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# Executive Summary

The proposed City of El Monte Downtown Main Street Transit-Oriented Development Specific Plan ("Specific Plan") Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is summarized in this section. It includes an environmental assessment of the proposed Specific Plan, which is the adoption and implementation of the Specific Plan located in the City of El Monte ("City"). The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15123 requires that the summary section of the EIR identify each significant effect, recommended mitigation measure(s) and alternatives that would minimize or avoid potential significant impacts. In addition, the CEQA Guidelines require the summary to identify areas of controversy known to the lead agency, including issues raised by agencies and the public and issues to be resolved, including the choice among alternatives and how to mitigate significant effects.

This Draft Program EIR will accompany the proposed Specific Plan through the adoption process as they are considered by the City of El Monte Planning Commission and the City Council. The City Council will review and take action on both the Specific Plan and EIR.

## Project Description

The Downtown Main Street Transit-Oriented Development Specific Plan area ("Plan Area") encompasses approximately 115 acres within the City's Downtown area. Located within or directly adjacent to the proposed Plan Area, the El Monte Metrolink Station and El Monte Bus Station facilities have experienced increased activity due to expanded services and a number of recently completed facility enhancements. Both of these transit facilities provide the Plan Area with a number of opportunities to diversify existing land uses within the Downtown area including a broader range of housing, retail, entertainment, and outdoor dining establishments.

Future development in the Plan Area shall apply the following Guiding Principles:

1. **Mixed-Use, Pedestrian and Transit Oriented.** Create a mixed-use, pedestrian- and transit-oriented urban village focused around a pedestrian-friendly Main Street that is woven together by attractive streetscape improvements and paseos.
2. **Central Shopping and Entertainment.** Transform the Downtown into a central shopping and entertainment district.
3. **Enticing Place for Investment.** Make the Downtown an enticing place for investment by designing an active and vibrant street environment that attracts new businesses.
4. **Housing.** Incorporate a variety of housing opportunities throughout the Downtown that include a mix of densities and product types.
5. **Expanded and Improved Transit.** Create a Downtown supported by an expanded and improved public transit system.

6. **Urban Design.** Provide a blend of old and new designs, where new development takes its design cues from the existing El Monte culture, character and history.
7. **Public Enhancements.** Provide a safe, active and livable urban atmosphere with distinct streetscape design connected by public plazas, promenades and paseos. Create entryways at key intersections, and improve streetscapes and signage.
8. **Multimodal Streets.** Provide a well-connected and balanced system of multi-modal streets (i.e., bus, auto, and bike) connected to pedestrian linkages that are designed to accommodate all users regardless of age or ability.

There are four sub-areas within the Specific Plan. Each includes a customized set of permitted land uses and development standards. These land use regulations in the Specific Plan (and where not specified in the Specific Plan, in Title 17 of the El Monte Municipal Code ("EMMC") control the type and density of development on privately and publicly-owned property. The sub-areas are described as follows:

**Main Street.** This 18.6-acre Sub-Area is the centerpiece of the Specific Plan area and gets its name from its original street name from the period 1902 to 1935.

**Zocalo.** This 13.3-acre Sub-Area is intended to be the cornerstone of the Specific Plan area specifically and the City overall as a future public square, gathering space, and center of arts and culture.

**Station.** This 19.7-acre Sub-Area gets its name from the proximity to key stations including the Metrolink Station to the north and the El Monte Bus Station to the west. These areas represent great opportunities for future transit oriented development.

**Monte Vista.** This 40-acre Sub-Area is located in the southern and northern portions of the Specific Plan area. It gets its name from derivations of the Spanish word "El Monte" and references in the City's history with treasured views of the San Gabriel Mountains.

In addition to the above sub-areas, the Specific Plan also includes the areas listed below:

- Existing R-2 PRD – 2.7 acres;
- Existing MMU – 3.2 acres;
- Roads/Railroads – 17.5 acres

Other components of the Specific Plan include a Mobility and Beautification Plan, which includes mobility improvements oriented around the "complete streets" concept whereby public roads and sidewalks are designed for all users. Beautification enhancements provide for a uniform streetscape and look and feel for the Plan Area. The Infrastructure and Public Facilities Plan of the Specific Plan discusses water, wastewater, storm drainage, solid waste disposal and energy systems within the Plan Area. It also as examines public services such as police and fire protection, parks and recreational facilities, schools and libraries within the Plan Area. The Specific Plan also includes an Implementation chapter which identifies strategies and actions to implement the public improvements identified in the Specific Plan. The

Administration chapter discusses the Specific Plan authority, adoption, amendment, and administration process and procedures.

### General Plan Amendment

In accordance with California Government Code Section 65454, which states that no specific plan may be adopted or amended unless the proposed plan or amendment is consistent with the General Plan, the adoption of the Specific Plan will require a General Plan Amendment ("GPA"). The City of El Monte 2011 General Plan, including the General Plan Land Use Policy Map, will be amended concurrent with the adoption of the Specific Plan. The amendment will include modifications to the boundaries of the Main Street subarea of the "Downtown Core" designation in the Land Use Element, as well as the maximum residential density and Floor Area Ratio ("FAR") allowed in the "Downtown Core." In addition, there are two small triangular sites west of the intersection of Santa Anita Avenue and Valley Boulevard within the Specific Plan area, which will have their land use designation changed from "Gateway Specific Plan" and "Open Space" to "Downtown Core" and "Open Space" as part of the General Plan Amendment.

### Zoning Map and Ordinance Amendment

The Zoning Map Amendment will change the zoning for the parcels within the plan boundary from various designations to "SP-4: Downtown Main Street Transit-Oriented Development Specific Plan" ("Downtown Specific Plan"). In addition, the Zoning Ordinance Amendment will remove certain Zoning Code Sections related specifically to the downtown area and add a new Zoning Code Chapter for the "Downtown Specific Plan."

## Areas of Concern and Issues to be Resolved

The City has determined that an EIR should be prepared for the proposed Specific Plan. This EIR addresses environmental issues that are known by the City or were raised by agencies during the Notice of Preparation (NOP) review process. The NOP was circulated to responsible and trustee agencies and filed with the California Office of Planning and Research (State Clearinghouse) and posted in the Office of the Los Angeles County Clerk on July 31, 2015. During the NOP review period, the City received comments letters from the following agencies and residents:

- South Coast Air Quality Management District (August 6, 2015)
- Jose and Aleja Ruvalcaba (August 12, 2015)
- Gabrieleno Band of Mission Indians - Kizh Nation (August 14, 2015)
- Yaling Zhang (August 15, 2015)
- County of Los Angeles Fire Department (August 18, 2015)
- County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County (August 28, 2015)
- Metrolink (August 31, 2015)
- Southern California Association of Governments (August 31, 2015)

- California Department of Transportation, District 7 (August 31, 2015)
- Southern California Gas Company (September 21, 2015)

An environmental scoping meeting was conducted on August 13, 2015 at the El Monte City Hall East, Council Chambers, 11333 Valley Boulevard, El Monte, CA. A study session was also held with the Planning Commission on August 25, 2015 to present the scope of the environmental review and updates to the project. The NOP and comment letters received from responsible and trustee agencies are included in this EIR as **Appendix A**.

This EIR evaluated in detail the following environmental issues of the proposed Specific Plan:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services and Recreation
- Transportation and Traffic
- Utilities and Service Systems

A key concern of the City is the need for revitalization and economic development in Downtown El Monte, which in recent years has experienced difficulty competing with new development of retail and professional business services in other adjacent cities. Other public concerns include connectivity of the Downtown with the transit centers, housing, and Downtown beautification. While all the concerns are important and are addressed in the Specific Plan, these opinions do not change the result or conclusion of the environmental issues discussed in this EIR

# Alternatives

The alternatives selected to illustrate the range of actions the City can take regarding the proposed project are as follows:

## No 1. No Project Alternative

The No Project Alternative consists of a scenario under which the Specific Plan as proposed would not proceed. Under this alternative, future development would occur in accordance with the current City of El

Monte's adopted General Plan policies and land use designations and Zoning Ordinance through the year 2035. It is projected that this alternative would result in 163 new housing units and 162,000 square feet of commercial building development

## No 2. Reduced Density Alternative

Under the Reduced Density Alternative, development would occur based on the land use concept and development guidelines of the proposed Specific Plan, with the exception that the allowable residential densities and commercial intensities for all land uses would be reduced by 25 percent. It is projected that this alternative would result in a net increase of 1,650 housing units and 375,000 square feet of commercial building area by the year 2035. Of the 375,000 square feet of commercial use, 244,000 square feet is anticipated for retail, 75,000 square feet for restaurant, and 56,000 square feet for office uses.

## No 3. Reduced Plan Area Alternative

The Reduced Plan Area Alternative would result in a reduction in the Specific Plan area from the current 115 acres to approximately 38 acres. This area would include only the Main Street Sub-Area and the Station Sub-Area. The reduced area under this alternative would include the El Monte Metrolink Station, the area on the east side of Santa Anita Avenue south of Valley Boulevard, and properties along Valley Mall/Main Street. The objectives for transit oriented development would remain, but land use regulations and circulation/infrastructure improvements would be focused on the underutilized areas within the reduced Specific Plan Area. This alternative would result in an increase of only 600 housing units and 120,000 square feet of commercial building area by 2035. Projected commercial building area under this alternative is projected to include 78,000 square feet of retail, 24,000 square feet of restaurant, and 18,000 square feet of office building area.

## No 4. Complete Streets Mobility Alternative

Under the Complete Streets Mobility Alternative, the same level of development would occur as the proposed Specific Plan. However, the Valley Mall/Main Street would be closed to vehicle traffic from Santa Anita Avenue on the west to Ramona Boulevard on the east. This 0.65-mile segment would be converted into a pedestrian zone with public and commercial uses. Public uses could consist of parks, plazas, playgrounds, and stages. Commercial uses could include vending kiosks, outdoor dining, and farmer's markets. This alternative would reduce the number of roadways in the Specific Plan and increase the amount of land area devoted to pedestrians and public spaces creating a more complete streets orientation to the Specific Plan Area. As a result, this alternative would also include the elimination of the two Valley Mall intersections, one at Santa Anita on the west and one at Ramona Boulevard on the east thus reducing the number of conflict points between pedestrians and vehicles and improve traffic congestion in and around the area.

## Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program

In accordance with Section 21081.6 of CEQA, a mitigation monitoring and reporting program ("MMRP") will be adopted by the City as part of the Final EIR. The MMRP will be designed to ensure compliance with the mitigation measures adopted at the time of project approval. The mitigation measures recommended in this document are intended to be as specific as a Program EIR will allow in order for the City to develop precise monitoring procedures.

## Summary of Impacts and Mitigation Measures

The Impact Summary Matrix presented in **Table ES-1** summarizes the impacts and mitigation measures discussed in Chapter 3: Environmental Analysis. The potential environmental impacts and the level of significance of each impact are summarized in the first two columns of the matrix. The mitigation measures recommended for alleviating the impacts of the proposed Specific Plan are summarized in the third column. The fourth column identifies the significance of the impacts anticipated after implementation of the recommended mitigation measures.

Table ES-1: Impact Summary Table

| Impacts | Level of Significance | Mitigation Measures | Impact After Mitigation |
|---|---|---|---|
| **3.1 Aesthetics** | | | |
| **Impact AES-1**<br>The Specific Plan has been prepared consistent with the El Monte General Plan, particularly the Community Design Element. The Plan would provide for denser development and increased building heights in certain districts. Architectural guidelines and infill development standards have been included to aid in bringing good quality design and compatible development within the private realm. The Specific Plan includes streetscape beautification provisions to enhance the public realm. Views of the San Gabriel Mountains, the Rio Hondo, Pioneer Park, and the Emerald Necklace would be minimally obstructed due to increased building heights in projected infill development. There are no designated or identified scenic vistas or highways. The urban character of the Downtown is not expected to change substantially. | **Less than Significant** | No mitigation is required. | **Less than Significant** |
| **3.2 Air Quality** | | | |
| **Impact AIR-1**<br>Implementation of the proposed Specific Plan would encourage transit-oriented growth in the Plan Area consistent with the growth projections utilized in the SCAQMD 2012 AQMP. | **Less Than Significant** | No mitigation is required | **Less than Significant** |
| **Impact AIR-2**<br>Construction of individual projects within the Specific Plan area would result in the temporary generation of air pollutants during construction which would affect local air quality. However, emissions would not exceed SCAQMD regional thresholds. Impacts would be less than significant. | **Less than Significant** | No mitigation is required | **Less than Significant** |
| **Impact AIR-3**<br>Operational emissions of ROG, CO, NOX, PM10 and PM2.5 would exceed SCAQMD's daily thresholds. Implementation of the Specific Plan would result in significant unavoidable impacts related to operational air quality emissions. | **Significant** | While impacts related to operational air pollutant emissions would be significant, no mitigation is available to reduce impacts to less than significant at the plan level. All future projects would be required to undergo project level CEQA review, including analysis of operational air emissions. At that time, appropriate mitigation measures would be identified for individual projects to reduce operational emissions. | **Significant Unavoidable** |

| Impacts | Level of Significance | Mitigation Measures | Impact After Mitigation |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Impact AIR-4**<br>The proposed Specific Plan would increase traffic along all studied roadway segments, however, increased traffic would not result in the creation of carbon monoxide (CO) hotspots. Therefore, impacts related to exposing sensitive receptors to pollutant concentrations would be less than significant. | **Less than Significant** | No mitigation is required | **Less than Significant** |
| **3.3 Biological Resources** | | | |
| **Impact BIO-1**<br>Implementation of development under the Specific Plan may result in impacts to trees protected under the City of El Monte Municipal Code. Impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated. | **Significant** | **Arborist Survey.** Prior to any construction within the Plan Area, a tree inventory shall be performed by a certified arborist to locate and identify all Protected Trees on the project site. The tree inventory shall outline specific measures to document native trees with protected status and heritage trees within the project site. Per the requirements of the City of El Monte, the following criteria shall be documented within the tree inventory: field location by GPS for all listed native trees and heritage trees; enumeration of all trees on both aerial image and spreadsheet; trees identification of each tree by both scientific and common name; trunk diameter, measured at 4.5 feet above root crown; approximate canopy height and diameter; health assessment of each tree by a certified arborist; and digital copies of the GPS shape file and spread sheet in Excel and/or PDF format. If any Protected Trees occur on the project site that need to be removed as part of the proposed project, a tree removal permit shall be obtained from the City of El Monte per Section 14.03.060 of the El Monte Municipal Code. Additionally, trees shall be replaced at a minimum 2:1 ratio and as required by Section 14.03.090 of the El Monte Municipal Code. | **Less than Significant** |
| **3.4 Cultural Resources** | | | |
| **Impact CR-1**<br>The Specific Plan has the potential to cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of historical resources. Implementation of the Plan could include demolition, and/or substantial alteration of historic resources currently unidentified. | **Significant** | **a) Significance and Eligibility Findings.** For all proposed alterations and development in the Plan Area, the City and project applicants shall determine the presence of historical resources that meet the CEQA | **Less than Significant** |

| Impacts | Level of Significance | Mitigation Measures | Impact After Mitigation |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | definition for structures and objects older than 45 years, an age threshold used by the California Office of Historic Preservation when evaluating properties for significance. For properties with proposed development changes, the City and the project applicant shall determine the impacts of proposed changes in accordance with CEQA.<br>**b) Secretary of the Interior's Standards.** To ensure that both known and unknown historic properties are appropriately maintained, the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of historic resources shall meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation based on analysis and findings. Any proposal to preserve, rehabilitate, restore, reconstruct, adaptively reuse a known historic resource shall be done in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, shall be deemed to not be a significant impact under CEQA, and may be "exempt."<br>**c) Code Enforcement.** The City shall monitor activity in the Plan Area to be sure alterations are being done under the applicable requirements, permits, and City oversight. Alterations that impact historic features to eligible properties may require further review. | |
| **3.5 Geology and Soils** | | | |
| **Impact GEO-1**<br>The Plan Area is located in an area identified as a potential liquefaction zone on the City of El Monte General Plan Liquefaction Hazards Map. As a result, any projects built within the proposed Specific Plan would be subject to liquefaction. | Significant | **Site-Specific Soil Investigation.** Site-specific soil investigations and geotechnical investigations shall be completed prior to project construction to identify potential specific hazards in the Plan Area. The investigations shall involve soil sampling and reports recommending foundation and structure design measures to mitigate potential geologic hazards. The report shall be submitted to the City for review and approval and all recommendations shall be incorporated into project design. Additionally, all new development shall comply with the standards of the California Building Code for the construction of new buildings. | Less than Significant |

| Impacts | Level of Significance | Mitigation Measures | Impact After Mitigation |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Impact GEO-2**<br>The Plan would encourage new construction in the area which could cause soil erosion. Adherence to applicable laws, regulations, and the City of El Monte General Plan, the proposed Specific Plan would not result in substantial soil erosion or loss of top soil, or expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving lateral spreading, subsidence, or collapse. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant. | **Less than Significant** | No mitigation measures are necessary beyond adherence to applicable laws and regulations. | **Less than Significant** |
| **3.6 Greenhouse Gas Emissions** | | | |
| **Impact GHG-1**<br>Development under the proposed Specific Plan would generate GHG emissions beyond existing conditions due to construction activity and long-term operation of individual developments. However, total estimated GHG emissions would not exceed the 4.1 metric tons/person efficiency threshold. Therefore, impacts related to GHG emissions would be less than significant. | **Less than Significant** | No mitigation is required. | **Less than Significant** |
| **Impact GHG-2**<br>The proposed Specific Plan would be consistent with the Climate Action Team GHG reduction strategies, the 2008 Attorney General Greenhouse Gas Reduction Measures, and the SCAG 2016-2040 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS). As a result, the proposed Specific Plan would not conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions. Impacts would be less than significant. | **Less than Significant** | No mitigation is required. | **Less than Significant** |
| **3.7 Hazards and Hazardous Materials** | | | |
| **Impact HAZ-1**<br>The northwest corner of the Plan Aras is within the San Gabriel Valley Airport Runway Protection Zone (RPZ) and Inner Safety Zone and is subject to restrictions within a RPZ zone. Structures in this area may be considered obstructions to air travel. | **Significant** | **a) FAA Notification.** For all development in the RPZ area the future project applicants shall notify the FAA via online application at the FAA's website. The FAA will determine whether the structure is an "obstruction" or "hazard" to aviation, and if so, will make recommendations to reduce the obstruction or hazard. Prior to issuance of building permits, the applicant shall forward the FAA determination and recommendations to the City, which shall require that the applicant implement the recommendations provided by the FAA.<br>**b) Avigation Easement.** Prior to issuance of a building permit for development within the RPZ, the future project | **Less than Significant** |

| Impacts | Level of Significance | Mitigation Measures | Impact After Mitigation |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | applicants shall grant an avigation easement to the County of Los Angeles to record that the property owner(s) acknowledge that their properties are in an area subject to frequent aircraft overflights and that such overflights may result in noise, exhaust emissions and vibrations. | |
| **3.8 Hydrology and Water Quality** | | | |
| **Impact HYD-1**<br>Future development under the Specific Plan and Master Plan would incrementally increase the amount of impermeable surfaces within the Plan Area. Additionally, future development under the Specific Plan and Master Plan would incrementally increase water demand as associated groundwater withdrawal within the Plan Area. However, impacts would be less than significant. | **Less than Significant** | No mitigation is required. | **Less than Significant** |
| **3.9 Land Use and Planning** | | | |
| **Impact LU-1**<br>The Specific Plan aims to improve the compatibility between land uses and the interconnectedness between neighborhoods, and therefore, impacts associated with the physical division of an established community would be less than significant. | **Less than Significant** | No mitigation is required. | **Less than Significant** |
| **Impact LU-2**<br>The proposed Specific Plan will not conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of any agency with jurisdiction over the project adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. Impacts will be less than significant. | **Less than Significant** | No mitigation is required. | **Less than Significant** |
| **3.10 Noise** | | | |
| **Impact N-1**<br>Development associated with the proposed Specific Plan would be subject to El Monte General Plan policies and would be required to comply with the El Monte General Plan Public Health and Safety Element Land Use and Noise Compatibility Guidelines. | **Significant** | **Acoustical Analysis and Design Mitigation**. Residential developers within the Plan Area shall retain a professional acoustical consultant to conduct acoustical analysis as part of the design process and the recommendations of the acoustical analysis shall be incorporated into project design. This will assure that the City's interior noise level standards are achieved. Noise reduction measures that may be required for future development may include but would not be limited to:<br>▪ Future exterior balconies and other outdoor living | **Less Than Significant** |

| Impacts | Level of Significance | Mitigation Measures | Impact After Mitigation |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | spaces shall be sited away from or removed from facades facing roadways, where feasible.<br>▪ All new residential structures in the Plan Area shall include windows and exterior doors that have a minimum STC rating of 30 STC or higher to ensure a minimum reduction of 25 dBA. Exterior doors shall be solid core and have weather stripping installed.<br>▪ All residential structures in the Plan Area shall include exterior wall assemblies should have a STC rating of 45 or higher to ensure a minimum reduction of 40 dBA.<br>▪ Sound barriers, including sound walls.<br>▪ To avoid secondary aesthetic impacts, long expanses of walls or fences shall be interrupted with offsets and provided with accents to prevent monotony. Landscape pockets and pedestrian access through walls should be provided. Whenever possible, a combination of elements shall be used, including solid fences, walls, and, landscaped berms.<br>▪ Site layout, including setbacks, open space separation, orientation of outdoor activity areas away from roadways, and shielding of noise sensitive uses with non-noise-sensitive uses<br>▪ Roof and attic vents facing away from the nearest roadway<br>▪ Air conditioning or a mechanical ventilation systems that allow doors and windows to remain closed<br>▪ Double-paned glass on all windows<br>▪ Windows and sliding glass doors mounted in low air infiltration rate frames<br>▪ Solid core exterior doors with perimeter weather stripping and threshold seals<br>▪ Acoustically insulated building wall construction | |

| Impacts | Level of Significance | Mitigation Measures | Impact After Mitigation |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Impact N-2**<br>Construction-related activities associated with implementation of the Specific Plan would intermittently generate high noise levels and groundborne vibration in and adjacent to the Plan Area. Buildout of the Specific Plan would comply with the requirements of the El Monte General Plan and the City of El Monte Municipal Code Section 8.36.050(C). Impacts would be less than significant. | **Less than Significant** | Impacts would be less than significant with compliance with Section 8.36.050(C) of the El Monte Municipal Code, which limits construction in the vicinity of noise sensitive land uses to between the hours of 6 am and 7 pm Monday through Friday and between the hours of 8 am and 7 pm Saturday and Sunday. | **Less than Significant** |
| **Impact N-3**<br>Traffic and the increased density generated by buildout of the proposed Specific Plan would incrementally increase noise levels in the Plan Area. Compliance with the standards required in the El Monte General Plan and the Specific Plan and implementation of mitigation would reduce roadway noise impacts to the maximum extent feasible. Impacts to exterior noise levels and interior noise levels at existing development would be less than significant. | **Less than Significant** | No mitigation is required. | **Less than Significant** |
| **Impact N-4**<br>The Plan Area is located approximately 1,000 feet south of the runway for the San Gabriel Valley Airport (formerly the El Monte Airport). A portion of the Plan Area, west of Santa Anita Road, North of Valley Mall, and west of Granada Avenue, lies within the 60 and 65 dBA CNEL contours of the airport. New residential uses could be located within this area. However, with compliance with General Plan policies, airport noise impacts would be less than significant. | **Less than Significant** | No mitigation is required. | **Less than Significant** |
| **3.11 Population and Housing** | | | |
| **Impact PH 1**<br>Implementation of the Specific Plan would encourage growth in the Plan Area, but would not exceed SCAG forecasts. It would also be in line with local and regional development goals and policies and would include a balance of new jobs and housing. Therefore, impacts related to housing, population, and employment growth would be less than significant. | **Less than Significant** | No mitigation is required. | **Less than Significant** |
| **Impact PH 2**<br>Implementation of the Specific Plan would increase the Plan Area's housing stock and preserve a diverse range of residential unit types at different cost levels for existing residents. Impacts related to the displacement of housing and people would be less than significant. | **Less than Significant** | No mitigation is required. | **Less than Significant** |
| **3.12 Public Services and Recreation** | | | |
| **Impact PS-1**<br>Implementation of the proposed Specific Plan would add residential and commercial uses, generating additional need for fire protection services and | **Less than Significant** | No mitigation is required. | **Less than Significant** |

| Impacts | Level of Significance | Mitigation Measures | Impact After Mitigation |
|---|---|---|---|
| facilities, including additional staff and equipment. However, implementation of the General Plan policies and public service requirements in the Specific Plan would reduce potential impacts on fire protection and emergency services to less than significant levels. | | | |
| **Impact PS-2**<br>Implementation of the proposed Specific Plan would increase the number of new residential units, resident population, commercial uses, and jobs in the Plan Area, which would result in the need for additional police protection services. Expansion of the current El Monte Police Department station or construction of a new facility would occur in existing urbanized areas where environmental impacts would be minimal. Therefore, impacts to police protection services and related facilities would be less than significant. | **Less than Significant** | No mitigation is required. | **Less than Significant** |
| **Impact PS-3**<br>Implementation of the Specific Plan would add residential units and an estimated 8,465 residents to the Plan Area, increasing use of recreational facilities, contributing to the need for on-going maintenance and upgrades, placing a demand on recreational programming and facilities, and contributing to the City's parkland deficit. Impacts are considered significant, but would be less than significant with mitigation. | **Significant** | The City shall adopt an ordinance authorizing use of the Quimby Act to require all developers (beyond what is required under Municipal Code Section16.34.030 - Parkland dedication) to pay fees, set aside land for parks, or donate conservation easements as a condition of development. | **Less Than Significant** |
| **Impact PS-4**<br>Implementation of the Specific Plan would add up to 2,054 new households within the Plan Area and a projected additional 1,467 K-12 students to current student roles. However, with payment of State-mandated school impact fees, impacts related to public school operating capacity would be less than significant. | **Less than Significant** | No mitigation is required. | **Less than Significant** |
| **Impact PS-5**<br>Implementation of the Specific Plan would increase the service population of the El Monte Public Libraries. There is adequate capacity at existing libraries within the City and in adjacent communities exists to serve the proposed Specific Plan, impacts related to libraries would be less than significant. | **Less than Significant** | No mitigation is required. | **Less than Significant** |
| **3.13 Transportation** | | | |
| **Impact T-1**<br>Implementation of the Specific Plan will generate a total of 21,370 trips per day and result in five of nine study intersections operating at an unacceptable LOS E or F during either the AM or PM peak hours (or both peak hours) under 2035 | **Significant** | ▪ Santa Anita Avenue and Valley Boulevard.<br>*2020.* Add 1 right-turn lane by widening and restripe existing through-right lane as through lane on the southbound approach, and restripe the westbound | **Less Than Significant** |

| Impacts | Level of Significance | Mitigation Measures | Impact After Mitigation |
|---|---|---|---|
| cumulative traffic condition with Project. The increase in the V/C ratio at the five intersections would exceed the threshold of significant impact. | | approach to provide 1 left-turn, 2 through and 1 shared through-right lane. Currently, the approach is striped for 2 left turn, 1 through and 1 shared through-right lane. The proposed mitigation will require 1 additional through lane on the westbound approach. This will improve the intersection LOS from F (V/C ratio = 1.078) to LOS D (V/C ratio = 0.865) during the AM peak hour, and from D (V/C ratio = 0.900) to LOS D (V/C ratio = 0.866) during the PM peak hour.<br>*2035.* In addition to 2020 mitigation (i.e., add 1 right-turn lane by widening, and restripe existing through-right lane as through lane on the southbound approach, and restripe westbound approach to provide 1 left-turn lane, 2 through lanes and 1 shared through-right lane), restripe eastbound approach to provide 2 left-turn lanes, 2 through lanes and 1 shared through-right lane (i.e., provide 1 additional through lane and 1 additional left-turn lane on the eastbound approach). This will improve the intersection LOS from F (V/C ratio = 1.145) to LOS D (V/C ratio = 0.893) during the AM peak hour, and from E (V/C ratio = 0.948) to LOS C (V/C ratio = 0.791) during the PM peak hour.<br>▪ Santa Anita Avenue and I-10 WB Ramps<br>*2020.* Widen and restripe the westbound approach to provide 1 left-turn, 1 shared through-left lane and 2 shared through-right lanes. Currently, the approach is striped for 1 left-turn lane, 1 shared through-left lane and 1 shared through-right lane. The proposed mitigation will require 1 additional shared through-right lane on the westbound approach. This will improve the intersection LOS from F (V/C ratio = 1.006) to LOS C (V/C ratio = 0.766) during the AM peak hour, and from F (V/C ratio = 1.098) to LOS D (V/C ratio = 0.896) during the PM peak hour. Since this intersection is also under Caltrans' jurisdiction, approval on any | |

| Impacts | Level of Significance | Mitigation Measures | Impact After Mitigation |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | modifications will be needed from Caltrans.<br>*2035.* Santa Anita Avenue and I-10 WB Ramps In addition to 2020 mitigation (i.e., widen and restripe the westbound approach to provide 1 left-turn, 1 shared through-left lane and 2 shared through-right lanes), restripe northbound approach to provide 1 left-turn lane, 1 shared left-through lane, and 2 through lanes (i.e., provide 1 additional shared left-through lane on the northbound approach). This will improve the intersection LOS from F (V/C ratio = 1.123) to LOS D (V/C ratio = 0.830) during the AM peak hour, and from F (V/C ratio = 1.157) to LOS D (V/C ratio = 0.843) during the PM peak hour. Since this intersection is under Caltrans' jurisdiction and also under an overpass, major reconstruction works and approval on any modifications will be needed from Caltrans.<br>▪ Santa Anita Avenue and I-10 EB Ramps<br>*2020.* Widen and restripe eastbound approach to provide 2 left-turn, 1 shared left-turn plus through lane and 2 right-turn lanes, and restripe southbound approach to provide 2 left-turn and 2 through lanes. Currently, the eastbound approach is striped for 1 left-turn, 1 shared left-turn plus through and 1 right-turn lane. The proposed mitigation will require 1 additional left-turn and 1 additional right-turn lanes on eastbound approach, and 1 additional left-turn lane on southbound approach. This will improve the intersection LOS from F (V/C ratio = 1.075) to LOS D (V/C ratio = 0.828) during the AM peak hour, and from F (V/C ratio = 1.011) to LOS C (V/C ratio = 0.766) during the PM peak hour. Since this intersection is under Caltrans' jurisdiction and also under an overpass, major reconstruction works and approval on any modification will be needed from Caltrans.<br>*2035.* With the 2020 mitigation measures (i.e., widen | |

| Impacts | Level of Significance | Mitigation Measures | Impact After Mitigation |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | and restripe the eastbound approach to provide 2 left-turn, 1 shared left-through lane and 2 right-turn lanes, and restripe the southbound approach to provide 2 left-turn and 2 through lanes for which Caltrans approval on major reconstruction works and any modifications will be needed as it is under Caltrans' jurisdiction and also under an overpass) installed, no further mitigation will be required. The 2020 mitigation will improve the intersection LOS from F (V/C ratio = 1.114) to LOS D (V/C ratio = 0.880) during the AM peak hour, and from F (V/C ratio = 1.065) to LOS C (V/C ratio = 0.807) during the PM peak hour under 2035 conditions.<br>▪ Ramona Boulevard and Valley Boulevard<br>2020. Restripe southbound approach to provide 2 left-turn, 2 through and 1 right-turn lane. Currently, the approach is striped for 1 left-turn, 2 through and 1 right-turn lane. The proposed mitigation will require 1 additional left-turn lane on southbound approach. This will improve the intersection LOS from D (V/C ratio = 0.840) to LOS C (V/C ratio = 0.781) during the AM peak hour, and from E (V/C ratio = 0.981) to LOS D (V/C ratio = 0.850) during the PM peak hour.<br>2035. With the 2020 mitigation measures (i.e., restripe the southbound approach to provide 2 left-turn lanes, 2 through lanes and 1 right-turn lane) installed, no further mitigation will be required. The 2020 mitigation will improve the intersection LOS from D (V/C ratio = 0.892) to LOS D (V/C ratio = 0.828) during the AM peak hour, and from F (V/C ratio = 1.036) to LOS D (V/C ratio = 0.896) during the PM peak hour under 2035 conditions.<br>▪ Peck Road and Valley Boulevard<br>2020. Restripe eastbound approach to provide 1 left-turn, 3 through and 1 right-turn lane, and restripe westbound approach to provide 2 left-turn, 3 through | |

| Impacts | Level of Significance | Mitigation Measures | Impact After Mitigation |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | and 1 right-turn lane. Currently, the eastbound approach is striped for 1 left-turn, 2 through and 1 right-turn lane, and the westbound approach is striped for 1 left-turn, 2 through and 1 right-turn lane. The proposed mitigation will require 1 additional through lane on the eastbound approach, and 1 additional left-turn and 1 additional through lane on the westbound approach. This will improve the intersection LOS from E (V/C ratio = 0.951) to LOS D (V/C ratio = 0.842) during the AM peak hour, and from F (V/C ratio = 1.072) to LOS D (V/C ratio = 0.854) during the PM peak hour.<br>2035. In addition to 2020 mitigation (i.e., restripe the eastbound approach to provide 1 left-turn lane, 3 through lanes and 1 right-turn lane, and restripe the westbound approach to provide 2 left-turn lanes, 3 through lanes and 1 right-turn lane), restripe the southbound approach to provide 1 left-turn lane, 3 through lanes and 1 right-turn lane (i.e., provide 1 additional through lane on the southbound approach). This will improve the intersection LOS from F (V/C ratio = 1.012) to LOS C (V/C ratio = 0.789) during the AM peak hour, and from F (V/C ratio = 1.139) to LOS D (V/C ratio = 0.869) during the PM peak hour. | |
| **Impact T-2**<br>There are no CMP arterial monitoring intersections within the City of El Monte, and therefore, there are no CMP impacts associated with the Specific Plan. | **Less than Significant** | No mitigation is required. | **Less than Significant** |
| **Impact T-3**<br>All Caltrans' intersections operate acceptably, at LOS D or better, with an exception of the intersection of Santa Anita Avenue and I-10 Westbound Ramps, which operates at LOS F during the PM peak-hour periods under both Without- and With-Specific Plan traffic conditions, and the intersection of Santa Anita Avenue and I-10 Eastbound Ramps, which operates at LOS F during both the AM and PM peak-hour periods under both Without- and With-Specific Plan traffic conditions. However, improvements have been identified to achieve City | **Significant** | No mitigation measures are required beyond those identified for Impact T-1. | **Less than Significant** |

| Impacts | Level of Significance | Mitigation Measures | Impact After Mitigation |
|---|---|---|---|
| of El Monte's minimum LOS standards as both these intersections are impacted under future conditions per City of El Monte thresholds of significance. | | | |
| **Impact T-4**<br>The Specific Plan will contribute no additional trips at any other on- or off-ramps in the study area. There are no Specific Plan-related impacts on Caltrans' off-ramps. | **Less than Significant** | No mitigation is required. | **Less than Significant** |
| **Impact T-5**<br>The Specific Plan will add more than 50 peak-hour trips to most freeway segment. However, the threshold of impact as defined by Caltrans will not be exceeded. | **Less than Significant** | No mitigation is required. | **Less than Significant** |
| **Impact T-6**<br>The Specific Plan will provide adequate on-site parking based on Sub-Area parking standards in the Specific Plan. Parking impacts are considered less than significant. | **Less than Significant** | No mitigation is required. | **Less than Significant** |
| **Impact T-7**<br>Implementation of the General Plan policies and the Specific Plan guiding principles supporting alternative mode of transportation will encourage transit use, walking, and bicycling instead of automobiles as a way of mobility to and from the Plan Area and within the Plan Area. Impacts related to alternative transportation are considered less than significant. | **Less than Significant** | No mitigation is required. | **Less than Significant** |
| **3.14 Public Utilities** | | | |
| **Impact U-1**<br>Development facilitated by the Specific Plan is estimated to increase water demand by 513,375 gallons per day. The City would be able to supply projected demand based on existing water entitlements. Therefore, impacts to water supply would be less than significant. | **Less than Significant** | No mitigation is required. | **Less than Significant** |
| **Impact U-2**<br>The Plan Area includes areas of aging water pipes and facilities that require improvements; however, the Specific Plan identifies numerous infrastructure improvement projects and new development project requirements. Therefore, impacts on water infrastructure are considered less than significant. | **Less than Significant** | No mitigation is required. | **Less than Significant** |
| **Impact U-3**<br>Development facilitated by the Specific Plan would generate an estimated 410,700 gallons per day of wastewater that would flow through the existing Whittier Narrows Water Reclamation Plan, which represents 5.87 percent of its remaining design capacity and through the Joint Water Pollution Control Plant | **Less than Significant** | No mitigation is required. | **Less than Significant** |

| Impacts | Level of Significance | Mitigation Measures | Impact After Mitigation |
|---|---|---|---|
| system, which represents 0.41 percent of the remaining design capacity at the wastewater treatment facility. Impacts on wastewater facilities are considered less than significant. | | | |
| **Impact U-4**<br>The Specific Plan has identified two sewer projects within the Plan Area to improve the deficiencies in the City's existing wastewater system. It also states that future upgrades be based on the Sewer Master Plan update and the Sewer Area/Capacity Study prepared for each new development within the Plan Area. These improvement projects and future upgrades will mitigate impacts on the wastewater infrastructure to less than significant levels. | **Less than Significant** | No mitigation is required. | **Less than Significant** |
| **Impact U-5**<br>Development facilitated by the Specific Plan would generate an increase of up to 9.4 tons of solid waste per day. However, because the Olinda Alpha Sanitary Landfill and the El Sobrante Landfill have adequate capacity to serve the Specific Plan, impacts related to solid waste facilities would be less than significant. | **Less than Significant** | No mitigation is required. | **Less than Significant** |

# Chapter 1: Introduction

## A. Purpose of the Environmental Document

The proposed project is the adoption and implementation of the Downtown Main Street Transit-Oriented Development Specific Plan ("Specific Plan"). While the proposed Specific Plan itself may not create any immediate impacts on the environment, it will provide a vision and direction for future physical, social and economic activities in Downtown El Monte ("Downtown" or the "Downtown area") that may ultimately result in a physical change in the environment. Therefore, prior to the City of El Monte's adoption of the Specific Plan, its potential environmental impacts must be assessed and mitigation measures identified for impacts considered significant in accordance with California Environmental Quality Act (Public Resources Code Section 21000 *et seq.*) ("CEQA") and the State CEQA Guidelines (14 Cal. Code Regs. Section 15000 *et seq.*) ("CEQA Guidelines").

