm sure shrinking the size of these buildings would ease that issue.

Will see you Thursday at the meeting - thank you,

--

Connor Murphy-Boyd
Designer, B.Architecture
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: Attn: City Council - Mater Dolorosa / The Meadows
Date: Thursday, September 15, 2022 12:05:46 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image007.png](#)
[image010.png](#)
[image012.png](#)
[image013.png](#)
[image014.png](#)
[image015.png](#)

CAUTION: This message is from an EXTERNAL SENDER - be CAUTIOUS, particularly with links and attachments.

The Meadow's negative impact far outweighs any benefit to the City of Sierra Madre and the neighbors. The approval process has been driven by the strong lobbying effort of the Diocese and NUW to push the project regardless of the negative neighborhood and environmental impact and strong objections by the neighbors. The NUW "Music Man" has managed to fool "River City" aka Sierra Madre with the commitment of \$2+ million in development fees.

Developing 42 tract homes exceeding site coverage guidelines which could include future ADUs (potentially expanding the density to 82) units is not the highest and best use of this property. Flat grading the site in the Hillside Zone should not be permitted. Cutting trees, chasing off mule deer and other animals inhabiting the site should not be permitted.

The flooding, fire, and drought risk seem to have been explained away, but it is very evident that there are real risks that have not been adequately addressed or mitigated, only superficially characterized in the DEIR prepared by NUW's paid consultant.

Declining to approve this project does not preclude the sale of the parcel for alternative uses such as estate-sized residential lots, a low-density senior housing complex, or religious retreat. The only option to The Meadows project that was presented in the DEIR was a frightening 800-room multi-story hospital complex. The density of The Meadows project is clearly profit driven, not compatibility driven.

Please consider carefully the conflict with the general plan, Hillside ordinance, existing zoning, and disruption to the neighbors who would be forced to live with 800 cars per day streaming down narrow two-lane streets already congested with on street car parking.

Finally, characterizing the initiative to stop The Meadows project as potentially "illegal" is grossly misleading and insensitive to the neighbors' legitimate concerns.

Please support the interests of the constituents you represent and have a responsibility to protect.

Thank you for your consideration.

Clyde F. Stauff, SIOR
Vice Chair | Greater Los Angeles
Stauff/Gan Industrial Team

[REDACTED]
CA Lic. 00464008
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: Message for City Council Members about Due Diligence
Date: Thursday, September 15, 2022 1:07:03 PM

CAUTION: This message is from an EXTERNAL SENDER - be CAUTIOUS, particularly with links and attachments.

Please acknowledge receipt of this email and forward it to all members of the City Council. Submitted before deadline on Thursday 15 September 2022

I write as a vigorous opponent to the bloated and hazardous Meadows project to implore the Council members to consider the ramifications of relying on incomplete and/or incorrect recommendations made by the Planning Commission, City employees and, most notably, our own City Counsel.

There are deep and abiding legal flaws in the final Environmental Impact Report that have already been flagged by citizens and outside officials. If City Council members want to accept the tainted recommendations, they need to be prepared for the personal consequences that will ensue.

According to land use case law, civil actions have been brought against individual members of municipalities across California who knowingly approve flawed or fraudulent documents. The actions would go beyond whatever liability umbrella a municipality might guarantee to elected or appointed Council Members and employees. Excess liability exposure could include and has included liens against personal property and wages, as well as considerable negative publicity that could tarnish both reputation and, in some cases, re-election possibilities.

City Council has to do the 'heavy lifting' here and recognize the range of flaws in the recommended plan by doing its own research, thus pausing any further action steps relating to the Meadows project. Each Council member has exposure issues to confront, far beyond the distrust and growing anger of the voting public that fears they'll merely rubber-stamp the Meadows Project.

Dan Golden

--

Dan Golden, PhD Director, GOLDENWORDS College and Life Planning Consultants

[REDACTED] Sierra Madre, CA 91024

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: Meadows Project
Date: Thursday, September 15, 2022 12:12:06 PM

CAUTION: This message is from an EXTERNAL SENDER - be CAUTIOUS, particularly with links and attachments.

Dear City Council Members,

The citizens of Sierra Madre still have many, many questions about the Meadows Project. While City protocols allow citizens to make brief public comments, that process does not give them the opportunity to engage in an interactive session with their representatives. This inability of citizens to engage in an active discussion with their elected officials is especially counterproductive with regard to an undertaking as monumental as the Meadows Project, which is fraught with issues of all kinds, and which will by any measurement have the greatest impact upon the City since its founding.

The citizens of Sierra Madre have demonstrated their intense interest in this matter, as evidenced by 1) the prolific discussion of this matter in every weekly issue of the Mountain Views News for more than a year; 2) the approval of ballot Measure HR by a significant number of its residents, and 3) the hundreds of emails that have been sent to Public Comment and to the City Council over the past several years regarding the Meadows Project.

All citizens, regardless of their assessment of the Meadows Project, must be given the opportunity to voice their opinions, and to hear the voices of each City Council member in reply. Please schedule such an open forum discussion before reaching any decision with respect to the Meadows Project. Your constituents deserve as much.

Thank you.

Lou Losorelli
Sierra Madre Resident

Much of the SPECIFIC PLAN for the "Meadows at Bailey Canyon" is INCONSISTENT WITH SIERRA MADRE'S GENERAL PLAN, ZONING ORDINANCES AND PLANS.

State law requires that Specific Plans must demonstrate consistency with the goals, objectives, policies and programs of the City's General Plan.

IF THEY DO NOT, THEY CAN NOT BE ADOPTED. California Code §65454

THAT REQUIRED CONSISTENCY WAS NEVER CONSIDERED OR DISCUSSED BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION WHEN THEY APPROVED THE SPECIFIC PLAN

"No specific plan may be adopted or amended unless the proposed plan or amendment is consistent with the general plan." California Code §65454

The Developer's analysis, echoed by our City Attorney in a Staff Report falsely argues that the PROPOSED project will be consistent with the (not yet) AMENDED General Plan. They reach that conclusion by conflating the legal argument under 65454 with an ordinance meant to apply to amendments of existing (not proposed) Specific Plans.

"No specific plan may be adopted or amended unless the proposed plan or amendment is consistent with the general plan." California Code §65454

The Documents submitted for the City Council to Certify the Environmental Impact Report, states that the Meadows Specific Plan IS consistent with our General Plan because the ANALYSIS DONE BY THE DEVELOPER SAYS THAT IT IS.

However MIG, the company hired by the City for Peer Review of the EIR (but paid for by the developer) did not feel that the Analysis was adequate. No changes were made in response to their stated concerns

Several Citizens and Groups also presented their alternative analyses (Including a 28 page response by members of Preserve Sierra Madre, who spent many weeks researching and analyzing that analysis). Strangely, the Preserve comment and those of several others were NOT INCLUDED in the FEIR, though submitted on time. A "Volume 1" was later created to address the comments. Director Gonzalez said that the exclusion of those comments was "an oversight"

THE PLANNING COMMISSION never did any required examination of the EIR's or the Citizens analyses of the Consistency, nor did the COMMISSION make a finding, based on facts before them, that the Specific Plan was consistent with our present General Plan.

THE PLANNING COMMISSION never addressed the fact that many sections in the General Plan for the Meadows Specific Plan have been rendered moot by changes made to the project in response to the Commissions requests.

The Hydrology and any drainage plans are no longer those considered in the DEIR or its technical studies, the FEIR, or Volume 1 or Volume 2!!

THE PLANNING COMMISSION, in effect , DID consider traffic by REQUIRING that the Project MUST obtain an easement to expand West Carter, that their “proposed” (in the FEIR) “OFFSITE IMPROVEMENT” is, in fact a requirement for the project to be built.

It is now incumbent on the City Council to do all legally required reviews of the EIR before approval of it, and any other entitlements!

THE SPECIFIC PLAN for the "Meadows at Bailey Canyon" is INCONSISTENT WITH SIERRA MADRE'S GENERAL PLAN, ZONING ORDINANCES AND PLANS.

Some inconsistencies are readily apparent – some are inconsistent because the Developer failed to do the studies or present the evidence by which the City could ascertain consistency. The Specific Plan for the “Meadows” project is inconsistent with all the following Goals and policies of our General Plan.

City of Sierra Madre 2015 General Plan – Land Use Goals

2. Preserve and enhance the diversity in the character of residential neighborhoods ensuring that new development is compatible in its design and scale with older established development in the surrounding neighborhood without attempting to replicate or mass produce a style of Development.
3. Ensure that development is done in harmony with its neighborhood, and preserves and protects privacy and mountain views of neighboring properties.
4. Ensure that development is done to maximize water conservation practices to reduce and minimize the impact on the City’s local water supply and the ability to serve its water customers.
5. Institute conservation measures so that the demand for water matches the City’s local supply.
8. Preserve existing and provide additional constructed and natural open space.
9. Preserve the hillside areas in order to protect the environment and mountain views, obtain a balance between developed areas and the hillside wilderness, and establish the role of the hillside as an entry point into wildland areas.