## B. Type of Environmental Document

The City of El Monte ("City") has determined, based on an Initial Study prepared in July 2015 and circulated for public review, that an Environmental Impact Report ("EIR") would be required to address one or more of the Specific Plan's potentially significant environmental impacts. The City has also determined that this environmental document is to be a so-called Program EIR. CEQA Guidelines Section 15168 defines a Program EIR as that which evaluates the overall effect of a series of actions that are related through the "... issuance of rules, regulations, plans, or general criteria to govern the conduct of a continuing program..." Program EIRs are most useful in addressing program-wide impacts, including the secondary or cumulative effects of what would otherwise be a series of individual actions that would be evaluated separately.

The EIR is an informational document that will be used by the appropriate decision-makers, their staff members, other involved public agencies, interested organizations, and the general public in providing an objective and impartial assessment of the potential environmental impacts that could result from the implementation of the Specific Plan. As an informational document, the EIR is intended to provide a forum for the discussion of the Specific Plan's potential impacts through the public review, comment, and public hearing process. The EIR is merely an informational tool to be considered during the adoption process of the Specific Plan.

# C. Legal Authority

The City of El Monte is initiating the proposed Specific Plan. With respect to CEQA, Public Resources Code Section 21067 deems the City, an autonomous governmental body, as the Lead Agency for the Specific Plan because it will have the principal responsibility for carrying out its policies. If the City Council approves the Specific Plan, no other approvals are necessary from other public agencies, including responsible agencies, in order for the Specific Plan to become effective. However, all subsequent individual development projects within the Specific Plan area, and the City as a whole, will be required to adhere to the standard City procedures for site plan review, approval, permits and environmental clearance.

# D. Planning Process

The Specific Plan was developed using an intensive public engagement process, which included:

**Stakeholder Interviews.** The Specific Plan team conducted interviews with agencies, organizations, and individuals from the affected community. These included Day One, Amigos de Los Rios, Bike SGV, the El Monte School District, as well as business owners, developers, and merchant groups such as the Chamber of Commerce. The interviews proved to be helpful in gaining input and insight from community members' issues and desires. Some of the common themes included the concern with safety at nighttime, an interest in additional retail and a variety of restaurants, including opportunities for outdoor dining, and a desire to improve connectivity between the Metrolink and El Monte Stations

**Community Workshops.** To ensure effective outreach, two community workshops (March and June 2014) were held to facilitate public input in the development of the Specific Plan. The workshops focused on an overview of Transit-Oriented Development ("TOD") and the associated positive impacts that higher density developments have had on other communities when placed in close proximity to transit hubs. The public was then given a clear description of the Specific Plan area boundary along with current projects already ongoing in and around the Downtown area. The planning team also presented the results from the existing baseline studies conducted on the Downtown area and provided suggestions for land use changes, opportunity areas, and an increase in density around the existing transit stations. A summary of public comment and common themes of the workshops included:

- Adding a central park/plaza within Downtown;
- Providing new retail spaces;
- Encouraging more outdoor dining;
- Integrating additional streetscape beautification improvements;
- Enhancing Downtown connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods;
- Providing additional improvements along Main Street;
- Integrating better signage and parking solutions; and
- Increasing the amount of affordable housing.

**Ad Hoc Committee.** An important component of the planning process was the input from an Ad Hoc Committee consisting of two City Council members, the City Manager, and the Economic Development Director. The Committee met four times to review and discuss proposed development projects and served as a platform for committee members to review and provide feedback on the progress of the Specific Plan.

**Study Sessions.** A study session of the full City Council was conducted in March 2015 to provide an overview of the Specific Plan and the processes for review and adoption. The City Council directed staff to proceed with the Specific Plan preparation and associated environmental review. Additional study sessions and public hearings will be held to review the Draft Specific Plan and consider certification of this EIR and adoption of the Specific Plan.

## E. Environmental Review Process

This EIR has been prepared to meet all of the procedural requirements of CEQA. In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15082(a) a Notice of Preparation ("NOP") was circulated to responsible and trustee agencies and posted in the Office of the Los Angeles County Clerk on July 31, 2015 and filed with the California Office of Planning and Research's State Clearinghouse (the "State Clearinghouse"). This started a public review period which concluded on August 31, 2015 to receive information from agencies in connection with the proposed project. In addition, City staff along with the environmental consultant team conducted an environmental scoping meeting on August 13, 2015 at the El Monte City Hall East, Council Chambers, 11333 Valley Boulevard, El Monte, CA. A study session was also held with the Planning Commission on August 25, 2015 to present the scope of the environmental review and updates to the project. The NOP, Initial Study, and comment letters received from responsible and trustee agencies are presented in **Appendix A** of this Draft EIR.

The City has filed a Notice of Completion ("NOC") and a Notice of Availability ("NOA") with the State Clearinghouse in accordance with CEQA Guideline Sections 15085 and 15087(a). In addition, the NOA was posted with the Los Angeles County Clerk, and the public was invited to review and provide comment during a 45-day public review period (December 22, 2016 through February 6, 2017). A study session with the El Monte Planning Commission was conducted on January 17, 2017.

The City, through public hearings before the Planning Commission and City Council, will review and consider the Final EIR prior to the decision to approve, revise, or reject the proposed project. If the City finds the Final EIR is adequate and complete, the City may certify the Final EIR. A decision to approve the proposed Specific Plan would be accompanied by written Findings in accordance with CEQA Guideline Section 15091, and a Notice of Determination ("NOD") will be filed with the Los Angeles County Clerk and the State Clearinghouse.

# F. Areas of Concern and Issues to be Resolved

This EIR addresses environmental issues that are known by the City or were raised by agencies during the CEQA NOP review process and the community outreach effort. As part of the NOP, the environmental Initial Study determined that the EIR evaluate in detail the following environmental issues of the proposed Specific Plan:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services and Recreation
- Transportation and Traffic
- Utilities and Service Systems

During the NOP review period, the City received a comment letters from the California Department of Transportation District 7; the County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County; Metrolink- Southern California Regional Rail Authority; Southern California Gas Company; the Southern California Association of Governments; the South Coast Air Quality Management District; Yaling Zhang; the Gabrielino Band of Mission Indians- Kizh Nation; Jose and Aleja Ruvalcaba; and the County of Los Angeles Fire Department.

A key concern of the City is the need for revitalization and economic development in Downtown El Monte, which in recent years has experienced difficulty competing with new development of retail and professional business services in other adjacent cities. Other public concerns include connectivity of the Downtown with the transit centers and housing and the beautification of the Downtown area. While all the concerns are important and are addressed in the Specific Plan, these opinions do not change the result or conclusion of the environmental issues discussed in this EIR.

# G. Statutory Exemptions from CEQA Review of Project Consistent with the Specific Plan

Future development projects that are consistent with a specific plan may be exempt from CEQA review. Two key CEQA statutory exemptions for projects implementing a specific plan include: future residential projects consistent with this Specific Plan; and developments within a specific plan in transit priority areas.

## Subequent Specific Plan Activities

As a program EIR, subequent activities that implement the Specific Plan may not require additional CEQA documents (CEQA Guidelines Section 15168(c)(2)), if the agency finds that pursant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15162, no new effects could occur or no new mitigation measures would be required, then the agency could approve the activity as being within the scope of the project covered by the Specific Plan Program EIR.

## Residential Project Consistent With a Specific Plan

Government Code Section 65457 provides a CEQA statutory exemption for any residential development project, including subdivisions or zone changes that are consistent with a specific plan for which an EIR has been certified. If the specific plan EIR is subject to any of the conditions under CEQA Guidelines Section 15162 that would require preparation of a subsequent EIR, then this exemption would not apply until the subsequent EIR has been certified.

## Developments Within Transit Priority Areas of Specific Plans

In September 2013, the California Governor signed Senate Bill 743, which made several changes to CEQA for projects located in areas served by transit (i.e., transit-oriented development or TOD). SB 743, codified in Public Resources Code Section 21155.4, created a new exemption from CEQA for certain projects that are consistent with a Specific Plan. It provides that residential, employment center, and mixed-use development projects that meet the following three specific criteria are statutorily exempt from CEQA review:

- The project is located within a transit priority area (this is defined as an area within one-half mile of a major transit stop that is existing or planned);
- The project is consistent with a specific plan for which an EIR has been certified; and
- The project is consistent with the general use designation, density, building intensity, and applicable policies specified for the project area in either an approved sustainable communities strategy or an alternative planning strategy.

The exemption cannot be applied if the project would cause new or worse significant impacts compared to what was analyzed in the EIR for the specific plan. In that case, supplemental environmental review must be prepared.

### Infill Project Exemptions

Section 15332 of the CEQA Guidelines describes infill projects that are categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA. To be exempt, infill projects must:

- Be consistent with the applicable General Plan designation and all applicable General Plan policies, as well as with the applicable zoning designation and regulations;
- Occur within the city limits on a project site of no more than five acres substantially surrounded by urban uses;
- Have no value as habitat for endangered, rare, or threatened species;
- Not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality; and
- Be able to be adequately served by all required utilities and public services.

## H. Purpose of the Specific Plan

A specific plan is a tool provided by Section 65450 et seq. of the California Government Code for the systematic implementation of the City's General Plan. It establishes a link between implementing policies of the General Plan and individual development proposals within the defined boundary of the Specific Plan. While the General Plan is the primary guide for growth and development within El Monte, the Specific Plan focuses in more detail on the Downtown area and surrounding neighborhoods. In particular, it focuses on the Main Street subarea with an area of 115 acres of the Specific Plan area (the "Plan Area"). It tailors land uses and zoning regulations to accommodate a desired mix of uses with guidelines and standards thus creating a development form and composition that would support a vibrant, active Downtown shopping district and neighborhood.

Overall, the primary purpose of this Specific Plan is to create a unique and identifiable Downtown area anchored by a Main Street that is an economically viable, vibrant, and pedestrian-friendly destination. This Specific Plan will act as the tool for implementing the overall vision of expanding El Monte's Downtown area, increasing land use intensities around existing transit facilities, and providing pedestrian-friendly mobility and streetscape improvements in support of transit-oriented developments throughout the Downtown area.

# Chapter 2: Project Description

## A. Project Purpose and Principals

### Project Background

The Downtown Main Street Transit-Oriented Development ("TOD") Specific Plan area ("Plan Area") encompasses approximately 115 acres within the City of El Monte's Downtown area. Located within or directly adjacent to the proposed Plan Area, the El Monte Metrolink Station and El Monte Bus Station facilities have experienced increased activity due to expanded services and a number of recently completed facility enhancements. Both of these transit facilities provide the Specific Plan area with a number of opportunities to diversify existing land uses within the Downtown area including a broader range of housing, retail, entertainment, and outdoor dining establishments.

Of significant importance to the Plan Area is the roadway segment known today as "Valley Mall," which is El Monte's original central business district. Its Downtown character and importance is highlighted within the Specific Plan through a number of proposed land use, mobility, and streetscape beautification enhancements. The renaming of "Valley Mall" to "Main Street" is critically important to the Specific Plan process as it will help convey to residents and visitors the current and historical importance of this roadway located at the heart of El Monte.

### Transit-Oriented Development and Downtown Revitalization

The Specific Plan was prepared in response to METRO grant funding allocated for future transit-oriented development throughout greater Los Angeles area. The emphasis of the Specific Plan is to provide standards and guidelines to revitalize the Downtown core into a pedestrian-oriented environment with increased land use intensities, support services, and streetscape improvement along Main Street and around existing transit facilities.

### Guiding Principles

Future development in the Plan Area shall apply the following Guiding Principles:

1. **Mixed-Use, Pedestrian and Transit Oriented.** Create a mixed-use, pedestrian- and transit-oriented urban village focused around a pedestrian-friendly Main Street that is woven together by attractive streetscape improvements and paseos.
2. **Central Shopping and Entertainment.** Transform the Downtown into a central shopping and entertainment district.
3. **Enticing Place for Investment.** Make the Downtown an enticing place for investment by designing an active and vibrant street environment that attracts new businesses.
4. **Housing.** Incorporate a variety of housing opportunities throughout the Downtown that include a mix of densities and product types.

5. **Expanded and Improved Transit.** Create a Downtown supported by an expanded and improved public transit system.
6. **Urban Design.** Provide a blend of old and new designs, where new development takes it design cues from the existing El Monte culture, character, and history.
7. **Public Enhancements.** Provide a safe, active, and livable urban atmosphere with distinct streetscape design connected by public plazas, promenades, and paseos. Create entryways at key intersections, and improve streetscapes and signage.
8. **Multimodal Streets.** Provide a well-connected and balanced system of multimodal streets (bus, auto, and bike) connected to pedestrian linkages that are designed to accommodate all users regardless of age or ability.

# B. Specific Plan Area

## Project Location

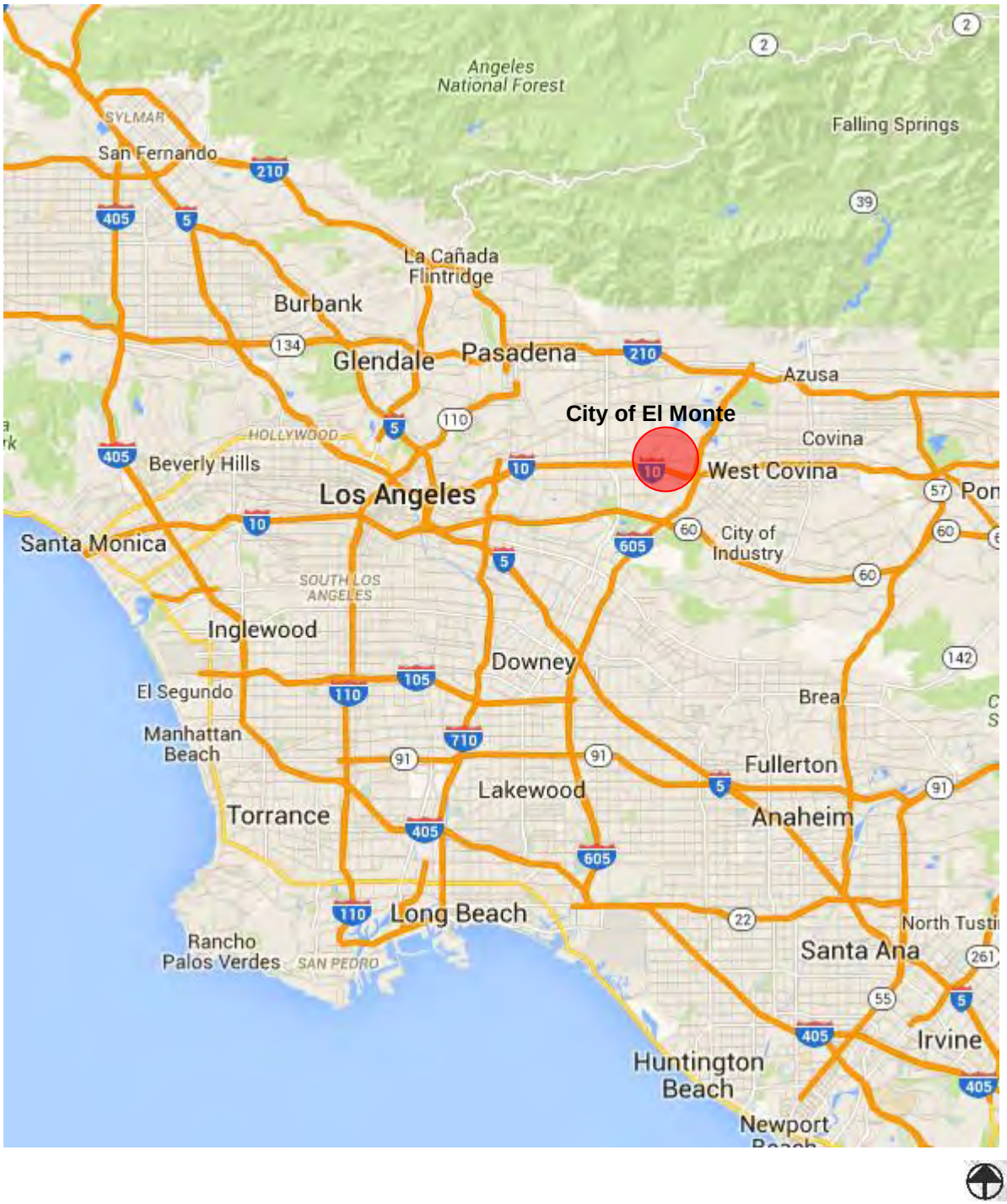
The Plan Area is located in the City of El Monte, approximately 14 miles east of Downtown Los Angeles. The City of El Monte, with a 2015 population estimate of 113,000 residents[1], has regional access via Interstate 10, Interstate 605, and State Route 60. The Plan Area also includes the El Monte Metrolink Station along its northern border and the El Monte Bus Station – the largest bus station on the west coast – located on the west side of Santa Anita Avenue. Both transit facilities provide convenient access to Downtown Los Angeles and to other local and regional destinations. **Figure 2-1** shows the location of the City from a regional perspective.

As shown in **Figure 2-2**, the Plan Area is triangular in shape and is generally bounded by the Union Pacific and Metrolink railroad tracks to the north, Ramona Boulevard to the south and east, and Santa Anita Avenue and the Rio Hondo River to the west. The key east-west roadways include Valley Boulevard and Ramona Boulevard, and the north-south roadways include Santa Anita Avenue and Tyler Avenue. Access to Interstate 10 from the Plan Area is from Santa Anita Avenue, approximately one-quarter mile to the south and at Valley Boulevard, approximately one-half mile to the southeast. Interstate 605 is located approximately two miles east of the Plan Area.

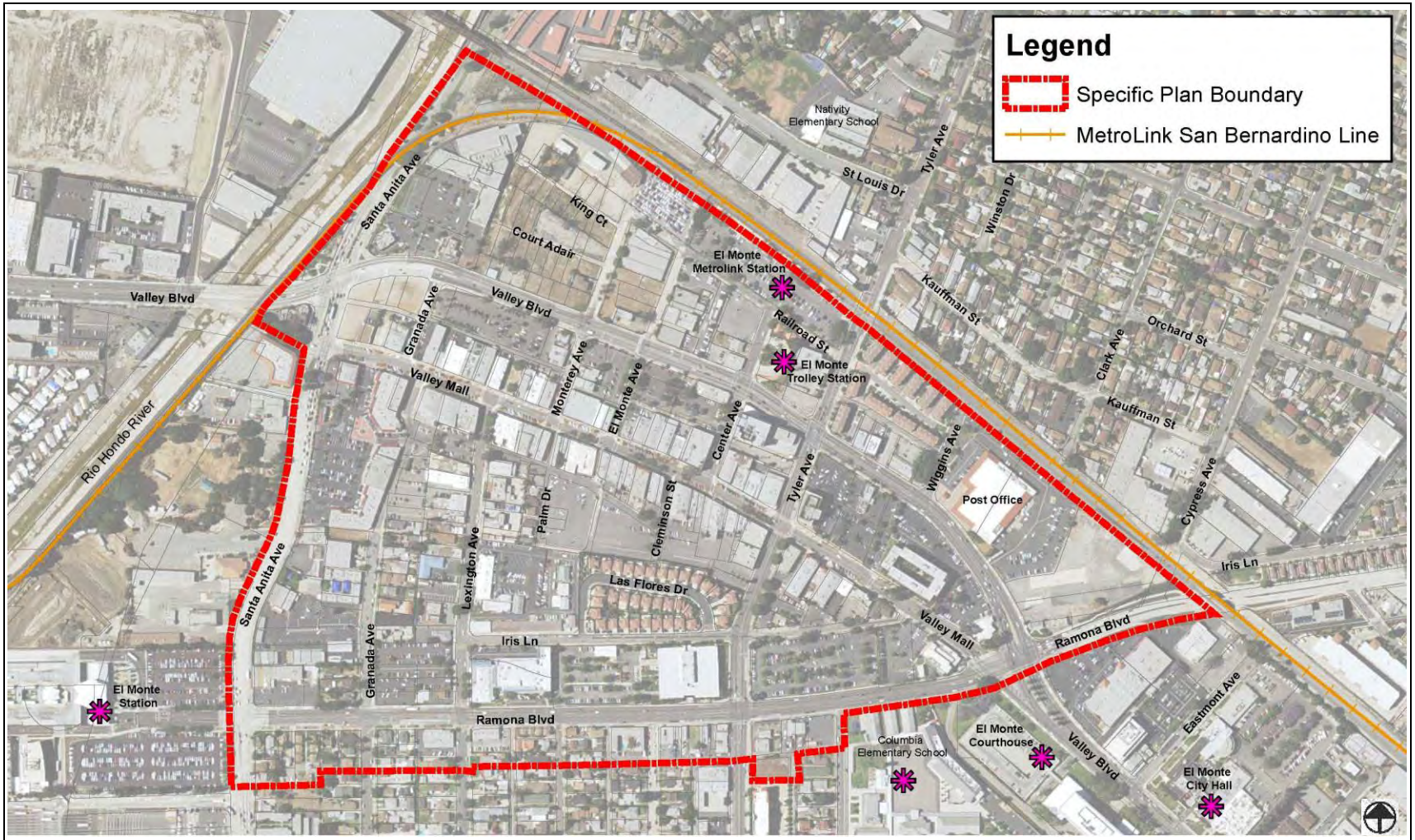
The Plan Area is also adjacent to the 60-acre Gateway Specific Plan area that was adopted in 2007. The Gateway Specific Plan is based upon the concept of TOD, which integrates a mix of transit, housing, retail, business, entertainment and public parks. A key development project within the Gateway Specific Plan area is a 14.3-acre transit-oriented, multi-phase, mixed-use development consisting of 552 housing units and 25,000 square feet of retail uses.

Other key uses and facilities in and around the Plan Area include the El Monte Trolley Station at Center Avenue and Valley Boulevard (which serves the City's local transit system), the U.S. Post Office at Wiggens Avenue and Valley Boulevard, the El Monte/Rosemead Adult School at Lexington Avenue and Ramona Boulevard, and the El Monte City School

[1] *California Department of Finance, E-5 City/County Population and Housing Estimates, 2015*




| | |
|---|---|
| Downtown Main Street Transit-Oriented Development, Specific Plan Draft EIR | **Figure 2-1 Regional Context** |




| Downtown Main Street Transit-Oriented Development, Specific Plan Draft EIR | **Figure 2-2 Specific Plan Area** |
|---|---|

Development administration building on Lexington Avenue. In addition, the El Monte City Hall and the El Monte Courthouse are located less than one-quarter mile to the southeast of the Plan Area along Valley Boulevard.

El Monte's neighboring cities include Rosemead to the west, South El Monte to the south, Baldwin Park to the east, and Arcadia and Temple City to the north.

## Existing Land Uses

The primary existing land uses in the Plan Area include residential, retail, office, parking, and public facilities. As presented in **Table 2-1**, residential uses (single- and multi-family) total 15 acres or 13.1 percent of the total Plan Area. Existing residential neighborhoods are generally located along the south side of Ramona Boulevard, the mid-block area along Granada Avenue and Lexington Avenue between Ramona Boulevard and Valley Mall, and along Encanto Way and Las Flores Drive. Currently, there are an estimated 190 single- and multi-family residential units in the Plan Area. Existing commercial (retail, restaurant, and office) uses total approximately 34 acres and represent 29.6 percent of the total Plan Area. Commercial uses are located throughout the Plan Area, with concentrations along Valley Mall, Valley Boulevard and Santa Anita Avenue. The 9.5-acre Santa Fe Trail Plaza, located at the northeast corner of Valley Boulevard and Santa Anita Avenue, is an example of new development that has recently occurred within the Plan Area. In total, the Plan Area is developed with nearly one million square feet of retail/service, and office uses. Land used for public facilities, transportation, communication and utilities totals approximately 13 acres or 11.3 percent of the total area.

**Table 2-1: Existing Land Uses of the Specific Plan Area**

| Land Use | Number of Parcels | Acres | Percent of Specific Plan Area |
|---|---|---|---|
| Single-Family Residential | 109 | 8 | 7.0% |
| Multi-Family Residential | 22 | 7 | 6.1% |
| Commercial Retail/Restaurant | 88 | 23 | 20.0% |
| Commercial Office | 36 | 11 | 9.6% |
| Surface Parking Lots | 92 | 24 | 20.9% |
| Industrial | 3 | 2 | 1.7% |
| Public Facility | 6 | 9 | 7.8% |
| Transp./Comm./Utilities | 12 | 4 | 3.5% |
| Open Space | 5 | 1 | 0.9% |
| Vacant | 25 | 7 | 6.1% |
| Streets/ROW | | 19 | 16.5% |
| **Total Specific Plan Area** | **398** | **115** | **100.0%** |

*Source: Los Angeles County Office of the Assessor parcel data*

Although the Plan Area is generally built-out, there remain approximately 24 acres of surface parking lots and seven acres of vacant land, which together total 31 acres and accounts for over one-quarter (27 percent) of the total land within the Plan Area. Parking lots and vacant land are where much of the Specific Plan's proposed new development is anticipated.

# C. Specific Plan Components

The Specific Plan includes six (6) chapters that focus on private and public realm development and improvements. Land use regulations in the Specific Plan (and where not specified in the Specific Plan, in Title 17 of the El Monte Municipal Code/EMMC) control the type and density of development on privately and publicly-owned property. Mobility improvements are oriented around "complete streets" concepts whereby public roads and sidewalks are designed for all users. Beautification enhancements provide for a uniform streetscape and look and feel for the Plan Area. Infrastructure identifies existing facilities and describes system upgrades that are needed to support new growth. Implementation identifies development incentives and funding opportunities. Administration outlines the procedures for amending the Specific Plan and for its use once adopted. The Specific Plan also includes design guidelines.

## Sub-Areas

There are four (4) sub-areas within the Specific Plan. Each includes a customized set of permitted land uses and development standards. The sub-area boundaries are illustrated in **Figure 2-3** and are described as follows:

**Main Street.** This 18.6-acre Sub-Area is the centerpiece of the Plan Area and gets its name from its original street name from the period 1902 to 1935.

**Zocalo.** This 13.3-acre Sub-Area is intended to be the cornerstone of the Plan Area specifically and the City overall as a future public square, gathering space, and center of arts and culture.

**Station.** This 19.7-acre Sub-Area gets its name from the proximity to key stations including the Metrolink Station to the north and the El Monte Bus Station to the west. These areas represent great opportunities for future transit oriented development.

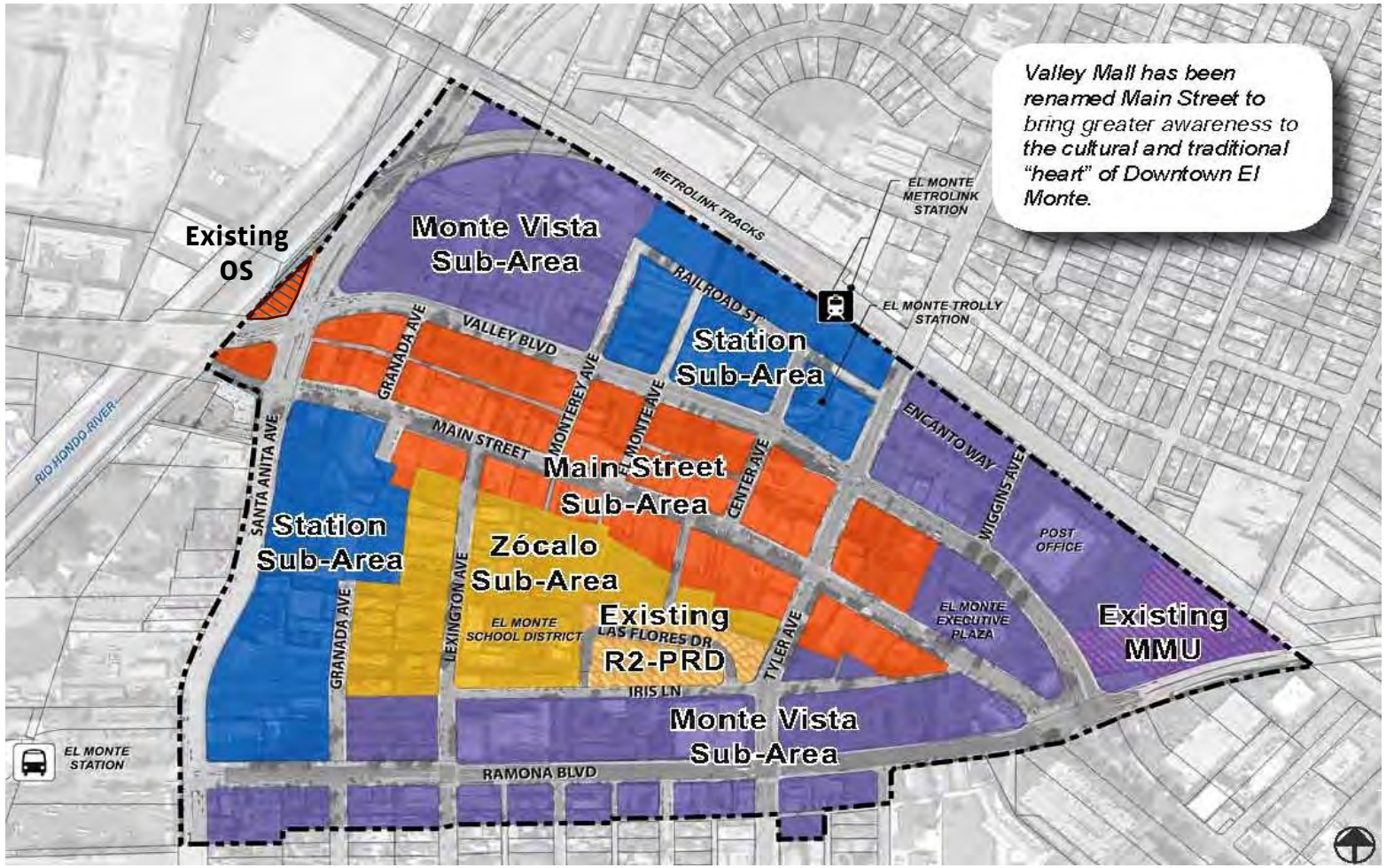
**Monte Vista.** This 40-acre Sub-Area is located in the southern and northern portions of the Plan Area. It gets its name from derivations of the Spanish word "El Monte" and references in the City's history with treasured views of the San Gabriel Mountains.

In addition to the above sub-areas, the Specific Plan also includes the areas listed below:

Existing R-2 PRD – 2.7 acres;

Existing MMU – 3.2 acres;

Roads/Railroads – 17.5 acres




Downtown Main Street Transit-Oriented Development, Specific Plan Draft EIR | **Figure 2-3 Specific Plan Sub-Areas**

## Land Use Plan

The future urban form of Downtown El Monte will be established by providing opportunities for development that adheres to the customized mix of land uses, context-sensitive development standards, and placemaking design guidelines.

Maximum development densities and configurations will be derived through adoption of the Specific Plan itself, along with review and consideration of the entitlements required in connection with future development projects. The permitted uses, maximum residential densities or dwelling units per acre (DU/acre), commercial intensities or Floor Area Ratio (FAR), height limits, and stories have been assigned for each of the four sub-areas.

**Permitted Uses.** The Specific Plan identifies permitted land uses for the various sub-areas. The uses shown in **Table 2-2** as Permitted (P) are acceptable anywhere in the sub-area in which they are located. Other uses are shown as Conditionally Permitted (C). Conditional uses require special consideration so they may be properly located with respect to their effects on surrounding properties.

**Development Standards**. The Specific Plan identifies the maximum dwelling units (DU/acre), Floor Area Ratio (FAR), height limits and lot coverage that are permitted by right and by the Development Opportunity Reserve (DOR), which allows higher densities and heights if amenities and/or infrastructure improvements are provided by a project (or if in-lieu payments for such improvements are provided). The intent of the DOR is to encourage increased development intensity concurrently with the delivery, or payment in lieu of delivery, of public improvements and additional amenities. Each sub-area's key development standards are presented in **Table 2-3** and illustrated in **Figure 2-4**.

**Area Wide Design Guidelines.** The Specific Plan design guidelines are included as a supplement to El Monte's Comprehensive Design Guidelines and El Monte's Zoning Code. Duplication has been avoided, however, should a conflict occur, the Specific Plan design guidelines shall take precedence. The Specific Plan guidelines have been organized to provide direction on sustainability, site design, building form and massing, articulation, and utilitarian aspects of a project and should be adhered to regardless of use.

Table 2-2: Permitted Uses

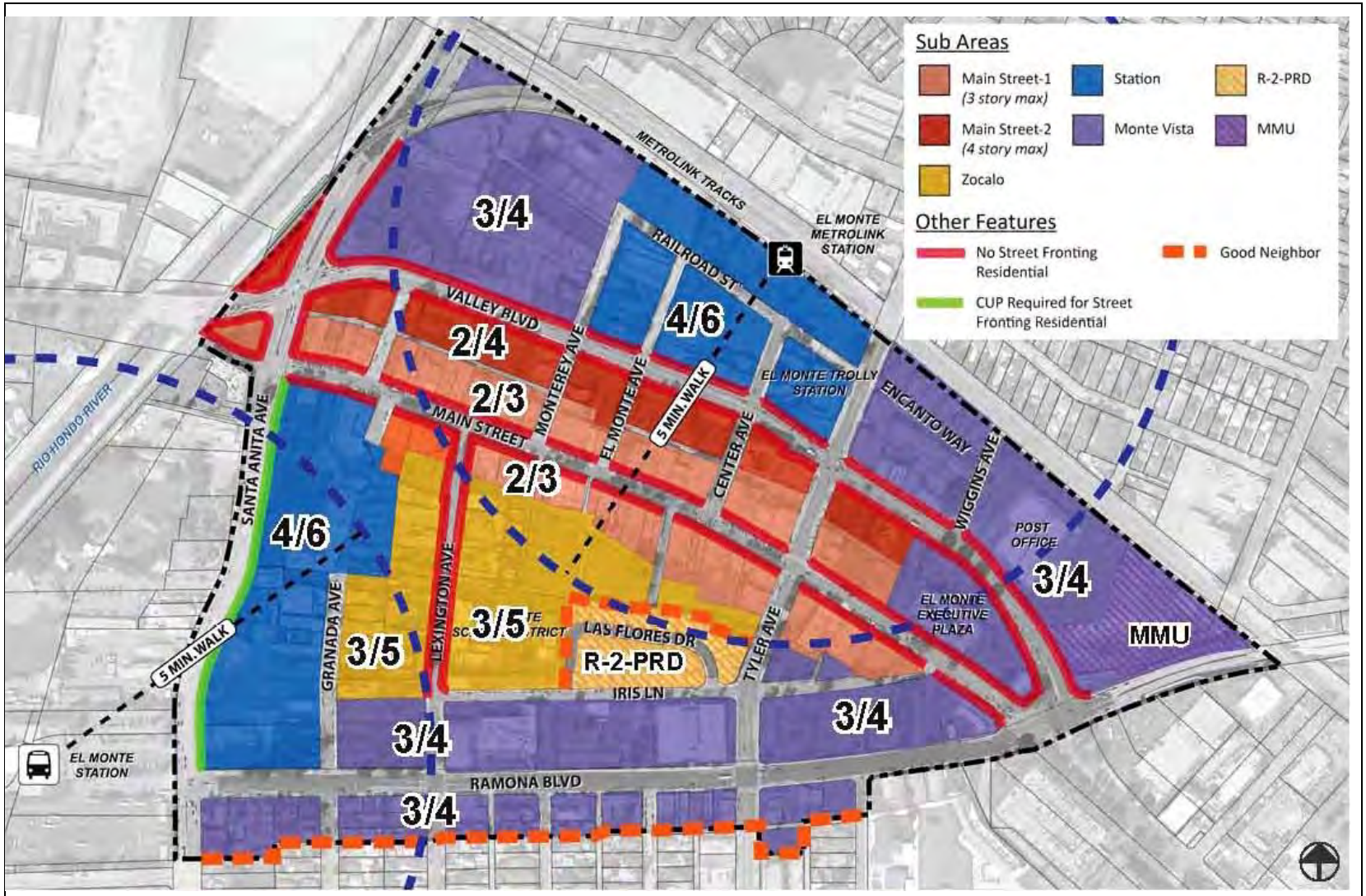
| | Main Street | Station | Zócalo | Monte Vista |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Residential** | | | | |
| Child Family Day Care | C[1] | C | C | C |
| Community Care Facility | - | C | C | C |
| Dwelling, Multifamily | P[1] | P | P | P |
| Live/Work | - | - | P | P |
| Mixed-Use Development, where residential and nonresidential uses are integrated vertically* | P | P | P | P |
| Residential Care Facility for Elderly | - | P | - | P |
| Senior Citizen Housing | P[1] | P | P | P |
| **Commercial** | | | | |
| Arcades, Pool Hall | C | - | C | C |
| Athletic Clubs/Health Spa < 5,000 sf | P[1] | P | P[1] | P |
| Athletic Clubs/Health Spa ≥ 5,000 sf | C[1] | C[1] | - | C |
| Automobile Parts and Accessory Store | - | | - | P |
| Automobile Rental or Leasing | - | C | C | C |
| Bar/Cocktail Lounge | C | C | C | C |
| Bowling Alley | C | - | - | C |
| Café | P | P[2] | P | P |
| Day Nurseries | - | C | C | C |
| Department Store | P | - | - | P |
| Drug Store/Pharmacy | P | P[2] | P | P |
| Financial Institution | P | P | - | P |
| Fast Food with no drive-thru | P | P[2] | P | P |
| Grocery/Market | P | P[2] | P | P |
| Hardware Store < 5,000 sf | P | - | - | P |
| Home Occupation | P | P | P | P |
| Hotel/Motel | C | C | C | C |
| Instructional Services < 5,000 sf | P[1] | P | P | P |
| Laundry and Dry Cleaning | - | P[2] | P | P |
| Medical Office Uses | | | | |
| Mixed-Use Development, Nonresidential* | P | P | P | P |
| Office Uses | P[1] | P | P | P |
| Personal Care Facility | P | P[1] | P | P |
| Restaurants (without alcohol) | P | P[2] | P | P |
| Restaurants (with alcohol) | C | C | C | C |
| Retail Store (without alcohol) | P | P | P | P |
| Retail Store (with alcohol) | C | C | C | C |
| Theater | C[1] | - | C[1] | C |
| **Education, Public, and Recreation Uses** | | | | |
| Automobile Parking Structure | C | P | C | C |
| Government Buildings | C[1] | C[2] | - | P |
| Parks, Playgrounds | P | P | P | P |
| Public/Community buildings | P | P | - | P |
| School, Trade | C[1] | - | C | C |

P - Permitted
C - Conditional Use Permit Required
P[1] - Use shall be located above the ground floor
P[2] - Use shall be provided within a vertical mixed-use building
C[1] - Conditionally permitted use. Use shall be located above the ground floor
C[2] - Conditionally permitted use. Use shall be provided within a vertical mixed-use building
"-" not permitted in this Sub Area
* - Shall conform with permit process associated with incorporated uses

Table 2-3: Key Development Standards by Sub-Area

| | Maximum Development Standards | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sub-Areas | DU/Acre | FAR | Building Height | Stories | Lot Coverage |
| Main Street | | | | | 100% |
| By Right | 25 | 1.5 | 30 ft. | 2 | |
| DOR-1[a] | 35 | 2.0 | 45 ft. | 3 | |
| DOR-2[b] | 45 | 2.5 | 50 ft. | 4 | |
| Zocalo | | | | | 100% |
| By-Right | 30 | 2.0 | 35 ft. | 3 | |
| DOR-1 | 65 | 3.5 | 60 ft. | 5 | |
| Station | | | | | 90% |
| By-Right | 35[c] | 2.25 | 50 ft. | 4 | |
| DOR-1 | 80 | 4.0 | 75 ft. | 6 | |
| Monte Vista | | | | | 80% |
| By-Right | 30 | 2.0 | 35 ft. | 3 | |
| DOR-1 | 50 | 3.0 | 50 ft. | 4 | |

[a] *DOR-1 in the Main Street Sub-Area apply to projects along Main Street*
[b] *DOR-2 in the Main Street Sub-Area apply to projects along Valley Boulevard*
[c] *Minimum residential density of 30 DU/acre within the Station Sub-Area*




| Downtown Main Street Transit-Oriented Development, Specific Plan Draft EIR | **Figure 2-4 Development Standards** |
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## Mobility and Beautification Plan

Mobility and beautification improvements included in the Specific Plan constitute the "public realm" component. These improvements will be implemented by the City of El Monte for local roads, parking lots, public spaces, and community facilities. In addition to the goal for a revitalized Downtown El Monte, the Plan's objective is to better link land uses, destinations, and private spaces to the wide range of public transportation and active transportation options in the Downtown, the City, and the region. The combination of enhanced land use development, business development, improved circulation, and beautified streetscapes will encourage increased use of local transit. The Plan also provides for better and safer routes for walking and bicycling to transit stations and stops. The existing Metrolink Station, El Monte Station, and El Monte Trolley Station in close proximity to the Valley Mall and government uses make the Plan Area well positioned for increased economic vitality and development opportunities.

The Mobility Plan of the Specific Plan provides for a bicycle and pedestrian network consistent with the City's Complete Streets Policy adopted in 2015 (City Council Resolution No. 9542). This new network is intended to encourage more active transportation, less vehicle use, and increased safety. A pedestrian-friendly network of plazas, promenades, paseos, and safer crossings is a central part of the Plan. Better and safer access to transit stations and stops is a key component of the Plan. The transit routes within the Plan Area are shown in **Figure 2-5. Figure 2-6** illustrates the pedestrian circulation map and the bicycle circulation map.

A few of the key mobility improvements within the Plan Area include:

- Five-point intersection of Ramona Boulevard, Valley Boulevard, and Valley Mall. Relieve traffic congestion at the intersection through geometric and traffic signal improvements, incorporating pedestrian/bicycle priority crossings, and allowing a better the flow of traffic in and out of the Valley Mall.
- Santa Anita Avenue. Modify Santa Anita Avenue to become a Complete Street and provide accommodations for pedestrian, bicycles, automobiles, and public transit.
- Valley Mall. Enhance the character of Valley Mall by first renaming it to Main Street, extending business activity throughout the day and evening, promoting streetscape beautification improvements, and providing pedestrian and bicycle-friendly access.

The Beautification Plan of the Specific Plan provides for primary and secondary gateways into the area marking and defining public and private spaces. Beautification includes landscape and streetscape enhancements to existing Valley Mall features and amenities. Added features to other public spaces such as Santa Anita Avenue, Valley Boulevard, and Ramona Boulevard are included. Amenities such as benches, wayfinding signs, and lighting are important to the public realm. **Figure 2-7** shows the street beautification map and the entryway map to the Plan Area.

### Infrastructure and Public Facilities Plan

The Infrastructure and Public Facilities Plan of the Specific Plan discusses the existing water, wastewater, storm drainage, solid waste disposal, and energy systems within the Plan Area. It also examines public services such as police and fire protection, parks and recreational facilities, schools, and libraries within the Plan Area. The Specific Plan identifies infrastructure and public service projects and planning requirements to accommodate the level of anticipated growth.

## D. Development Potential for EIR Analysis

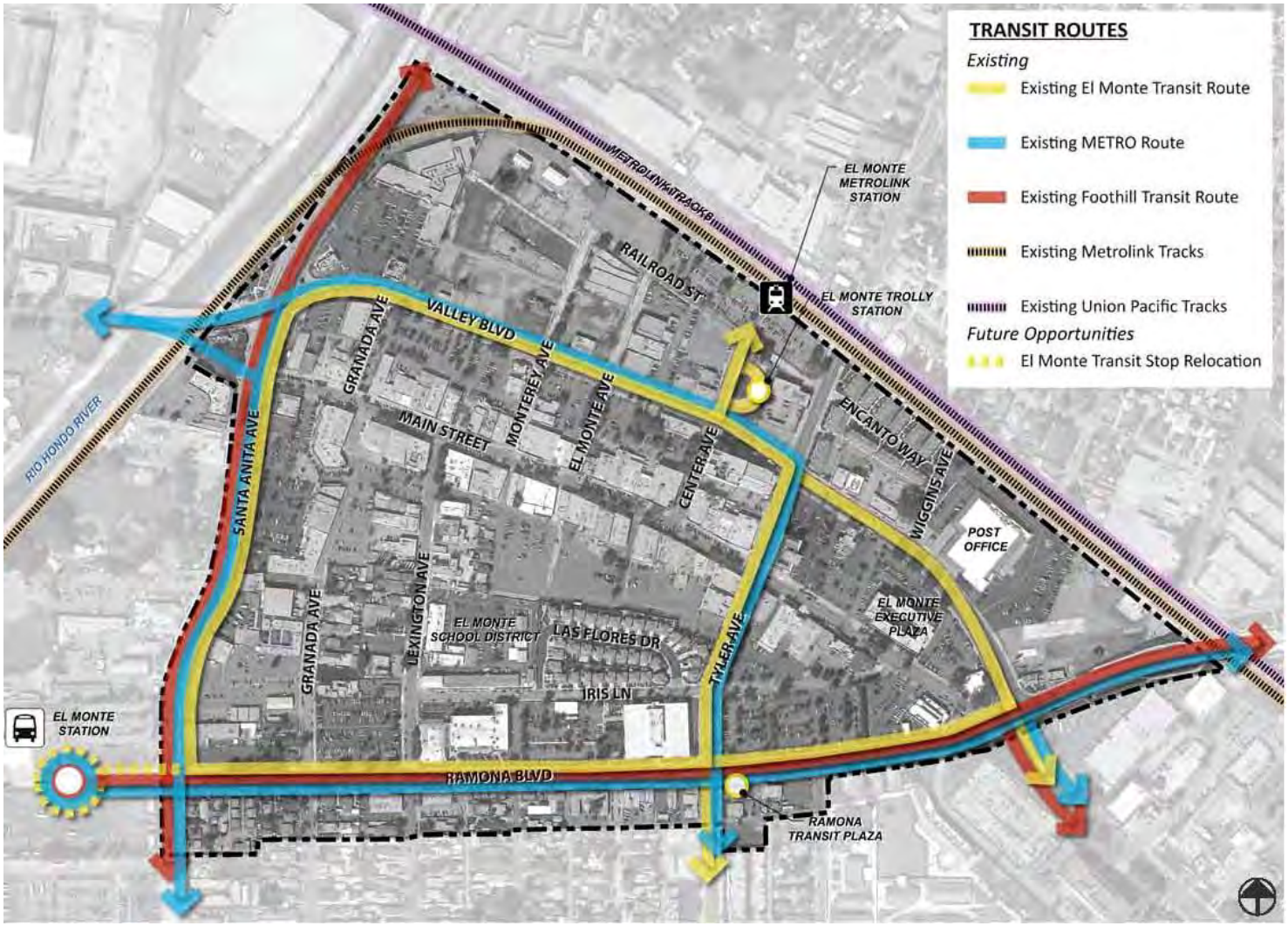
For purposes of this environmental analysis, the EIR assesses the potential environmental impacts associated with the development potential of the sub-areas according to the Specific Plan development standards and in coordination with an economic consultant for the Specific Plan in January 2016.

### Basic Assumptions

This EIR assumes that many of the vacant and underutilized parcels within the Plan Area will be developed over time and according to the corresponding development standards of each sub-area (as outlined in previous **Table 2-3** and **Figure 2-4**).

However, it is unlikely "absolute buildout" will occur, where all properties are developed at the maximum density and floor area permitted. Rather, "future potential buildout" levels were identified and studied for the EIR. The actual future development of the Plan Area will depend on such factors as market conditions, ownership patterns, property configuration, and parking requirements. Furthermore, since the Plan Area is already developed with varying ages of structures and existing residential neighborhoods, some of the areas may not experience recycling to higher intensities by the year 2035.

The basic assumption used to calculate future residential and commercial development in the Plan Area is that it will occur according to the development standard permitted by right plus DOR for each sub-area.




| Downtown Main Street Transit-Oriented Development, Specific Plan Draft EIR | **Figure 2-5 Transit Routes** |
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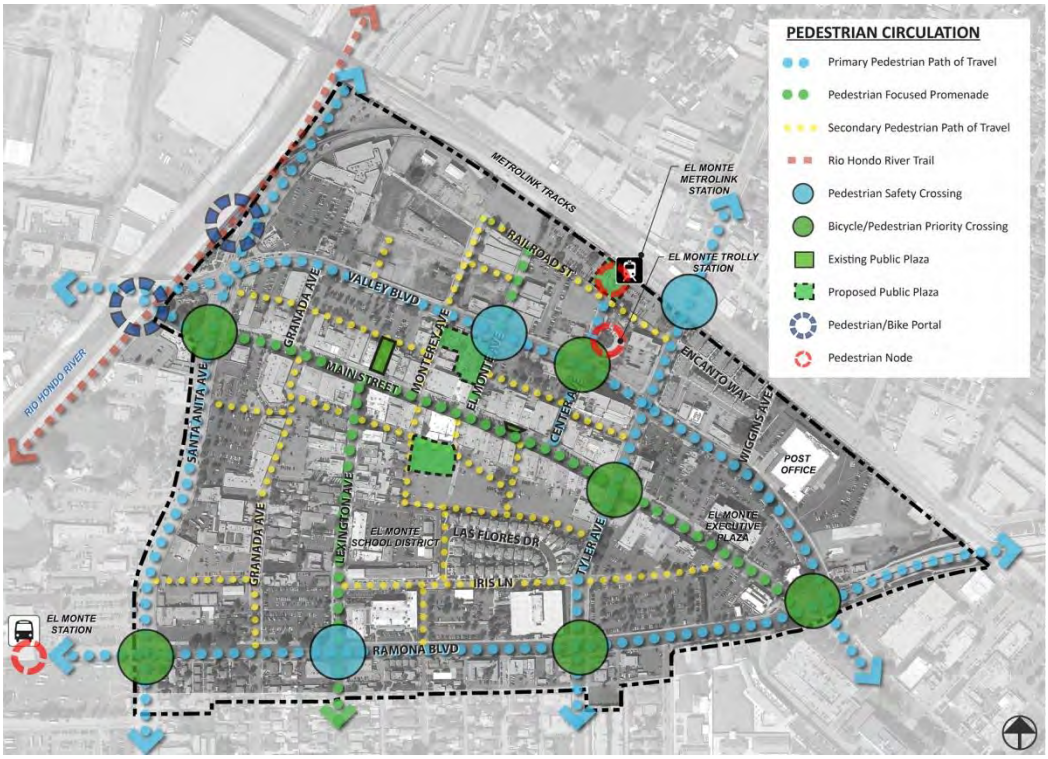


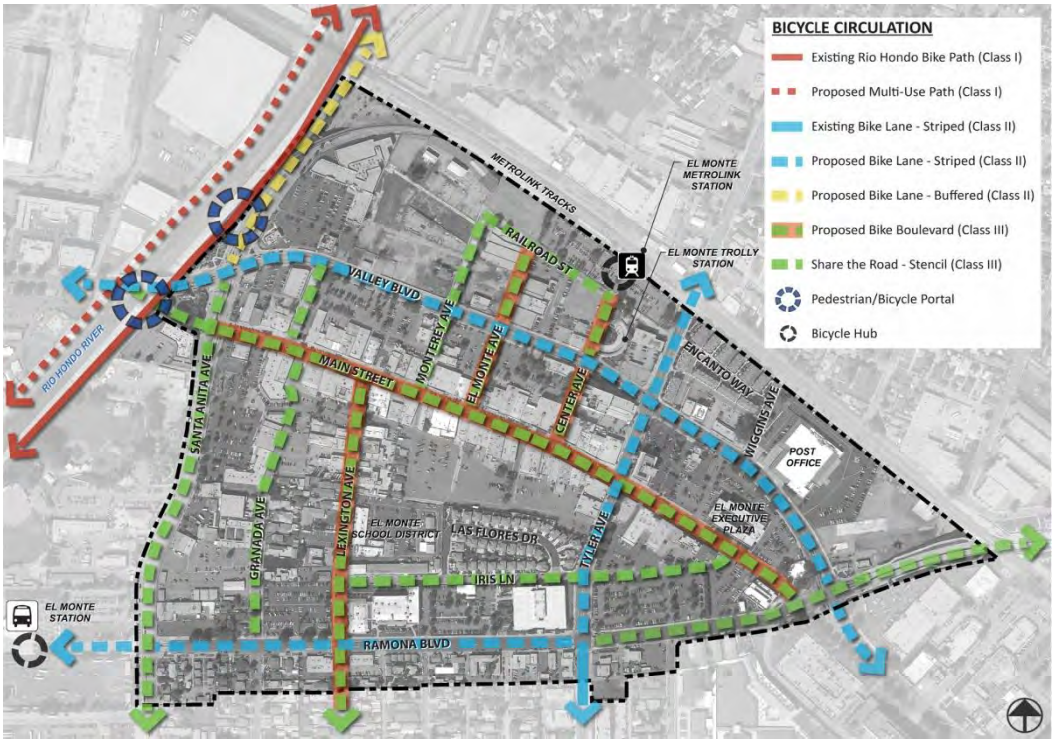


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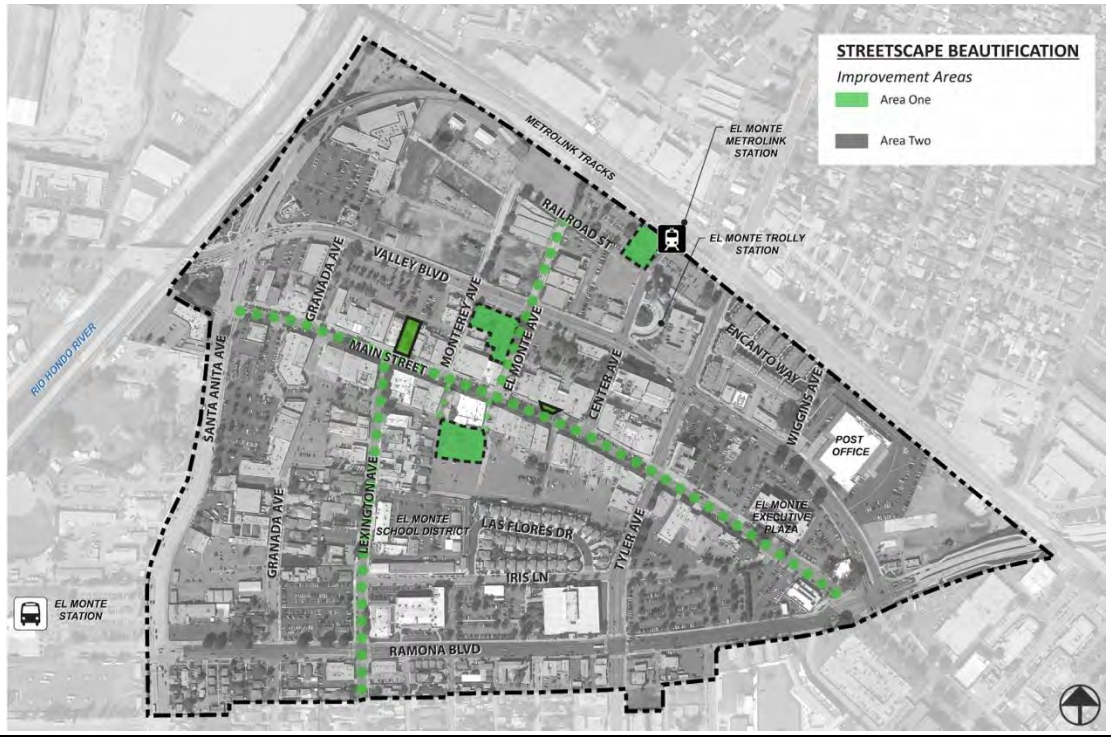
| Downtown Main Street Transit-Oriented Development, Specific Plan Draft EIR | **Figure 2-6 Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation** |



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| Downtown Main Street Transit-Oriented Development, Specific Plan Draft EIR | **Figure 2-7 Streetscape Beautification and Entryway Intersections** |

## Future Development

The calculated development potential used to assess the environmental impacts in this EIR reflect the projected net increase in housing units and square feet of commercial (retail, restaurant, and office) uses within the Plan Area. In 2015, there were approximately 190 housing units and 950,000 square feet of commercial building area in the Plan Area. As presented in **Table 2-4**, the potential buildout of the Specific Plan may result in the net increase of 2,200 new residential units and 500,000 square feet of new commercial building area by the year 2035. For purposes of the EIR analysis, all new housing units are assumed to be multi-family units. The net increase of 500,000 square feet of commercial building area assumes 325,000 square feet (65%) of retail building area, 100,000 square feet (20%) of restaurant building area, and 75,000 square feet (15%) of office building area. The net increase of new housing units and commercial building area includes projects within the Plan Area that have already been approved by the City but not constructed or occupied.

**Table 2-4: Potential Development Buildout 2035 Specific Plan Area**

| Use | 2015 | 2035 | Net Increase |
|---|---|---|---|
| Residential Units (DU) | 190 | 2,390 | 2,200[a] |
| Total Commercial Building Area (SF) | 950,000 | 1,450,000 | 500,000[b] |
| Retail | NA | NA | 325,000 |
| Restaurant | NA | NA | 100,000 |
| Office | NA | NA | 75,000 |

[a] *Residential net increase represents all multi-family dwelling units*
[b.] *Commercial net increase represents 65% retail, 20% restaurant, and 15% office building area*

## Projected Population and Jobs

The net increase of 2,200 residential units and 500,000 square feet of commercial building area associated with the implementation of the proposed Specific Plan may result in an increase in the number of residents and the number of jobs created. Assuming the California Department of Finance (DOF) 2015 estimated household size of 4.12 and a vacancy rate of 6.6 percent[2], buildout of the Specific Plan would result in a net increase of 8,465 residents and 2,054 households during the 2015-2035 period.

The distribution of the increase in commercial development is projected to be approximately 325,000 square feet of retail, 100,000 square feet of restaurant, and 75,000 square feet of office building area by 2035. Assuming an average employment generation factor of 425 square feet of commercial

[2] *California Department of Finance, E-5 City/County Population and Housing Estimates 2015*

retail/services per employee and 320 square feet of commercial low-rise office per employee[3], buildout of the Specific Plan would create an estimated 1,235 jobs in the Plan Area by 2035.

A comparison of the buildout growth under the Specific Plan and the General Plan land use designation of Downtown Core indicate that the General Plan estimates fewer housing units and more commercial building area than the potential growth under the Specific Plan. Since the Plan Area is smaller than the General Plan Downtown Core area, most of the commercial growth of the General Plan will occur outside of the Plan Area, hence the General Plan buildout growth has less housing units and commercial building space than the Specific Plan. The resulting increase of population and employment under the General Plan is also less than estimated under the Specific Plan for the Plan Area.

# E. City Approvals and Actions

As the lead agency with the authority to approve and implement the proposed Downtown Main Street Transit-Oriented Development Specific Plan, the City's actions include certification of the Specific Plan EIR, adoption of the Specific Plan, and amendments to the "Vision El Monte" 2011 General Plan and Zoning Ordinance.

## EIR Certification

Once the City finds that the Final EIR is "adequate and complete," the City may certify the Final EIR in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15090(a). The EIR can be certified if: 1) it shows a good faith effort at full disclosure of environmental information; and 2) it provides sufficient analysis to allow decisions to be made regarding the project in contemplation of environmental considerations.

## Specific Plan Adoption

Adoption of the Specific Plan will establish development standards and regulations (i.e., residential densities, floor area ratios, building height, parking, design, etc.), procedures, and fee requirements for future development in the Plan Area. A decision to approve the proposed project would be accompanied by written findings in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15091 and, if applicable, Section 15093 (Statement of Overriding Considerations). In addition, a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program will also be adopted.

## General Plan Amendment

In accordance with California Government Code Section 65454, which states that no specific plan may be adopted or amended unless the proposed plan or amendment is consistent with the general plan, the adoption of the Specific Plan will require a General Plan Amendment (GPA). The City of El Monte 2011 General Plan, including the General Plan Land Use Policy Map, will be amended concurrent with the adoption of the Specific Plan. The amendment will include modifications to the boundaries of the Main

[3] *Southern California Association of Governments, Employee Density Study, 2001*

Street subarea of the "Downtown Core" designation in the Land Use Element, as well as the maximum residential density and Floor Area Ratio (FAR) allowed in the "Downtown Core." In addition, there are two small triangular sites west of the intersection of Santa Anita Avenue and Valley Boulevard within the Plan Area, which will have their land use designation changed from "Gateway Specific Plan" and "Open Space" to "Downtown Core" and "Open Space" as part of the General Plan Amendment.

### Zoning Map and Ordinance Amendment

The Zoning Map Amendment will change the zoning for the parcels within the plan boundary from various designations to "SP-4: Downtown Main Street Transit-Oriented Development Specific Plan" ("Downtown Specific Plan"). In addition, the Zoning Ordinance Amendment will remove certain Zoning Code Sections related specifically to the downtown area and add a new Zoning Code Chapter for the "Downtown Specific Plan."

## F. Intended Use of the Program EIR

This EIR approaches the environmental analysis based on the overall development pattern and character described in the proposed Specific Plan. As a program EIR, it describes the potential impacts that could result from the adoption and buildout of the Specific Plan and identifies corresponding mitigation measures, as necessary, within calendar year 2035 time frame. It does not evaluate the impacts associated with specific development projects that may be allowed under the proposed Specific Plan. While subsequent environmental documents may tier off this EIR, this EIR is not intended to address impacts or identify mitigation measures of subsequent specific development projects within the Plan Area. Such development projects will require separate environmental review pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15168(c).

# Chapter 3: Environmental Analysis

This chapter explains the existing environmental setting and evaluates the potential environmental impacts associated with the implementation of the Specific Plan for the following issues:

- Aesthetics;
- Air Quality;
- Biological Resources;
- Cultural Resources;
- Geology and Soils;
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions;
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials;
- Hydrology and Water Quality;
- Land Use and Planning;
- Noise;
- Population and Housing;
- Public Services and Recreation;
- Transportation and Traffic; and
- Utilities and Service Systems.

Other environmental issues not analyzed in detail in this EIR are identified in the Initial Study and summarized in Chapter 5 CEQA Mandated Analysis. **Appendix A** includes the complete Initial Study for this project. As described in the Initial Study, issue areas not addressed in the Draft EIR include the following:

Aesthetics
- Scenic Resources – No Impact

Agriculture and Forest Resources
- Convert Prime Farmlands, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance – No Impact
- Agricultural Uses or Williamson Act – No Impact
- Rezoning Forest Land/Timberland – No Impact
- Conversion/Loss of Forest Land – No Impact
- Farmland Conversion – No Impact

Air Quality
- Objectionable Odor – Less Than Significant Impact

Biological Resources

- Sensitive or Special Status Species – Less Than Significant Impact
- Riparian Habitat or Other Sensitive Natural Community – Less Than Significant Impact
- Wetlands – Less Than Significant Impact
- Habitat Conservation Plan – No Impact

Cultural Resources

- Paleontological Resources – Less Than Significant Impact
- Human Remains – No Impact

Geology and Soils

- Fault Rupture – No Impact
- Seismic Ground Shaking – Less Than Significant Impact

- Landslides – No Impact
- Expansive Soils – Less Than Significant Impact
- Septic Tanks – No Impact

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

- Release of Hazardous Materials- Less Than Significant Impact

Vicinity of Schools – Less Than Significant Impact

- Hazardous Waste Site – Less Than Significant Impact
- Private Airstrip – No Impact
- Emergency Planning – Less Than Significant Impact
- Wildland Fires – No Impact

Hydrology and Water Quality

- Water and Wastewater Standards – Less Than Significant Impact
- Alter Drainage Patterns – Less Than Significant Impact
- Runoff – Less Than Significant Impact
- On- and Off-Site Flooding – Less Than Significant Impact
- Water Quality – Less Than Significant Impact
- 100-Year Flooding and Housing – No Impact
- Impedance/Redirection of 100-Year Flooding – No Impact
- Dam or Levee Failure – Less Than Significant Impact
- Seiche, Tsunami, or Mudflow – No Impact

Land Use Planning

- Conservation Planning – No Impact

Mineral Resources

- Regional Mineral Resources – No Impact
- Local Mineral Resources – No Impact

Noise

- Private Airstrip Vicinity – No Impact

Recreation

- Construction/Expansion of Recreational Facilities – No Impact

Transportation and Traffic

- Change Air Traffic Patterns – No Impact
- Hazardous Design Features – Less Than Significant Impact

Utilities and Service Systems

- Storm Water Drainage – Less Than Significant Impact

The environmental analysis in each of these sections is organized into five subsections:

1. **Setting** – This subsection includes local and regional information on the existing conditions of the Specific Plan area and is intended to define the baseline conditions for such area.
2. **Regulatory Framework** – The Regulatory Framework present local, regional, state and federal regulations that are relevant to the Specific Plan.
3. **Significance Threshold** – This subsection includes the methodology used and the standards or criteria used to evaluate whether an environmental impact is considered less than significant or significant.
4. **Impacts and Mitigation Measures** – The Impacts and Mitigation Measures section examines any direct and/or indirect impacts of implementing the Specific Plan. If potentially significant adverse impacts are determined, feasible mitigation measures are identified to reduce these impacts to less than significance levels.
5. **Cumulative Impacts** – This section examines the Specific Plan in combination with other similar projects in the area and determines the combined related impacts. The list of related projects is included as **Appendix B** of this EIR.

# 3.1 Aesthetics

The Aesthetics section address potential impacts to visual character, views and vistas, scenic resources, shade and shadows, and light and glare that may result from implementation of the Specific Plan.

## A. Setting

The City of El Monte is located 12 miles east of Downtown Los Angeles, in the central portion of the San Gabriel Valley, just west of the interchange of Interstates 605 and 10. The San Gabriel River borders the City on the east and the Rio Hondo River bisects the western half of the City from the north to the southwest. The Specific Plan Area comprises a section of the Downtown El Monte district, which sits in the triangular area between the Southern Pacific Railroad, Ramona Boulevard, and Santa Anita Avenue. It is bordered by the Rio Hondo to the west, and extends just south of Interstate 10. The Specific Plan Area comprises all of the Main Street neighborhood of Downtown El Monte subdistrict, and also includes a small, northerly portion of the Downtown Residential subdistrict. The Plan Area is an urbanized, developed area marked by roads and busy commercial corridors. To the west is the El Monte Station, a major transportation hub in Los Angeles County. The El Monte Metrolink Station is within the Plan Area along the northern portion as is the local City of El Monte Trolley Station.

According to El Monte's General Plan, the Downtown El Monte district encompasses about 200 acres (an area larger than the 115-acre Plan Area), and includes five distinct sub-districts with residential, commercial office, shopping, residential and government uses. The sub-districts describe below serve distinct functions—civic, business, transit, residential, or other uses. The Plan Area is comprised principally of "Main Street" and its surrounding areas.

- **Government Center**. The government center is the eastern gateway to the Downtown and serves as the governmental core of El Monte. This area is anchored by the El Monte City Hall including the Police station, Los Angeles County Superior Court, educational uses, and police station. Other governmental and public uses also extend into other districts.
- **Main Street**. Main Street covers an area bounded by the railroad tracks, Santa Anita Boulevard, and Ramona Boulevard. The sub-district is anchored by a traditional outdoor shopping street. With several blocks of street-facing frontage and tree-lined sidewalks, it connects the civic center to the transit station.
- **Cultural District**. The cultural district is the heart of the community and is home to the El Monte Community Center, Historic Society Museum, Jack Crippen Senior Center, Aquatic Center, Tony Arceo Memorial Park, and El Monte High School. It is a well-known place for street fairs, concerts, and community gatherings.
- **Neighborhoods**. The Downtown has an eclectic mix of housing projects and small distinct neighborhoods, south of Ramona Boulevard and along Tyler Avenue north of Downtown. This area is well established.
- **El Monte Gateway**. The El Monte Gateway Project is a groundbreaking effort to create a 60-acre, regionally significant, mixed-use community that integrates public transit, housing, parks and open

space, retail, business, and entertainment. The El Monte Gateway will be a key activity center, linked with the Emerald Necklace.

The most notable feature within the Plan Area is Valley Mall, an existing outdoor pedestrian-oriented shopping mall along a winding roadway with the same name. Adoption of the Specific Plan would also include a corresponding change to the street name from "Valley Mall" to "Main Street." The "Mall" was redesigned in the early 1960s by local leaders to transform the old shopping district into a unique place. Today, Valley Mall is somewhat secluded within the Plan Area since surrounding corridors carry large traffic volumes bypassing the low scale buildings. Entry points at either end, Ramona Blvd at the east end and Santa Anita Avenue at the west end, help to define the beginning and end points of Valley Mall. Expansive surface public parking lots are found behind Valley Mall on both sides.

The Plan Area is also the location of remnant and obsolete industrial areas between Valley Boulevard and the Metrolink tracks. Many industrial properties have been cleared for future redevelopment over the past 20 years. A recently remodeled shopping center with major retail anchors is located at the corner of Santa Anita Avenue and Valley Boulevard within the Plan Area. Residential uses within the Plan Area include primarily two-story townhouse style, attached homes. Along the southern boundary and the south side of Ramona Boulevard are residential homes and apartments. A few remnant residential properties are found scattered within the Plan Area. Public uses in the Plan Area include educational and medical facilities and a US post office. The area is rich in transit with the adjacent El Monte Station, the City's Trolley Station, and the Metrolink Station.

## Viewsheds and Vistas

The City of El Monte is overall an urbanized area and one of the most populated cities in the San Gabriel Valley. The City has very limited undeveloped, natural open space. It no longer contains any native habitat or natural resources, though until the mid-1990s, the San Gabriel River was free-flowing with natural banks and riparian habitat. The nearest views of natural features include views of the San Gabriel Mountains seven miles to the north and a network of foothills one mile to the south, containing the Whittier Narrows Recreation Area with natural habitat. Unnatural open space includes developed parks and vacant lots. The Rio Hondo and San Gabriel Rivers, which frame the City, were once prominent natural rivers that have long ago been modified as regional flood control channels, a result of destructive flooding in 1938. Important visual features within and surrounding the Plan Area include the following.

**San Gabriel Mountain Range.** There are several historical references to the location of El Monte within the valley capped by the San Gabriel Mountain range to the north. Though the name "El Monte" is a Spanish derivative of the word for "Mountain", the City was named for an archaic Spanish translation of that era: meaning "the wood"; El Monte was originally known as the wooded place between the rivers. But other names, including "Monte Vista" and "Mountain View", are still present within the City and carry-over

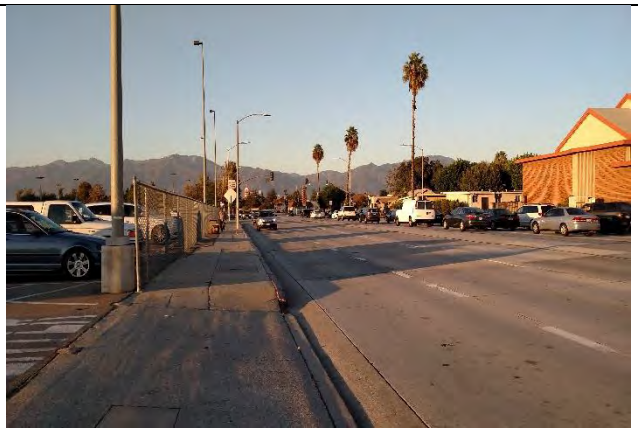
references to the historic visual setting of the community. Photos showing views of the San Gabriel Mountain range from various locations within the Plan Area are included in **Figure 3.1-1**.