City of Sierra Madre – Policies

- Policy L4.1: Ensure that the expansion of existing uses is reflective of and complements the overall

pattern of development, without changing the character of existing development.

- Policy L6.2: Ensure that any new or expanded structures in residential neighborhoods do not unreasonably obstruct significant mountain or basin views.
- Policy L7.1: Maintain maximum lot coverage and floor area ratios which allow for adequate buffering from neighboring properties, usable private yard area, air circulation and light.
- Policy L7.3: Limit the height of new buildings to reflect the height patterns on the street and within the Sierra Madre community.
- Policy L7.4: Encourage new residential development to be compatible with existing structures including the following:
 - a. Maintenance of front, side, and rear yard setbacks.
- Policy L10.4: Maintain development standards and minimum lot sizes which result in development with dimensions, quality, and aesthetics consistent with existing developments.
- Policy L15.1: In subdividing larger parcels, determine development density based on a calculation that uses slope as one of the primary factors, which means that the steeper the slope, the larger the minimum lot size.
- Policy L15.2: Ensure that development in the hillside areas be located in those areas resulting in the least environmental impact.
- Policy L15.3: Require that all access into hillside areas be designed for minimum disturbance to the natural features.
- Policy L15.5: Consider the impact of development on wildlife.
- Policy L16.1: Minimize the amount of grading and removal of natural vegetation.
- Policy L17.2: Require that all development be designed to reflect the contours of the existing landform using techniques such as split pads, detached secondary structures (such as garages), and avoiding the use of excessive cantilevers.
- Policy L17.3: Require that all development preserves, to the maximum extent possible, significant features of the natural topography, including swales, canyons, knolls, ridge lines, and rock outcrops.
- Policy L24.1: Require that new residential development be compatible with and complement existing structures on the block:
 - a. Maintain existing front yard setbacks on the block;
- Policy L24.5: Encourage the retention of existing mature, specimen trees.
- Policy L37.8: Ensure that all development and new uses are compatible with adjacent uses, and yield no significant negative impacts to noise, air quality, water quality and traffic.

Measure IM-12: The City shall continue to enforce and amend the R-1 (One Family Residential) Zoning

Ordinance as necessary to ensure that development is compatible in design and scale with the neighborhood.

Measure IM-59: The City shall continue to enforce the Institutional (I) Zoning Ordinance.

Our 2015 General Plan included the following Policies:

- Policy R3.2: Ensure that wildland open space, including the areas of the city designated as High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, is left in its natural state with the exception of brush abatement for public safety in order to aid the City in fighting fires.

- Policy R3.3: Ensure that natural open space within the High Fire Hazard Severity Zones remains undeveloped so as to mitigate the flood cycles that follow wild land fires in the natural open space.

Policy L15.2: Ensure that development in the hillside areas be located in those areas resulting in the least environmental impact.

Policy L15.3: Require that all access into hillside areas be designed for minimum disturbance to the natural features.

Policy L15.5: Consider the impact of development on wildlife.

Policy L16.1: Minimize the amount of grading and removal of natural vegetation.

Policy L24.5: Encourage the retention of existing mature, specimen trees.

Policy L44.3: Establish the role of natural open space as an interface to the wilderness area.

Policy R1.1: Maintain and enforce the Hillside Management Zone Ordinance and other ordinances that seek to protect hillside areas.

Policy R3.2: Ensure that wildland open space, including the areas of the city designated as High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, is left in its natural state with the exception of brush abatement for public safety in order to aid the City in fighting fires.

Policy R3.3: Ensure that natural open space within the High Fire Hazard Severity Zones remains undeveloped so as to mitigate the flood cycles that follow wild land fires in the natural open space.

Policy R3.4: Ensure the protection of natural open space so as to maintain it as a preventative measure against flooding, and as a means of capturing stormwater runoff for groundwater recharge.

Policy R10.8: Continue to monitor construction projects with regard to grading and construction effects on trees, tree removal and replacement.

Measure IM-1: The City shall continue to enforce the Hillside Zone Ordinance and other ordinances that seek to protect the hillside areas.

Measure IM-5: The City shall amend the Open Space Ordinance to identify wildland open space as areas to remain in their natural state to mitigate flood cycles and capture stormwater runoff, except where brush abatement is necessary for fire safety

- Policy R10.3: Carry out the objectives and recommendations of the Community Forest Management Plan.
- Policy R10.8: Continue to monitor construction projects with regard to grading and construction effects on trees, tree removal and replacement.

The policies below should be enforced and alone provide a sufficient basis for the project to be rejected by the Planning Commission and City Council.

Measure IM-5: The City shall amend the Open Space Ordinance to identify wildland open space as areas to remain in their natural state to mitigate flood cycles and capture stormwater runoff, except where brush abatement is necessary for fire safety

Policy R3.2: Ensure that wildland open space, including the areas of the city designated as High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, is left in its natural state with the exception of brush abatement for public safety in order to aid the City in fighting fires.

Policy R3.3: Ensure that natural open space within the High Fire Hazard Severity Zones remains undeveloped so as to mitigate the flood cycles that follow wild land fires in the natural open space.

We residents of Sierra Madre, who love our very unique and special City because it has enacted and enforces all these Goals and Policies, rely on Sierra Madre's Planning Commission and City Council to continue to protect those values on behalf of the citizens of this town.

Barbara Vellturo



Sierra Madre, CA 91024

Analysis of each inconsistency is below

From the General Plan Introduction

The City of Sierra Madre General Plan is a long-range policy document which lays out the

framework for all future growth and development within the City. The General Plan is the blueprint that sets the basis for future policy decisions, in that it organizes the desires of the Sierra Madre community with respect to the physical, cultural, economic, and environmental character of the City.

Most importantly, the Sierra Madre General Plan is a community-based document that reflects the community values and character as expressed in its goals and policies, while also serving as a technical document which provides information about the City. ***The General Plan shall be used as a guide by the City's decision makers to achieve the community's vision and preserve the history, character and shared values of the community for future generations.***

Because the General Plan is so critically important in guiding all future development decisions in a City, State law requires that a Specific Plan MAY NOT BE ADOPTED Unless it is Consistent with the General Plan. pursuant to §65454

The following sections will show many critical inconsistencies with several parts of the Sierra Madre General Plan, the Sierra Madre Ordinances and the Sierra Madre Community Forest Plan. Some inconsistencies are readily apparent – some are inconsistent because the Developer failed to do the studies or present the evidence by which the City could ascertain consistency.

The SPECIFIC PLAN for the "Meadows of Bailey Canyon" is INCONSISTENT with the SIERRA MADRE GENERAL PLAN with regard to the **Land Use Section of the General Plan**

The proposed Meadows development is inconsistent with these GENERAL PLAN LAND USE GOALS, the policies which further define those goals and the Implementation measures to put those policies into effect. Those Goals and Policies establish what is valuable to the Citizens of Sierra Madre. They must be enforced and protected.

City of Sierra Madre 2015 General Plan – Land Use Goals

2. Preserve and enhance the diversity in the character of residential neighborhoods ensuring that new development is compatible in its design and scale with older established development in the surrounding neighborhood without attempting to replicate or mass produce a style of Development.
3. Ensure that development is done in harmony with its neighborhood, and preserves and protects privacy and mountain views of neighboring properties.
4. Ensure that development is done to maximize water conservation practices to reduce and minimize the impact on the City's local water supply and the ability to serve its water customers.
5. Institute conservation measures so that the demand for water matches the City's local supply.

8. Preserve existing and provide additional constructed and natural open space.
9. Preserve the hillside areas in order to protect the environment and mountain views, obtain a balance between developed areas and the hillside wilderness, and establish the role of the hillside as an entry point into wildland areas.

THE SPECIFIC PLAN IS NOT CONSISTENT WITH THE LAND USE GOALS AND POLICIES OF THE GENERAL PLAN WITH REGARD TO THE CHARACTER OF NEW DEVELOPMENT.

GOALS OF THE SIERRA MADRE GENERAL PLAN

2. Preserve and enhance the diversity in the character of residential neighborhoods ensuring that new development is compatible in its design and scale with older established development in the surrounding neighborhood without attempting to replicate or mass produce a style of Development.
3. Ensure that development is done in harmony with its neighborhood, and preserves and protects privacy and mountain views of neighboring properties,

1. Most building projects in Sierra Madre (except for this "Meadows" project which evades all our protective regulations by use of a Specific Plan) would be required by our Planning Application process to SHOW how their planned house or development fits into the neighborhood. A Sierra Madre Planning application requires a: "Neighborhood Analysis - a tabulated list of properties within a 300 foot radius of the project site comparing lot size and building data as presented by the Los Angeles County Assessor" "The analysis should calculate the median and average values for lot size and identify where the proposed project falls within the properties."

The Meadows Development has not done any such "Neighborhood Analysis" and we do not know if, under the Specific Plan, that analysis will be required, as their Specific Plan negates many of Sierra Madre's planning requirements.