**The Rio Hondo.** The Rio Hondo traverses the western edge of the Specific Plan Area. Today, the river is channelized and concrete-lined, with fragmented habitat occurring throughout the El Monte area. Alongside the Rio Hondo is the Upper Rio Hondo Bike Trail, which can be accessed by Valley Boulevard.

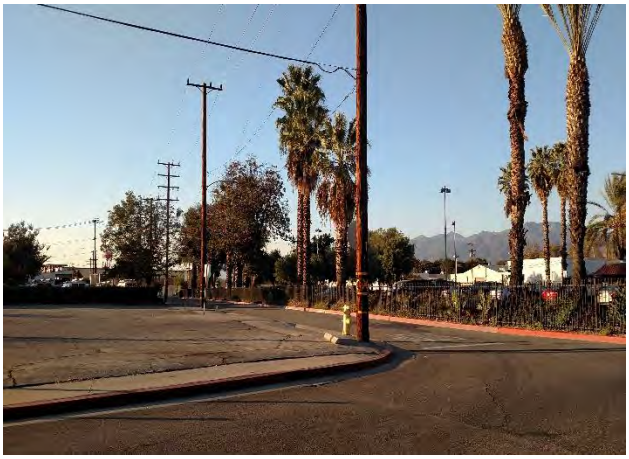
**The Emerald Necklace.** The Emerald Necklace is the development of a 17-mile loop of multi-benefit parks and green-ways connecting 10 cities along the Rio Hondo and San Gabriel River watershed areas. It includes both existing and proposed parks. When complete, the Emerald Necklace will serve as a physical boundary to the City's borders. Though manmade, the Emerald Necklace will restore green space to the Plan area, a landscape that was once notable for its marshes and rich, riparian woodland. The Plan Area connects to the Emerald Necklace at the northwest corner of Santa Anita Avenue and Valley Boulevard. The El Monte General Plan identifies the Emerald Necklace as a linear route of parks, open space, water resources, and recreational resources along the banks of the rivers.

**Pioneer Park.** Pioneer Park sits just west of the Specific Plan Area, on the bank of the Rio Hondo. Pioneer Park shares a site with the small Santa Fe Trail historical park, which has been designated a California historical landmark. The Santa Fe Trail was an extension of the trail from Missouri to Santa Fe, and makes Pioneer Park the site of important features and places from various historical periods.

**Natural Environment.** The Plan Area's natural environment is largely degraded. The Rio Hondo and San Gabriel Rivers, which frame the City, were once prominent natural rivers that sustained marsh and woodlands. Today, they are regional flood control channels. Much of El Monte's greenery consists of non-native species, often taking the form of ornamental landscaping that is commonly used amongst urban settings. There are large mature trees of various species throughout the area, but a tree survey has not been conducted, and at this time there are no known heritage landscapes within the Plan Area. Photos showing the landscaped natural environment of the Plan Area are included in **Figure 3.1-2**.



View of the San Gabriel Mountains looking north along Santa Anita Avenue



View of the San Gabriel Mountains looking northwest from the Metrolink Station

View of the San Gabriel Mountains looking north from Ramona Boulevard

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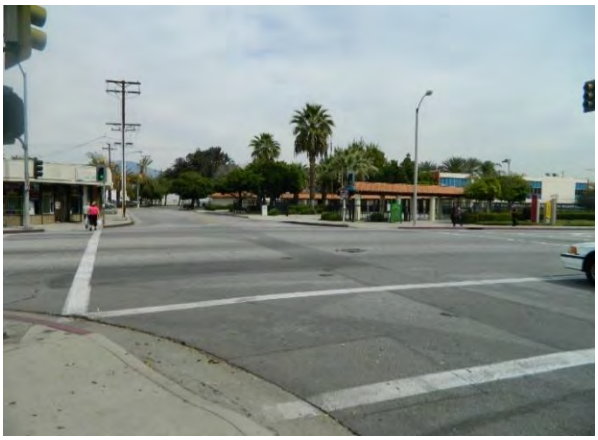
| Downtown Main Street Transit-Oriented Development, Specific Plan Draft EIR | **Figure 3.1-1 Viewsheds and Vistas: Views of the San Gabriel Mountains** |

a. Looking north from Ramona Boulevard and Valley Mall showing mature trees making the eastern entrance of Valley Mall

b. Looking southeast from Santa Anita Avenue and Valley Boulevard showing landscaped median on Santa Anita Avenue



c. Looking north from the intersection of Valley Boulevard and Tyler Avenue showing the a variety of trees at the El Monte Trolley Station and the Metrolink Station

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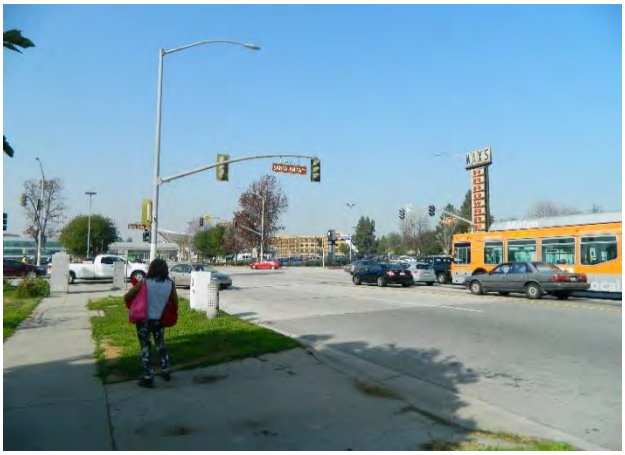
| Downtown Main Street Transit-Oriented Development, Specific Plan Draft EIR | **Figure 3.1-2 Viewsheds and Vistas: Natural Environment** |

a. Ramona Bouelvard at Tyler Avenue showing signalized intersection with pavement markings

b. Ramona Boulevard at the Valley Mall/Valley Boulevard intersection showing multi-signal three-legged intersection



c. Ramona Boulevard at Santa Anita Avenue looking west at the El Monte Station

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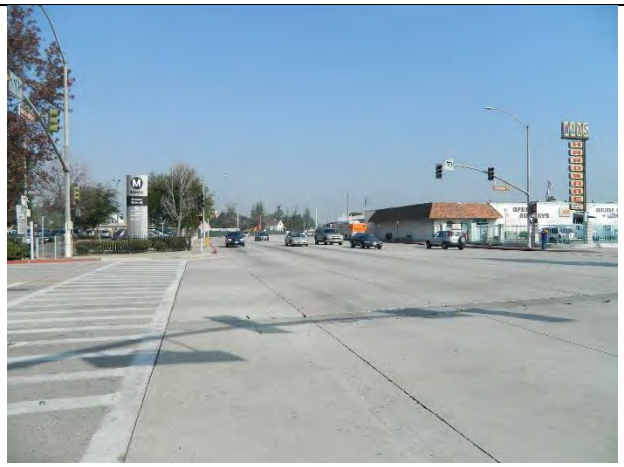
| Downtown Main Street Transit-Oriented Development, Specific Plan Draft EIR | **Figure 3.1-3 Visual Character and Quality: Ramona Boulevard** |



a. Santa Anita Avenue at Ramona Boulevard looking north showing crosswalk at the El Monte Station

b. Santa Anita Avenue at the Valley Mall intersection looking southwest showing crosswalk

c. Santa Anita Avenue at Valley Boulevard intersection looking north

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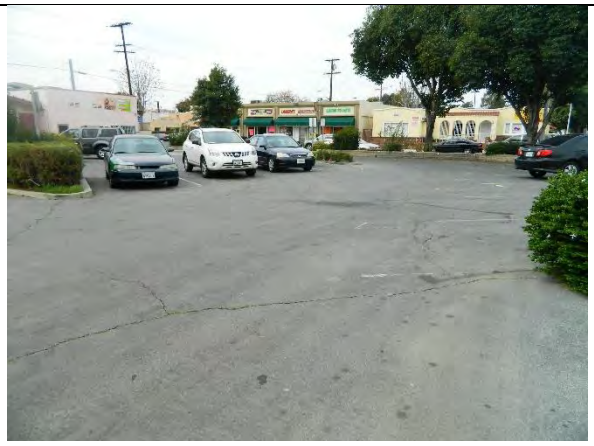
| Downtown Main Street Transit-Oriented Development, Specific Plan Draft EIR | **Figure 3.1-3 (Cont.) Visual Character and Quality: Santa Ana Avenue** |



a. *Surface Parking Lot along north side of Valley Mall showing angled parking and drive aisles*

*b. Surface parking lot along north side of Valley Mall showing expansiveness and landscape*

*c. Surface parking lot showing mature trees*

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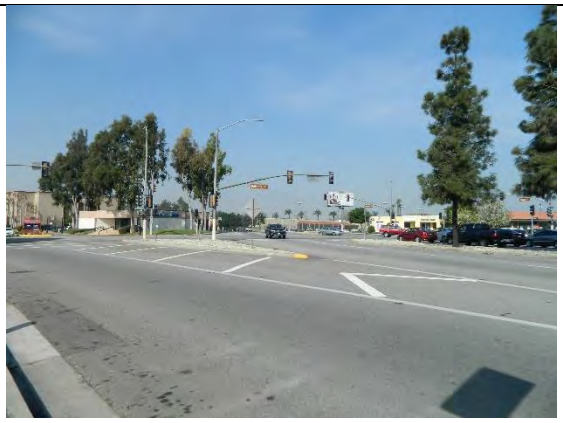
| Downtown Main Street Transit-Oriented Development, Specific Plan Draft EIR | **Figure 3.1-3 (Cont.) Visual Character and Quality: Surface Parking Lots** |



a. Intersection of Valley Boulevard and Valley Mall looking northwest

b. Intersection of Valley Boulevard and Santa Anita Avenue looking west

c. Valley Boulevard west of Tyler Avenue looking west

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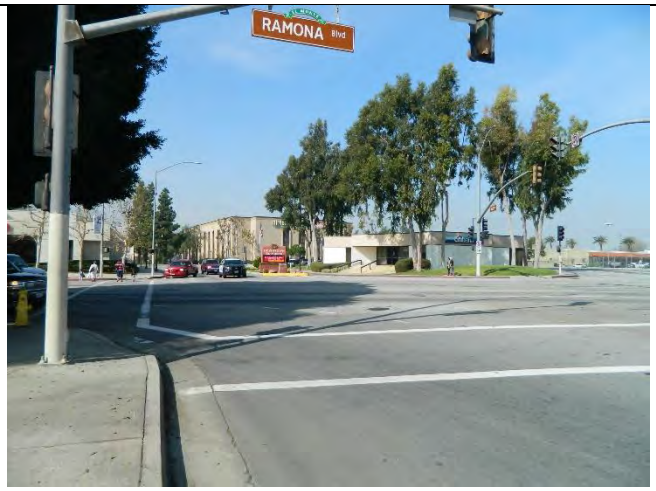
| Downtown Main Street Transit-Oriented Development, Specific Plan Draft EIR | **Figure 3.1-3 (Cont.) Visual Character and Quality: Valley Boulevard** |




a. *Intersection of Ramona Boulevard and Valley Mall showing the eastern entry into Valley Mall*

*b. Streetscape view of Valley Mall showing low traffic volumes and speeds, pedestrian amenities, and shop-fronts.*

*c. Valley Mall looking east showing angled parking*

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| Downtown Main Street Transit-Oriented Development, Specific Plan Draft EIR | **Figure 3.1-3 (Cont.) Visual Character and Quality: Valley Mall** |

a. Looking east from the center of Valley Mall near Santa Anita Avenue

b. View of Valley Mall crosswalk

c. View of Valley Mall looking east showing pedestrian amenities and streetscapes

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| Downtown Main Street Transit-Oriented Development, Specific Plan Draft EIR | **Figure 3.1-3 (Cont.) Visual Character and Quality: Valley Mall** |

a. View of old JC Penney's Store, a key historic anchor to the Mall design in the Moderne style

b. Street view of the old US Post Office designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival Style with strong Moderne architectural influences.

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| Downtown Main Street Transit-Oriented Development, Specific Plan Draft EIR | **Figure 3.1-3 (Cont.) Visual Character and Quality: Historic and Architectural Important Properties** |

## Visual Character and Quality

Much of the visual character in the Specific Plan Area is defined by the commercial corridors that traverse the City. The condition of these corridor's streetscapes including their signs, landscaping, lighting, and other aspects help to define the image and identity of El Monte. The following describes the current visual environment of the Specific Plan Area, focusing on streetscapes, centers, districts, and other urban features. Photos showing the existing visual character for the following features are included in **Figure 3.1-3.**

**Ramona Boulevard.** Ramona Boulevard is major east-west corridor and was once the passageway for the historic streetcar through the San Gabriel Valley. It is now the location of the El Monte Station immediately to the west of the Plan Area. There is a combination of both aging and new mixed-use properties of various densities along the corridor. The north side contains public uses, commercial uses, remnant uses, and parking lots. The south side contains primarily residential intermixed with commercial uses. Tyler Avenue is the primary north-south street across Ramona Boulevard with commercial uses or parking lots on all four corners and a major bus stop hub at the southeast corner. Traffic volumes along Ramona Boulevard are lower than the adjoining Valley Boulevard and Santa Anita Avenue. An elementary school is located on the south side just outside the Plan Area. Ramona Boulevard intersects with Valley Mall and Valley Boulevard at a multi-leg intersection at the eastern tip of the Plan Area. Ramona Boulevard intersects with Santa Anita Avenue at the western and southern boundary of the Plan Area.

**Santa Anita Avenue.** Santa Anita Avenue is a major north-south corridor that travels in a parallel fashion with the Rio Hondo to the west and serves as the western edge of the Plan Area. It offers some of the City's best views to the San Gabriel Mountains. A shopping center with a surface parking lot is located along the east side within the Plan Area. Pioneer Park is located along the west side, just outside of the Plan Area. There are a limited number of open spaces along the corridor. Surface parking lots seem to dominate some of the street's character. Santa Anita is a principal regional arterial roadway with heavy traffic volumes particularly at the am and pm peak periods. It serves much of El Monte as well as the cities of Arcadia to the north and South El Monte to the south. It is the primary access to the El Monte Station and is an important access route to Interstate 10 with east and west freeway ramps just below the Plan Area. Through the Plan Area, Santa Anita Avenue has three lanes in each direction.

**Valley Boulevard.** Valley Boulevard is a principal regional arterial through the San Gabriel Valley serving a large number of cities and communities. The corridor has minimal landscaping and a large number of surface parking lots. There are mixed-use buildings of varying densities. Traffic volumes are high at peak periods.

**Valley Mall (roadway).** What is now called Valley Mall used to be called Valley Boulevard, and was once the historic spine of the City—the name change occurred in the early 1960s. In the late 1800s, Valley Boulevard was the only road and the gateway east of Los Angeles to San Bernardino. Today, Valley Mall connects Santa Anita Avenue to Ramona Boulevard and is the main throughway of the commercial shopping district called by the same name.

**Valley Mall (shopping district).** Valley mall is also the name of the commercial shopping district along this roadway segment. It is characterized as the home to the City's traditional outdoor pedestrian mall. Speed limits are very slow through Valley Mall with a maximum limit of 15 miles per hour. There is a children's playground and a recently landscaped zone along this less than one-mile stretch. Shops are located side by side with a few small intersections, one including Tyler Avenue.

**Surface Parking Lots.** Surface parking lots, both public and private, with open space parking make up a large portion of the Specific Plan area and contribute widely to its visual character. Although the parking lots often contain large, mature trees, the aesthetic quality of the parking lots is generally poor. At times, parking lots are fully occupied and at other times are largely empty. The surface lots along Valley Boulevard are easy to access but diminish the visual appeal of the area.

**Historic Places.** There are several historic features and properties within the Plan Area that help to link the area to its past at the City's original town center. Many of the remaining historic properties are from the 1930s and 1940s, the early modern era when El Monte was a major shopping destination.

## Shade and Shadow

Shade and shadow are considerations for compatibility among various existing and future land uses. Within an urban environment, building heights are of concern since taller buildings cast longer shadows depending on the time of day and the time of year. Those who occupy specific land uses such as residences, schools, churches, outdoor restaurants, and recreational spaces may consider sun exposure levels important.

The lower the sun is in the sky, the more shadow it casts on buildings. The inverse of this is that the higher the sun is in the sky, the less shadow it casts on buildings. Therefore, more shadow is cast on buildings during the winter season, and the most shadow is cast during the winter solstice. Less shadow is cast on buildings during the summer season, with the least shadow cast during the summer solstice. The shadow cast during the spring and fall seasons is mid-point between both extremes.

As the sun rises in the east, shadow on buildings is cast to their western face. The earlier it is, the more western shadow is cast. At midday, the sun is at its highest point, which is the time that the least shadow is cast on a building. As the sun sets to the west, shadow is cast on the eastern face of buildings. The later it is, the more eastern shadow is cast.

## Light and Glare

Light and glare are considerations for compatibility among various existing and future land uses. Within an urban environment building materials, styles, and heights are of concern as newer and taller buildings may produce a new source of light and glare incompatible with neighboring uses. More urban and denser development is expected to bring additional sources of light to the area. Glare is generally produced as a result of using reflective or non-reflective materials. Vehicles can also produce glare.

# B. Regulatory Framework

This portion lists the applicable laws, codes, rules, policies, plans and guidelines. There are no federal rules about aesthetic visual analysis and limited State programs. The primary rules governing views and aesthetic character are at the local, City of El Monte level.

## California State Scenic Highways

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) State Scenic Highway System includes a list of state designated scenic highways and eligible highways. Currently, there are no state scenic highways officially designated or eligible for designation within the City of El Monte.

## City of El Monte General Plan

The City of El Monte's General Plan, last updated in June 2011, includes a framework for the visual character of the of the City primarily contained in the Community Design Element which serves as a guiding document for all design-related planning efforts. The Community Design Element provisions are most closely applicable to the Specific Plan addressed under Streetscapes, Landscapes, Architectural Quality, and Downtown El Monte. The following Community Design Element goals are to be considered throughout the analysis of potential impact.

> **Goal CD-1.** An attractive and unified community identity for El Monte that affirms its diverse heritage of multicultural influences, physical, and natural environment, and collective vision for the future.
>
> **Goal CD-2.** Attractive commercial corridors exemplified by consistency of hardscape, landscaping, signage, sidewalks, and other treatments appropriate to their context to foster a pleasant driving and pedestrian experience.
>
> **Goal CD-3.** A green City with beautifully landscaped corridors, residential streets, commercial areas, developments, and public areas that are symbolically and physically encircled by an Emerald Necklace of parks and open space.
>
> **Goal CD-4.** High-quality architectural design or residential, commercial, and industrial buildings evidenced by thoughtful attention and balance of quality materials, durability, aesthetics, functionality, and sustainability concepts.
>
> **Goal CD-5.** A vibrant downtown that is an attractive, accessible and pedestrian friendly center noted for its wide range of quality shopping, entertainment, and cultural and recreational amenities.

*"Commercial Streetscapes"* outlines the need for sign regulation, street trees, street lights, and the undergrounding of utilities, all of which will contribute to an aesthetic improvement of commercial corridors. Additional emphases are placed on the need for complete streets and public landscaping. There are numerous policies that establish the framework to build on historical and contemporary qualities of

each corridor, with the ultimate goal of attractive and unified streetscapes. This is further elaborated in the City of El Monte's General Plan by stating, "In creating a positive image of the City, El Monte must address:

- **Corridor Identity**. The City can enhance the identity of well-known arterials through a thematic approach recognizing its contemporary and historical role. Valley Boulevard is the historic spine of the City; Ramona Boulevard was a corridor for the Red-Line Cable Cars; Santa Anita Avenue affords some of the City's best views; and Tyler Avenue links the Downtown to the cultural center.
- **Functional Needs**. Although the auto dominates many roads, many El Monte residents and workers walk to school, work, or shopping and desire a more pleasant street environment. Completing sidewalks and crosswalks, ensuring that walkways can accommodate people of all abilities, providing shade trees, installing quality street furniture, and other projects will create a more positive experience for users.
- **Public Landscaping**. Public landscaping and trees can soften the hardscape of commercial corridors and, if properly designed, invoke El Monte's image and heritage as a wooded place. However, the majority of corridors lack consistency and quality of green infrastructure. Proper landscaping should take into account roadway function, its characteristics, desired visual image, and maintenance requirements.
- **Signage and Lighting**. El Monte's streets are dotted with signs and lighting of varying shapes, sizes, and quality. While signage and lighting fulfills a vital informational role, unregulated signs clutter streetscapes and are a blighting influence. Moreover, signs and lighting should be sensitive to their intended use, with careful consideration of height, placement, materials, colors, and consistency."

*"Architectural Quality"* outlines the City's policies developed to encourage high-quality architecture via adherence to a specific set of principles. These principals are listed as Quality Materials, Durability, History, Aesthetics, Functionality, and Sustainability. High-quality architectural design of residential, commercial, and industrial buildings can be achieved by thoughtful attention and balance of quality materials, durability, and aesthetics, functionality, and sustainability concepts.

*"Downtown El Monte"* addresses the historic importance and potential of the Downtown area. According to the General Plan, Downtown El Monte is to be the mixed-use, mixed-income and cultural heart of El Monte. Policies outlined are towards the development of a more unified design. Policies include subsections such as Linkages, Streetscape, Gathering Places, Pedestrian Plan, and Architecture.

## City of El Monte Municipal Code

The City of El Monte Municipal Code ("EMMC") includes the Zoning Code in Title 17, which contains provisions for design review and rules governing signs, wireless facilities, and landscaping to enhance the aesthetic environment of the City. Under EMMC Title 14 (Sustainable Development) the Code provides for tree preservation and protection to assist with preserving the City's scenic and natural beauty. The Code also includes as a part of Title 15. (Building and Construction) an "Art in Public Places" program requiring large developments to contribute to public arts in the City.

# C. Significance Thresholds

As included in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines: the CEQA Environmental Checklist, an aesthetic impact may be considered significant if the project would:

a. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista
b. Cause substantial damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway
c. Cause substantial degradation of the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings
d. Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime view in the area

CEQA requires that aesthetic features of a project be analyzed in order to disclose the potential impact that the project may have upon the existing visual character of the area and its surroundings. Important visual resources may include views of rivers, mountains, and cultural resource sites, scenic areas, scenic highways and corridors, and park areas. Visual character is also important and would include elements of the built urban environment that could potentially be impacted. Elements to be considered may include the nature and quality of buildings, the quality of streetscapes, roadways, plazas, landscapes, and parks.

Analysis of these elements may serve as a reference point when determining the impact and compatibility of features within an urban environment. Generally, evaluation is determined by the level of contrast between proposed development and the existing environment. Contrast may be determined by considering scale, massing, and heights of buildings permitted as well as the amount and quality of open space and public amenities. The impact analysis under the thresholds are focused on scenic views, visual character, and lighting.

# D. Impacts and Mitigation Measures

The Specific Plan includes a wide range of design features to enhance the visual character of the Plan Area.

## Impact AES-1

**Impact AES-1** The Specific Plan has been prepared consistent with the El Monte General Plan, particularly the Community Design Element. The Plan would provide for denser development and increased building heights in certain zoning districts. Architectural guidelines and infill development standards have been included to aid in bringing good quality design and compatible development within the private realm. The Specific Plan includes streetscape beautification provisions to enhance the public realm. Views of the San Gabriel Mountains, the Rio Hondo, Pioneer Park, and the Emerald Necklace would be minimally obstructed due to increased building heights in projected infill development. There are no designated or identified scenic vistas or highways. The urban character of the Downtown is not expected to change substantially. Impacts related to aesthetics are less than significant.

The Specific Plan is expected to intensify and more clearly define the urban environment of Downtown El Monte consistent with the General Plan which identifies the Downtown commercial, government, and residential components. The current visual environment is urban and the proposed visual environment is also urban. Maximum future building heights are expected to increase from one and two stories up to four and five stories in certain districts. Taller buildings and development on underutilized parcels would create a denser Downtown but would not significantly change the existing urban character of the Downtown. The role of the Downtown as a central destination would remain. Shade and shadow cast by taller buildings is expected to extend across adjacent roadways and have little impact on adjoining buildings and uses. Additional and more intense development expected with the Specific Plan is also expected to bring new sources of light and glare. Light and glare produced by new buildings and features such as signage is not expected to degrade the existing visual quality of the urban landscape.

There are no designated scenic vistas or State Scenic Highways within or surrounding the Plan Area. A visual analysis of views and viewsheds surrounding the Plan Area recognized the various views of the San Gabriel Mountain range to the north. Taller buildings and infill development is expected to reduce current views of the San Gabriel Mountains but is not expected to degrade the views that currently exist through the Plan Area. Buildout of the Specific Plan under the new Design Guidelines will still afford views of the San Gabriel Mountains. Existing views will not be degraded.

## Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

## Significance After Mitigation

No mitigation measure is required, therefore, the impact would remain less than significant.

# E. Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative development in the Plan Area and its surroundings has the potential to further urbanize the City and surrounding communities and change the character of the region from suburban to urban. Views particularly along Valley Boulevard considering cumulative development along this roadway are expected to change the character of this regional roadway. The visual changes from suburban to urban will not result in a cumulative degradation of views and will not change the visual character which is largely urban.

# 3.2 Air Quality

This section discusses the emissions and associated impacts that would result from the construction and operation of buildout of the Specific Plan.

## A. Setting

### Climate and Meteorology

The Plan Area is located in El Monte, which is part of the South Coast Air Basin (Basin) and under the jurisdiction of the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD). Air quality in the Basin is affected by various emission sources (e.g., motor vehicles and industry) as well as atmospheric conditions such as wind speed, wind direction, temperature, and rainfall, etc. The combination of topography, low mixing height, abundant sunshine, and emissions from the second largest urban area in the United States give the Basin the worst air pollution problem in the nation.

The majority of annual rainfall in the Basin occurs between November and April. Summer rainfall is minimal and is generally limited to scattered thunder showers in coastal regions and slightly heavier showers in the eastern portion of the Basin and along the coastal side of the mountains. The Pasadena Western Regional Climate Center Station monitored precipitation from January 1893 to June 2016. Average monthly rainfall measured in Pasadena during that period varied from 0.3 inches in July to 4.54 inches in February, with an annual total of 20.24 inches.

The Basin experiences a persistent temperature inversion (increasing temperature with increasing altitude) as a result of the Pacific high pressure system. This inversion limits the vertical dispersion of air contaminants, holding them relatively near the ground. As the sun warms the ground and the lower air layer, the temperature of the lower air layer approaches the temperature of the base of the inversion (upper) layer until the inversion layer finally breaks, allowing vertical mixing with the lower layer. This phenomenon is observed in mid- to late- afternoons on hot summer days. Winter inversions frequently break by midmorning.

The combination of stagnant wind conditions and low inversions produces the greatest pollutant concentrations. On days of no inversion or high wind speeds, ambient air pollutant concentrations are lowest. During periods of low inversions and low wind speeds, air pollutants generated in urbanized areas are transported predominantly onshore into Riverside and San Bernardino counties. In the winter, the greatest pollution problem is the accumulation of carbon monoxide (CO) and nitrogen oxides ($NO_X$) due to low inversions and air stagnation during the night and early morning hours. In the summer, the longer daylight hours and the brighter sunshine combine to cause a reaction between hydrocarbons and $NO_X$ to form photochemical smog.

## Sensitive Receptors

Ambient air quality standards have been established to represent the levels of air quality considered sufficient, with an adequate margin of safety, to protect public health and welfare. They are designed to protect that segment of the public most susceptible to respiratory distress, such as children under 14; the elderly over 65; persons engaged in strenuous work or exercise; and people with cardiovascular and chronic respiratory diseases. The majority of sensitive receptor locations are therefore, schools and hospitals. Sensitive receptors likely to be affected by air quality impacts associated with future development include residential areas near construction sites. The Plan Area is bordered by residential sensitive receptors to the northeast and south. Two schools are located within 1,000 feet of the Plan Area: Columbia Elementary School, immediately to the south; and Nativity School, 400 feet northeast.

In April 2005, the California Air Resources Board (ARB) released the final version of the Air Quality and Land Use Handbook, which is intended to encourage local land use agencies to consider the risks from air pollution prior to making decisions that approve the siting of new sensitive receptors (e.g., homes or daycare centers) near sources of air pollution. Unlike industrial or stationary sources of air pollution, siting of new sensitive receptors does not require air quality permits, but could create exposure to unhealthy air pollutant concentrations. The primary purpose of the handbook is to highlight the potential health impacts associated with proximity to common air pollution sources, so that those issues are considered in the planning process. ARB makes recommendations regarding the siting of new sensitive land uses near freeways, truck distribution centers, dry cleaners, gasoline dispensing stations, and other air pollution sources. These recommendations are based primarily on modeling information and may not be entirely reflective of conditions in the Plan Area. The Air Quality and Land Use Handbook notes that siting of new sensitive land uses within these distances may be possible, but recommends that site-specific studies be conducted to identify actual health risks. ARB acknowledges that land use agencies have to balance other siting considerations such as housing and transportation needs, economic development priorities, and other quality of life issues. The recommendations in the handbook are used to evaluate projects and their potential effects.

## Current Air Quality

The SCAQMD, with cooperation from CARB, maintains ambient air quality monitoring stations in the Basin. The closest air quality monitoring station to the site is the Pico Rivera station (4144 San Gabriel River Parkway in Pico Rivera), and its air quality trends represent the ambient air quality in the project area. The pollutants monitored at this station are $O_3$, $NO_2$, and $PM_{2.5}$. Data for $PM_{10}$ is available from the second nearest station to the Plan Area (Pasadena Station, at 752 S. Wilson Avenue in Pasadena).

**Table 3.2-1** summarizes the ambient air quality levels measured at these stations during the years 2013 to 2015. The pollutants that exceeded thresholds during the monitoring period were $O_3$, $NO_2$, $PM_{10}$, and

$PM_{2.5}$. The $O_3$ federal eight-hour standard was exceeded five times in 2015 and two times in 2016, while the State eight-hour standard was exceeded three times in 2013, seven times in 2014, and 11 times in 2015. The $NO_2$ federal standard was exceeded once in 2013. The State $PM_{10}$ standard was exceeded six times in 2013, 21 times in 2014, and 12 times in 2015. The $PM_{2.5}$ standard was exceeded three times in 2015.

# B. Regulatory Framework

## Federal

Pursuant to the Federal Clean Air Act (CAA) of 1970, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) established national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS). The NAAQS were established for six major pollutants termed "criteria" pollutants, which are those pollutants for which the federal and State governments have established air quality standards (AAQS) which are criteria for outdoor concentrations in order to protect public health. The current AAQS plus the California standards (generally more stringent than federal standards) are presented in **Table 3.2-2**.

**Table 3.2-1: Ambient Air Quality Data**

| Pollutant | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ozone, ppm – Worst Hour | 0.101 | 0.121 | 0.107 |
| Number of days of State exceedances (>0.09 ppm) | 2 | 7 | 6 |
| Ozone, ppm – Worst 8 Hours | 0.073 | 0.092 | 0.082 |
| Number of days of State exceedances – 8 hour average (>0.07 ppm) | 3 | 7 | 11 |
| Number of days of Federal exceedances – 8 hour average (>0.07 ppm) | 0 | 5 | 2 |
| Carbon Monoxide, ppm - Worst 8 Hours | * | * | * |
| Number of days of State/Federal exceedances (>9.0 ppm) | * | * | * |
| Nitrogen Dioxide, ppb - Worst Hour | 104.6 | 86.7 | 70.4 |
| Number of days of State exceedances (>100 ppb) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Number of days of Federal exceedances (>180 ppb) | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Sulfur Dioxide, ppm – Worst 24 Hours | * | * | * |
| Number of days of State exceedances (>0.04 ppm) | * | * | * |
| Particulate Matter <10 microns, $\mu g/m^3$ Worst 24 Hours | 76 | 96 | 101 |
| Number of samples of State exceedances (>50 $\mu g/m^3$) | 6 | 21 | 12 |
| Number of samples of Federal exceedances (>150 $\mu g/m^3$) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Particulate Matter <2.5 microns, $\mu g/m^3$ Worst 24 Hours | 29.1 | 35.1 | 52.7 |
| Number of measured days of Federal exceedances (>35 $\mu g/m^3$) | 0 | 0 | 3 |

*Source: CARB, Annual Air Quality Data Summaries available at http://www.arb.ca.gov/adam/topfour/topfour1.php*
*Particulate matter (<2.5), ozone, and nitrogen dioxide data taken from Pico Rivera station.*
*Particulate matter (<10) data from the Pasadena station, which is the next closest station.*
** Insufficient data available to determine the value*

**Table 3.2-2: Current Federal and State Ambient Air Quality Standards**

| Pollutant | Federal Standard | California Standard |
|---|---|---|
| Ozone | 0.075 ppm (8-hr avg) | 0.09 ppm (1-hr avg)<br>0.07 ppm (8-hr avg) |
| Carbon Monoxide | 9.0 ppm (8-hr avg)<br>35.0 ppm (1-hr avg) | 9.0 ppm (8-hr avg)<br>20.0 ppm (1-hr avg) |
| Nitrogen Dioxide | 0.053 ppm (annual avg)<br>0.10 ppm (1-hr avg) | 0.18 ppm (1-hr avg)<br>0.030 ppm (annual avg) |
| Sulfur Dioxide | 0.14 ppm (24-hr avg)<br>0.075 ppm (1-hr avg) | 0.04 ppm (24-hr avg)<br>0.25 ppm (1-hr avg) |
| Lead | 1.5 $\mu g/m^3$ (3-month avg) | 1.5 $\mu g/m^3$ (30-day avg) |
| Particulate Matter ($PM_{10}$) | 150 $\mu g/m^3$ (24-hr avg) | 20 $\mu g/m^3$ (annual avg)<br>50 $\mu g/m^3$ (24-hr avg) |
| Particulate Matter ($PM_{2.5}$) | 15 $\mu g/m^3$ (annual avg)<br>35 $\mu g/m^3$ (24-hr avg) | 12 $\mu g/m^3$ (annual avg) |

*ppm = parts per million*
*$\mu g/m^3$ = micrograms per cubic meter*
*Source: California Air Resources Board 2015*

The U.S. EPA uses data collected at permanent monitoring stations to classify regions as "attainment" or "nonattainment," depending on whether the regions meet the requirements stated in the primary NAAQS. Nonattainment areas have additional restrictions imposed upon them as required by the U.S. EPA.

Descriptions of the criteria pollutants follow.

**Ozone.** $O_3$ (smog) is formed by photochemical reactions between oxides of nitrogen and reactive organic gases rather than being directly emitted. Ozone is a pungent, colorless gas typical of Southern California smog. Elevated ozone concentrations result in reduced lung function, particularly during vigorous physical activity. This health problem is particularly acute in sensitive receptors such as the sick, the elderly and young children. Ozone levels peak during the summer and early fall. The entire Basin is designated as a nonattainment area for the State one-hour and eight-hour ozone standards. The U.S. EPA has officially designated the status for the Basin regarding the eight-hour ozone standard as "Extreme." The Basin has until 2024 to attain the federal eight-hour $O_3$ standard.

**Carbon Monoxide.** CO is formed by the incomplete combustion of fossil fuels, almost entirely from automobiles. It is a colorless odorless gas that can cause dizziness, fatigue, and impairment to central nervous system functions. The entire Basin is in attainment for the State standards for CO. The Basin is designated as an "Attainment/ Maintenance" area under the federal CO standards.

**Nitrogen Oxides.** Nitrogen dioxide ($NO_2$), a reddish-brown gas, and nitric oxide (NO), a colorless odorless gas, are formed from fuel combustion under high temperature or pressure. These compounds are referred to as nitrogen oxides, or $NO_X$, which is a primary component of the photochemical smog reaction. It also contributes to other pollution problems, including a high concentration of fine particulate matter, poor visibility, and acid deposition (i.e., acid rain). $NO_2$ decreases lung function and may reduce resistance to infection. The entire Basin is designated as nonattainment for the State $NO_2$ standard and as an "Attainment/Maintenance" area under the federal $NO_2$ standard.

**Sulfur Dioxide.** Sulfur dioxide ($SO_2$) is a colorless irritating gas formed primarily from incomplete combustion of fuels containing sulfur. Industrial facilities also contribute to gaseous $SO_2$ levels. $SO_2$ irritates the respiratory tract, can injure lung tissue when combined with fine particulate matter, and reduces visibility and the level of sunlight. The entire Basin is in attainment for both federal and State $SO_2$ standards.

**Lead.** Lead is found in old paints and coatings, plumbing, and a variety of other materials. Once in the blood stream, lead can cause damage to the brain, nervous system, and other body systems. Children are highly susceptible to the effects of lead. The Los Angeles County portion of the Basin was re-designated as nonattainment for the State and federal standards for lead in 2010.

**Particulate Matter.** Particulate matter is the term used for a mixture of solid particles and liquid droplets found in the air. Coarse particles (particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter [$PM_{10}$]) derive from a variety of sources, including windblown dust and grinding operations. Fuel combustion and exhaust from power plants and diesel buses and trucks are primarily responsible for fine particle ($PM_{2.5}$) levels. Fine particles can also be formed in the atmosphere through chemical reactions. $PM_{10}$ can accumulate in the respiratory system and aggravate health problems such as asthma. The U.S. EPA's scientific review concluded that $PM_{2.5}$, which penetrates deeply into the lungs, is more likely than $PM_{10}$ to contribute to the health effects listed in a number of recently published community epidemiological studies that assessed the effects of concentrations that extend well below those allowed by the current $PM_{10}$ standards. These health effects include premature death; increased hospital admissions and emergency room visits (primarily the elderly and individuals with cardiopulmonary disease); increased respiratory symptoms and disease (children and individuals with cardiopulmonary diseases such as asthma); decreased lung functions (particularly in children and individuals with asthma); and alterations in lung tissue and structure and in respiratory tract defense mechanisms. The Basin is a nonattainment area for the State $PM_{10}$ and $PM_{2.5}$ standards and a nonattainment area for the federal $PM_{2.5}$ standards. The Basin was re-designated as an Attainment/Maintenance area for the federal $PM_{10}$ standard in 2013.

**Reactive Organic Compounds.** Reactive organic compounds (ROCs), also known as reactive organic gases (ROGs) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs), are formed through the combustion of fuels and evaporation of organic solvents. ROCs are not defined criteria pollutants but are a prime component of the

photochemical smog reaction. Consequently, ROCs accumulate in the atmosphere more quickly during the winter when sunlight is limited and photochemical reactions are slower.

**Sulfates.** Sulfates occur in combination with metal and/or hydrogen ions. In California, emissions of sulfur compounds occur primarily from the combustion of petroleum-derived fuels (e.g., gasoline and diesel) that contain sulfur. This sulfur is oxidized to $SO_2$ during the combustion process and subsequently converted to sulfate compounds in the atmosphere. The conversion of $SO_2$ to sulfates takes place fairly rapidly and completely in urban areas of California due to regional meteorological features. The entire Basin is in attainment for the State standard for sulfates.

**Hydrogen Sulfide.** Hydrogen sulfide ($H_2S$) is a colorless gas with the odor of rotten eggs. It forms during bacterial decomposition of sulfur-containing organic substances and can be present in sewer gas and some natural gas. It can be emitted as the result of geothermal energy exploitation. In 1984, an ARB committee concluded that the ambient standard for $H_2S$ is adequate to protect public health and to significantly reduce odor annoyance. The State standard for outdoor levels of $H_2S$ is 30 parts per billion averaged over one hour (SCAQMD 2015).The entire Basin is unclassified for the State standard for $H_2S$.

**Visibility-Reducing Particles.** Visibility-reducing particles consist of suspended particulate matter, a complex mixture of tiny particles that consists of dry solid fragments, solid cores with liquid coatings, and small droplets of liquid. These particles vary greatly in shape, size, and chemical composition, and can be made of many different materials such as metals, soot, soil, dust, and salt. The State standard intends to limit the frequency and severity of impairment to visibility due to regional haze. The entire Basin is unclassified for the State standard for visibility-reducing particles.

## State

In 1967, the California Legislature passed the Mulford-Carrell Act, combining two Department of Health bureaus (the Bureau of Air Sanitation and the Motor Vehicle Pollution Control Board) to establish the ARB. The ARB coordinates and oversees both State and federal air pollution control programs in California. It also oversees activities of local air quality management agencies and maintains air quality monitoring stations throughout the State in conjunction with the U.S. EPA and local air districts. The ARB has divided the State into 15 air basins based on meteorological and topographical factors of air pollution.

The ARB identified particulate emissions from diesel-fueled engines (diesel particulate matter [DPM]) as a toxic air contaminant (TAC) in August 1998. Following the identification process, ARB was required by law to determine whether there is a need for further control. In September 2000, the ARB adopted the Diesel Risk Reduction Plan (Diesel RRP), recommending many control measures to reduce the risks associated with DPM and to achieve the goal of 85 percent DPM reduction by 2020.

**California Green Building Code.** California Green Buildings Standards Code (Cal Green Code) (California Code of Regulations [CCR], Title 24, Part 11) was adopted by the California Building Standards Commission in 2010 and became effective in January 2011. The Code applies to all new constructed residential, nonresidential, commercial, mixed-use, and State-owned facilities, as well as schools and hospitals. The Code comprises Mandatory Residential and Nonresidential Measures and more stringent, Voluntary Measures (Tier I and Tier II).

Mandatory Measures are required for all new construction projects. These include an array of green measures concerning project site design, water use reduction, indoor air quality improvement, and material and resource conservation. The Cal Green Building Code refers to Title 24, Part 6 compliance with respect to energy efficiency, but it encourages 15 percent energy use reduction over that required in Part 6. Voluntary Measures are optional, more stringent than those required by mandatory code and may be used by jurisdictions to enhance their commitment to green and sustainable design and the achievement of Assembly Bill (AB) 32 goals. Under Tier I, all new construction projects are required to reduce energy consumption by 15 percent and by 30 percent under Tier II below the baseline required under the California Energy Commission (CEC).

## Local

**Regional Air Quality Planning Framework.** The 1976 Lewis Air Quality Management Act established the SCAQMD and other air districts throughout the State. The federal CAA Amendments of 1977 required that each state adopt an implementation plan outlining pollution control measures to attain the federal standards in nonattainment areas of the state. The ARB is responsible for incorporating air quality management plans for local air basins into a State Implementation Plan (SIP) for U.S. EPA approval. Significant authority for air quality control in the local air basins has been given to local air districts that regulate stationary source emissions and develop local nonattainment plans.

**Regional Air Quality Management Plan.** The SCAQMD and the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) are responsible for formulating and implementing the Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) for the Basin. Every three years, the SCAQMD prepares a new AQMP, updating the previous plan with a 20-year horizon. The SCAQMD adopted the Final 2012 AQMP on December 7, 2012 and forwarded it to the ARB for review in February 2013. The 2012 AQMP includes the new and changing federal requirements, implementation of new technology measures, and the continued development of economically sound, flexible compliance approaches. The 2012 AQMP is based on the growth assumptions contained in SCAG's 2012-2035 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS).

Currently, the SCAQMD is initiating an early development process for the 2016 AQMP, which will be a comprehensive and integrated Plan focused primarily on addressing the ozone standards. The Plan will be

a regional and multi-agency effort (SCAQMD, ARB, SCAG, and U.S. EPA). State and federal planning requirements include developing control strategies, demonstrating attainment, showing reasonable further progress, and maintaining plans. The 2016 AQMP will incorporate the latest scientific and technical information and planning assumptions, including the most recent, applicable growth assumptions from the RTP/SCS and updated emission inventory methodologies for various source categories.

**City of El Monte General Plan.** The Public Health and Safety Element (2011) of the El Monte General Plan includes goals and polices related to air quality. The following goals and policies are applicable to the proposed project:

> **Goal PHS-3:** Clean and healthful air through the implementation of responsive land use practices, enhancement to the natural landscape, pollution reduction strategies, and cooperation with regional agencies.
>
> > **Policy PHS-3.1:** Land Use. As a condition for siting or expanding operations in El Monte, require air pollution emitters to evaluate and fully mitigate the impacts of their operations on schools, homes, medical facilities, child care centers, and other sensitive receptors.
> >
> > **Policy PHS-3.2**: Sensitive Receptors. Utilize CARB recommendations to evaluate the siting of dry cleaners, chrome platers, large gas stations, freeways, and other high pollutant sources near residences, health care facilities, schools, and other sensitive land uses.
> >
> > **Policy PHS-3.3:** Community Forest. As prescribed in the Parks and Recreation Element, enhance the City's community forest by planting trees along all roadways as a means to help filter air pollutants, clean the air, and provide other health benefits to the community.

# C. Significance Thresholds

The analysis of the Specific Plan's air quality impacts follows the guidance and methodologies recommended in the SCAQMD's *CEQA Air Quality Handbook* (1993), as well as Appendix G of the State *CEQA Guidelines*.

According to Appendix G of the *State CEQA Guidelines*, impacts related to air quality from the proposed project may be significant if the project would:

1. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan.
2. Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation.

3. Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or State ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed qualitative thresholds for ozone precursors).
4. Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations.
5. Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people.

Potential impacts associated with significance criterion 5 were found in the Initial Study (Appendix A) to be less than significant. The impacts analysis below is focused on significance criterion 1 through 4.

The State CEQA Guidelines further state that the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the determinations above. The analysis of the Specific Plan's air quality impacts follows the guidance and methodologies recommended in SCAQMD's CEQA Air Quality Handbook (1993) and the significance thresholds on SCAQMD's website (SCAQMD 2015). The SCAQMD has not developed guidelines or thresholds of significance specifically for local plans; therefore, SCAQMD's thresholds of significance for regional air quality emissions for construction activities and project operation are used to assess the impacts of the Specific Plan.

## Air Quality Management Plan Consistency

The criteria for determining consistency with the SCAQMD's AQMP are defined in Chapter 12, Section 12.2 and Section 12.3 of the SCAQMD's *CEQA Air Quality Handbook*, and include the following:

- The project will not result in an increase in the frequency or severity of existing air quality violations or cause or contribute to new violations, or delay the timely attainment of air quality standards or the interim emissions reductions specified in the AQMP.
- The proposed project will not exceed the assumptions in the AQMP based on the year of project buildout.

## Construction Emission Thresholds

The SCAQMD has developed specific numeric thresholds that apply to projects in the Basin. The SCAQMD currently recommends that impacts associated with projects with construction-related mass daily emissions that exceed any of the following emissions thresholds should be considered significant:

- 75 pounds per day of ROG
- 100 pounds per day of $NO_x$
- 550 pounds per day of CO
- 150 pounds per day of $SO_x$
- 150 pounds per day of $PM_{10}$
- 55 pounds per day of $PM_{2.5}$

## Operational Emission Thresholds

The SCAQMD has also established the following significance thresholds for project operations in the Basin:

- 55 pounds per day of ROG
- 55 pounds per day of $NO_X$
- 550 pounds per day of CO
- 150 pounds per day of $SO_X$
- 150 pounds per day of $PM_{10}$
- 55 pounds per day of $PM_{2.5}$

## Localized Significance Thresholds

In addition to the above thresholds, the SCAQMD has developed Localized Significance Thresholds (LST). LSTs represent the maximum emissions from a project that will not cause or contribute to an air quality exceedance of the most stringent applicable federal or State ambient air quality standard at the nearest sensitive receptor. However, LSTs are applicable to projects at the project-specific level and are not applicable to regional projects such as specific plans (SCAQMD 2003). As such, LSTs do not apply to the proposed Specific Plan.

## Local Carbon Monoxide Concentrations

Areas with high vehicle density, such as congested intersections, have the potential to create high concentrations of CO, and are known as CO hotspots. A project's localized air quality impact is considered significant if CO emissions create a hotspot where either the California one-hour standard of 20 ppm or the federal and State 8-hour standard of 9.0 ppm is exceeded. This typically occurs at severely congested intersections (level of service [LOS] E or worse). Pursuant to SCAQMD guidance, a CO hotspot analysis should be conducted for intersections where a project would have a significant impact at a signalized intersection, causing the LOS to change to E or F, or when the volume to capacity ratio (V/C) increases by two percent or more as a result of a proposed project for intersections rated D or worse (SCAQMD 2003).

## Methodology

Both temporary construction emissions and long-term operation emissions were calculated using the California Air Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod), version 2016.3.1. CalEEMod is a software model developed by SCAQMD to estimate air pollutant and GHG emissions from land use development projects. Operational emissions were estimated by using CalEEMod default inputs for the type and size of proposed land uses. Operational emissions would be composed of mobile source emissions, those associated with energy consumption, and area source emissions. Mobile source emissions are generated by the increase

in motor vehicle trips to and from the Plan Area associated with operation of development proposed under the Specific Plan. Emissions attributed to energy use include electricity and natural gas consumption for space and water heating and cooling. Area source emissions are generated by, for example, landscape maintenance equipment, consumer products, and architectural coatings.

The estimate of total daily weekday trips associated with the proposed Specific Plan was based on vehicle trip data provided in Section 4.13, Transportation and Circulation, which includes a 20 percent trip reduction for transit use due to Specific Plan's transit-oriented design. Weekend trip rates were not provided in the Traffic Study and therefore default values were used. The overall vehicle fleet mix used for the analysis is the default fleet mix provided in the CalEEMod software.

CalEEMod provides an estimate of emissions associated with the construction period, based on parameters such as the duration of construction activity, area of disturbance, and anticipated equipment use during construction. The actual rate and amount of development occurring under the Specific Plan is not known as it will depend upon market conditions and regulatory actions. Therefore, to provide a conservative estimate of maximum daily construction emissions, it was assumed that construction of all development facilitated by the Specific Plan (2,200 multi-family units, 500,000 sf of commercial space) would occur simultaneously and begin in 2017. In addition, it was assumed that grading would be concentrated in the key development sites and would be balanced in the Plan Area. Furthermore, it was assumed no offsite import or export of soil would be required during construction under the proposed Specific Plan. The CalEEMod construction analysis considered grading, building construction, architectural coatings, and paving phases. Demolition and site preparation phases of construction were not included in the analysis because formal development plans in Specific Plan areas that may require demolition and site preparation activities are not available. Therefore, any assessment of air quality emissions resulting from demolition in the Specific Plan area would be speculative.

Modeling assumed compliance with SCAQMD Architectural Coating Rule 1113, SCAQMD Wood-Burning Devices Rule 445, and SCAQMD Fugitive Dust Rule 403. Complete results from CalEEMod and assumptions are provided in Appendix B. All other values utilized in the modeling were based on applicable SCAQMD defaults for the Basin. SCAQMD Rule 1113 requires the use of low-VOC paint (150 g/L for non-flat coatings) in the South Coast Air Basin. SCAQMD Rule 445 prohibits permanent installation of indoor or outdoor wood burning devices in new developments in the Basin. SCAQMD Rule 403 identifies measures to reduce fugitive dust and is required at all construction sites located in the Basin. Therefore, the following conditions, required to reduce fugitive dust in compliance with SCAQMD Rule 403, were included in CalEEMod for the site preparation and grading phases of construction.

- **Minimization of Disturbance**. Construction contractors should minimize the area disturbed by clearing, grading, earth moving, or excavation operations to prevent excessive amounts of dust.

- **Soil Treatment**. Construction contractors should treat all graded and excavated material, exposed soil areas, and active portions of the construction site, including unpaved on-site roadways to minimize fugitive dust. Treatment shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, periodic watering, application of environmentally safe soil stabilization materials, and/or roll compaction as appropriate. Watering shall be done as often as necessary, and at least two times daily, preferably in the late morning and after work is done for the day.
- **Soil Stabilization**. Construction contractors should monitor all graded and/or excavated inactive areas of the construction site at least weekly for dust stabilization. Soil stabilization methods, such as water and roll compaction, and environmentally safe dust control materials, shall be applied to portions of the construction site that are inactive for over four days. If no further grading or excavation operations are planned for the area, the area shall be seeded and watered until landscape growth is evident, or periodically treated with environmentally safe dust suppressants, to prevent excessive fugitive dust.
- **Grading During High Winds**. Construction contractors should stop all clearing, grading, earth moving, and excavation operations during periods of high winds (20 miles per hour or greater, as measured continuously over a one-hour period).
- **Street Sweeping**. Construction contractors should sweep all on-site driveways and adjacent streets and roads at least once per day, preferably at the end of the day, if visible soil material is carried over to adjacent streets and roads.

# D. Impacts and Mitigation Measures

## Impact AIR-1

**Impact AIR-1:** Implementation of the proposed Specific Plan would encourage transit-oriented growth in the Plan Area consistent with the growth projections utilized in the SCAQMD 2012 AQMP. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

A project may be inconsistent with the AQMP if it would generate population, housing or employment growth exceeding the forecasts used in the development of the AQMP. The 2012 AQMP, the most recent AQMP adopted by the SCAQMD, incorporates local city general plans and SCAG's 2012-2035 RTP/SCS socioeconomic forecast projections of regional population, housing and employment growth. The growth assumptions used in the AQMP are based on SCAG's 2012 growth forecasts. Therefore, if the proposed project would facilitate growth exceeding SCAG's 2012 forecasts, then the project would be inconsistent with the assumptions in the AQMP (SCAG 2012a).

As discussed in Section 2, Project Description, buildout under the proposed Specific Plan would generate approximately 8,465 residents. This would bring the population of the city to 122,350, a seven percent increase. Implementation of the proposed Specific Plan would add an estimated 1,235 new employees at full buildout. **Table 3.2-3** compares project-generated population, employment and housing growth to

SCAG's 2012 growth projections, on which the 2012 AQMP is based. SCAG's 2012 forecasts assume that El Monte will have a population of 140,100 and 33,300 households in 2035. The Specific Plan would increase population of El Monte to 122,350, which is within the growth forecast and accounted for in the AQMP. Implementation of the Specific Plan would result in an additional 2,054 households, resulting in 31,322 households in the City. This is also within the SCAG 2012 forecast and accounted for in the AQMP.

The increases in population, housing, and jobs associated with full buildout of the proposed Specific Plan would not exceed the SCAG growth projections that the AQMP is based on. Therefore the project would be in conformance with the AQMP and impacts would be less than significant.

**Table 3.2-3: Comparison of Project-generated Population, Housing, and Employment Growth Projections in El Monte**

| | Specific Plan Build Out Growth | SCAG 2035 El Monte Growth Projections[1] | Percentage of SCAG Projected Growth for El Monte |
|---|---|---|---|
| Population | 8,465 | 26,700 | 32% |
| Housing | 2,054 | 5,500 | 37% |
| Jobs | 1,235 | 2,100 | 59% |

[1] *Unlike the Population and Housing section, which compares Specific Plan population growth to the most recent 2016 RTP/SCS, this analysis compares population growth under the Specific Plan to the 2012 RTP/SCS, on which the 2012 AQMP is based.*

## Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

## Significance after Mitigation

Impacts would be less than significant without mitigation.

## Impact AIR-2

**Impact AIR-2:** Construction of individual projects within the Specific Plan area would result in the temporary generation of air pollutants during construction, which would affect local air quality. However, emissions would not exceed SCAQMD regional thresholds. Impacts would be less than significant.

Project construction would generate temporary air pollutant emissions. These impacts are associated with fugitive dust ($PM_{10}$ and $PM_{2.5}$) and exhaust emissions from heavy construction vehicles, in addition to ROG that would be released during the drying phase upon application of architectural coatings. Construction would generally consist of grading, construction of the proposed buildings, paving and architectural coating.

Since no projects have been proposed as part of the Specific Plan, it was assumed that build out of the Plan would occur as one large project, and the CalEEMod default construction schedule was used. Construction activity is assumed to occur simultaneously over a period of approximately 15 years based on this default construction schedule for all construction phases, except architectural coating, which was assumed to overlap with the end of building construction. **Table 3.2-4** shows estimated maximum daily emissions over the entire construction period, reflecting the worst year of construction for each pollutant. Details are included in **Appendix C**. With compliance with SCAQMD Fugitive Dust Rule 403 and SCAQMD Architectural Coating Rule 1113, construction emissions would not exceed SCAQMD regional thresholds for any criteria pollutant during any of the 15 years of construction. Impacts would be less than significant.

**Table 3.2-4: Estimated Construction Maximum Daily Air Pollutant Emissions (lbs/day)**

| | Emissions Estimate (lbs/day) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Year | ROG | $NO_X$ | CO | $SO_2$ | $PM_{10}$ | $PM_{2.5}$ |
| Maximum lbs/day[1] | 67.7 | 70.4 | 122.9 | 0.3 | 23.6 | 7.6 |
| *SCAQMD Thresholds* | *75* | *100* | *550* | *150* | *150* | *55* |
| Threshold Exceeded? | No | No | No | No | No | No |

*Source: See Appendix B for calculations, assumptions, and maximum lbs/day per year for entire construction period (2017 through 2032). Assumed compliance with SCAQMD Fugitive Dust Rule 403 and SCAQMD Architectural Coating Rule 1113.*
*[1] Maximum daily emissions include onsite and offsite emissions and reflect the worst year for each pollutant of the entire construction period (2017 through 2032).*

## Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

## Significance after Mitigation

Impacts would be less than significant without mitigation.

## Impact AIR-3

**Impact AIR-3:** Operational emissions of ROG, CO, NOX, PM10 and PM2.5 would exceed SCAQMD's daily thresholds. Implementation of the Specific Plan would result in significant unavoidable impacts related to operational air quality emissions.

As described, operational emissions for the proposed Specific Plan would consist of mobile source emissions, emissions associated with energy consumption and area source emissions. The emissions associated with all operations with buildout of the proposed Specific Plan are shown in **Table 3.2-5**.

Mobile source emissions constitute the majority of operational emissions from residential and commercial land use development projects. Compared to mobile source emissions, area-source emissions and energy

source emissions are negligible. All emissions associated with the operational phase of the Specific Plan are presented in

**Table** 3.2-5. The Specific Plan is based upon a land use pattern that would mix residential and commercial uses in the Plan Area adjacent to high quality transit services, resulting in reduced trip generation rates when compared to standard Institution of Transportation Engineers (ITE) trip generation rates. As discussed above, the estimate of total daily trips associated with the proposed Specific Plan was based on vehicle trip data provided in Section 3.13, Transportation and Circulation, and includes a 20 percent transit trip reduction in daily vehicle trips due to the Specific Plan's transit-oriented design.

Table 3.2-5 Estimated Operational Emissions

| | Emissions Estimate (lbs/day) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Emission Source | ROG | $NO_X$ | CO | $SO_2$ | $PM_{10}$ | $PM_{2.5}$ |
| Area | 63.9 | 2.1 | 180.9 | <0.1 | 1.0 | 1.0 |
| Energy | 2.0 | 17.7 | 10.2 | 0.1 | 1.4 | 1.4 |
| Mobile | 32.9 | 189.1 | 382.9 | 1.9 | 198.2 | 53.7 |
| **Total Emissions[1]** | **98.8** | **208.8** | **574.0** | **2.1** | **200.6** | **56.1** |
| **SCAQMD Threshold** | **55** | **55** | **550** | **150** | **150** | **55** |
| **Threshold Exceeded?** | **Yes** | **Yes** | **Yes** | **No** | **Yes** | **Yes** |

*Source: Calculations using CalEEMod 2016.3.1. See Appendix B for calculations. Applied the highest emissions from summer or winter.*
*[1]. The sum of individual emissions sources may differ slightly from total emissions due to rounding.*

SCAQMD has adopted project level operational emissions thresholds but does not have regional or plan level emissions thresholds. The proposed Specific Plan would exceed the project level operational emissions thresholds for ROG, $NO_X$, CO, $PM_{10}$, and $PM_{2.5}$. However, as stated in Impact AIR-1, the proposed Plan is consistent with the SCAQMD AQMP. Additionally, the Specific Plan includes policies that would reduce vehicle trips and emissions. Section 3.3.1 includes policies that would promote pedestrian safety. Section 3.4.2 includes policies to improve bicycle facilities within the plan area. Section 3.6.6 includes policies to improve bus shelters. All of these measures would reduce operational VMT in the Plan Area and subsequently reduce air pollutant emissions. Further, future projects included in the Specific Plan would be required to undergo site-specific CEQA review, including analysis of operational emissions. Appropriate project-specific mitigation measures would be identified at that time.

While these measures would reduce operational air pollutant emissions, implementation of the Specific Plan would result in significant and unavoidable impacts related to operational air quality emissions.

## Mitigation Measures

While impacts related to operational air pollutant emissions would be significant, no mitigation is available to reduce impacts to less than significant at the plan level.

## Significance after Mitigation

While impacts would be significant and unavoidable, all future projects would be required to undergo project level CEQA review, including analysis of operational air emissions. At that time, appropriate mitigation measures would be identified for individual projects to reduce operational emissions.

## Impact AIR-4

**Impact AIR-4:** The proposed Specific Plan would increase traffic along all studied roadway segments, however, increased traffic would not result in the creation of carbon monoxide (CO) hotspots. Therefore, impacts related to exposing sensitive receptors to pollutant concentrations would be less than significant.

Areas with high vehicle density, such as congested intersections, have the potential to create high concentrations of CO, known as CO hotspots. A project's localized air quality impact is considered significant if CO emissions create a hotspot where either the California one-hour standard of 20 ppm or the federal and state eight-hour standard of 9.0 ppm is exceeded. This typically occurs at severely congested intersections (level of service [LOS] E or worse). Pursuant to SCAQMD guidance, a CO hotspot analysis should be conducted for intersections where the proposed project would have a significant impact at a signalized intersection, causing the LOS to change to E or F, or when the volume to capacity ratio (V/C) increases by two percent or more as a result of a proposed project for intersections rated D or worse (SCAQMD 2003). As discussed in Section 4.13, Transportation and Traffic, local roadways currently operate at LOS F or better during peak hours.

Full buildout of the Specific Plan is forecast to result in an increase of 856 vehicle trips during the a.m. peak hour and 1,772 vehicles trips during the p.m. peak hour. Under the 2020 and 2035 conditions, six intersections would operate at LOS E or F: Santa Anita Avenue and Valley Boulevard, Santa Anita Avenue and I-10 west bound ramps, Santa Anita Avenue and I-10 east bound ramps, Tyler Avenue and Valley Boulevard, Ramona Boulevard and Valley Boulevard, and Peck Road and Valley Boulevard. In 2012, the most recent data available, the 8-hour average CO concentration in the area was 2.45 parts per million (ppm), well below the 9 ppm State and federal 8-hour thresholds. A detailed CO analysis was conducted during the preparation of SCAQMD's 2003 AQMP. The locations selected for microscale modeling in the 2003 AQMP included high average daily traffic (ADT) intersections in the Basin, those which would be expected to experience the highest CO concentrations. The highest CO concentration observed was at the intersection of Wilshire Boulevard and Veteran Avenue on the west side of Los Angeles near the I-405

Freeway. The concentration of CO at this intersection was 4.6 ppm, which is well below the 35-ppm 1-hour CO federal standard. The Wilshire Boulevard/Veteran Avenue intersection has an ADT of approximately 100,000 vehicles per day.

The Specific Plan traffic analysis demonstrates Tyler Avenue and Valley Boulevard would be the most congested intersection studied, operating at LOS F with a V/C ratio of 1.331 (assuming full buildout of the Specific Plan). The total ADT for this intersection would be approximately 37,000, which is less than the 100,000 trip example above for the Wilshire Boulevard and Veteran Avenue intersection. Furthermore, due to stricter vehicle emissions standards in newer cars and new technology that increases fuel economy, CO emission factors under future land use conditions (year 2035) would be substantially lower than those under existing conditions. Thus, even though there would be more vehicle trips under the Specific Plan than under existing conditions, project-generated local mobile-source CO emissions would not result in or substantially contribute to concentrations that exceed the one-hour or eight-hour ambient air quality standards for CO.

Under current and future vehicle emission rates, a project would have to increase traffic volumes at a single intersection by more than 44,000 vehicles per hour—or 24,000 vehicles per hour where vertical and/or horizontal air does not mix—in order to generate a significant CO impact (BAAQMD 2011). Development that would be accommodated by the proposed Specific Plan would produce up to 1,772 vehicles trips during the p.m. peak hour, which would not increase the volume of traffic at any one intersection by the 24,000 to 44,000 vehicles per hour required to generate a CO hot spot. Localized air quality impacts related to CO hot spots would therefore be less than significant.

### Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

### Significance after Mitigation

Impacts would be less than significant without mitigation.

## E. Cumulative Impacts

The South Coast Air Basin is a non-attainment area for the federal standards for ozone, $PM_{2.5}$, and lead, and the State standards for ozone, $PM_{10}$, $PM_{2.5}$, $NO_2$, and lead. Any growth in the Los Angeles metropolitan area would contribute to existing exceedances of ambient air quality standards when taken as a whole with existing development. Cumulative development through the year 2040 in the surrounding areas would result in an increase of approximately 1,971 housing units, 1,485,900 sf of commercial and industrial space, and 883 hotel rooms in addition to the development that would be allowed under the Specific Plan. As discussed under Impact AQ-1, population growth under the proposed Specific Plan

would not exceed long-term growth projections for the city. Therefore, buildout of the Specific Plan would not conflict with the implementation of the 2012 AQMP because of its transit-oriented design. Therefore cumulative impacts would be less than significant.

# 3.3 Biological Resources

The following section discusses the potential impacts to biological resources that could result from development encouraged by the proposed Plan.

## A. Setting

The Plan Area is located in central El Monte, Los Angeles County, California. The Plan Area encompasses a triangular area bounded by Union Pacific railroad tracks to the north, Santa Anita Avenue to the west, and Ramona Boulevard to the south (refer to **Figure 2-2** in Section 2.0, Project Description). The approximately 115-acre area consists primarily of commercial land uses with single family housing, an adult education center, and a health center located near the southern boundary of the Plan Area.

### Habitats

As described above, the Plan Area is mostly developed and there are no native biological habitats on-site. Per a California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) search, no sensitive plant communities occur within the Plan Area, and no plant community or land cover type present at the site is considered sensitive (CNDDB, 2014). The Plan Area contains mature trees that could contain bird nests and birds which are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA).

### Special-Status Resources

The term "special-status" as pertains to biological resources includes those plants, animals, vegetation communities, jurisdictional drainages and other sensitive biological resources that are governed under federal, state and local laws and regulations. Information regarding the occurrences of special-status species in the vicinity of the plan area was obtained from searching the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDB, 2014) and California Native Plant Society's Electronic Inventory (CNPS 2014) for the USGS El Monte 7.5-minute quadrangle. These databases contain records of reported occurrences of federal- or state-listed endangered, threatened, rare, or proposed endangered or threatened species, federal species of concern, state species of special concern, or otherwise sensitive species or habitat that may occur within a five-mile radius of the Plan Area. Lists from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and CDFW were also reviewed and lists of common and sensitive wildlife and plant species potentially occurring within the plan area were created. This search range encompasses a sufficient distance to accommodate for regional habitat diversity and to overcome the limitations of the CNDDB (the CNDDB is based on reports of actual occurrences and does not constitute an exhaustive inventory of every resource).

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**Listed Species**. Federal, state, and local authorities under a variety of legislative acts share regulatory authority over biological resources. The CDFW has direct jurisdiction under law for biological resources through the State Fish and Game Code and under the California Endangered Species Act. The federal Endangered Species Act also provides direct regulatory authority over specially designated organisms and their habitats to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). These acts specifically regulate listed and candidate "endangered" and "threatened" species, which are defined as:

- Endangered Species: any species that is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.
- Threatened Species: any species that is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant part of its range.

**Special-Status Plants.** Special-status plant species are either listed as endangered or threatened under the federal or California Endangered Species Acts, or as "rare" under the California Native Plant Protection Act, or considered to be rare (but not formally listed) by resource agencies and the scientific community. CDFW and local governmental agencies may also recognize special listings developed by focal groups (i.e. Audubon Society Blue List; California Native Plant Society (CNPS) Rare and Endangered Plants; U.S. Forest Service regional lists). **Table 3.3-1** shows seven special-status plant species that may occur within the Plan Area, one of which has a state and federal listing status, Nevin's barberry (Berberis nevinii), as federal and state endangered.

Table 3.3-1: Special Status and Rare Plant Species Known to Occur in the Vicinity (5-Mile) and Nine USGS Quadrangles of the Plan Area

| Scientific Name/Common Name | Status Fed/State ESA CRPR G-Rank/S-Rank | Habitat Preference/Requirements | Potential for Occurrence/Basis for Determination |
|---|---|---|---|
| Berberis nevinii<br>Nevin's barberry | FE/CE<br>1B.1<br>G1 / S1 | Perennial evergreen shrub. Blooms February-June. Chaparral, cismontane woodland, coastal scrub, riparian scrub; 70 – 825 m (230 – 2707 ft). | Low. Chaparral and woodland habitat absent. May occur in small areas of landscaping in built out Plan Area. |
| Centromadia parryi ssp. Australis<br>Southern tarplant | --/--<br>1B.1<br>G3T2 / S2 | Annual herb. Blooms May-Nov. Marshes and swamps (margins), valley and foothill grassland. Often in disturbed sites near the coast at marsh edges; also in alkaline soils sometimes with saltgrass. Sometimes on vernal pool margins. 0-425m (0-1395ft). | Low. Marshes and swamps absent. May occur in small areas of landscaping in built out Plan Area. |
| Cuscuta obtusiflora var. glandulosa<br>Plummer's mariposa lily | --/--<br>2B.2<br>G45T4/ SH | Annual vine (parasitic). Blooms July - October. Occurs in marshes and freshwater swamps. 15-280m (49-919ft). | Low. Marshes and swamps absent May occur in small areas of landscaping in built out Plan Area. |
| Horkelia cuneata var. puberula<br>Mesa horkelia | --/--<br>1B.1<br>G4T1 / S2 | Perennial herb. Blooms Feb-Jul. Chaparral (maritime), cismontane woodland, coastal scrub. Sandy or gravelly soils. More inland than other varieties. 70-810m (229-2657ft) | Not Expected. Habitat not present in Plan Area. |
| Phacelia stellaris<br>Brand's star phacelia | --/--<br>1B.1<br>G1/S1 | Annual herb. Blooms March-June. Occurs in coastal dunes and coastal shrub. 1-400m (3-1312ft). | Not Expected: Habitat not present in Plan Area. |
| Ribes divaricatum var. parishii<br>Parish's gooseberry | --/--<br>1A<br>G4TH/SH | Perennial deciduous shrub. Blooms February - April. Occurs in riparian woodland. 65-300m (213-984ft). | Low. One population extirpated. |

| Scientific Name/Common Name | Status Fed/State ESA CRPR G-Rank/S-Rank | Habitat Preference/Requirements | Potential for Occurrence/Basis for Determination |
|---|---|---|---|
| Scutellaria bolanderi ssp. austromontana<br><br>Southern mountain's skullcap | --/--<br>1B.2<br>G4T3/S3 | Perennial rhizomatous herb. Blooms June - August. Mesic, in chaparral, cismontane woodland, and lower montane coniferous forest. 25-2000m (82-6562ft). | Not Expected: Habitat not present in Plan Area. |

Regional Vicinity refers to within a 5-mile radius of site.

The table includes a nine quadrangle CNDDB search. .
FE = Federally Endangered, FT = Federally Threatened
SE = State Endangered, ST = State Threatened, SR = State Rare
CRPR (CNPS California Rare Plant Rank):

1A=Presumed Extinct in California
1B=Rare, Threatened, or Endangered in California and elsewhere
2=Rare, Threatened, or Endangered in California, but more common elsewhere

CRPR Threat Code Extension:
. 1=Seriously endangered in California (over 80% of occurrences threatened / high degree and immediacy of threat)
. 2=Fairly endangered in California (20-80% occurrences threatened)
. 3=Not very endangered in California (<20% of occurrences threatened)

G-Rank/S-Rank = Global Rank and State Rank as per NatureServe and CDFW's CNDDB RareFind 5.
G1 or S1 - Critically Imperiled Globally or Subnationally (state)
G2 or S2 - Imperiled Globally or Subnationally (state)
G3 or S3 - Vulnerable to extirpation or extinction Globally or Subnationally (state)
G4 or S4 - Apparently secure Globally or Subnationally (state)
G5 or S5 - Secure Globally or Subnationally (state)
? - Inexact Numeric Rank
T - Intraspecific Taxon (subspecies, varieties, and other designations below the level of species)
CDFW = California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife - "Special Plant" http://www.dfg.ca.gov/biogeodata/cnddb/pdfs/SPPlants. pdf

**Special Status Animals.** Ten sensitive wildlife species are known to occur within a five-mile radius of the Plan Area, based on a search of the CNDDB. **Table 3.3-2** identifies these wildlife species that are known to occur or have the potential to occur within the Plan Area, six of which have a State or federal listing status: state listed threatened Swainson's hawk (Buteo swainsoni), proposed federally listed threatened and state listed endangered western yellow-bulled cuckoo (Coccyzus americanus occidentalis), federally and state listed endangered southwestern willow flycatcher (Empidonax traillii extimus), State listed threatened bank swallow (Riparia riparia), federally listed threatened coastal California gnatcatcher (Polioptila californica), and federally and State listed endangered least Bell's vireo (Vireo bellii pusillus).