But, unless that analysis IS done, and unless the results show that the project falls close to the median or average values of the surrounding properties, the project can NOT claim to be "consistent" with Sierra Madre General Plan, Ordinances, or our City's Values. The neighborhood surrounding the proposed development has a specific character, lot size and house size. That, and not some oversized house on an oversized lot in another part of town, is what must be compatible in design and scale.

2. The project's Specific Plan shows larger house sizes than is allowed in single family residential zones. Our General Plan requires adherence to those zoning requirements. The project can NOT claim to be "consistent" with Sierra Madre General Plan, Ordinances, the surrounding neighborhood or our City's Values when it varies from those requirements.

3. The project's Specific Plan shows greater lot coverage than is allowed in Single family residential zones. Our General Plan requires adherence to those zoning requirements. The project can NOT claim to be "consistent" with Sierra Madre General Plan, Ordinances, the surrounding neighborhood or our City's Values when it varies from those requirements.

4. The project's Specific Plan shows lesser setbacks than is allowed in Single family residential zones. Our General Plan requires adherence to those zoning requirements. The project can NOT claim to be "consistent" with Sierra Madre General Plan, Ordinances. the surrounding neighborhood or our City's Values when it varies from those requirements.

5. An aerial map of homes adjacent to the Parcel to be developed shows that only 5 homes of 59 in the neighborhoods to the west and south of the project are two story homes and 54 are single story homes. (Map below) The homes in the proposed project do not come close to the prevailing percentage of single story homes in the neighborhood, let alone conforming to the house and lot size that our planning application would require analyzed.



At the Developer's presentation to the city Council and the residents, in March 2021, a Council Member asked how many of the "Meadows" houses would be one story. The response was that it hadn't been decided, but that information would be in the Specific Plan. It is not! The Specific Plan makes no mention at all about how many houses, IF ANY, will be single story. At a Planning Commission meeting, Planning Director Gonzalez stated that there were only 4 designs to review. ALL designs previously shown were two story houses. And none of those previously presented designs appear in the Specific Plan – the designs of the houses to be built, along with their sizes are not shown.

The Developer has used a “Stock” response as part of its “Consistency Analysis” – ostensibly intended to cover any Goals and Policies which require the project to be consistent with its surrounding neighborhood.

Table 1. Consistency with City of Sierra Madre’s General Plan Goals and Policies

Master Responses:

Response 1: The Specific Plan includes development regulations and design guidelines and standards for the project site created to be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. The development will be designed in a manner that is sensitive to viewpoints through building design, site layout and building heights. The design guidelines and standards in Chapter 5 promote the high-quality standards that the City and the community value. In addition, multiple measures are in place that will provide buffers, additional setbacks for lots west of North Sunnyside Avenue and landscaping, as well as a Grading and Landscape buffer along the northern boundary of the Plan area, to ensure compatibility with existing structures in the adjacent neighborhood and Retreat Center. See Section 3.8.5, Good Neighborhood Plan for additional details. See Section 3.8.5, Good Neighborhood Plan for additional compatibility details in regard to the site’s compatibility with surrounding uses.

Those statements of “fact” unless supported by sufficient evidence are inadequate. In any case where the language merely states that the project would be consistent with itself—not the policy, it fails to establish consistency with the policy. It states the development would be “regulated” by its own design guidelines which are, in fact, inconsistent with this policy. No facts are presented to support the erroneous conclusion of consistency because it can’t be done. The developer must address the inconsistency of the project with this policy, with facts.

Unless the developer shows the locations and numbers of ALL one and two story homes, and the lot sizes and house sizes for each of the 42 lots, they can NOT claim that their project is "consistent" with Sierra Madre General Plan, the surrounding neighborhood or our City's Values. The statement that something is so, without evidence, is invalid.

6. The orientation of the homes, as show on previous Site Plans, is NOT CONSISTENT with any other neighborhood in the city. The houses on the west side will all face east and the interior homes will all face north. There will be no homes facing each other. Each row of houses will sit on top of a pad, at the top of a slope. This will eliminate the community/neighborhood aspect of homes looking out onto the same street, that the entire city has and is a configuration not seen in any part of Sierra Madre. The project can NOT claim to be "consistent" with the General Plan, surrounding neighborhood or our City's Values.

A local architect had these comments that the design of the development did NOT at all fit into our City’s standards and character. “It is also separated by making itself a separate enclave, rather than fitting in. This is due to two factors: One is the road layout. It definitely has a

message of being separate. For instance, why isn't Carter improved and continued west to Sunnyside as a starting point in the layout?

Two is that nowhere in Sierra Madre do we have these "Orange County-like" butcher the natural land forms to make these "line 'em-up" flat building pads. Completely un-natural looking, with useless steep slopes that result from doing this. These pads are for the purpose of setting cookie cutter house designs down quickly and cheaply to maximize speed and profit. They have nothing to do with urban form or even trying to fit into our town. This configuration does not exist anywhere in Sierra Madre. It is alien and unnatural."

7. The developer has shown no plans, no elevations nor any other studies to support its claim that no views will be impacted by the project. Simply SAYING that it will not is insufficient evidence. Unless they produce evidence to support their unsubstantiated comment, they can NOT claim that the project is "consistent" with Sierra Madre General Plan, the surrounding neighborhood or our City's Values.

8. The developer has shown no maps or plans that would support their claim that the project is "consistent" with the General Plan requirements attached. They have not shown how many of each lot size and their locations, or the size of the homes on each lot. We can analyze the size of the lots and the homes in the surrounding neighborhoods, but still can't know whether their project is consistent with our General Plan without knowing the developments lot sizes and house sizes.

Simply referring to "Design Standards" in a Specific Plan, which also includes their right to "amend" that plan, does not provide a true representation of what will be built and if it will complement the character of existing development. **Stating** that their development regulations and design standards make the development "compatible with the surrounding neighborhood" and "sensitive to viewpoints" does NOT show to any reasonable person that those things are so, especially when those neighborhood properties were built with more restrictions than will apply under the Specific Plan. The Specific plan sets zoning standards which, if applied, would automatically make the development NOT COMPATIBLE with the neighborhood and inconsistent with our General Plan, which requires that compatibility. Again, their "consistency" statement simply states the development would be "regulated" by its own design guidelines which are, in fact, inconsistent with our policies. No facts are presented to support the erroneous conclusion of consistency because it can't be done. The developer must address the inconsistency of the project with this policy, with facts.

Below are the Policies in the General Plan pertaining to developments. The Developers Specific Plan MUST demonstrate consistency with our CURRENT General Plan. It may not claim that consistency based on its own regulations or an "Amended" or future General Plan which incorporates those regulations

The developer has not proven Consistency with any of these policies or implementation measures. The Specific Plan's stated Home Sizes, Lot Coverage and Setbacks alone make the development inconsistent with the zoning Ordinances that the General Plan policies intended to "maintain" and "protect".

- Policy L4.1: Ensure that the expansion of existing uses is reflective of and complements the overall pattern of development, without changing the character of existing development.
- Policy L6.2: Ensure that any new or expanded structures in residential neighborhoods do not unreasonably obstruct significant mountain or basin views.
- Policy L7.1: Maintain maximum lot coverage and floor area ratios which allow for adequate buffering from neighboring properties, usable private yard area, air circulation and light.
- Policy L7.3: Limit the height of new buildings to reflect the height patterns on the street and within the Sierra Madre community.
- Policy L7.4: Encourage new residential development to be compatible with existing structures including the following:
 - a. Maintenance of front, side, and rear yard setbacks.
- Policy L10.4: Maintain development standards and minimum lot sizes which result in development with dimensions, quality, and aesthetics consistent with existing developments.
- Policy L15.1: In subdividing larger parcels, determine development density based on a calculation that uses slope as one of the primary factors, which means that the steeper the slope, the larger the minimum lot size.
- Policy L15.2: Ensure that development in the hillside areas be located in those areas resulting in the least environmental impact.
- Policy L15.3: Require that all access into hillside areas be designed for minimum disturbance to the natural features.
- Policy L15.5: Consider the impact of development on wildlife.
- Policy L16.1: Minimize the amount of grading and removal of natural vegetation.
- Policy L17.2: Require that all development be designed to reflect the contours of the existing landform using techniques such as split pads, detached secondary structures (such as garages), and avoiding the use of excessive cantilevers.
- Policy L17.3: Require that all development preserves, to the maximum extent possible, significant features of the natural topography, including swales, canyons, knolls, ridge lines, and rock outcrops.
- Policy L24.1: Require that new residential development be compatible with and complement

existing structures on the block: a. Maintain existing front yard setbacks on the block;

- Policy L24.5: Encourage the retention of existing mature, specimen trees.
- Policy L37.8: Ensure that all development and new uses are compatible with adjacent uses, and yield no significant negative impacts to noise, air quality, water quality and traffic.

Measure IM-12: The City shall continue to enforce and amend the R-1 (One Family Residential) Zoning Ordinance as necessary to ensure that development is compatible in design and scale with the neighborhood.

Measure IM-59: The City shall continue to enforce the Institutional (I) Zoning Ordinance.