Table 3.3-2: Special-Status Wildlife Species Known to Occur in the Vicinity (5-Mile) and Nine USGS Quadrangles of the Plan Area

| Scientific Name / Common Name | Status Fed / State ESA CDFW G-Rank / S-Rank | Habitat Requirements | Potential for Occurrence / Basis for Determination |
|---|---|---|---|
| Reptiles | | | |
| Emys marmorata<br><br>Western pond turtle | --/--<br>SSC<br>G3G4 / S3 | A thoroughly aquatic turtle of ponds, marshes, rivers, streams and irrigation ditches, usually with aquatic vegetation, below 6000 ft. elevation. Need basking sites and suitable (sandy banks or grassy open fields) upland habitat up to 0. 5 km from water for egg-laying. | Low. Limited water source, no pools within drainages onsite, and no streamside vegetation likely precludes occurrence. |
| Phrynosoma blainvillii<br><br>Coast horned lizard (=Blainvilli's) | -- / --<br>SSC<br>G3G4 / S3S4 | Frequents a wide variety of habitats, most common in lowlands along sandy washes with scattered low bushes. Open areas for sunning, bushes for cover, patches of loose soil for burial and abundant supply of ants and other insects. | Low. No suitable habitat present in developed Plan Area. |
| Birds | | | |
| Buteo swainsoni<br><br>Swainson's hawk | -- / ST--<br>G5 / S2 | Breeds in grasslands with scattered trees, juniper-sage flats, riparian areas, savannahs, and agricultural or ranch lands with groves or lines of trees. Requires adjacent suitable foraging areas such as grasslands, or alfalfa or grain fields supporting rodent populations. | Not Expected. Population determined to be extirpated in Plan Area. |
| Coccyzus americanus occidentalis<br><br>Western yellow-billed cuckoo | FC / SE--<br>G5T3Q / S1 | Riparian forest nester, along the broad, lower flood-bottoms of larger river systems. Nests in riparian jungles of willow, often mixed with cottonwoods, with lower story of blackberry, nettles, or wild grape. | Low. No suitable habitat in Plan Area; no recent occurrences in the area. |

| Scientific Name / Common Name | Status Fed / State ESA CDFW G-Rank / S-Rank | Habitat Requirements | Potential for Occurrence / Basis for Determination |
|---|---|---|---|
| Empidonax traillii extimus<br><br>Southwestern willow flycatcher | FE / SE--<br>G5T1T2 / S1 | Riparian woodlands in Southern California. | Low. No suitable riparian woodlands or willows present in the development area. |
| Polioptila californica<br><br>Coastal California gnatcatcher | FT / --<br>SSC<br>G3T2 / S2 | Obligate, permanent resident of coastal sage scrub below 2500 ft. in Southern California. Low, coastal sage scrub in arid washes, on mesas and slopes. Not all areas classified as coastal sage scrub are occupied. | Not Expected. One population determined to be extirpated in Plan Area. |
| Riparia riparia<br><br>Bank swallow | -- /ST--<br>G5 / S2S3 | Colonial nester; nests primarily in riparian and other lowland habitats west of the desert. Requires vertical banks/cliffs with fine-textured/sandy soils near streams, rivers, lakes, ocean to dig for nesting. | Not Expected. Population determined to be extirpated in Plan Area. |
| Vireo bellii pusillus<br><br>Least Bell's vireo | FE / SE--<br>G5T2 / S2 | Summer resident of Southern California in low riparian in vicinity of water or in dry river bottoms; below 2000 ft. Nests placed along margins of bushes or on twigs projecting into pathways, usually willow, mulefat, mesquite. | Not Expected. One population determined to be extirpated in Plan Area. |
| Mammals | | | |
| Antrozous pallidus<br><br>Pallid bat | -- / --<br>SSC<br>G5 / S3 | Deserts, grasslands, shrublands, woodlands and forests. Most common in open, dry habitats with rocky areas for roosting. Roosts must protect bats from high temperatures. Very sensitive to disturbance of roosting sites. | Low: No suitable habitat present in Plan Area. |

| Scientific Name / Common Name | Status Fed / State ESA CDFW G-Rank / S-Rank | Habitat Requirements | Potential for Occurrence / Basis for Determination |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lasiurus cinereus<br><br>Hoary bat | -- / --<br>--<br>G5 / S4? | Prefers open habitats or habitat mosaics, with access to trees for cover and open areas or habitat edges for feeding. Roosts in dense foliage of medium to large trees. Feeds primarily on moths. Requires water. | Moderate. Potential roosts in trees throughout Plan Area. The closest record of hoary bat (CNDDB 1922) is identified as approximately 3 miles to the northwest. |

Regional Vicinity refers to within a 5 mile radius of site.
FT = Federally Threatened
FC = Federally Candidate
FE = Federally Endangered
FD = Federally Delisted
SSC = CDFW Species of Special Concern
SE = State Endangered
ST = State Threatened
SR = State Rare
SD = State Delisted
FP = CDFW Fully Protected

WL: CDFW Watch List
G-Rank/S-Rank = Global Rank and State Rank as per NatureServe and CDFW's CNDDB RareFind 5.
G1 or S1 - Critically Imperiled Globally or Subnationally (state)
G2 or S2 - Imperiled Globally or Subnationally (state)
G3 or S3 - Vulnerable to extirpation or extinction Globally or Subnationally (state)
G4 or S4 - Apparently secure Globally or Subnationally (state)
G5 or S5 - Secure Globally or Subnationally (state)
? - Inexact Numeric Rank
T - Intraspecific Taxon (subspecies, varieties, and other designations below the level of species)
Q – Questionable taxonomy that may reduce conservation priority

Source: CNDDB RareFind 5, Department of Fish & Wildlife, Biogeographic Data Branch, Sacramento, CA

# B. Regulatory Framework

## Federal

**Endangered Species Act of 1973.** The Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) and implementing regulations (Title 16 United States Code (U.S.C.)§§ 1531 et seq., Title 50 Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) §§ 17.1 et seq.) include provisions for the protection and management of federally listed threatened or endangered plants and animals and their designated critical habitats. Section 7 of the ESA requires a permit to take threatened or endangered species during lawful project activities. The administering agency is the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for terrestrial, avian, and most aquatic species.

**Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act**. Section 7 of Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 U.S.C., § 742a, et seq., 16 U.S.C., § 1531, et seq., and 50 C.F.R. § 17.1 et seq.) requires consultation if any project facilities could jeopardize the continued existence of an endangered species. Applicability depends on federal jurisdiction over some aspect of the project (e.g., dredge or fill activities in "waters of the US"). The administering agency is typically the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in coordination with the USFWS.

**Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918**. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 U.S.C. §§ 703-711) includes provisions for protection of migratory birds, which prohibits the taking of migratory birds under the authority of the USFWS and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW).

**Clean Water Act of 1977, Section 404**. This section of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. §§ 1251 et seq., 33 C.F.R. §§ 320 and 323) gives the USACE authority to regulate discharges of dredge or fill material into Waters of the U.S., including wetlands

## State

**California Endangered Species Act of 1984**. The California Endangered Species Act (CESA) and implementing regulations in the Fish and Game Code, Section 2050 through Section 2098, include provisions for the protection and management of plant and animal species listed as endangered or threatened, or designated as candidates for such listing. The CESA includes a consultation requirement "to ensure that any action authorized by a State lead agency is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any endangered or threatened species...or result in the destruction or adverse modification of habitat essential to the continued existence of the species" (Fish and Game Code § 2090). Plants of California declared to be endangered, threatened, or rare are listed within the California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 14 Section 670.2. Animals of California declared to be endangered or threatened are listed at 14 CCR Section 670.5. 14 CCR §§ 15000 et seq. describes the types and extent of information required to evaluate the effects of a project on biological resources of a project site.

### Local

**El Monte Tree Protection and Preservation Ordinance**. Chapter 14.03 of the El Monte Municipal Code (EMMC) protects and preserves trees for the health and welfare of the City. The chapter establishes polices, regulations, and standards necessary to ensure that the City benefits from the existing local trees. Under Section 14.03.030 of the EMMC it is unlawful to carve, remove, severely prune, poison, top, or relocate a Protected Tree, unless issued a tree removal permit. A "Protected Tree" is defined as a public tree, Heritage Tree, or native tree. A "Heritage Tree" is defined by the EMMC as a tree, shrub, or plant that meets one of the following criteria: 1) has a single trunk circumference of at least 36 inches; 2) has a combined trunk circumference of at least 75 inches for a multi-trunk tree; 3) at least 35 feet in height; 4) a strand of trees where each depends on another for survival; or 5) is historically or culturally significant.

## C. Significance Thresholds

It should be noted that the following analysis is programmatic and encompasses the broader Plan Area because specific development projects are not included in the Specific Plan. Thus, specific impacts to biological resources are unknown, but due to the lack of overall biologically sensitive resources within the project area are expected to be minimal

### Methodology

The impact analysis is based on available literature regarding the existing biological resources within the plan area. Environmental impacts relative to biological resources may be assessed using impact significance criteria from federal, state, and local regulations. Project impacts to flora and fauna may be determined to be significant even if they do not directly affect rare, threatened, or endangered species.

Public Resources Code Section 21001 (c) states that it is the policy of the State of California to "prevent the elimination of fish and wildlife species due to man's activities, ensure that fish and wildlife populations do not drop below self-perpetuating levels, and preserve for future generations representations of all plant and animal communities." Environmental impacts relative to biological resources may be assessed using impact significance criteria encompassing CEQA guidelines and federal, state and local plans, regulations, and ordinances.

The following thresholds are based on Appendix G of the *State CEQA Guidelines*. A significant impact may occur if the proposed project would result in any of the following conditions:

1. Have a substantial adverse effect (i.e. significantly reduce species population, reduce species habitat, restrict reproductive capacity), either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by CDFW or USFWS.

2. Have a substantial adverse effect (i.e. direct/indirect reduction) on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies regulations, or by the CDFW or USFWS.
3. Have a substantial adverse effect (i.e. direct/indirect reduction) on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including but not limited to, marsh vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, or hydrological interruption, or other means.
4. Interfere substantially (i.e. direct/indirect reduction) with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites.
5. Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance.
6. Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Preservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan.

Potential impacts associated with significance criteria 1 through 3 and 6 were found in the Initial Study (Appendix A) to be less than significant. Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-1, below, of the Initial Study would reduce impacts to nesting birds to a less than significant level. Therefore, further analysis of criterion 4 is not warranted. The impacts analysis below is focused on significance criterion 5.

**BIO-1 Nesting/Breeding Native Bird Protection**. To avoid impacts to nesting birds, including birds protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, all initial ground disturbing activities, including tree removal, for development of projects associated with the Specific Plan, should be limited to the time period between August 16 and January 31 (i.e., outside the nesting season) if feasible. If initial site disturbance, grading, and vegetation removal cannot be conducted during this time period, a pre-construction survey for active nests within the project site shall be conducted by a qualified biologist at the site no more than two weeks prior to any construction activities. If active nests are identified, species specific exclusion buffers shall be determined by the biologist, and construction timing and location adjusted accordingly. The buffer shall be adhered to until the adults and young are no longer reliant on the nest site, as determined by the biologist. Limits of construction to avoid a nest should be established in the field with flagging and stakes or construction fencing. Construction personnel shall be instructed on the sensitivity of the area.

# D. Impacts and Mitigation Measures

## Impact BIO-1

| | |
|---|---|
| **Impact BIO-1** | Implementation of development under the Specific Plan may result in impacts to trees protected under the City of El Monte Municipal Code. Impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated. |

Implementation of the Specific Plan would be subject to all applicable federal, state, and regional policies and regulations related to the protection of important biological resources. This includes trees protected

under the *El Monte Tree Protection and Preservation Ordinance* (EMMC Chapter 14.03). As discussed in Section 4.3.1(d) the ordinance protects public trees, heritage trees, and native trees within the City limits. Any trees within the Plan Area that may need to be removed as part of development allowed by the Specific Plan would require a tree removal permit obtained from the City of El Monte per Section 14.03.060 of the EMMC.

Because of the broad-scale nature of the Specific Plan, a precise, project-level analysis of the specific impacts of Specific Plan development on trees is not possible under this analysis. However, public, native, and heritage trees may be encountered at the locations where future projects are constructed within the Plan Area. These could include the trees along Lexington Avenue, in the Zocalo Sub-Area, and along Tyler Avenue, in the Monte Vista and Main Street Sub-Area. Thus, it is assumed that several trees may be impacted and that potentially significant impacts could occur.

Projects in the vicinity of any trees have the potential to impact public, heritage, and/or native trees either indirectly during project construction or directly with the removal of trees for project development. Indirect impacts would occur through encroachment on the trees or alteration of the environmental setting in such a way as to reduce the amount of sun that a tree would receive.

## Mitigation Measures

**Arborist Survey.** Prior to any construction within the Plan Area, a tree inventory shall be performed by a certified arborist to locate and identify all Protected Trees on the project site. The tree inventory shall outline specific measures to document native trees with protected status and heritage trees within the project site. Per the requirements of the City of El Monte, the following criteria shall be documented within the tree inventory: field location by GPS for all listed native trees and heritage trees; enumeration of all trees on both aerial image and spreadsheet; trees identification of each tree by both scientific and common name; trunk diameter, measured at 4.5 feet above root crown; approximate canopy height and diameter; health assessment of each tree by a certified arborist; and digital copies of the GPS shape file and spread sheet in Excel and/or PDF format. If any Protected Trees occur on the project site that need to be removed as part of the proposed project, a tree removal permit shall be obtained from the City of El Monte per Section 14.03.060 of the El Monte Municipal Code. Additionally, trees shall be replaced at a minimum 2:1 ratio and as required by Section 14.03.090 of the El Monte Municipal Code.

## Significance after Mitigation

The mitigation measure would assure that impacts to trees protected under Chapter 14.03 of the City of El Monte Municipal Code would be less than significant because it would require an arborist report to identify all Protected Trees within the Plan Area.

# E. Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts for biological resources consider both localized and regional impacts. The Cumulative Projects list of currently planned and pending projects in the general vicinity, which includes 1,884 residential units, 1,485,900 sf of non-residential development, 87 assisted living units, and 883 hotel rooms. Significance for cumulative impacts to biological resources is based upon:

- The cumulative contribution of other approved and proposed development to fragmentation of open space in the project site's vicinity;
- Loss of sensitive habitats and species;
- Contribution of the proposed project to urban expansion into natural areas; and
- Isolation of open space within the proposed project by future projects in the vicinity.

The project's impacts on biological resources have been determined in this section of the EIR to be less than significant with mitigation. Furthermore, the project site is currently developed and does not contain native biological habitats, habitats for special-status species, or open space, while both the project site and the sites of other planned and pending developments are within urban areas that lacks native biological habitat. Therefore, cumulative development in El Monte generally would not adversely affect biological habitat and the proposed project would not contribute to any cumulative fragmentation of open space in the vicinity, isolation of open space, loss of sensitive habitats and species, or expansion into natural areas. The project's contribution to cumulative impacts would not be significant.

# 3.4 Cultural Resources

This section analyzes impacts to historically designated and potential historic resources within the Plan Area. If a proposed project may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource, then alternatives or modifications to the project, or mitigation measures to lessen impacts must be considered.

The first step in analyzing impacts is to determine the presence of designated and potential historic resources within the subject area. Because the Specific Plan does not include any particularly development project, the act of adopting the Specific Plan will not result in any direct changes to the physical environment. As a result, the evaluation of potential historic resources on a parcel by parcel, building by building, level was not conducted. However, a historic context statement and preliminary identification of resources was conducted for the Plan Area as contained in the Historic Resources Technical Report (see **Appendix D**). The historic context statements can be used to help evaluate the significance of individual properties and districts at some time in the future.

## A. Setting

### Cultural Setting

**Prehistory**. The prehistory of the Plan Area vicinity can generally be divided into four horizons: Early Man (ca. 10,000-6,000 B.C.), Milling Stone (6,000-3,000 B.C.), Intermediate (3,000 B.C. - A.D. 500), and late Prehistoric (A.D. 500- European contact). The Early Man Horizon is characterized by an emphasis on hunting, indicated by the presence of large projectile points and scrapers (Moratto 1984; Jones and Klar 2007). Milling Stone Horizon sites are marked by the dominance of milling stone implements indicating a focus on plant resources (Wallace 1955; Byrd and Raab 2007). The Intermediate Horizon is characterized by a shift toward hunting and maritime subsistence strategy. Tool kits reflect an increased diversity in subsistence strategies, with scrapers, drills, various projectile points, and shell fishhooks being manufactured (Wallace 1955). The Late Prehistoric Horizon featured a greater increase in subsistence diversity from the Intermediate period. More classes of artifacts were observed during this period, including use of high quality lithic materials for small, finely worked projectile points associated with the bow and arrow and more artistic artifacts (Wallace 1955).

**Ethnography**. The Plan Area of Potential Effect (APE) is located within the Gabrielino/Tongva ethnographic territory (Bean and Smith 1978:538; Kroeber 1925: Plate 57). Adjacent native groups include the Chumash and Tataviam/Alliklik to the north, Serrano and Cahuilla to the east, and Juaneño to the south. The term "Gabrielino" denotes those people who were administered by the Spanish at Mission San Gabriel, which included people from the traditional Gabrielino territory as well as other nearby groups (Bean and Smith 1978; Kroeber 1925). Many modern Gabrielino identify themselves as descendants of the indigenous people who lived within the Los Angeles Basin and refer to themselves as

Tongva (King 1994:12). The Tongva language belongs to the Takic branch of the Uto-Aztecan language family, which can be traced to the Great Basin region (Mithun 2004).

The Tongva established large permanent villages and smaller satellite camps in locations from the San Gabriel Mountains to the southern Channel Islands. Tongva subsistence was oriented around acorns supplemented by the roots, leaves, seeds, and fruits of a wide variety of plants. Meat sources included large and small mammals, freshwater and saltwater fish, shellfish, birds, reptiles, and insects (Langenwalter et al. 2001; Kroeber 1925; McCawley 1996).

**History.** California history is generally divided into three periods: the Spanish period (1769-1822), Mexican Period (1822-1848), and American Period (1848-present). The Spanish Period begins with the establishment of Mission San Diego de Alcalá by Father Junipero Serra, and the presidio of San Diego by Gaspar de Portolá in 1769. Portolá's expedition became the first Europeans to visit the San Gabriel Valley. Mission San Gabriel de Arcángel, founded in 1771, was the first permanent European occupation in the Los Angeles County area (Johnson et al. 1972). From the 1770s to the 1830s, Spanish soldiers and missionaries visited the area of El Monte, meaning "meadow" or "wooded place" (City of El Monte 2014).

The Mexican Period began when Mexico and the California territory won independence from Spain in 1821. During this time, the missions were secularized and extensive land grants were established (Dallas 1955). The Los Angeles region saw an increase in European settlement during the Mexican Period largely due to the many land grants (ranchos) to Mexican citizens by various governors. Governor Pío Pico and his predecessors made more than 600 rancho grants between 1833 and 1846, putting most of the state's lands into private ownership for the first time (Gumprecht 1999).

The end of the Mexican-American War and the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 marked the beginning of the American Period in California. The discovery of gold in northern California in 1848 led to the California Gold Rush, despite the first California gold being previously discovered in southern California at Placerita Canyon in 1842 (Guinn 1977; Workman 1935:26). Southern California remained dominated by cattle ranches in the early American period, though droughts and increasing population resulted in farming and more urban professions increasingly supplanted ranching through the late nineteenth century. In 1850, California was admitted into the United States and by 1853, the population of California exceeded 300,000. Thousands of settlers and immigrants continued to move into the state, particularly after completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869.

The City of El Monte's first permanent residents settled the area in the 1850s as farmers. In 1868, the Township of El Monte was established. Agriculture remained the focus of the economy throughout the early twentieth century. In the 1930s, farm profits dropped and many of the ranches and farms in El Monte were divided into residential communities. World War II brought industrial factories to the area and population, through annexation and new development, greatly increased. Today, El Monte is home to large industrial and commercial centers and continues to grow (City of El Monte 2014).

## Historical Setting

**Downtown El Monte Development History.** The town of Lexington was formed around the 1870s near the Rio Hondo River. The town was later mapped as the El Monte Township. Around the turn of the century a central business district formed around what is known today as "Valley Mall". The commercial district was along the old County Road from Los Angeles to San Bernardino generally following today's Valley Boulevard through the San Gabriel Valley. The commercial district also relied on the railroad for agricultural packing and shipping, as well as passenger travel and was the location of the Southern Pacific Railroad Depot and the Pacific Electric Depot. The booming agricultural industry around El Monte lead to the expansion of a commercial center which saw its greatest growth in the 1920s period. At that time, the street section of the commercial district east of the Rio Hondo was named "Main Street". Further growth and residential building in El Monte and the San Gabriel Valley lead to the evolution of the central business district into a local and regional shopping district along what was renamed "Valley Boulevard." Suburbanization and the importance of the automobile with freeway building lead to the decline in the shopping district throughout the 1950s. New revitalization plans to convert the district into a pedestrian mall, popular at the time, lead to the construction of the Valley Boulevard bypass, located one block north of the business district, and the design of a pedestrian friendly "Valley Mall" in 1964.

The Historic Resources Technical Report includes historic context statements for the area's development history, and themes associated with Downtown El Monte. These context statements can be used to help evaluate the significance of properties in the Downtown.

**Local Historic Groups and Museums.** The El Monte Historical Society retains a presence in the City and operates a museum within the El Monte Community Center on Tyler Avenue. Other local historic groups include the "La Historia Society Museum" also on Tyler Avenue, formed in 1993 documenting the old barrios of El Monte. The Los Angeles Conservancy is the County's largest non-profit historic preservation advocacy organization and was instrumental in nominating an El Monte property to the California Register of Historical Resources. The Conservancy also publishes a "Report Card" applying their grading to each City in the County.

**Formally Listed and Designated Historic Places in El Monte.** There are few properties in the City that have been formally listed as historic. Listing takes a coordinated effort by persons or groups, requiring research and findings as a part of a nomination process. Not all historic properties in the City have been formally listed, surveyed, or identified. According to records searches there are no properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Within the City of El Monte, the following properties were formally found to be historically significant and/or placed on a State historic register. In the 1980s, the El Monte Historical Society took an active part in landmarking properties associated with the City's pioneer history resulting in the creation of Pioneer Park, just east of the Plan Area. Recently the Los Angeles Conservancy took the initiative to nominate the Driftwood Drive-Thru Dairy as one of the best examples of drive-thru modern architecture.

**Currently Designated El Monte Properties.**

California Historical Landmark No. 975, ***El Monte-First Southern California Settlement by Immigrants from United States***. El Monte, on the bank of the San Gabriel River, played a significant part in California's early pioneer history. It was first an encampment on the Old Spanish Trail, an extension of the trail from Missouri to Santa Fe. By the 1850s, some began to call El Monte the "End of the Santa Fe Trail". Early in that decade a permanent settlement was established by immigrants from Texas, the first settlement in Southern California founded by citizens of the United States. LISTED: August 13, 1987.

California Point of Historical Interest No. LAN-47 (Plaque No. P715), ***Old El Monte Jail, Pioneer Park, Located at 3535 Santa Anita Avenue.*** The Old El Monte Jail was built by William Dodson and donated to the town in 1880. The jail consists of a one-room wooden structure, and it was used to contain undesirables until 1922. The jail housed its share of desperadoes over the years. LISTED: June 12, 1989

**Formally Found To Be Eligible.**

California Historical Resources, ***Driftwood Drive-Thru Dairy.*** Nominated and formally found eligible, but because the property owner objected to the listing the property was not officially placed on the Register. Its space age design is the only example of a drive-thru dairy in El Monte and one of the few remaining in the County. Nomination and Formal Finding: 2008

**Historic Resource Surveys and Evaluations in El Monte.** There is no process in El Monte to systematically inventory historic properties. The City does not have a survey program nor does it maintain a list of potential historic resources. The City does not have a historic resource ordinance or a register of historic properties.

As a part of the research conducted for the Historic Resources Technical Report, the State of California's "Directory of Properties in the Historic Property Data File" was obtained for the City. The list includes over 500 properties, but nearly all those properties were included because they underwent some type of historic resource review under Federal funding programs subject to the National Historic Preservation Act. None of those properties under review were found to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places based on the status codes given. The list also includes the few properties that have been designated at the State level as listed above.

There are some unlisted but well known historic properties in the City that have no designation. The old El Monte Library now houses the El Monte Historical Society and is a known local landmark but is not on any inventory list nor is it registered. The Victorian Farmhouse within Pioneer Park is a known local landmark of significance. There are many historic and culturally noteworthy properties in the City that have yet to be identified.

**Potential Historic Resources in the Plan Area**. The Historic Resources Technical Report is a preliminary effort in identifying specific properties, features, and sites of significance in the Downtown area. Although a

parcel by parcel reconnaissance or intensive level survey was not conducted, based on preliminary field work, data collection, and evaluation, the Report finds that there could be an eligible historic district within the Plan Area based on the "Valley Mall" association with the City's early commercial development.

Several properties along Valley Mall date from the City's initial "Main Street" period designed in the "Commercial Block" architectural style from 1917 to 1924. Some have been compromised through certain alterations. However, there remains a large number of both modified and original buildings from the early Modern architectural periods, including "Streamline Moderne", "Art Deco", and "Mid-Century Modern", that collectively convey a strong association with the period of "Valley Boulevard' when this was the City's premier shopping destination from 1933 to 1959.

Because of extensive alterations to properties over time, an evaluation of "integrity" would have to be conducted to formally make certain findings of eligibility. As there is no definition for local historic districts, definitions at the Federal and State level could be utilized.

The responsibility for identifying historic and potentially significant properties is given to local governments. Because there is no survey or inventory list in El Monte, it is difficult to gauge the extent of historic and significant properties in El Monte.

# B. Regulatory Framework

This portion lists the applicable laws, codes, rules, policies, plans, guidelines, historic register programs

## Federal

**National Historic Preservation Act.** The passage of the National Historic Preservation Act in 1966 (Act) made the Federal Government a full partner and a leader in historic preservation. Prior to the Act, citizen committees formed to protect historic properties from demolition. The Act defined a list of policy objectives. While Congress recognized that national goals for historic preservation could best be achieved by supporting the drive, enthusiasm, and wishes of local citizens and communities, it understood that the Federal Government must set an example through policies and practices in a leadership manner.

A major part of the Act was the creation of the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) program as well as codified the roles and responsibilities of Federal agencies. The National Register is maintained by the National Park Service, under the Department of the Interior, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and State Preservation Offices. Although the Act is not responsible for historic preservation, its major influence is the requirement to review the impacts of Federal actions on historic properties eligible for the National Register, through the Section 106 process. Review is limited to Federal actions and has a lesser influence on State and local preservation programs.

**National Register of Historic Places.** The National Register is a listing of properties nominated and officially placed on the nationwide list of historically significant properties. Resources can be districts,

structures, objects, or landscapes. A property is considered historically significant if it meets one or more of the National register criteria and retains sufficient historic integrity to convey its significance. The listing procedure starts with an application process followed by research, criteria finding, and owner consent. If an owner objects to listing, a formal finding of eligibility is made but the property is not officially placed on the register. Any person or organization can apply for listing. A property on the National Register is not subject to any special review unless local governments place a procedure. However, properties on the National Register are clearly CEQA historical resources. The National Parks Service is the keeper of the National Register. A series of National Register Bulletins have been published to aid in the findings of eligibility.

Criteria for listing on the National Register include association with events, persons, history, or prehistory, or embodiment of distinctive characteristics. These criteria are based on context (theme, place, and time), integrity (location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association), and, in the case of properties under 50 years old, exceptional importance.

Those criteria state that eligible resources comprise districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and any of the following:

a) Are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
b) Are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
c) Embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.
d) Have yielded or may be likely to yield, information important to history or prehistory.

Eligible properties must meet at least one of the criteria and exhibit "integrity." Historic integrity is measured by the degree to which the resource retains its historical attributes and conveys its historical character during its "period of significance." Historic properties either retain integrity or they do not. Within the concept of integrity, the National Register criteria recognize seven aspects or qualities that, in various combinations, define integrity. To retain historic integrity, a property will possess several, and usually most, of the aspects. Determining which of these aspects is most important to a property requires knowing why, where, and when the property is significant.

A historic district is defined as a geographically definable area of land containing a significant concentration of buildings, sites, structures, or objects united by past events or aesthetically by plan or physical development. A district's significance and integrity should help determine the boundaries.

Within historic districts, resources are identified as "contributing" and "noncontributing." A contributing building, site, structure, or object adds to the historic associations, historic architectural qualities, or

archaeological values for which a district is significant because it was either present during the "period of significance."

**Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines.** The Secretary of Interior Standards ("Standards") for Rehabilitation developed in 1986 are ten (10) basic principles created to help preserve the distinctive character of a historic building and its site while allowing for reasonable changes to meet contemporary needs. The "Secretary of Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings, 1995" were developed to help protect the nation's irreplaceable cultural resources by promoting consistent preservation practices. The Standards are a series of concepts about maintaining, repairing and replacing distinctive historic materials, as well as designing new additions or making alterations while maintaining historic significance and eligibility.

**Federal Historic Tax Credits.** At the National level, the 20 percent Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit is among the most popular for adaptive reuse of historic properties by the private sector. This tax credit is sometimes combined with other incentives to create a feasible rehabilitation project. Because this incentive is a tax credit, only National Register eligible properties qualify and work must be done in conformance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines.

## State

**California Office of Historic Preservation/State Historical Resources Commission.** The California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP), through its State Historic Preservation Officer and the State Historical Resources Commission, implements state preservation law, and is responsible for maintaining the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) and for administering federally- and state-mandated historic preservation programs. These programs include the California Historic Resources Inventory System (CHRIS), which uses Status Codes as a standardized system for classifying historical resources in the CHRIS database. The status codes correspond to the State's methodology for historic resource surveys. In addition, OHP oversees the California Historic Landmarks and California Points of Historical Interest programs.

**State Historic Preservation Plan.** California prepared the "Sustainable Preservation, California's Statewide Historic Preservation Plan 2013-2017." This plan describes the organization of preservation activities at the State level as well as list goals and objectives for the five-year period. They include fostering a preservation ethic, developing partnerships, and protecting resources.

**California Register of Historical Resources**. The California Register was created by the State legislature as an authoritative guide to be used to identify the State's historic resources and to indicate what properties are to be protected to the extent prudent and feasible, from substantial adverse change. The State Historical Resources Commission was tasked with administrative oversight of the California Register. The State of California created the California Register of Historical Resources in 1992 (Public Resources Code Section 5024.1). In addition to properties added since 1992, the register contains historic properties from

older landmarking programs such as the "Point of Historical Interest" program and the "Historical Landmark" program. The California Register also includes properties listed for determined eligible for listing in the National Register as well as properties evaluated as eligible under Section 106. The criteria for listing are like those of the National Register and include the following.

A resource may be listed in or eligible for listing on the California Register if it meets any one of the following criteria:

- It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history or the cultural heritage of California or the United States (Criterion 1).
- It is associated with the lives of persons important to local, California, or national history (Criterion 2).
- It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values (Criterion 3).
- It has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California, or the nation (Criterion 4).

Even without a formal determination of significance and nomination for listing on the California Register, a lead agency can determine that a resource is potentially eligible for listing. Like the National Register, an evaluation of "integrity" is necessary for California Register eligibility. California applies the same "integrity" criteria as the National Register, the seven aspects of integrity.

**California Public Resources Code.** Section 5097.9 of the Public Resources Code stipulates that it is contrary to the free expression and exercise of Native American religion to interfere with or cause severe irreparable damage to any Native American cemetery, place of worship, religious or ceremonial site, or sacred shrine.

Section 5097.5 of the Public Resources Code prohibits excavation or removal of any "vertebrate paleontological site or historical feature, situated on public lands, except with the express permission of the public agency having jurisdiction over such lands." Public Resources Code Section 30244 requires reasonable mitigation of adverse impacts to paleontological resources from development on public land. California Penal Code Section 623 identifies regulations for the protection of caves, including their natural, cultural, and paleontological contents. It specifies that no "material" (including all or any part of any paleontological item) will be removed from any natural geologically formed cavity or cave.

**California Health and Safety Code.** Section 7052 of the California Health and Safety Code states that it is a felony to disturb Native American cemeteries. If human remains are discovered or exposed during construction, Section 7050.5 requires that no further disturbance shall occur until the County Coroner has made the necessary findings as to origin and disposition pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98. If the remains are determined to be of Native American descent, the coroner has 24 hours to notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC). The NAHC will then contact the most likely

descendent of the deceased Native American, who will serve as a consultant on how to proceed with the remains (i.e., avoid, rebury).

**California Native American Historical, Cultural and Sacred Sites Act.** The California Native American Historical, Cultural, and Sacred Sites Act applies to both State and private lands. The Act requires that upon discovery of human remains, construction or excavation activity cease and the County coroner be notified. If the remains are of a Native American, the coroner must notify the NAHC. The NAHC then notifies those persons most likely to be related to the Native American remains. The Act stipulates the procedures that the descendants may follow for treating or disposing of the remains and associated grave goods.

**California Environmental Quality Act.** At the State level, the CEQA serves as a review process for the identification and impact findings with regard to historic properties, similar to the Section 106 process at the Federal level. CEQA is a State mandate for all discretionary decisions of all local lead agencies and State agencies. A wide range of environmental considerations must be given when a local government makes a land use decision which includes the impact on historical resources. Actions that have a significant impact on a property of historic significance should be mitigated to a less than significant level. If mitigation is not possible, then the lead agency must make a finding of overriding considerations. If the local approval includes demolition of a historic resource, no mitigation is available since permanent removal of a resource is significant and cannot be mitigated. Alternatives can be considered to avoid or lessen the impact but are not required. Projects that include treatments and alterations to historic properties that meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines can be deemed exempt from CEQA review.

**Mills Act.** The State-sponsored Mills Act property tax program is an incentive program implemented at the local level. This incentive is especially popular with single family homeowners who enter into a contract with the City and agree to preserve the property in exchange for a reduction in property taxes as coordinated with the County tax assessor. Once a qualified property is recorded as a Mills Act contract, the tax assessor applies a new "historic" assessed value to the property which typically results in a substantial tax reduction. The enabling legislation must first be enacted at the local level to begin the program. The local jurisdiction determines the parameters and conditions of the program. Because of its popularity, some local governments cap the number of applications processed each year or apply special conditions.

**State Historic Building Code.** Under California Health and Safety sections 18950-18961, alternative building regulations and building standards are available for the rehabilitation, preservation, restoration, reconstruction, or reconstruction of buildings or structures designated as historic buildings. These standards and regulation are intended to facilitate the restoration or change of occupancy to preserve original architectural features while also allowing for energy conservation and cost effectiveness while ensuring safety for occupants. Properties must be "qualified historic properties" and be recognized as such at the local level.

**AB 52 Tribal Consultation.** With the implementation of Assembly Bill 52 (AB 52) last July, California welcomed a new chapter in the ongoing relationship between public agencies and Native American tribes. This new law recognizes California tribes' expertise regarding cultural resources and provides a method for agencies to incorporate tribal knowledge into their CEQA environmental review and decision-making processes. Under AB 52, California tribes now have the ability to establish, through a formal notice letter, a standing request to consult with a lead agency regarding any proposed project subject to CEQA in the geographic area with which the tribe is traditionally and culturally affiliated. To help public agencies familiarize themselves with the AB 52 process, this article outlines the basic framework of the new law and offers suggestions for agencies engaging in AB 52 consultation efforts.

## Local

**City of El Monte General Plan (2011).** The recent 2011 El Monte General Plan included a "Cultural Resources" Element that forms the basis for understanding historic resource policy and plans at the local level. The primary guiding principles are outlined as a series of goals and objectives. Although the City currently does not have a historic preservation program, the following goals and policies from the General Plan as listed below forms the foundation for a historic preservation program. At this time, only a few of the policies have been put into action, but others may be under City consideration.

### VISION El Monte

**Theme 1: Friendly and Diverse Community.** El Monte will be a friendly and welcoming city that provides a safe environment; values family, diversity, community; and cherishes, preserves, and builds on our rich history and culture.

**Theme 6: Sustainable Growth.** El Monte will grow in a sustainable way, preserving and enhancing neighborhoods while fostering revitalization and quality development in downtown and along commercial corridors.

### Land Use Element – Downtown El Monte

**Goal LU-3.** Distinct and identifiable residential neighborhoods and commercial, industrial and office districts that reflect and augment the historical, cultural, economic, and social fabric and roles in El Monte.