THE SPECIFIC PLAN IS NOT CONSISTENT WITH THE LAND USE GOALS AND POLICIES OF THE GENERAL PLAN WITH REGARD TO THE PRESERVATION OF OPEN SPACE

GOALS OF THE SIERRA MADRE GENERAL PLAN

8. Preserve existing and provide additional constructed and natural open space.
9. Preserve the hillside areas in order to protect the environment and mountain views, obtain a balance between developed areas and the hillside wilderness, and establish the role of the hillside as an entry point into wildland areas.

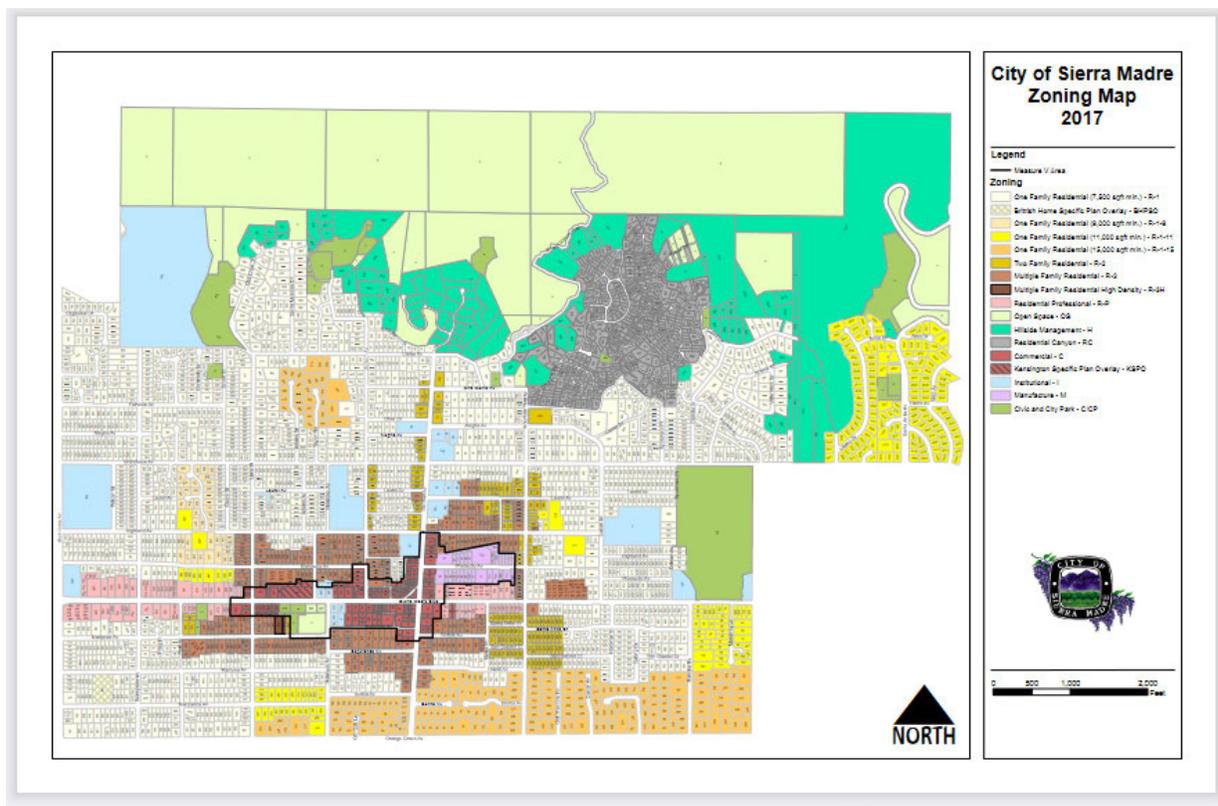
Our 2015 General Plan included the following Policies:

- Policy R3.2: Ensure that wildland open space, including the areas of the city designated as High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, is left in its natural state with the exception of brush abatement for public safety in order to aid the City in fighting fires.
- Policy R3.3: Ensure that natural open space within the High Fire Hazard Severity Zones remains undeveloped so as to mitigate the flood cycles that follow wild land fires in the natural open space.

The planned project is in the Very High Fire Severity Zone and is part of the Wildland Urban Interface.

The Sierra Madre General Plan identifies and recognizes the value of Constructed and Natural Open Space within our Wildland Urban Interface, but states that NATURAL OPEN SPACE is the most precious because it can not be replaced once lost. The entire parcel to be developed is currently Natural Open Space, the most valuable.

All other parcels which abut the Forest wilderness area recognize the City’s goal to “Preserve the hillside areas in order to protect the environment and mountain views, obtain a balance between developed areas and the hillside wilderness, and establish the role of the hillside as an entry point into wildland areas”. With the exception of a small part of the Canyon Zone all of those parcels are zoned either Hillside Management Zone or Open Space Zone, for the protection of Open Space and for Fire and Flood Safety. Sierra Madre Zoning Map shows the Open Space Zone in pale green, the Hillside Management Zone in a darker blue/green, and the solid green as City Parks.



The most important values to our community of that open space are its protections as a buffer against wildfires and landslides as well as an area from which our firefighters and partners can stage their attacks against any fire that threatens our City. It is a safety asset for all of Sierra Madre.

But there is a further value of that specific area as described to us by a member of a conservation group.

“Watershed Conservation Authority’s mission is to expand the open space and recreational opportunities in the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers Watershed area consistent with the goals of flood protection, water supply, and groundwater recharge. It is in this spirit that I want to share considerations for the Mater Dolorosa land, which is proposed as a site of a residential development.

This development will be situated on the very last large parcel of land in the Eastern San Gabriel foothills which retains a connection between the canyons and the alluvial fan. Alluvial fans have particularly high rates of infiltration. There, water can sink deep into the ground and recharge aquifers. Keeping remaining recharge areas as undeveloped as much as possible is a critical part of protecting our region’s watersheds. This land was ranked very high in conservation value in our agency’s Foothills Open Space Acquisition Study due to its watershed value, adjacency to protected lands, potential for habitat restoration, and for public access. The opportunity to optimize the recharge potential on any remaining undeveloped alluvial fan land has the potential to benefit all users of the Raymond Basin far into the future. It may also serve as a buffer to absorb flows from the mountains above in an era of climate change uncertainty. If this land is covered by houses and roads, it would be prohibitive to regain all these functions in full. Please give full consideration to an alternative scenario: to acquire the land for regional public benefit and to optimize its capacity to enhance biodiversity, aquifer recharge, as well as provide flood control.”

The Developer has shown no consistency with any Goals or Policies that seek to Preserve and Protect Open Space, in developing the land.

However, the developer in the DEIR consistency analysis claims that its development is consistent with the General Plan’s goal to Preserve existing and provide additional constructed and natural open space.

They State: “The project would comply with the City’s goal of providing additional constructed open space. The proposed project establishes open spaces zones on the project site, including the incorporation of a neighborhood park at the southern area of the project site and dedication of approximately 35 acres of protected open space to the City, north of the Mater Dolorosa Retreat Center”

That statement is entirely untrue. The intent of the Goal is to Preserve existing and “add” additional open space. The Developers plan does not “preserve” ANY existing (natural) open space, nor provide any additional open space. It plans to CONVERT less than 5 acres of the 17 from Natural Open Space (the most precious, as stated in our General Plan) to *Constructed* Open Space, for the Park and for the landscaped buffer to protect the Monastery from the

sights and sounds of the development. It has provided NO additional open space of any kind. Their development is Inconsistent with the Goal of the General Plan

Though the DEIR states that the proposed “land above the retreat center is NOT part of the project site”, the developer still attempts to claim credit for that land as part of its “consistency” with the City’s goal to “Preserve existing and provide additional constructed and natural open space”. It would not be consistent with that goal, even IF that donation was part of the project.

Only 20 acres of that land is in Sierra Madre and subject to the City’s General Plan goals and policies. Those 20 acres of Sierra Madre land are already Preserved and Protected by the fact that they are zoned “Open Space” and cannot be developed for housing. That proposed donation in no way can serve to evidence any consistency with the General Plan goal –and there is no benefit to the public by the donation of any of the land proposed.

The developers have neither “**preserved existing**” nor “**provided additional**” open space.

The Developer further claims that the project is consistent with Objective L44: “The preservation of natural open space areas as crucial to the distinctive character of Sierra Madre, and as a key feature of sustainability and public safety” - based on the same referenced donation of land already preserved and protected by its zoning designation, and other land which is not IN Sierra Madre and which poses a significant liability if accepted.

These are the Goals and Policies in the General Plan pertaining to the preservation and protection of Open Space in Sierra Madre. The developer has NOT proven Consistency with any of these goals, policies or implementation measures.

Goal 8. Preserve existing and provide additional constructed and natural open space.

Goal 9. Preserve the hillside areas in order to protect the environment and mountain views, obtain a balance between developed areas and the hillside wilderness, and establish the role of the hillside as an entry point into wildland areas.

Policy L15.2: Ensure that development in the hillside areas be located in those areas resulting in the least environmental impact.

Policy L15.3: Require that all access into hillside areas be designed for minimum disturbance to the natural features.

Policy L15.5: Consider the impact of development on wildlife.

Policy L16.1: Minimize the amount of grading and removal of natural vegetation.

Policy L24.5: Encourage the retention of existing mature, specimen trees.

Policy L44.3: Establish the role of natural open space as an interface to the wilderness area.

Policy R1.1: Maintain and enforce the Hillside Management Zone Ordinance and other ordinances that seek to protect hillside areas.

Policy R3.2: Ensure that wildland open space, including the areas of the city designated as High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, is left in its natural state with the exception of brush abatement for public safety in order to aid the City in fighting fires.

Policy R3.3: Ensure that natural open space within the High Fire Hazard Severity Zones remains undeveloped so as to mitigate the flood cycles that follow wild land fires in the natural open space.

Policy R3.4: Ensure the protection of natural open space so as to maintain it as a preventative measure against flooding, and as a means of capturing stormwater runoff for groundwater recharge.

Policy R10.8: Continue to monitor construction projects with regard to grading and construction effects on trees, tree removal and replacement.

Measure IM-1: The City shall continue to enforce the Hillside Zone Ordinance and other ordinances that seek to protect the hillside areas.

Measure IM-5: The City shall amend the Open Space Ordinance to identify wildland open space as areas to remain in their natural state to mitigate flood cycles and capture stormwater runoff, except where brush abatement is necessary for fire safety

The Specific Plan does not provide two safe and acceptable methods of ingress and egress to the Proposed Development as required nor two evacuation routes.

The Specific Plan specifications for Carter Avenue do not comply with Sierra Madre Road Standards

The DEIR failed to consider or study a serious pedestrian Safety issue that would result from development of this project according to the Specific Plan.

A Traffic Study, in an Environmental Impact Analysis to amend our General Plan, done concurrently with this one for the Meadows at Bailey Canyon, also included this project. That analysis showed that the impact of all projects could ONLY meet acceptable standards if, in addition to other mitigations, they adhered to the Sierra Madre bicycle regulations and its Street Standards Ordinance for all access roads, which requires a 30 foot width.

The proposed housing project has admitted that it will not meet the City's bicycle requirements and has shown no intent or ability to widen all of Carter Avenue to the required 30 feet width. Unless it corrects those two issues in the Final EIR, it will remain INCONSISTENT with Sierra Madre's Ordinances and General Plan, and will not meet CEQA requirements to mitigate significant transportation impacts.

The pending Draft SEIR for the General Plan update/housing element, at the City's request, included Environmental impacts to Stonegate and the "Meadows" project (as potential future residential development) to be studied. In its analysis of impacts of ALL SITES, that DEIR made this requirement (among others) for the adequate safety of all proposed and potential development:

Access to/from each site would be required to meet the City's design standards with respect to location, width, and sight distance. With the above mitigation measures, the General Plan Update residential land

uses can be added to the City housing supply without any remaining significant CEQA transportation impacts.”

This is the Sierra Madre Ordinance setting forth the City Subdivision Standards for Streets that would need to be met:

§ 16.32.035. Street standards—Modification of same.

Except as otherwise required by Chapter 15.24 of this code, the city's public street standards shall require at least thirty feet of road easement to accommodate two travel lanes, one parking lane, and a pedestrian walkway. Notwithstanding Sections 16.32.020 and 16.32.030 of this code, the city council may determine, upon approval of a parcel or tentative tract map creating streets, that adjustment of the city's public street standards as to those streets is justified by other benefits to the policies stated in Section 17.52.010 of this code and that such adjustments do not unduly impact circulation and parking. (Ord. 1229 § 2, 2005)

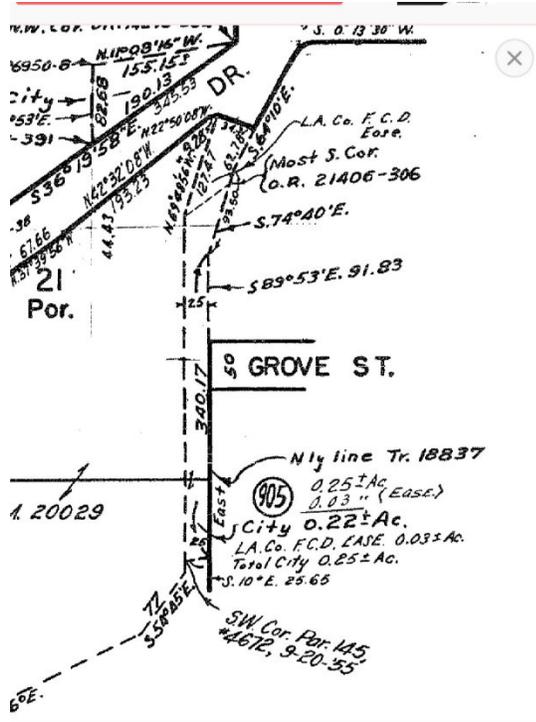
Despite that ordinance, the Developer’s Specific Plan for the “Meadows” states: "Site access, including road widths and connectivity, would also comply with all City requirements and would include the following:

- Primary access to the project site would be provided from North Sunnyside Avenue. Carter Avenue would provide secondary egress and ingress access.
(They have not explained what is meant by “secondary egress and ingress access”, how that would be managed and what, if any results could be obtained by that designation)
- All roads comply with access road standards of not less than 24 feet, unobstructed width."
(Access road standards of 24 feet are required for fire apparatus, not for two way traffic of hundreds of trips daily)

These findings in the SEIR of what is required for safe traffic must be enforced in any development to satisfy CEQA requirements and should be part of Sierra Madre ordinances as requirements for development. Unless the Project can provide this safe access it must be rejected.

There MUST ALSO be an explanation as to why there is a discrepancy in the findings and required mitigation between the Meadows Environmental Impact Report (paid for by the developer although the City of Sierra Madre is listed on the NOP as lead agency) and the one which considered the same project in the EIR to update the General Plan (paid for by the City of Sierra Madre).

It is unknown who might have the right and ability to correct the deficiencies in this road. Unlike City streets, this section of road has its own parcel number in the LA County assessor’s office, and is identified as “Government Owned” We have been unable to ascertain, through public records requests, the title and ownership of this section of land and all easements and rights of way included in it, or whether any entity has the sole right to improve it to comply with our City Street Ordinance. (LA County Assessor’s Parcel Map is below”



The Final EIR must also show whether or not the Developer is able to meet the required mitigations to bring its plan to an acceptable level, as well as comply with the City's bicycle regulations. If it is not able to comply, the project is inconsistent with the Sierra Madre Street Standards Ordinance and bicycle requirements and must be rejected.

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

The Meadows DEIR made NO examination of Pedestrian safety in its analysis of Traffic and Circulation.

Carter Avenue, proposed by the developer to provide ingress and egress for hundreds of vehicles daily, does not meet any reasonable standards for its use for that purpose. Its width and condition and lack of sidewalks for the entire length from Lima Avenue to the current monastery gate are hazardous for pedestrians even with the lesser amount of current traffic.

Because of its location - directly adjacent to Bailey Canyon Park, which regularly results in overflow parking that clogs nearby streets, there is significant pedestrian traffic. Those pedestrians would be crossing the road that the "Meadows" plan proposes to use as and ingress and egress for hundreds of cars daily. Neither Carter Avenue, from the proposed project gate to its intersection with Lima, nor Grove Avenue, directly across from the Park entrance, have sidewalks. All of the many pedestrians walk in the narrow streets

It can also be expected that many people planning to visit Bailey Canyon Park will park on the west side of Carter (parking side) inside the development and cross 2 way traffic on that road to the developers "pedestrian walkway" (which it says will provide enhanced access to the park), exiting to the north side of that 24 foot section of Carter (with no sidewalks).

Cars exiting the development will be travelling at a high rate of speed down the wider, sloped portion of Carter within the development (12% slope) threatening those crossing from the west side parking, then making a left turn onto a narrow road and **intercepting** within a short block with pedestrians,

unaccustomed to traffic from that direction. Without (at the very least) sidewalks, there WILL be pedestrian accidents.

Yet the DEIR never considered, nor made mention of any study of that dangerous condition and the danger to pedestrians crossing from the west side parking to the east side "pedestrian walkway" or simply to exit on the east side which is closer to the park.

The City has known for a long time that the parking on Grove Avenue, which barely leaves one lane open on weekends, requires those going to Bailey Canyon Park to walk in the Street. The single lane left on Grove, with cars parked on both sides, would make it difficult for rescue equipment to access those blocked homes if necessary. Yet that already hazardous situation, which would be greatly exacerbated by two way traffic from the potential project, was not at all studied or its impact considered in the DEIR.

The close proximity of that egress from the development to the County Access road should also be studied as to its adequacy as a second evacuation route, in light of first responders' need to access the development either by Carter Avenue within the development or by the County Access Road, close to the development exit.

A thorough study of pedestrian safety on and near this road, proposed as a second point of ingress and egress and a second evacuation route in case of fire, earthquake or landslide MUST be done as part of an adequate Traffic and Circulation Analysis.