- **LU-3.7 History and Culture**. Incorporate a broad range of history, culture, and public art expressions throughout each of El Monte's districts to promote community identity, preserve and

**Goal LU-5.** Establish the Downtown as the mixed-use, mixed-income, and cultural heart of El Monte. Its historical role is augmented by new housing, business, parks, cultural facilities, and transit-oriented development. The population is diverse, the architecture is human scaled, and the character authentic.

- **LU-5.10 Architectural Design.** Require that residential, commercial, institutional, and other uses exhibit a high level of architectural and site quality in accordance with the principles defined in the Community Design Element and applicable specific plans.

### Cultural Resources Element

**Goal CR-1.** A multifaceted program for enhancing cultural resources in the City as a means to acknowledge and celebrate the leadership, achievements, accomplishments, and diverse histories of its residents.

- **CR-1.1 Cultural Resources Index.** Ratify the cultural resources index as a living document recording people, places, and events of local significance to the City of El Monte, and establish a protocol for updates and additions.
- **CR-1.2 Cultural Resources Map.** Create a cultural resources map capturing the dynamic layers of El Monte's history; locate the original map at a major civic institution and use reproductions throughout the city as appropriate.
- **CR-1.3 Cultural Heritage Commission.** Establish a commission to develop and oversee cultural resources programs, including public art programs, annual cultural resources awards, collaborative school curriculum, and special events.
- **CR-1.4 Cultural Resources Ordinances.** Update the El Monte Municipal Code to include authorizing ordinances that govern the designation, preservation, and recognition of cultural resources in El Monte and to delineate the roles of commissions.
- **CR-1.5 Cultural Resources Plan.** Create a comprehensive cultural resources plan, based on the cultural resource index and map, to imbue the natural and built environment with symbols and improvements drawing from El Monte's rich cultural heritage.
- **CR-1.6 Cultural Resources Education.** Inspire public support and recognition of cultural resources through a public education program, including school district curriculum, public art, library corners, displays in local museums, and special events.
- **CR-1.7 Government Role.** Fully support the establishment of a cultural resources program and provide funding, staffing, and other mechanisms to maintain the program.

**Goal CR-2.** A community that embraces the rich diversity of residents and the cultural heritage they bring from all over the world by incorporating local cultural history and special places into the fabric of the built environment.

- **CR-2.1 Cultural Districts.** Designate cultural districts based on historical development and cultural settlement patterns. Where little historical precedent exists, evaluate the creation of a district from existing site or urban design characteristics.
- **CR-2.2 Historic Overlay Zones.** Assess the feasibility of creating historic overlay zones, as relevant, that contain elements of potential historic significance such as the Valley Mall, El Monte Theatre, Wye Street/Rurban Homestead area, and Medina Court.
- **CR-2.3 Cultural Elements.** Develop elements relevant to defining traces of urban fabric: elements may include new gateways, streetscape elements such as kiosks with maps, special street signs, distinct textures for crosswalks or sidewalks, landscaping specific to districts, relevant public art, and interpretive signs.
- **CR-2.4 Public Spaces.** Assess the feasibility of creating distinctive public space and walking routes in each district and Citywide, with a central gathering place and an interpretive map of the

history of El Monte. An example of this would be the El Monte Historic Plaza between the Valley Mall and Valley Boulevard.

- **CR-2.5 Capital Improvements.** Create a plan for making infrastructure improvements (e.g., signage, historical markers, park improvements, public art, and other media) that incorporate relevant images of El Monte's cultural heritage.
- **CR-2.6 Cultural Icons.** Develop a program for placement of City symbols on sidewalks, street signs, retaining walls, freeway ramps, crosswalks, and other infrastructure to signify El Monte's unique cultural heritage.

**Goal CR-3.** A community that respects and re-creates its natural environmental and cultural legacy through a comprehensive program to restore the natural environment.

- **CR-3.1 Community Forest.** Develop a community forest program that balances indigenous trees and plants and modern requirements for maintenance, water conservation, and aesthetics, as a visual reminder of the City's heritage and natural environment.
- **CR-3.2 Landscape Amenities.** Create an integrated network of greenways, medians, parkways, and other landscaped amenities using a consistent and meaningful palette that balances the need for maintenance and cultural significance.
- **CR-3.3 Emerald Necklace.** Continue to support, through a cooperative public/private/regional partnership, the realization of the Emerald Necklace Vision Plan (see Parks and Recreation Element for more detail).
- **CR-3.4 Cultural Exhibits.** Include cultural exhibits and displays within linear parks, along greenways, and at other recreational facilities of the Emerald Necklace and City parks to acknowledge the unique contributions of people of all backgrounds.
- **CR-3.5 Cultural Walk.** Create an El Monte cultural history river history walk linking key sites throughout the City with representative symbols, displays, and information acknowledging each cultural heritage of the city.
- **CR-3.6 School Curriculum.** Create an educational packet for El Monte public schools explaining the role of the watershed in the City's historical and cultural heritage, including its historical use, watershed management, and conservation.
- **CR-3.7 Yearly Events.** Create a series of yearly events and celebrations fostering youth and family involvement in the preservation, maintenance, and restoration of the cultural and environmental landscape of El Monte.

**Goal CR-4.** A community that acknowledges, identifies, protects, enhances, and expands its inventory of historic buildings, sites, and resources.

- **CR-4.1 El Monte Historic Register.** Establish an El Monte Register of Historic Buildings and Places and seek listing for appropriate properties to the national and state registers of historic places.
- **CR-4.2 Architectural Inventory.** Survey all potentially historic structures and create an architectural period and styles inventory for El Monte as a means to identify potential historic or locally significant structures.

- **CR-4.3 Local List of Historic Places.** Create a local list of historic places for properties that do not meet criteria of the national or state Registers but are important to protect in terms of local significance. Tie this to the cultural resources index.
- **CR-4.4 Historic Preservation Ordinance.** Adopt a preservation ordinance that would require a special permit to demolish or modify a historic resource.
- **CR-4.5 Preservation and Rehabilitation.** Promote the preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reuse of older structures through the Mills Act and other programs.
- **CR-4.6 School Curricula.** Link El Monte's Register of Historic Places and national and state monuments to multidisciplinary school curricula (literature, art, and social studies), with a living history component to include guest speakers and local field trips.
- **CR-4.7 Adaptive Reuse.** Encourage the adaptive reuse of buildings of historical significance to serve meaningful contemporary uses while preserving the character, spirit, and original identity of the structures.

**Goal CR-5.** A community that celebrates the diversity of El Monte neighborhoods and recognizes people for their hard work, vision, and leadership in defining and shaping the City's past and future community.

- **CR-5.1 Community Events.** Support events of community-wide significance that represent and promote the City's varied cultural influences and community values.
- **CR-5.2 Museums.** Working with partnerships, strive to financially support all museums in the City in order to preserve El Monte's unique history and culture and provide accessible and adequate venues for residents of all ages to appreciate these resources.
- **CR-5.3 Gateways and Signage.** Preserve existing traces of the City's historic urban fabric throughout residential, commercial, industrial, and open space areas by creating a network of cultural districts, markers, and streetscape symbols.
- **CR-5.4 Interpretive Signage.** Expand the public display of historical and cultural displays, commemorative plaques and public art works testifying to the significance of historic events, persons, buildings, or establishments no longer in existence.
- **CR-5.5 Story of El Monte Art and Cultural Resources Program.** Develop a program for creating and placing interpretive historical markers at significant and visible sites in El Monte using interpretive categories from the index.
- **CR-5.6 Art and Public Places.** Support an art in public places program through creating a cultural resources/public art map, establishing a public arts commission, creating a public arts master plan, and sponsoring and placing public art in El Monte.
- **CR-5.7 City Regulations.** Use incentives, land use regulations, design guidelines, and other City policies to integrate the creation and display of art and cultural resources into every aspect of the community.

**City of El Monte Municipal Code.** The El Monte Municipal Code does not contain provisions for protection, review, or identification of historic resources but does contain, in Chapter 17.72, Downtown El Monte Retail Core Façade Design Standards, design guidance focused on signage, awnings, lighting, and

other elements of front, side and rear facades along Valley Mall. The standards neither address the historic nature of the retail core nor include historic property design guideline, however some of the guidelines seem to speak to the unique character of the area. The City does not have a historic preservation ordinance. The El Monte Municipal Code also includes Comprehensive Design Guidelines (Chapter 17.86).

The building code chapters of the El Monte Municipal Code under 15.01.130 includes adoption, in its entirety, Part 8 of the Historical Building Code of California. This code provision is seen as an incentive for rehabilitation work on historic structures. There does not appear to be a City implementation component for enacting this provision and it appears that the historical code has not been used before.

Under Chapter 14.03 (Tree Preservation), the Municipal Code has a provision for identifying and protecting trees that may be deemed historically or culturally significant.

The City Municipal Code also includes the establishment of the "Patriotic Commission," the "Cultural Commission," and the "Planning Commission." These appointed City bodies may deal with matters associated with historic and cultural resources, but it is not clear in what manner.

# C. Significance Threshold

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.4 addresses the mitigation of impacts to archaeological and historical resources. Preservation in place is the preferred manner of mitigating impacts to archaeological resources (14 CCR 15126.4(b)(3)). Preservation in place may be accomplished by planning construction to avoid the resource, incorporating sites in parks or open space, covering sites with chemically stable and culturally sterile fill, or deeding the site into a permanent conservation easement. When data recovery excavation of an archaeological site is the only feasible mitigation, a detailed data recovery plan must be prepared and adopted prior to any excavation.

For buildings and structures, the maintenance, repair, restoration, preservation, conservation, or reconstruction consistent with the Secretary of Interior's Standards and Guidelines for the Treatment of Historic Properties is considered mitigation of impacts to a less than significant level (14 CCR 15126.4(b)(1)). Simply documenting a historical resource, however, will not mitigate the effects of demolition to a less than significant level (14 CCR 15126.4(b)(2)).

In order to evaluate impacts to archaeological resources, archaeologists conduct field surveys, resource evaluations, and archaeological monitoring.

**Field Surveys.** Each archaeological resource survey begins with an assessment of the general conditions at a project site by conducting a records search at the regional California Historical Resource Information System (CHRIS) information center. If it is determined that a project site has been surveyed in the last five years, the records search may be sufficient. If not, archaeologists conduct an intensive pedestrian survey of the project area. Any newly identified cultural resources are recorded on Department of Parks and

Recreation (DPR) Series 523 forms and submitted to the client and regional CHRIS information center. Results of field surveys are written up in a technical report following Archaeological Resource Management Reports: Recommended Contents and Format (ARMR Guidelines) developed by the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP).

**Resource Evaluations.** Archaeologists conduct resource evaluation for National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) eligibility through archival research, thorough recordation, and archaeological testing, when necessary. Archaeologists conduct Phase II archaeological testing and Phase III data recovery investigations using fieldwork methods including mapping and photo documentation, surface collection, excavation of shovel test pits, hand-powered augur pits, and standard test units. The archaeologists prepare soil profiles and collect samples for further analysis. Laboratory methods include artifact and ecofact analysis and sample submittal for special studies such as obsidian hydration and radiocarbon dating. Phase II and Phase III investigations are written up in technical reports following ARMR guidelines.

**Monitoring.** In areas deemed to have high archaeological sensitivity, construction, and mitigation monitoring is conducted to mitigate impacts to any archaeological resources that may be encountered during ground disturbing activities. Archaeological monitoring includes identifying and implementing the appropriate level of monitoring, observing construction activities, clearly communicating regulations to staff and crew, conducting environmental education programs, and documenting the status of mitigation progress.

The following criteria are based on Appendix G of the *State CEQA Guidelines*. The effects of the proposed Specific Plan on recreation are considered to be significant if the proposed Specific Plan would:

a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in Section 15064.5.

b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a Tribal Cultural Resource as defined in Section 21074.

c) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5.

d) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature.

e) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries.

Based on the discussion included in the IS/NOP prepared for the project (**Appendix A**) no impact was associated with threshold 5, and impacts related to threshold 4 were determined to be less than significant. Impacts related to threshold 3 were determined to be less than significant after inclusion of mitigation measures CR-1 and CR-2 shown below. Therefore the following discussion focuses on thresholds 1 and 2.

**CR-1.** a. An archaeological resources survey of the Plan Area shall be conducted under the direction of an archaeologist meeting the Secretary of Interior's (1983) professional qualification standards. Any

archaeological resources that are encountered shall be recorded on State of California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) Series 523 forms, and the potential for project-related impacts to such sites shall be considered. Any historic age (over 50 years old) archaeological sites within the Plan Area shall be evaluated for NRHP/CRHR eligibility to assess the potential of the Specific Plan Project to impact to these resources.

b. An archaeological resources technical report shall be prepared that incorporates the results of a cultural resources records search, pedestrian survey, and any NRHP and CRHR-eligibility evaluations. It should describe the methods and results of the literature review, Native American consultation, intensive pedestrian survey, and the evaluations of any resources for NRHP and CRHR eligibility. The report should include maps depicting the area surveyed for archaeological resources, the locations of archaeological resources identified during the survey, and site records or updates for archaeological resources encountered during the survey. The report shall be prepared in accordance with the California Office of Historic Preservation's Archaeological Resource Management Reports (ARMR) guidelines (OHP 1990). As such, it shall include an environmental setting and detailed cultural setting that includes prehistoric, ethnographic, and historic period subsections. The recommendations of the report must be reviewed before issuing approval for development within the Plan Area. All applicable recommendations of the report must be incorporated into the conditions of approval for projects approved in the Plan Area. The recommendations may include protection of resources, required buffers around resources, recovery requirements for resources that can be removed and designation of recipient (most likely descendant or institution).

# D. Impacts and Mitigation Measures

## Impact CR-1

**Impact CR-1** The Specific Plan has the potential to cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of historical resources. Implementation of the Plan could include demolition, and/or substantial alteration of historic resources currently unidentified.

The Plan Area is within a historically sensitive area. Demolition or substantial alteration to a historic property or site is an irreversible impact. Preliminary work indicates that historic resources, sites, and districts likely exist within the Plan Area but these resources have not been fully evaluated. The Specific Plan is intended to help revitalize the Valley Mall area as well as encourage transit-oriented development, redevelopment, mixed uses, increased residential development, and improved public realm conditions to create a vibrant and walkable downtown. The Specific Plan provides for increased development, density, and types of uses. As a result, demolitions, modifications, alterations, and additions to properties is expected to occur. For those properties over 45 years old and that have not been fully surveyed, impacts could result in loss of historic fabric and features. There may be an eligible historic district within the Plan Area, demolitions and inappropriate alterations to possible contributors could compromise the integrity of

the district or individual properties and render them ineligible for listing on a register program. Future identification of historic resources and an analysis of impacts of specific development proposals will be necessary and can be done systematically or on a case-by-case basis.

## Mitigation Measures

a) **Significance and Eligibility Findings.** For all proposed alterations and development in the Plan Area, the City and project applicants shall determine the presence of historical resources that meet the CEQA definition for structures and objects older than 45 years, an age threshold used by the California Office of Historic Preservation when evaluating properties for significance. For properties with proposed development changes, the City and the project applicant shall determine the impacts of proposed changes in accordance with CEQA.

b) **Secretary of the Interior's Standards.** To ensure that both known and unknown historic properties are appropriately maintained, the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of historic resources shall meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation based on analysis and findings. Any proposal to preserve, rehabilitate, restore, reconstruct, adaptively reuse a known historic resource shall be done in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, shall be deemed to not be a significant impact under CEQA, and may be "exempt."

c) **Code Enforcement.** The City shall monitor activity in the Plan Area to be sure alterations are being done under the applicable requirements, permits, and City oversight. Alterations that impact historic features to eligible properties may require further review.

## Significance after Mitigation

Impacts would be less than significant. Implementation of the Specific Plan would not directly result in the demolition of historic resources. Development standards in the Specific Plan place height limits along Valley Mall, the most historically sensitive area within the Plan Area, intended to help preserve the character of the City's historic shopping district. Future preservation planning guided by the goals and objectives of the City's General Plan, along with proper CEQA review for discretionary project approvals involving structures and objects over 45 years old, or any other action involving the demolition of structures and objects over 45 years old, would require further review to assess impacts. For any future demolition or substantial alterations (not in conformance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines) to properties and objects found to be historically significant, no mitigation would be available since such impacts are irreversible. In such cases the lead agency would need to adopt a "Statement of Overriding Considerations" prior to project approvals.

## Impact CR-2

**Impact CR-2:** Ground disturbance associated with new construction could uncover previously unknown buried archeological deposits or human remains.

The Plan Area does not include known prehistoric and historic archaeological resources. The vast majority of the Plan Area, where new or more intense development could be facilitated by the proposed Specific Plan, has been disturbed by previous development over many decades and historical periods. Therefore, archeological resources that may have existed at or near the surface have likely been disturbed by past development. As a result, the uppermost sediments are not likely to contain archeological resources.

However, there is a reasonable potential that the development that could occur under the Specific Plan could take place on sites with previously unknown archaeological resources or at depths (for example, underground parking) that could encounter undisturbed native soils with prehistoric resources.

Effects on archeological resources are only knowable once a specific project has been proposed, because the effects are highly dependent on both the individual project site conditions and the characteristics of the proposed ground-disturbing activity. In order to ensure that development within the Plan Area does not have a detrimental effect on archaeological resources, each project will need to be assessed as it proposed. Therefore mitigation is required.

## Mitigation Measures

a) **Archaeological Survey.** For new development that would require ground disturbance, an archaeological resources survey of the Plan Area shall be conducted under the direction of an archaeologist meeting the Secretary of Interior's (1983) professional qualification standards. Any archaeological resources that are encountered shall be recorded on State of California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) Series 523 forms, and the potential for project-related impacts to such sites shall be considered. Any historic-age (over 50 years old) archaeological sites within the Plan Area shall be evaluated for NRHP/CRHR eligibility to assess the potential of the Specific Plan Project to impact to these resources.

   An archaeological resources technical report shall be prepared that incorporates the results of a cultural resources records search, pedestrian survey, and any NRHP and CRHR-eligibility evaluations. It shall describe the methods and results of the literature review, Native American consultation, intensive pedestrian survey, and the evaluations of any resources for NRHP and CRHR eligibility. The report should include maps depicting the area surveyed for archaeological resources, the locations of archaeological resources identified during the survey, and site records or updates for archaeological resources encountered during the survey. The report shall be prepared in accordance with the Office of Historic Preservation's Archaeological Resource Management Reports (ARMR) guidelines (OHP 1990). As such, it shall include an environmental setting and detailed cultural setting that includes prehistoric, ethnographic, and historic period subsections.

b) **Resource Recovery Procedures.** In the event that archaeological resources are unearthed during project construction, all earth disturbing work within the vicinity of the find must be temporarily suspended or redirected until an archaeologist has evaluated the nature and significance of the find. After the find has been appropriately mitigated, work in the area may resume. A Native American representative shall be retained to monitor any mitigation work associated with Native American cultural material.

c) **Human Remains Recovery Procedures.** If human remains are unearthed, State Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 requires that no further disturbance shall occur until the County Coroner has made the necessary findings as to the origin and disposition pursuant to the Public Resources Code

Section 5097.98. If the remains are determined to be of Native American descent, the coroner has 24 hours to notify the Native American Heritage Commission. Additional surveys will be required if the Project changes to include unsurveyed areas.

### Significance after Mitigation

Impacts would be less than significant.

## E. Cumulative Impacts

Full implementation of the proposed Specific Plan would increase density and intensity of existing land uses, adding up to 1,971 residential units, 1,475,900 sf of commercial and industrial development, and 883 hotel rooms. Potential impacts to cultural and historic resources associated with the proposed Specific Plan would be less than significant through implementation of mitigation measures and similar findings were made for implementation of the City of El Monte General Plan, which encompasses the Plan Area. Cumulative impacts to these resources would not be significant. The proposed Specific Plan, the City of El Monte General Plan Open Space and Conservation Element, and County and State regulations would protect historic and archaeological resources on a case-by-case basis as projects are considered. Therefore, the proposed Specific Plan's impact on cultural resources would not be cumulatively considerable.

# 3.5 Geology and Soils

This chapter analyzes the potential issues related to geology and mineral resources.

## A. Setting

### Topography

The Plan Area is located within the City of El Monte (the "City") in Los Angeles County. The Plan Area is within the heart of the city and encompasses a triangular area bounded by the railroad tracks to the north, Santa Anita Avenue to the west and Ramona Boulevard to the south.

El Monte is in the central San Gabriel Valley, part of the larger Los Angeles Basin. The San Gabriel Valley is surrounded by the San Gabriel Mountains to the north, the Puente Hills and Montebello Hills to the south, and the San Jose Hills to the southeast. El Monte is located in a relatively flat topographic area. The city is approximately 300 feet above mean sea level (msl).

El Monte lies within the Transverse Ranges geomorphic province, characterized by numerous earthquake faults. The Transverse Ranges consist of a distinct group of east/west-trending ranges and valleys that truncate the prevailing north-northwest trend of the southern Coast Ranges and Peninsular Ranges. This province encompasses approximately 325 square miles, and extends from Point Arguello, located along the western coast of California, eastward to Joshua Tree National Park, where it merges with the Mojave and Colorado Desert provinces.

Within the Transverse Ranges there are abundant compressional reverse and thrust faults, and curvilinear strike-slip faults that generally trend in an east/west direction. The foremost structural feature that has affected the geologic evolution of the province is the San Andreas Fault. This fault has a northwest strike, located both to the north and south of the Transverse Ranges, but changes to a west-northwest strike within the Transverse Ranges, thus forming a bend in the fault. Many of these faults break the ground surface south of the San Andreas Fault along the southern flank of the San Gabriel and Santa Monica Mountains. The thrust faults that break the surface south of the San Andreas Fault dip southward and merge with the broad, buried fold and thrust belts that underlie the Los Angeles basin and the southern margin of the Transverse Ranges.

### Geology and Soil Characteristics

The El Monte Quadrangle contains Quaternary (1.8 million years ago to the present) alluvial and fluvial sedimentary deposits, which are susceptible to liquefaction. The northwestern half of the quadrangle consists of deposits of varying amounts of sand, gravel, and silt layers that are incorporated within large, composite alluvial fans. In the southeastern half of the quadrangle flood plain and overbank deposits associated with the San Gabriel and Rio Hondo rivers constitute most of the surficial deposits. The general

mineralogy of the Quaternary sediments reflects the composition of Pre-Tertiary crystalline bedrock units exposed in the San Gabriel Mountains to the north, and some Tertiary sediments exposed in the Montebello Hills and Puente Hills to the south (DOC, 1998).

The majority of El Monte is covered by valley alluvial sediments (gravel, sand, and silt) from Quaternary age deposited by streams flowing out of the San Gabriel Mountains (El Monte General Plan EIR, 2011).

## Faults

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) defines active faults as those that have had surface displacement during Holocene time (about the last 11,000 years). Surface displacement can be recognized by the existence of cliffs in alluvium, terraces, offset stream courses, fault troughs and saddles, the alignment of depressions, sag ponds, and the existence of steep mountain fronts. Potentially active faults are faults that have had surface displacement during the last 1.6 million years. Inactive faults have not had surface displacement in the last 1.6 million years. The Plan Area is in the vicinity of several faults. The City does not lie on top of any active earthquake faults, however several active and potentially active faults affect the City (El Monte General Plan, 2011). The major faults that have the potential to affect the greater Los Angeles Basin, and therefore the City are described below.

**San Andreas.** The San Andreas Fault, the most likely source of a major earthquake in California, is approximately 35 miles northwest of the Plan Area. The San Andreas Fault is the primary surface boundary between the Pacific and the North American plates. There have been numerous historic earthquakes along the San Andreas Fault, and it generally poses the greatest earthquake risk to California. In general, the San Andreas Fault is likely capable of producing a Maximum Credible Earthquake (MCE) of 8.0 (Caltrans 1996).

**Newport-Inglewood.** The Newport Inglewood Fault, approximately 12 miles southwest of the Plan Area, stretches about 47 miles from Culver City through Inglewood and other coastal communities to Newport Beach, at which point it extends east-southeast into the Pacific Ocean. The Newport Inglewood Fault is capable of producing a Maximum Credible Earthquake (MCE) of 7.4 (Caltrans 1996).

**Whittier.** The Whittier Fault, located approximately 4 miles southwest of the Plan Area, stretches 25 miles along the Chino Hills range between the cities of Chino Hills and Whittier. The Whittier Fault is likely capable of producing a Maximum Credible Earthquake (MCE) of 7.2 (Caltrans 1996).

Other active faults in the Plan Area vicinity include the San Gabriel, Palos Verdes, Santa Monica, Sierra Madres, Puente Hills Blind Thrust, Raymond Hill, Workman Hill, and Clamshell-Sawpit Canyon faults. These faults can cause earthquakes that could result in significant property damage and loss of life. Recent earthquakes that have affected El Monte include the Northridge Earthquake (1994), Whittier Earthquake (1987), and Landers Quake (City of El Monte, 2011).

## Ground Shaking

Seismically induced ground shaking covers a wide area and is greatly influenced by the distance of the site to the seismic source, soil conditions, and depth to groundwater. The peak horizontal ground acceleration forecast to occur in the City during an earthquake with a 10 percent probability of exceedence in 50 years, that is, an average return period of 475 years, is roughly 0.6g, where g is the acceleration of gravity (CGS 2007). An acceleration of 0.6g corresponds roughly to an intensity of VIII on the MMI Scale (Wald 1999). In an Intensity VIII earthquake, damage is slight in specially designed structures; ordinary substantial buildings are damaged considerably and partially collapse; and damage is great in poorly built structures. Objects such as chimneys, factory stacks, columns, monuments, and walls fall, and heavy furniture is overturned (USGS 2009).

Hazards associated with seismically induced ground shaking include liquefaction, seismically induced settlement, and earthquake-triggered landslides. Movement along any of the faults near the City could potentially generate substantial ground shaking in the Plan Area leading to these secondary hazards, as discussed below.

## Liquefaction and Seismically-Induced Settlement

Liquefaction is defined as the sudden loss of soil strength due to a rapid increase in soil pore water pressure resulting from seismic ground shaking. Liquefaction potential depends on such factors as soil type, depth to ground water, degree of seismic shaking, and the relative density of the soil. When liquefaction of the soil occurs, buildings and other objects on the ground surface may tilt or sink, and lightweight buried structures (such as pipelines) may float toward the ground surface. Liquefied soil may be unable to support its own weight or that of structures, which could result in loss of foundation bearing or differential settlement. Liquefaction may also result in cracks in the ground surface followed by the emergence of a sand-water mixture.

Seismically induced settlement occurs in loose to medium dense unconsolidated soil above groundwater, which compress (settle) when they are subject to seismic shaking. The settlement can be exacerbated by increased loading, such as from the construction of buildings. Settlement can also result solely from human activities including improperly placed artificial fill and structures built on soils or bedrock materials with differential settlement rates.

Localities susceptible to liquefaction-induced damage in El Monte are underlain by loose, water-saturated, granular sediment within 40 feet of the groundwater surface. Due to these soil conditions and historical water table levels, the entire El Monte area, including the Plan Area, has potential for permanent ground displacement from liquefaction (City of El Monte General Plan 2011). According to the Seismic Hazard Zone maps for the El Monte Quadrangle, the Plan Area is located in a potential liquefaction zone (DOC, 1999).

### Slope Stability and Landslides

Landslides result when the driving forces that act on a slope (i.e., the weight of the slope material and the weight of objects placed on it) are greater than the slope's natural resisting forces (i.e., the shear strength of the slope material). Slope instability may result from natural processes, such as the erosion of the toe of a slope by a stream or by ground shaking caused by an earthquake. Slopes can also be modified artificially by grading or by the addition of water or structures to a slope. Development that occurs on a slope can substantially increase the frequency and extent of potential slope stability hazards.

Areas susceptible to landslides are typically characterized by steep, unstable slopes in weak soil/bedrock units, which have a record of previous slope failure. There are numerous factors that affect the stability of the slope, including: slope height and steepness, type of materials, material strength, structural geologic relationships, ground water level, and level of seismic shaking.

Although landslides can be induced by seismic activity, the City's terrain is relatively flat and the majority of El Monte, including the Plan Area, is not located in an area where landslides are considered a hazard.

### Expansive Soils

Expansive soils possess a "shrink-swell" behavior, which is the cyclic change in volume (expansion and contraction) that occurs in fine-grained clay sediments from the process of wetting and drying. Highly expansive soils can cause structural damage to foundations and roads without proper structural engineering and are generally less suitable or desirable for development than non-expansive soils because of the necessity for detailed geologic investigations and costlier grading application. Expansive soils generally are not present in El Monte because soils in the City do not have clay as a major constituent.

### Erosion

Soil erosion is also a natural ongoing process that transports, erodes, and displaces soil particles through a transport mechanism such as flowing water or wind. Erosion is the physical detachment and movement of soil materials through natural processes or human activities. El Monte is mostly built out, relatively flat, and with no hillsides that would be subject to substantial soil erosion, landslide, and mudslide. A small portion of El Monte in the far northeastern corner bordering Arcadia contains some earthquake-induced landslide areas where erosion may occur. However, the Plan Area is not part of this area.

## B. Regulatory Framework

### Federal

**International Building Code.** The International Building Code (IBC), published by the International Code Council (ICC), covers major aspects of construction and design of structures and buildings, except for three-story one and two-family dwellings and town homes. The 2006 International Building Code replaces the 1997 Uniform Building Code and contains provisions for structural engineering design. The

International Building Code addresses the design and installation of structures and building systems through requirements that emphasize performance. The IBC includes codes governing structural as well as fire- and life-safety provisions covering seismic, wind, accessibility, egress, occupancy, and roofs.

## State

**Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act**. The Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act was signed into law in 1972 (14 C.C.R. §§ 3600 et seq.). The purpose of this Act is to prohibit the location of most structures for human occupancy across the traces of active faults and to thereby mitigate the hazard of fault rupture. Under the Act, the State Geologist is required to delineate "Earthquake Fault Zones" along known active faults in California (14 C.C.R. §3601). Cities and counties affected by the zones must regulate certain development projects within the zones. They must withhold development permits for sites within the zones until geologic investigations demonstrate that the sites are not threatened by surface displacement from future faulting (14 C.C.R. §3603).

**Seismic Hazards Mapping Act**. The California Geologic Survey, formerly the California Department of Conservation (DOC), Division of Mines and Geology (CDMG), provides guidance with regard to seismic hazards. Under CDMG's Seismic Hazards Mapping Act (1990), seismic hazard zones are to be identified and mapped to assist local governments in land use planning (California Public Resources Code §§ 2690 et seq.). The intent of these maps is to protect the public from the effects of strong ground shaking, liquefaction, landslides, ground failure, or other hazards caused by earthquakes. In addition, CDMG's Special Publications 117, "Guidelines for Evaluating and Mitigating Seismic Hazards in California," provides guidance for the evaluation and mitigation of earthquake-related hazards for projects within designated zones of required investigations.

**California Building Code**. California law provides a minimum standard for building design through the California Building Code (CBC) (C.C.R. Title 24). Chapter 23 of the CBC contains specific requirements for seismic safety. Chapter 29 regulates excavation, foundations, and retaining walls. Chapter 33 of the CBC contains specific requirements pertaining to site demolition, excavation, and construction to protect people and property from hazards associated with excavation cave-ins and falling debris or construction materials. Chapter 70 of the CBC regulates grading activities, including drainage and erosion control. Construction activities are subject to occupational safety standards for excavation, shoring, and trenching as specified in California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA) regulations (C.C.R. Title 8).

## Local

**City of El Monte Municipal Code**. El Monte Municipal Code ("EMMC") Section 16.10.040 (Tentative Tract Map accompanying data and reports) requires a tentative map to be accompanied by the following data or reports:

1. **Soils Report**. A preliminary soils report prepared in accordance with the City's grading ordinance shall be submitted. If the preliminary soils report indicates the presence of critically expansive soils or other soil problems which, if not corrected, would lead to structural defects, the soils report accompanying the final map shall contain an investigation of each lot within the subdivision.
2. **Engineering Geology and/or Seismic Safety Report**. A preliminary engineering geology and/or seismic safety report, prepared in accordance with City guidelines, is required if the subdivision lies within a "medium risk" or "high risk" geologic hazard area, as shown on maps on file contained within the Safety Element of the El Monte General Plan.

Section 17.11.120 of the EMMC (Grading Design Plan) requires grading that is designed to minimize soil erosion, runoff, and water waste. To prevent excessive erosion and runoff, the ordinance recommends that the project applicant avoid disruption of natural drainage patterns, avoid soil compaction in landscaped areas, and grade so that all irrigation and normal rainfall remains within property lines.

**City of El Monte General Plan.** The City of El Monte General Plan contains several policies to address geology and soils. Specifically, the Public Health and Safety Element contains the following goal and policies:

**Goal PHS-1.** Adequate protection of public health and safety, infrastructure, and City facilities and services from earthquakes from geologic and seismic hazards.

**PHS-1.1**. Building Codes. Ensure that new and retrofitted buildings comply with the most recently adopted City and state building codes governing seismic and structural design to minimize the potential for damage, personal injury, and loss from earthquakes.

**PHS-1.2**. Geotechnical Study. As necessary, require detailed geologic, geotechnical, or soil investigations in areas of potential seismic or geologic hazards as part of the environmental and/or development review process.

**PHS-1.3**. Structural Hazards. Mitigate structural hazards related to seismic events through appropriate methods such as excavating and refilling land with engineered fill, ground improvements, structural design, and other appropriate mitigation.

# C. Significance Thresholds

Assessment of impacts is based on review of site information and conditions and City information regarding geologic issues. In accordance with Appendix G of the *State CEQA Guidelines*, a project would result in a significant impact if it would do any of the following:

1. Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including:
   a. the risk of loss, injury, or death involving rupture of a known earthquake fault
   b. strong seismic ground shaking
   c. seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction
   d. landslides.
2. Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil.

3. Result in the loss of a unique geologic feature.
4. Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse.
5. Be located on expansive soil, creating substantial risks to life or property.
6. Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater.

Potential impacts associated with significance criteria 1(a, b, d), 3, 5, and 6 were found in the Initial Study (Appendix A) to be less than significant. Therefore, the impact analysis below is focused on significance criteria 1c, 2, and 4.

# D. Impacts and Mitigation Measures

## Impact GEO-1

| | |
|---|---|
| **Impact GEO-1** | The Plan Area is located in an area identified as a potential liquefaction zone on the City of El Monte General Plan Liquefaction Hazards map. As a result, any projects built within the proposed Specific Plan would be subject to liquefaction. Impacts would be considered significant. |

As discussed in the Setting, there are a number of active and potentially active fault systems located around the Plan Area. The Plan Area is therefore subject to earthquakes that can result in intense ground shaking causing liquefaction. According to the Seismic Hazard Zone maps for the El Monte Quadrangle and the City of El Monte General Plan, the entire Plan Area is located in a potential liquefaction zone (DOC, 1999; City of El Monte General Plan, 2011).

Buildout under the Specific Plan would add residential and commercial development. The entire Plan Area is located in a liquefaction zone, therefore, new structures could experience substantial damage from liquefaction.

As noted in the Setting, the El Monte General Plan includes policies to address geology and seismicity, as presented below. Compliance with these policies would minimize the potential for construction and development to experience damage from liquefaction by ensuring appropriate design of structures. These policies, specifically policies PHS-1.1 through PHS-1.3, would also minimize the potential for health and safety hazards to occur in association with any such damage.

Any development proposed within the Plan Area would be required to conform to CBC Chapter 16 for the construction of new buildings or structures. This section requires specific engineering design and construction measures which would be implemented to anticipate and avoid the potential for adverse impacts to human life and property caused by liquefaction. Additionally, standards in the Uniform Building Code (UBC) would require an assessment of this hazard and the incorporation of design measures into

structures to mitigate this hazard. Compliance with existing regulations would ensure that building foundations are properly anchored and stabilized to withstand damage from liquefaction.

Section 16.10.040 of the EMMC requires a soils report and engineering geology and/or seismic safety report for all proposed subdivisions. The soils report required for new projects must indicate the presence of critically expansive soils or other soil issues associated with the project site. The geology report is required if a subdivision lies within a medium risk or high risk geologic hazard area, as identified in the Safety Element of the El Monte General Plan. However, these reports are not required for other types of new development within the Plan Area. However, if a project does not include the subdivision of parcels, then a soils report is not required. Therefore, the impact would be considered significant.

## Mitigation Measures

**Site-Specific Soil Investigation.** Site-specific soil investigations and geotechnical investigations shall be completed prior to project construction to identify potential specific hazards in the Plan Area. The investigations shall involve soil sampling and reports recommending foundation and structure design measures to mitigate potential geologic hazards. The report shall be submitted to the City for review and approval and all recommendations shall be incorporated into project design. Additionally, all new development shall comply with the standards of the California Building Code for the construction of new buildings.