The SPECIFIC PLAN for the "Meadows of Bailey Canyon" is INCONSISTENT with the SIERRA MADRE GENERAL PLAN, Ordinances and Community Forest Management Plan with regard to Trees and Tree Canopies.

FROM THE SIERRA MADRE CITY WEBSITE

The Community Forest Master Plan ensures the continuation and enhancement of the tree canopy for the beauty, wellbeing, livability, and long-term environmental health of the community of Sierra Madre.

The City of Sierra Madre's mission to grow and perpetuate the community forest is embodied in the Community Forest Master Plan. This mission is expressed through these overarching goals:

- Conserve and expand tree canopy cover equal to no net loss, with a gradual increase over time.
- Foster increased public awareness and education regarding the environmental value of trees as green infrastructure
- Promote increased shade-tree canopy for energy conservation, storm water capture, and improved air quality.
- Encourage species selection appropriate for local environmental conditions and sustainability

- Preserve and enhance community aesthetics and property values through increased canopy cover and diversity
- Apply Best Management Practices for planting, maintaining, and responding to changed environmental conditions in the community forest

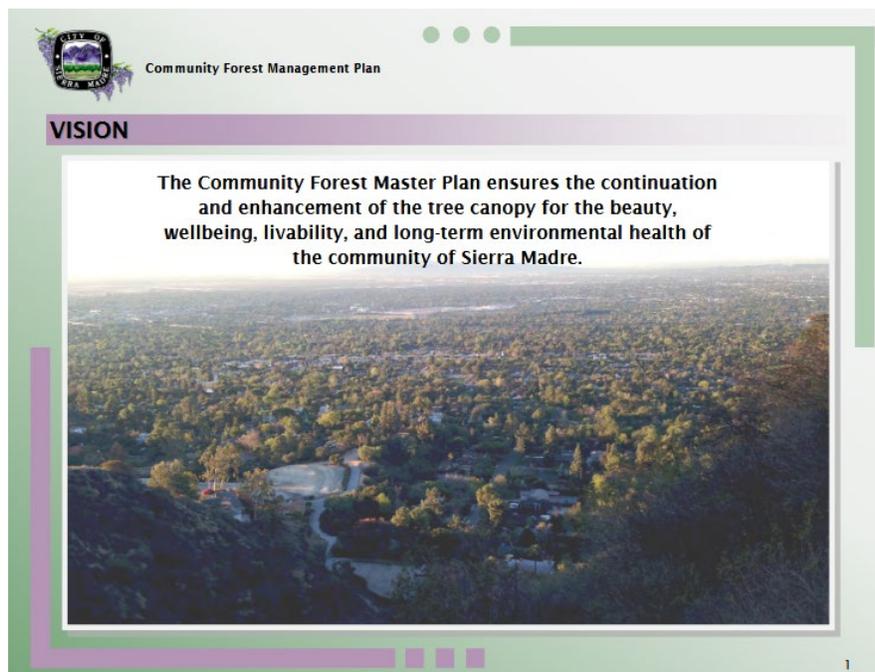
The City of Sierra Madre places a high value on its tree canopy and is committed to the preservation and enhancement of the community forest over the next 50 years. A Tree Preservation and Protection Ordinance also protects the community’s trees and the Energy, Environment, and Natural Resource Commission (previously the Tree Advisory Commission) oversees the implementation of the ordinance and makes recommendations to the City Council on management strategies. “

The Developers Specific Plan would entirely ignore the requirements of the City’s Forest Management Plan and would replace approximately 90 mature, canopied trees and eliminate their environmental and aesthetic benefits. These mature trees, that have managed to survive droughts with little or no care or watering, would be replaced by an equal number of smaller trees which will require a great amount of water to keep established, if they can survive in the drought. Water we cant afford to use!

Meanwhile, the large “Protected” Oak Trees, if removed, have only a slim chance of surviving the transplant and will be lost.

The City has recognized the critical environmental and aesthetic value of its mature trees and their Canopies and has created a plan to protect them.

The intent of the Specific Plan to remove all those trees to allow a “MAXIMUM PROFIT” configuration is INCONSISTENT with our Community Forest Plan, despite their claim to be guided by it.



The following explanation of the critical impact of the Developers Plan shows the immeasurable loss to the Community of these mature trees which will be destroyed to make way for oversized houses on smaller lots than allowed, further depleting the available open land for environmental sustainability by loss of the open land.

COMMENT SUBMITTED BY DANIEL GOLDEN

“101 mature trees will be removed, including 10 protected Oaks. The Oaks will be replaced with smaller Oaks and other small trees (requiring a great deal of water to become established--water that is not apparently accounted for in the questionable "net zero" pre-purchase arrangement suggested in the Specific Plan). SM has a Forest Management Plan with a mission to preserve "Canopies" for their environmental and aesthetic benefit.

The Specific Plan to swap these mature specimens for 24" boxed trees fails to factor in the massive loss of oxygen production that will be immediately generated. It would take 15 or more years for boxed trees to develop sufficient caliper to emit barely 35% of the oxygen created by the original stand of large mature trees. These large trees each generate over 270 lbs of oxygen per year--so long as they are not summarily uprooted and discarded by the developer. Remove the trees and you lose sufficient oxygen for some 60 families per year. My research, including studies published in the journal of Arboriculture and Urban Forestry, points out the devastating effects on community air quality from such profligate destruction.

Simply stated, trees grow air, inhibit particulate settling, preserve wildlife, keep ground temperatures in check, absorb storm runoff, help to prevent many human lung disorders, and more. The new housing development, if approved, would actually and desperately itself need the offset of the canopy of mature trees on the property to help alleviate massive creation of heat island conditions--hardscape with foundations, driveway pads, sidewalks and paved streets supplanting the current breathable meadow space.

Summary removal of the trees without sufficient atmospheric impact analysis is one of many flaws in the developer's Specific Plan.”

The Policy of the City of Sierra Madre is to carry out the objectives and recommendations of the Community Forest Management Plan. Those objectives are to Preserve Canopied Trees for the Benefit of the City and the Citizens of Sierra Madre.

THE SPECIFIC PLAN FOR THE MEADOWS IS NOT CONSISTENT WITH THAT POLICY.

- Policy R10.3: Carry out the objectives and recommendations of the Community Forest Management Plan.
- Policy R10.8: Continue to monitor construction projects with regard to grading and construction effects on trees, tree removal and replacement.

THE SPECIFIC PLAN for the "Meadows at Bailey Canyon" is INCONSISTENT WITH SIERRA MADRE'S GENERAL PLAN, ZONING ORDINANCES AND PLANS.

September 15, 2022

**To: City of Sierra Madre
232 W. Sierra Madre Boulevard
Sierra Madre, Ca. 91024**

To: The Citizens of Sierra Madre

To: City Council
Gene Goss, Mayor
Edward Garcia, Mayor Pro Tem
Rachelle Arizmendi, Council Member
Kelly Kriebs, Council Member
Robert Parkhurst, Council Member
City Manager, Jose Reynoso

Cc: Planning Commission
William Pevsner, Chair
Thomas Denison, Vice-Chair
Peggy Dallas, Commissioner
John Hutt, Commissioner
Bob Spears, Commissioner

Via: PublicComment@CityofSierraMadre.com

From: Glenn Hickman, [REDACTED], Sierra Madre, Ca. 91024

**Re: LET THE PEOPLE VOTE – LISTEN TO YOUR STAKEHOLDERS – DO NOT VOTE YET
The Meadows at Bailey Canyon Development – EIR Certification, All Entitlement Approvals
City Council Meeting of September 15th 2022**

Dear City Council and Mayor, 5 Sierra Madrean Volunteers: You are entrusted to listen and vote on behalf of the people, setting aside personal opinions and slanted bias. The Monastery Development Entitlements requested by One Stakeholder are Discretionary Approvals and can receive a Vote of NO.

I would urge the 5 students in the Playground of Big Development with inadequate school supplies, to accept their back in school hall pass. Delay any Monastery Development Vote until Measure HR has been decided by the Sierra Madrean Voters, November 8, 2022. You would be Off the Hook to hang up your book bag until the Voters have spoken. You would not need to be concerned for Re-Election or Recalls, or your voluntary abdication for loss in stakeholder confidence when Measure HR passes.

If you learned one thing from small town voluntary politics and Measure V, to save the Village, dodge the ball and let your classmates vote on the dodge ball rules. There is no Principal in Sierra Madre and God should have nothing to do with it.

You have already thrown your de facto vote in opposition to Measure HR, and for all to take notice in the ballot readings. Although, perhaps you were going to Vote No to any or all the Entitlements, but for risk to City and Stakeholders took a protective position due to Measure HR. To date, The City Council and Planning, with assistance from the consulting City Attorney, may have met statutory and governance obligations, be it for concern of potential downstream litigation, re-election, whatsoever.

I have been involved with major developments in my 40 years and soon to retire with a massive resource base. The agencies and politicians with whom I have worked over the years would not dare to decide on so many Entitlements, let alone in one sitting, and in the face of such stakeholder opposition (on the metric alone compared to the eligible voters) and or with the Voter Box before them. I have worked with many of the Developer's consultants. I know how the curriculum is typically developed for lunchroom consumption; and have seen the ramifications when more resources are deployed to squash playground bullying or naivete.

I would have hoped you read my earlier technical pleadings to City Council and Planning and comments to the EIR, including my rebuttals to most of the non-responses by the Applicants EIR Team. In the event that you missed one of my pivotal writings, I have re-attached my document of May 5th 2022 to City Planning.

I have been keeping my own grade scoring to additionally opinionize as follows in augmentation to my public record of comments:

1. **West Carter Ave. Road Design:** The original application depicted and denoted egress only. That should influence any widening scope. Has the applicant seized an opportunity without transparency into a fundamental CEQA issue to include both ingress added to egress?
2. **Project Park:** Irrespective of the Planning Commission's approval with design exactions, including punting to a public design process with Community Services, the proposed park will be overshadowed by the 2 story Madrea Mansions as a beautiful backdrop to the foothills (although it is on the north side of the park – the drought resistant weeds will grow). **Too late**, if you approve the current entitlements, Community Services can only paint the Token Park with more trees. There will be 12, two story houses, with pad elevations set 35 feet above the Park (park is at elev. 1105 and house pads at elev. 1140).
 - o The Applicant's renderings and conceptual sections are not revealing, rather seductive. The park will be crowded with a geometrical massing, not unlike the water tower at the Mt Wilson Trail Park? Should that park be named after any of you, or all of you, after the fact? The Carter family probably never anticipated that its Monastery neighbor would ever compromise a habitat which it tried to protect.....with the adjoining humanity as proposed.
3. **Insolvency:** The City Attorneys recommendation for a percentage of the houses be built in answer to Insolvency, is a toothless solution. I own property in LA City where this provision was included in the Final Tract Map for 13 houses, with the project grading idol for over 30 years and several recessions later. This country is now in a protracted recession. Exact a Development Bond, and not the typical benign construction and performance bonds.
4. **ADU's:** Needless to say, my comments never received replies, and I am unaware of any 3rd Party Legal opinion to neuter future ADU's. I know how clever property owners can be to usurp the need for housing for financial gain and densify to the detriment of neighbors or communities within pre-existing approved structures and Tract Maps.
5. **Possible Active Seismic Faults:** I am now in contact with world class seismological resources to possibly shed light in response to the real threat due to the Clamshell-Sawpit Canyon Fault and other Sierra Madrea Trace Faults impacting the project, let alone the Existing Monastery.
 - o **Institutional Development Will Never Occur:** The prior City Manager and Applicant's messaging, including EIR Alternatives, are clearly scare tactics to compel Housing Development. No long-term take-out loans or insurers will ever fund Institutional Development due to the Seismic Pedigree of the land and existing faults. Housing is the Applicant's only option, IF at all.
6. **Community Meadows Wildlife Preserve Alternative – Bond Measure:** I assume there will be no action, no interest, until Measure HR passes and it will cost less to negotiate.

I consider your playground, a small town of good intentioned Voluntary Leaders playing with Big Development and limited resources for City Planning and City Legal. Even the EIR 3rd Party Reviewer process apparently was optimized, along with ongoing City Legal opinions as constrained by resources. Dodge the ball and hand it off to the Voters.

Regards and Thank You in Advance for Your Consideration,

Glenn Hickman

Encl. Hickman Public Comment: Planning Commission Meeting of May 5th 2022

May 5, 2022

To: **City of Sierra Madre**
232 W. Sierra Madre Boulevard
Sierra Madre, Ca. 91024

To: **The Citizens of Sierra Madre**

Attn: **City Council**
Gene Goss, Mayor
Edward Garcia, Mayor Pro Tem
Rachelle Arizmendi, Council Member
Kelly Kriebs, Council Member
Robert Parkhurst, Council Member
City Manager, Jose Reynoso

Planning Commission
William Pevsner, Chair
Thomas Denison, Vice-Chair
Peggy Dallas, Commissioner
John Hutt, Commissioner
Bob Spears, Commissioner

Via: PublicComment@CityofSierraMadre.com

From: **Glenn Hickman, [REDACTED] Sierra Madre, Ca. 91024**

Re: **The Meadows at Bailey Canyon Development – EIR Certification, All Entitlement Approvals
Planning Commission Meeting of May 5th 2022**

Let me preface, that the tone of my comments and opinions may have become somewhat whimsical, yet relevant; because in my career of 40 years in architecture – construction – real estate development, and involvement with major projects in the region, and entitlement of so many projects thru CEQA, variances, specific plans, master plans, bla, bla, bla.....that I am alarmed as to my observations regarding the entitlement process and campaigning for the Meadows at Bailey Canyon Development.

Repeating my opening statement of March 1st in my written commentary to the City Council and Planning Commission in its Joint Planning Session of March 1st 2022. We enable and trust Our City Leadership to Vote NO regarding any or all Discretionary Entitlement Actions Requested; and to also impose Development Exactions in alignment with the risks, rewards, and mitigations for All. City Leadership should not fear a civil lawsuit from any Applicant in matters of Discretionary Approval, vote in alignment with the empowerment and voice for the Stakeholders, and in context to the facts as presented to them, setting aside their opinions.

- 1. West Carter Ave. Road Design:** If I were to try to resolve the contention between the Parties, I would recommend as follows: 1) A one-way road egress from the development, east bound onto West Carter Ave. with no sidewalks. This should minimize the road right of way issue impacts to the trees and the park. This would additionally minimize and disincentivize two-way ingress and egress traffic impacts. 2) Use of the one-way road in the opposite direction by Sierra Madre Fire and LA County Public Works / Flood Control, using a roadway control arm lock off up road into the development. 3) Exactions from the Developer: to provide a new entry into Bailey Park over the existing flood channel at Oak Crest Drive (north of N. Lima Street) with closure of the existing Bailey Canyon Access from North Grove Street. This will mitigate the parking issues on North Grove, leveraging the underutilized curbside parking on Oak Crest Drive without burden to any Neighbors. 4) No right turn from the new one way onto North Grove. 5) A right turn only from North Grove onto the new one-way road of West Carter.
- 2. Project Park and Hillside Acreage:**
Project Park: Will the Project Park offer a betterment for the Community, and is it of complimentary design and continuity with Bailey Park (in trade off to the Meadows which will be gone forever)? Is the “Sliver of a Park,” a “Token Park”, with two story houses on an acropolis over 35 feet above it - overlooking it with ends providing minimal access to the stakeholders it should serve? Will the Park be perceived to be in a canyon of geometrical massing and crowding, not unlike the water tower at the Mt Wilson Trail Park? Will this Sliver Park be of any remedy and relief to offset the impacts imposed on the Bailey Canyon Park’s Biodiversity? Does the Project Park solely and cleverly address storm water (with risk shift to the City and Stakeholders) - reducing infrastructure costs; and block up-mountain view vistas from existing lower altitude Existing Houses?

What should the Planning Commission exact in process and or recommend in requirements to provide for the certainty of good design, safe design, preservation of Bailey Canyon’s Biodiversity, etc. for a new Sierra Madre - Community Park, adjacent the Carter Families Legacy Bailey Canyon Park?

My Pro-Growth Twin looks at the 3 Acre – “Token Park,” as I call it, as sensible and practical for what might be called a "Pocket Park" in Land Use Planning Lingo, and the development criteria it intends to address. It buffers the Madrean 2 Story Mansions, 35 feet above the Park (park is at elev. 1105 and house pads at elev. 1140), from the existing houses but is it Sierra Madrean?

Several of the Community Voices at various city hearings continue to ask for “A Comprehensive Park and Traffic Design” inclusive of Bailey Park and West Carter: to address the need for the proposed park uses (not public art, etc.), parking, ADA access, toilet facilities, traffic, the debris basin road, safety in passage between Bailey and the Proposed Park, etc.

The Applicant’s Work Session was well intentioned, but a "Comprehensive Design" will require more than a Community Conversation to address the complexities involved, and the Design Tie-In to Bailey Park and West Carter. A true collaborative process would have included LA County Parks and Recreation regarding Bailey Park to establish Scope and Criteria for inclusion into the Specific Plan, and did not.

Hillside Acreage: The 35 acres of open space to the north of the existing Monastery, is not buildable and useable for a Park.....and a self-serving fire and earthquake risk and liability shift to the City of Sierra Madre and Stakeholders (to clear and maintain, and defend in fire and protect the Monastery).

3. **Insolvency:** The mitigation measure proposed to build out 25% of the houses and or for typical construction or performance bonds is irrelevant to Insolvency. A “Special Development Bond” should be imposed as a Discretionary Exaction, to assure the Development is completed. Economic uncertainty and the potential for Community Blight from an incomplete 42-unit housing development, with major grading operations incomplete, is a risk and should be mitigated.
4. **ADU’s:** The future state to add ADU’s to this development and encumber the infrastructure and traffic is real and relevant. I have heard the Applicant’s commentary, including the City Attorney’s comments regarding the matter, however, this requires a written legal opinion from 3rd party council to the City of Sierra Madre Leadership. Consideration to covenant NO ADU’s, thru the Subdivision Mapping and or exaction and voluntary concession from the Developer pass thru to the HOA CCR’s should not be overlooked. If, I were to prove that I could add 42 ADU or any number to the existing development, would the infrastructure and traffic metrics become voidable? Have you seen anything from the State Attorney’s General in regards to a project which is used to meet requirements for the General Plan Housing Element and then in a future issuance claim additional housing?
5. **Possible Active Seismic Faults:** Perhaps redundant on my part as was stated in all prior commentary, but the exact location of two seismic faults on the same property requires field specific fault exploration, not just the technical rebuttals from the Applicant’s technical team.
6. **Community Meadows Wildlife Preserve Alternative – Bond Measure:** Genuine Leadership on both sides of the aisle would stay the CEQA and Entitlement Process in favor of a unilateral solution to address those seeking financial benefit, open space, and preservation of the last community bio-diverse meadow, adjacent Bailey Park’s bio-diversity. This should have been a CEQA Alternative, given the enormity of the issues, and without which, presents an ever-increasing division between Stakeholders in Sierra Madre. “Measure M”, as I would call it, has become the reincarnated Measure V, to preserve the Village, or in the history of the Sierra Madre Canyon’s 1960’s to “Save Our Stream.”

Regards and Thank You in Advance for Your Consideration,

Glenn Hickman

Amber Tardif

From: Barbara Vellturo [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, September 15, 2022 2:57 PM
To: Public Comment; Barbara Vellturo
Subject: CC meeting Comment

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

CAUTION: This message is from an EXTERNAL SENDER - be CAUTIOUS, particularly with links and attachments.

To the City Council

Without any documents included in the Agenda, there is no way for Citizens to Address any discrepancies between what "STAFF" has recommended that the Council Approve and the Actual Documents (revised many times) that they are approving.

For ONE EXAMPLE - The Council is told that they should approve: changing the land use and zoning to RESIDENTIAL ZONING

While the latest amendment of the specific plan makes this statement

- a. **General Plan Amendment and Zone Change.** The property is currently designated and zoned Institutional (I) in both the City's General Plan and Zoning Code. To accommodate the development, a General Plan Land Use Amendment and Zone Change are necessary to revise the General Plan designation and zoning to Specific Plan (SP). The revised land use designation/zone for the property to Specific Plan will provide a mechanism to develop the Plan area consistent and compatible with the surrounding existing uses and to provide public benefits and amenities to the Sierra Madre community.

So..... Does the ordinance specify which version is actually being considered?

The Meadows Final EIR		21 Item(s)
↳	Revised_02172022_Volume II_FEIR_The Meadows at Bailey Canyon Specific Plan Final Environmental Impact Report	26.2 MB ...
↳	Revised_02172022_Volume I_FEIR_The Meadows at Bailey Canyon Specific Plan Final Environmental Impact Report	118 MB ...
↳	Sierra-Madre Specific Plan	127 MB ...
↳	Appendix C2_Arborist Report	5.69 MB ...
↳	Notice of Availability Final EIR	134 KB ...
↳	FEIR_The Meadows at Bailey Canyon Specific Plan Final Environmental Impact Report	133 MB ...
↳	Appendix K_Traffic Conditions Analysis	5.79 MB ...
↳	Appendix J Water Wastewater Cost of Service	2.72 MB ...
↳	Appendix H VMT Assessment	668 KB ...
↳	Appendix I1_Confidential Tribal Cultural Resources	18.2 KB ...

1 2 3 PAGE 1 OF 3

The Council is being asked to approve the EIR - IF YOU DO - WHICH VERSION ARE YOU approving?? Which is/has been/will be reviewed by you and which is the FINAL FEIR??

The City Website under FINAL EIR shows

FEIR (133 MB) - plus 15 Appendices (most are technical studies)

VOLUME 1 FEIR (NOT REVISED ON THE DATE GIVEN) (118 MB) AND

VOLUME 11 FEIR (NOT REVISED ON THE DATE GIVEN) (26.2 MB)

WHICH VERSION IS THE FINAL EIR - OR ARE THEY ALL ADDED TOGETHER TO MAKE A FINAL FINAL???

Barbara Vellturo

Amber Tardif

From: Susan Neuhausen [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, September 15, 2022 3:50 PM
To: Public Comment; City Council
Subject: September 15, 2022 City Council Meeting Public Comments

CAUTION: This message is from an EXTERNAL SENDER - be CAUTIOUS, particularly with links and attachments.

Date: Thursday, September 15, 2022

From: Susan Neuhausen, [REDACTED]

To: Mayor Goss and Council Members:

You are discussing the New Urban West Meadows Project this evening. I request careful consideration of all aspects. I would like to address some comments made by City Council members at recent meetings in regard to the Meadows Project Specific Plan.

At the July 12th meeting, Mayor Goss commented that in 2015, he and others spent a lot of time on the General Plan figuring out appropriate gross-floor-area to lot-size ratios. And yet the Specific Plan for the Meadows Project allows for houses on a 7800 square foot lot that are 75% larger than allowed under the Sierra Madre General Plan and Municipal Code 17.20 and, in fact, all houses in New Urban West's proposal exceed what is allowed with the exception of one house on a single lot. That negates all the hard work that Mayor Goss and others did. The Meadows Project's Specific Plan is NOT consistent with the General Plan.

Note to Mr. Parkhurst who said in the July 12th meeting that the project's houses would all be electric: That is simply not the case. That claim was retracted by New Urban West long ago and, in fact, it only pertained to kitchen appliances. For the sake of the environment, and to ameliorate a major fire hazard, the houses should be 100% electric, including heating and cooling. But now the developer is only going to "encourage" all-electric appliances. So, everybody can still have their Viking gas ranges. Moreover, the developer is only planning to do the minimum required for solar energy and only install panels sufficient for 60% of the estimated electric use. So much for sustainability.

Note to Mayor Goss: At the September 13th City Council meeting, you commented on having attended a meeting about the Paradise fire and that even with the highest standards of fire prevention, nothing can withstand infernos. That reality should raise major concerns about the Meadows Project, where there are 42 oversized houses on 9 acres abutting parched Angeles National Forest land, and where there is not adequate space between houses to prevent the entire neighborhood from going up in flames in a matter of minutes.

Note to Mr. Garcia regarding Measure HR: At the July 12 meeting, you commented that you were against Measure HR because there could be so many large houses built on half-acre lots. In Hillside zoning, the minimum lot size is two acres and a lot split is only allowed one time and needs to be approximately half the lot size, so one acre. Only the homeowner can split a lot (and cannot split two adjacent two-acre lots) and depending on configuration, it may not be possible. Moreover, the homeowner is required to live in their house for three years after splitting the lot. A developer cannot split the lot and build a second unit. The

maximum gross floor area of ALL structures on a two-acre (87,120 square-foot) lot or a one-acre (43,560 square-foot) lot is a maximum of 6500 square feet. On a 17-acre parcel with NO roads, there could be a maximum of eight two-acre lots, but with roads, more like six or seven lots. This is compared to 42 houses on 9.2 Acres with minimum lot sizes of 7800 square feet under the Meadows Plan. On the entire 35 acres, after putting in roads, there would be no more than 15 or 16 two-acre lots. Given that the city staff has noted that under 1% of homeowners are building ADUs, there will NEVER be 68 units on the 35 Acres.

Housing units spiraling out of control under Hillside zoning is a ridiculous strawman argument. Consider the hypotheticals of the Meadows Project and of the Mater Dolorosa parcel of 35 acres with its current Institutional zoning. After up to 126 housing units on the 42 lots within the Meadows Project proposal (with ADUs and JDUs), the owner can use the remaining 18 acres to build a giant institution or another 242 housing units based on the Meadows Specific Plan. That would be 368 housing units versus 68 units under Hillside Zoning, or 550% more housing units with the current zoning than under Measure HR. The hypotheticals in the press are simply disinformation.

I understand that you can only consider the Meadows Project proposal as it exists today. However, you also need to think about the consequences not just to the 17 acres under discussion for development but to the entire parcel.

One last concern: Although the Planning Commission had numerous discussions regarding the Specific Plan and the developer made some minor concessions as to house sizes, there was very little discussion of the EIR. In addition, my impression is that they did not consider the EIR within their area of expertise or oversight. I ask that all five of you take the time to read the EIR and the comments from residents that are both within the last posted EIR. There are numerous issues that relate to safety and engineering that differ from the DEIR, and there has been an egregious lack of input from important agencies such as the Los Angeles County Flood Control District and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

In a very short amount of time, 1300 Sierra Madre registered voters signed the petition for the initiative to allow the voters to decide on Hillside zoning for the Mater Dolorosa parcel. I can't speak for those 1300 voters but, having gathered many of those signatures and listened to people's concerns, I can say with confidence that the vast majority don't want a high-density, high-traffic, high-fire-severity housing project like this one built in Sierra Madre. Please allow our citizens to vote on this ballot measure prior to making a decision on the Meadows Project.