## Significance after Mitigation

Mitigation Measure GEO-1 would assure that impacts from liquefaction are reduced to less than significant levels because soil and geotechnical investigations will be required for each site-specific project.

## Impact GEO-2

| | |
|---|---|
| **Impact GEO-2** | The Plan would encourage new construction in the area which could cause soil erosion. Adherence to applicable laws, regulations, and the City of El Monte General Plan, the proposed Specific Plan would not result in substantial soil erosion or loss of top soil, or expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving lateral spreading, subsidence, or collapse. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant. |

El Monte has relatively flat terrain. The Plan Area encompasses approximately 115 acres made up of transit, commercial, and residential development that are all generally level, which limits the potential for substantial soil erosion. The grading and excavation phase when soils are exposed has the highest potential for erosion. Ground-disturbing activities that would occur with implementation of the proposed Specific Plan would include site-specific grading for foundations, building pads, access roads, and utility trenches. Temporary erosion could occur during project construction.

The proposed project would be required to comply with erosion control standards administered by the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) through the National Pollutant Discharge

Elimination System (NPDES) permit process, which requires implementation of nonpoint source control of storm water runoff. Such controls would be included as best management practices (BMPs) identified in Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plans (SWPPP) for future development in the Plan Area.

The California Stormwater Quality Association (CASQA) BMP Handbook for Construction (2009) provides guidance for drafting project-specific BMPs for erosion control, among other storm water issues. For example, CASQA Measure WE-1 (Wind Erosion Control) identifies a variety of BMPs to stabilize exposed surfaces and minimize activities that suspend to track dust particles (CASQA 2009). This is commonly achieved by applying soil binders or water to disturbed surfaces. Furthermore, Section 17.11.120 of the EMMC requires a grading design plan for projects that minimizes soil erosion and runoff. To prevent erosion and runoff the grading plan is submitted as part of the landscape documentation package and includes avoided disruption of natural drainages and soil compaction in landscaped areas.

Lateral spreading occurs as a result of liquefaction; therefore, liquefaction prone areas would also be susceptible to lateral spreading. The entire Plan Area was identified by the *El Monte General Plan Public Health and Safety Element* as being in an area prone to liquefaction, and is therefore susceptible to lateral spreading.

Lateral spreading, subsidence and collapse from seismic hazards in the Plan Area include the potential for unstable soils to result in damage to existing or proposed infrastructure, and/or to introduce potential hazards to human health and safety. Unstable soils may include any materials not capable of supporting a selected land use. Development within the City would be required to comply with the CBC regarding the minimum development standards for structural design and site development. The CBC, which is based on the UBC, has been modified for California conditions with numerous more detailed and/or stringent regulations. The CBC requires that "classification of the soil at each building site shall be determined when required by the building official" and that "the classification shall be based on observation and any necessary test of the materials disclosed by borings or excavations." The CBC provides standards, including, but not limited to: excavation, grading, and earthwork construction; fills and embankments; expansive soils; foundation investigations; and liquefaction potential and soils strength loss. Thus, an acceptable degree of soil stability can be achieved for soil materials by the CBC-required incorporation of soil treatment programs (replacement, grouting, compaction, drainage control, etc.) in the excavation and construction plans to address site-specific soil conditions.

The El Monte General Plan includes policies to address geology and seismicity, including Policy PHS-1.2. Compliance with these policies would minimize the potential for impacts to people or structures from lateral spreading, subsidence, and collapse in the Plan Area.

Compliance with CBC standards and El Monte General Plan, including the recommendations of the geotechnical evaluation, will be required as a condition of a grading permit and/or building permit, and would be monitored by the City's Building Division during the development review and plan check process for each individual project.

With compliance with above listed requirements, impacts of the proposed Specific Plan related to soil erosion and loss of topsoil would be less than significant.

### Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are necessary beyond adherence to applicable laws and regulations.

### Significance after Mitigation

Impacts would be less than significant without mitigation.

## E. Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts for biological resources consider both localized and regional impacts. The Cumulative Projects list of currently planned and pending projects in the general vicinity, which includes 1,884 residential units, 1,485,900 sf of non-residential development, 87 assisted living units, and 883 hotel rooms. Development in and around the Plan Area would increase the number of structures and people exposed to potential geological hazards, including effects associated with seismic events such as strong shaking. The El Monte General Plan, which includes the Plan Area, accounts for an increase in population and housing units in the Plan Area; as described, conformance with the CBC and local policies, as well as other laws and regulations mentioned above, would reduce project-specific impacts associated with geology and soils to a less than significant level. Additionally, geologic features do not worsen as a result of development on the surface. Therefore development in the project area and would not cause increased geologic hazards in surrounding areas, nor would it add to potential geologic hazards that may affect planned and pending development outside the Plan Area. Potential impacts associated with geology and soils would not be cumulatively considerable.

# 3.6 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

This section discusses the potential greenhouse gas emissions, and resulting impacts, that would result from buildout of the Specific Plan.

## A. Setting

### Climate Change and Greenhouse Gases

Climate change is the observed increase in the average temperature of the Earth's atmosphere and oceans along with other substantial changes in climate (such as wind patterns, precipitation, and storms) over an extended period of time. The term "climate change" is often used interchangeably with the term "global warming," but "climate change" is preferred to "global warming" because it helps convey that there are other changes in addition to rising temperatures. The baseline against which these changes are measured originates in historical records identifying temperature changes that have occurred in the past, such as during previous ice ages. The global climate is continuously changing, evidenced by repeated episodes of substantial warming and cooling documented in the geologic record. The rate of change has typically been incremental with warming or cooling trends occurring over the course of thousands of years. The past 10,000 years have been marked by a period of incremental warming as glaciers have steadily retreated across the globe. However, scientists have observed acceleration in the rate of warming during the past 150 years. Per the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC 2013), the understanding of anthropogenic warming and cooling influences on climate has led to a high confidence (95 percent or greater chance) that the global average net effect of human activities has been the dominant cause of warming since the mid-20$^{th}$ century (IPCC 2013).

Gases that absorb and re-emit infrared radiation in the atmosphere are called greenhouse gases (GHG). The gases that are widely seen as the principal contributors to human-induced climate change include carbon dioxide ($CO_2$), methane ($CH_4$), nitrous oxides ($N_2O$), fluorinated gases, such as hydrofluorocarbons (HFC) and perfluorocarbons (PFC), and sulfur hexafluoride ($SF_6$). Water vapor is excluded from the list of GHGs because it is short-lived in the atmosphere and its atmospheric concentrations are largely determined by natural processes, such as oceanic evaporation.

GHGs are emitted by both natural processes and human activities. Of these gases, $CO_2$ and $CH_4$ are emitted in the greatest quantities from human activities. Emissions of $CO_2$ are largely by-products of fossil fuel combustion, whereas $CH_4$ results from off-gassing associated with agricultural practices and landfills. Observations of $CO_2$ concentrations, globally-averaged temperature, and sea level rise are generally well within the range of the extent of the earlier IPCC projections. The recently observed increases in $CH_4$ and $N_2O$ concentrations are smaller than those assumed in the scenarios in the previous assessments. Each IPCC assessment has used new projections of future climate change that have become more detailed as the models have become more advanced.

Man-made GHGs, many of which have greater heat-absorption potential than $CO_2$, include fluorinated gases and sulfur hexafluoride ($SF_6$) (California Environmental Protection Agency [CalEPA] 2006). Different types of GHGs have varying global warming potentials (GWP). The GWP of a GHG is the potential of a gas or aerosol to trap heat in the atmosphere over a specified timescale (generally 100 years). Because GHGs absorb different amounts of heat, a common reference gas ($CO_2$) is used to relate the amount of heat absorbed to the amount of the gas emissions, referred to as "carbon dioxide equivalent" ($CO_2e$), and is the amount of a GHG emitted multiplied by its GWP. Carbon dioxide has a 100-year GWP of one. By contrast, methane $CH_4$ has a GWP of 25, meaning its global warming effect is 25 times greater than carbon dioxide on a molecule per molecule basis (IPCC 2007).

The accumulation of GHGs in the atmosphere regulates the earth's temperature. Without the natural heat trapping effect of GHGs, Earth's surface would be about 34°C cooler (CalEPA 2006). However, it is believed that emissions from human activities, particularly the consumption of fossil fuels for electricity production and transportation, have elevated the concentration of these gases in the atmosphere beyond the level of naturally occurring concentrations. The following discusses the primary GHGs of concern.

*Carbon Dioxide*. The global carbon cycle is made up of large carbon flows and reservoirs. Billions of tons of carbon in the form of $CO_2$ are absorbed by oceans and living biomass (i.e., sinks) and are emitted to the atmosphere annually through natural processes (i.e., sources). When in equilibrium, carbon fluxes among these various reservoirs are roughly balanced (United States Environmental Protection Agency [U.S. EPA] 2014). $CO_2$ was the first GHG demonstrated to be increasing in atmospheric concentration, with the first conclusive measurements being made in the second half of the 20$^{th}$ century. Concentrations of $CO_2$ in the atmosphere have risen approximately 40 percent since the industrial revolution. The global atmospheric concentration of $CO_2$ has increased from a pre-industrial value of about 280 parts per million (ppm) to 391 ppm in 2011 (IPCC 2007, Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration [NOAA] 2010). The average annual $CO_2$ concentration growth rate was larger between 1995 and 2005 (average: 1.9 ppm per year) than it has been since the beginning of continuous direct atmospheric measurements (1960–2005 average: 1.4 ppm per year), although there is year-to-year variability in growth rates (NOAA 2010). Currently, $CO_2$ represents an estimated 74 percent of total GHG emissions (IPCC 2007). The largest source of $CO_2$ emissions, and of overall GHG emissions, is fossil fuel combustion.

*Methane*. Methane ($CH_4$) is an effective absorber of radiation, though its atmospheric concentration is less than that of $CO_2$, and its lifetime in the atmosphere is limited to 10 to 12 years. It has a GWP approximately 25 times that of $CO_2$. Over the last 250 years, the concentration of $CH_4$ in the atmosphere has increased by 148 percent (IPCC 2007), although emissions have declined from 1990 levels. Anthropogenic sources of $CH_4$ include enteric fermentation associated with domestic livestock, landfills, natural gas and petroleum systems, agricultural activities, coal mining, wastewater treatment, stationary and mobile combustion, and certain industrial processes (U.S. EPA 2014).

*Nitrous Oxide*. Concentrations of nitrous oxide ($N_2O$) began to rise at the beginning of the industrial revolution and continue to increase at a relatively uniform growth rate (NOAA 2010). $N_2O$ is produced

by microbial processes in soil and water, including those reactions that occur in fertilizers that contain nitrogen, fossil fuel combustion, and other chemical processes. Use of these fertilizers has increased over the last century. Agricultural soil management and mobile source fossil fuel combustion are the major sources of $N_2O$ emissions. The GWP of nitrous oxide is approximately 298 times that of $CO_2$ (IPCC 2007).

*Fluorinated Gases (HFCS, PFCS and $SF_6$).* Fluorinated gases, such as hydrofluorocarbons (HFC), perfluorocarbons (PFC), and sulfurhexafluoride ($SF_6$), are powerful GHGs that are emitted from a variety of industrial processes. Fluorinated gases are used as substitutes for ozone-depleting substances such as chlorofluorocarbons (CFC), hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFC), and halons, regulated since the mid-1980s because of their ozone-destroying potential and phased out under the Montreal Protocol (1987) and Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990. Electrical transmission and distribution systems account for most $SF_6$ emissions, while PFC emissions result from semiconductor manufacturing and as a by-product of primary aluminum production. Fluorinated gases are typically emitted in smaller quantities than $CO_2$, $CH_4$, and $N_2O$, but these compounds have much higher GWPs. $SF_6$ is the most potent GHG the IPCC has evaluated.

## Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory

Worldwide anthropogenic emissions of GHGs were approximately 46,000 million metric tons (MMT or gigatonne) CO2e in 2010 (IPCC 2014). CO2 emissions from fossil fuel combustion and industrial processes contributed about 65 percent of total emissions in 2010. Of anthropogenic GHGs, carbon dioxide was the most abundant accounting for 76 percent of total 2010 emissions. Methane emissions accounted for 16 percent of the 2010 total, while nitrous oxide and fluorinated gases account for six and two percent respectively (IPCC 2014).

Total U.S. GHG emissions were 6,525.6 MMT $CO_2e$ in 2012 (U.S. EPA 2014). Total U.S. emissions have increased by 4.7 percent since 1990; emissions decreased by 3.4 percent from 2011 to 2012 (U.S. EPA 2014). The decrease from 2011 to 2012 was due to a decrease in the carbon intensity of fuels consumed to generate electricity due to a decrease in coal consumption, with increased natural gas consumption. Additionally, relatively mild winter conditions, especially in regions of the United States where electricity is important for heating, resulted in an overall decrease in electricity demand in most sectors. Since 1990, U.S. emissions have increased at an average annual rate of 0.2 percent. In 2012, the transportation and industrial end-use sectors accounted for 28.2 percent and 27.9 percent of $CO_2$ emissions (with electricity-related emissions distributed), respectively. Meanwhile, the residential and commercial end-use sectors accounted for 16.3 percent and 16.4 percent of $CO_2$ emissions, respectively (U.S. EPA 2014).

Based on the California Air Resources Board (ARB) California Greenhouse Gas Inventory for 2000-2013, California produced 459.3 MMT $CO_2E$ in 2013 (ARB 2015). The major source of GHG in California is transportation, contributing 37 percent of the state's total GHG emissions. Industrial sources are the second largest source of the state's GHG emissions (ARB 2015). California emissions are due in part to its large

size and large population compared to other states. However, compared to other states, California's per capita fuel use and GHG emissions are lower due to the state's relatively mild climate. The ARB has projected statewide unregulated GHG emissions for the year 2020 will be 509.4 MMT $CO_2e$ (ARB 2014). These projections represent the emissions that would be expected to occur in the absence of any GHG reduction actions.

## Potential Effects of Climate Change

Globally, climate change has the potential to affect numerous environmental resources through potential impacts related to future air temperatures and precipitation patterns. Scientific modeling predicts that continued GHG emissions at or above current rates would induce more extreme climate changes during the 21st century than were observed in the 20th century. Long-term trends have found that each of the past three decades has been warmer than all the previous decades in the instrumental record, and the decade from 2000 through 2010 was the warmest. The global, combined land and ocean temperature data show an increase of about 0.89°C (0.69°C–1.08°C) over the period 1901–2012 and about 0.72°C (0.49°C–0.89°C) over the period 1951–2012, when described by a linear trend. Several independently analyzed data records of global and regional Land-Surface Air Temperature (LSAT) obtained from station observations are in agreement that LSAT as well as sea surface temperatures have increased. In addition to these findings, there are identifiable signs that global warming is currently taking place, including substantial ice loss in the Arctic over the past two decades (IPCC 2013).

According to the CalEPA's 2010 Climate Action Team Biennial Report, potential impacts of climate change in California may include loss of snow pack, sea level rise, and increases in extreme heat days per year, high ozone days, large forest fires, and drought years (CalEPA 2010). Below is a summary of some of the potential effects that could be experienced in California as a result of climate change.

**Air Quality.** Higher temperatures conducive to air pollution formation could worsen air quality in California. Climate change may increase the concentration of ground-level ozone, but the magnitude of the effect, and therefore its indirect effects, are uncertain. If higher temperatures are accompanied by drier conditions, the potential for large wildfires could increase, which, in turn, would further worsen air quality. However, if higher temperatures are accompanied by wetter, rather than drier conditions, the rains would tend to temporarily clear the air of particulate pollution and reduce the incidence of large wildfires, thereby ameliorating the pollution associated with wildfires. Additionally, severe heat accompanied by drier conditions and poor air quality could increase the number of heat-related deaths, illnesses, and asthma attacks throughout the state (California Energy Commission [CEC] 2009).

**Water Supply.** Analysis of paleoclimatic data (such as tree-ring reconstructions of stream flow and precipitation) indicates a history of naturally and widely varying hydrologic conditions in California and the west, including a pattern of recurring and extended droughts. Uncertainty remains with respect to the overall impact of climate change on future water supplies in California. However, the average early spring snowpack in the Sierra Nevada decreased by about 10 percent during the last century, a loss of 1.5

million acre-feet of snowpack storage. During the same period, sea level rose eight inches along California's coast. California's temperature has risen 1°F, mostly at night and during the winter, with higher elevations experiencing the highest increase. Many Southern California cities have experienced their lowest recorded annual precipitation twice in the past decade. In a span of only two years, Los Angeles experienced both its driest and wettest years on record (California Department of Water Resources [DWR] 2008, California Climate Change Center [CCCC] 2009).

This uncertainty complicates the analysis of future water demand, especially where the relationship between climate change and its potential effect on water demand is not well understood. The Sierra snowpack provides the majority of California's water supply by accumulating snow during the state's wet winters and releasing it slowly during the state's dry springs and summers. Based upon historical data and modeling DWR projects that the Sierra snowpack will experience a 25 to 40 percent reduction from its historic average by 2050. Climate change is also anticipated to bring warmer storms that result in less snowfall at lower elevations, reducing the total snowpack (DWR 2008).

**Hydrology and Sea Level Rise.** As discussed above, climate change could potentially affect the amount of snowfall, rainfall, and snow pack; the intensity and frequency of storms; flood hydrographs (flash floods, rain or snow events, coincidental high tide and high runoff events); sea level rise and coastal flooding; coastal erosion; and the potential for salt water intrusion. According to The Impacts of Sea-Level Rise on the California Coast, prepared by the California Climate Change Center (CCCC) (CCCC 2009), climate change has the potential to induce substantial sea level rise in the 21st century. The rising sea level increases the likelihood and risk of flooding. The rate of increase of global mean sea levels over the 2001-2010 decade, as observed by satellites, ocean buoys and land gauges, was approximately 3.2 mm per year, which is double the observed 20th century trend of 1.6 mm per year (World Meteorological Organization [WMO] 2013). As a result, sea levels averaged over the last decade were about 8 inches higher than those of 1880 (WMO 2013). Sea levels are rising faster now than in the previous two millennia, and the rise is expected to accelerate, even with robust GHG emission control measures. The most recent IPCC report (2013) predicts a mean sea–level rise of 11-38 inches by 2100. This prediction is more than 50 percent higher than earlier projections of 7-23 inches, when comparing the same emissions scenarios and time periods. A rise in sea levels could result in coastal flooding and erosion and could jeopardize California's water supply due to salt water intrusion. In addition, increased CO2 emissions can cause oceans to acidify due to the carbonic acid it forms. Increased storm intensity and frequency could affect the ability of flood-control facilities, including levees, to handle storm events.

**Agriculture.** California has a $30 billion annual agricultural industry that produces half of the country's fruits and vegetables. Higher CO2 levels can stimulate plant production and increase plant water-use efficiency. However, if temperatures rise and drier conditions prevail, water demand could increase; crop-yield could be threatened by a less reliable water supply; and greater air pollution could render plants more susceptible to pest and disease outbreaks. In addition, temperature increases could change the time of year certain crops, such as wine grapes, bloom or ripen, and thereby affect their quality (CCCC 2006).

**Ecosystems and Wildlife.** Climate change and the potential resulting changes in weather patterns could have ecological effects on a global and local scale. Increasing concentrations of GHGs are likely to accelerate the rate of climate change. Scientists project that the average global surface temperature could rise by 1.0-4.5°F (0.6-2.5°C) in the next 50 years, and 2.2-10°F (1.4-5.8°C) in the next century, with substantial regional variation. Soil moisture is likely to decline in many regions, and intense rainstorms are likely to become more frequent. Rising temperatures could have four major impacts on plants and animals: (1) timing of ecological events; (2) geographic range; (3) species' composition in communities; and (4) ecosystem processes, such as carbon cycling and storage (Parmesan 2006).

# B. Regulatory Framework

The following regulations address both climate change and GHG emissions.

## International

The United States is, and has been, a participant in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) since it was produced in 1992. The UNFCCC is an international environmental treaty with the objective to achieve the "stabilization of GHG concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system" (United Nations 1992: 7) This is generally understood to be achieved by stabilizing global GHG concentrations between 350 and 400 ppm, in order to limit the global average temperature increases between 2.0 and 2.4°C above pre-industrial levels (IPCC 2007). The UNFCCC itself does not set limits on GHG emissions for individual countries or enforcement mechanisms. Instead, the treaty provides for updates, called "protocols," that would identify mandatory emissions limits.

Five years later, the UNFCCC brought nations together again to draft the Kyoto Protocol (1997). The Kyoto Protocol established commitments for industrialized nations to reduce their collective emissions of six GHGs ($CO_2$, $CH_4$, $N_2O$, $SF_6$, HFCs, and PFCs) to 5.2 percent below 1990 levels by 2012. The United States is a signatory of the Kyoto Protocol, but Congress has not ratified it and the United States has not bound itself to the Protocol's commitments (UNFCCC 2007). The first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol ended in 2012. Governments, including 38 industrialized countries, agreed to a second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol beginning January 1, 2013 and ending either on December 31, 2017 or December 31, 2020, to be decided by the Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol at its seventeenth session (UNFCCC 2011).

At the convention held in Durban, South Africa (United Nations 2011), governments decided to adopt a universal legal agreement on climate change. Work began on that task immediately under a new group called the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action. Progress was also made regarding the creation of a Green Climate Fund (GCF) for which a management framework was adopted (UNFCCC 2011, United Nations 2011).

In December 2015, the 21st session of the Conference of the Parties (COP21) adopted the Paris Agreement. The deal requires all countries that ratify the agreement to commit to cutting greenhouse gas emissions "as soon as possible" (Worland 2015). The agreement includes commitments to (1) achieve a balance between sources and sinks of greenhouse gases in the second half of this century; (2) to keep global temperature increase "well below" 2˚C or 3.6˚F and to pursue efforts to limit it to 1.5˚C; (3) to review progress every five years; and (4) to spend $100 billion a year in climate finance for developing countries by 2020 (UNFCCC 2015). The agreement includes both legally binding measures, like reporting requirements, and voluntary or non-binding measures, such as setting emissions targets for individual countries (Worland 2015).

## Federal

The United States Supreme Court in *Massachusetts et al. v. Environmental Protection Agency et al.* ([2007] 549 U.S. 05-1120) held that the U.S. EPA has the authority to regulate motor-vehicle GHG emissions under the federal Clean Air Act. The U.S. EPA issued a Final Rule for mandatory reporting of GHG emissions in October 2009. This Final Rule applies to fossil fuel suppliers, industrial gas suppliers, direct GHG emitters, and manufacturers of heavy-duty and off-road vehicles and vehicle engines, and requires annual reporting of emissions. The first annual reports for these sources were due in March 2011.

On May 13, 2010, the U.S. EPA issued a Final Rule that took effect on January 2, 2011, setting a threshold of 75,000 tons of $CO_2e$ per year for GHG emissions. New and existing industrial facilities that meet or exceed that threshold will require a permit after that date. On November 10, 2010, the U.S. EPA published the "PSD and Title V Permitting Guidance for Greenhouse Gases." The U.S. EPA's guidance document is directed at state agencies responsible for air pollution permits under the Federal Clean Air Act to help them understand how to implement GHG reduction requirements while mitigating costs for industry. It is expected that most states will use the U.S. EPA's new guidelines when processing new air pollution permits for power plants, oil refineries, cement manufacturing, and other large pollution point sources.

On January 2, 2011, the U.S. EPA implemented the first phase of the Tailoring Rule for GHG emissions Title V Permitting. Under the first phase of the Tailoring Rule, all new sources of emissions are subject to GHG Title V permitting if they are otherwise subject to Title V for another air pollutant and they emit at least 75,000 tons of $CO_2e$ per year. Under Phase 1, no sources were required to obtain a Title V permit solely due to GHG emissions. Phase 2 of the Tailoring Rule went into effect July 1, 2011. At that time new sources were subject to GHG Title V permitting if the source emits 100,000 tons of $CO_2e$ per year, or they are otherwise subject to Title V permitting for another pollutant and emit at least 75,000 tons of $CO_2e$ per year.

On July 3, 2012 the U.S. EPA issued the final rule that retains the GHG permitting thresholds that were established in Phases 1 and 2 of the GHG Tailoring Rule. These emission thresholds determine when Clean Air Act permits under the New Source Review Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD) and Title V Operating Permit programs are required for new and existing industrial facilities.

## State

The California Air Resources Board ("CARB") is responsible for the coordination and oversight of State and local air pollution control programs in California. California has a numerous regulations aimed at reducing the state's GHG emissions. These initiatives are summarized below.

Assembly Bill (AB) 1493 (2002), California's Advanced Clean Cars program (referred to as "Pavley"), requires ARB to develop and adopt regulations to achieve "the maximum feasible and cost-effective reduction of GHG emissions from motor vehicles." On June 30, 2009, U.S. EPA granted the waiver of Clean Air Act preemption to California for its greenhouse gas emission standards for motor vehicles beginning with the 2009 model year. Pavley I took effect for model years starting in 2009 to 2016 and Pavley II, which is now referred to as "LEV (Low Emission Vehicle) III GHG" will cover 2017 to 2025. Fleet average emission standards would reach 22 percent reduction from 2009 levels by 2012 and 30 percent by 2016. The Advanced Clean Cars program coordinates the goals of the Low Emissions Vehicles (LEV), Zero Emissions Vehicles (ZEV), and Clean Fuels Outlet programs and would provide major reductions in GHG emissions. By 2025, when the rules will be fully implemented, new automobiles will emit 34 percent fewer GHGs and 75 percent fewer smog-forming emissions from their model year 2016 levels (ARB 2011).

In 2005, former Governor Schwarzenegger issued Executive Order (EO) S-3-05, establishing statewide GHG emissions reduction targets. EO S-3-05 provides that by 2010, emissions shall be reduced to 2000 levels; by 2020, emissions shall be reduced to 1990 levels; and by 2050, emissions shall be reduced to 80 percent below 1990 levels (CalEPA 2006). In response to EO S-3-05, CalEPA created the Climate Action Team (CAT) that published the Climate Action Team Report (the "2006 CAT Report") in March 2006 (CalEPA 2006). The 2006 CAT Report identified a recommended list of strategies that the state could pursue to reduce GHG emissions. These are strategies that could be implemented by various state agencies to ensure that the emission reduction targets in EO S-3-05 are met and can be met with existing authority of the state agencies. The strategies include the reduction of passenger and light duty truck emissions, the reduction of idling times for diesel trucks, an overhaul of shipping technology/infrastructure, increased use of alternative fuels, increased recycling, and landfill methane capture, etc. In April 2015, Governor Brown issued EO B-30-15, calling for a new target of 40% below 1990 levels by 2030.

California's major initiative for reducing GHG emissions is outlined in Assembly Bill 32 (AB 32), the "California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006," signed into law in 2006. AB 32 codifies the statewide goal of reducing GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020 (essentially a 15 percent reduction below 2005 emission levels; the same requirement as under S-3-05), and requires ARB to prepare a Scoping Plan that outlines the main State strategies for reducing GHGs to meet the 2020 deadline. In addition, AB 32 requires ARB to adopt regulations to require reporting and verification of statewide GHG emissions.

After completing a comprehensive review and update process, ARB approved a 1990 statewide GHG level and 2020 limit of 427 MMT of $CO_2e$. The Scoping Plan was approved by ARB on December 11, 2008,

and included measures to address GHG emission reduction strategies related to energy efficiency, water use, and recycling and solid waste, among other measures. Many of the GHG reduction measures included in the Scoping Plan (e.g., Low Carbon Fuel Standard, Advanced Clean Car standards, and Cap-and-Trade) have been adopted over the last five years. Implementation activities are ongoing and ARB is currently the process of updating the Scoping Plan.

In May 2014, ARB approved the first update to the AB 32 Scoping Plan. The 2013 Scoping Plan update defines ARB's climate change priorities for the next five years and sets the groundwork to reach post-2020 goals set forth in EO S-3-05. The update highlights California's progress toward meeting the "near-term" 2020 GHG emission reduction goals defined in the original Scoping Plan. It also evaluates how to align the State's longer-term GHG reduction strategies with other State policy priorities, such as for water, waste, natural resources, clean energy and transportation, and land use (ARB 2014).

Senate Bill (SB) 97, signed in August 2007, acknowledges that climate change is an environmental issue that requires analysis in California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) documents. In March 2010, the California Resources Agency (Resources Agency) adopted amendments to the State CEQA Guidelines for the feasible mitigation of GHG emissions or the effects of GHG emissions. The adopted guidelines give lead agencies the discretion to set quantitative or qualitative thresholds for the assessment and mitigation of GHGs and climate change impacts.

ARB Resolution 07-54 establishes 25,000 MT of GHG emissions as the threshold for identifying the largest stationary emission sources in California for purposes of requiring the annual reporting of emissions. This threshold is just over 0.005 percent of California's total inventory of GHG emissions for 2004.

SB 375, signed in August 2008, enhances the state's ability to reach AB 32 goals by directing ARB to develop regional GHG emission reduction targets to be achieved from passenger vehicles for 2020 and 2035. In addition, SB 375 directs each of the state's 18 major Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) to prepare a "sustainable communities strategy" (SCS) that contains a growth strategy to meet these emission targets for inclusion in the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). On September 23, 2010, ARB adopted final regional targets for reducing GHG emissions from 2005 levels by 2020 and 2035. The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) was assigned targets of an eight percent reduction in GHGs from transportation sources by 2020 and a 13 percent reduction in GHGs from transportation sources by 2035. In the SCAG region, SB 375 also provides the option for the coordinated development of subregional plans by the subregional councils of governments and the county transportation commissions to meet SB 375 requirements.

In early 2010, ARB adopted a regulation for reducing $SF_6$ emissions from electric power system gas-insulated switchgear (17 CCR 95350). $SF_6$ gas is commonly used as an arc quenching and insulating medium for high and medium voltage switchgear systems used in electrical substations. The regulation requires owners of such switchgear to (1) annually report their $SF_6$ emissions; (2) determine the emission rate relative to the $SF_6$ capacity of the switchgear; (3) provide a complete inventory of all gas-insulated

switchgear and their $SF_6$ capacities; (4) produce a $SF_6$ gas container inventory; and (5) keep all information current for ARB enforcement staff inspection and verification.

In April 2011, Governor Brown signed SB 2X, requiring California to generate 33 percent of its electricity from renewable energy by 2020.

On April 29, 2015, Governor Brown issued an executive order to establish a statewide mid-term GHG reduction target of 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. According to ARB, reducing GHG emissions by 40 percent below 1990 levels in 2030 ensures that California will continue its efforts to reduce carbon pollution and help to achieve federal health-based air quality standards. Setting clear targets beyond 2020 also provides market certainty to foster investment and growth in a wide array of industries throughout the State, including clean technology and clean energy.

On September 8, 2016, the governor signed Senate Bill 32 (SB 32) into law, which requires the State to further reduce GHGs to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. SB 32 is an extension of AB 32. The other provisions of AB 32 remain unchanged. ARB is currently working to update the Scoping Plan to provide a framework for achieving the 2030 target (CARB 2015).

For more information on the Senate and Assembly Bills, Executive Orders, and reports discussed above, and to view reports and research referenced above, please refer to the following websites: www.climatechange.ca.gov and www.arb.ca.gov/cc/cc.htm.

*California Environmental Quality Act.* Pursuant to the requirements of SB 97, the Resources Agency has adopted amendments to the *State CEQA Guidelines* for the feasible mitigation of GHG emissions or the effects of GHG emissions. The adopted *CEQA Guidelines* provide general regulatory guidance on the analysis and mitigation of GHG emissions in CEQA documents, while giving lead agencies the discretion to set quantitative or qualitative thresholds for the assessment and mitigation of GHGs and climate change impacts. To date, a variety of air districts have adopted quantitative significance thresholds for GHGs.

## Local

**Southern California Association of Governments.** On April 7, 2016, SCAG's Regional Council adopted the 2016-2040 Regional Transportation Plan/ Sustainable Communities Strategy (2016 RTP/SCS or Plan). The Plan is a long-range visioning plan that balances future mobility and housing needs with economic, environmental and public health goals. The strategies, programs and projects outlined in the 2016 RTP/SCS are projected to result in greenhouse gas emissions reductions in the SCAG region that meet or exceed targets mandated by the State.

**City of El Monte.** The City of El Monte has not adopted a plan, policy, or regulation for the purpose of reducing the emissions of GHGs. However, the City biennially adopts, by reference, Los Angeles County's more restrictive standards and modifications to the California Green Building Code and the City's Housing Element Program 7 includes objectives for green building.

# C. Significance Thresholds

Based on Appendix G of the *State CEQA Guidelines*, impacts related to GHG emissions from the proposed project would be significant if the project would do either of the following:

- Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment.
- Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases.

The majority of individual projects do not generate sufficient GHG emissions to create a project-specific impact through a direct influence on climate change. Therefore, the discussion of climate change typically involves an analysis of whether a project's contribution towards greenhouse gas emissions is cumulatively considerable. "Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of an individual project are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, other current projects, and probable future projects (*CEQA Guidelines*, Section 15355).

For future projects, the significance of GHG emissions may be evaluated based on locally adopted quantitative thresholds, or consistency with a regional GHG reduction plan (such as a Climate Action Plan). However, neither the SCAQMD nor the City of El Monte has adopted GHG emissions thresholds, and no GHG emissions reduction plan with established GHG emissions reduction strategies has yet been adopted. The SCAQMD threshold, adopted in December 2008, considers emissions of over 10,000 MT $CO_2e$ per year to be significant. However, the SCAQMD's threshold applies only to stationary sources and is intended to apply only when the SCAQMD is the CEQA lead agency. In the latest guidance provided by the SCAQMD's GHG CEQA Significance Threshold Working Group in September 2010, SCAQMD has considered a tiered approach to determine the significance of residential and commercial projects. The draft-tiered approach is outlined in the meeting minutes, dated September 29, 2010.

Tier 1 - If the project is exempt from further environmental analysis under existing statutory or categorical exemptions, there is a presumption of less than significant impacts with respect to climate change. If not, then the Tier 2 threshold should be considered.

Tier 2 - Consists of determining whether or not the project is consistent with a GHG reduction plan that may be part of a local general plan, for example. The concept embodied in this tier is equivalent to the existing concept of consistency in CEQA Guidelines section 15064(h)(3), 15125(d) or 15152(a). Under this Tier, if the proposed project is consistent with the qualifying local GHG reduction plan, it is not significant for GHG emissions. If there is not an adopted plan, then a Tier 3 approach would be appropriate.

Tier 3 - Establishes a screening significance threshold level to determine significance. The Working Group has provided a recommendation of 3,000 tons of CO2e per year for all land use projects.

Tier 4 – Establishes an efficiency target threshold to determine significance. The Working Group has provided a recommendation for a 2020 target of 4.8 MT/year CO2e per service population (residents and employees) for a project level threshold (land use employment only) or 6.6 MT/year CO2e per service population for a plan level threshold and a 2035 target of 3.0 MT/year CO2e per service population for a project level threshold and 4.1 MT/year CO2e per service population for a plan level threshold.

Development under the Specific Plan is expected to occur over the next approximately 20 years (by 2035). Therefore, the Plan's contribution to cumulative impacts related to GHG emissions and climate change would be cumulatively considerable if its GHG emissions exceed SCAQMD's recommended Tier 4 plan-level threshold of 4.1 MT/year of CO2e per service population for target year 2035, because the majority of development under the Plan would occur after 2020.

## Methodology

Calculations of $CO_2$, $CH_4$, and $N_2O$ emissions are provided to identify the magnitude of potential project effects. The analysis focuses on $CO_2$, $CH_4$, and $N_2O$ because these make up 98.9 percent of all GHG emissions by volume (IPCC, 2007) and are the GHG emissions that buildout of the Plan would emit in the largest quantities. Fluorinated gases, such as HFCs, PFCs, and $SF_6$, were also considered for the analysis. Emissions of all GHGs are converted into their equivalent weight in $CO_2$ ($CO_2e$). Minimal amounts of other main GHGs (such as chlorofluorocarbons [CFC]) would be emitted, but these other GHG emissions would not substantially add to the calculated $CO_2e$ amounts. Calculations are based on the methodologies discussed in the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA) CEQA and Climate Change white paper (January 2008) and included the use of the California Climate Action Registry (CCAR) General Reporting Protocol (January 2009).

GHG emissions associated with buildout of the Specific Plan were calculated using the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) version 2016.3.1 (see **Appendix C** for calculations).

**Operational Emissions.** CalEEMod provides operational emissions of $CO_2$, $N_2O$, and $CH_4$. Emissions from energy use include electricity and natural gas use. The emissions factors for natural gas combustion are based on EPA's AP-42, (*Compilation of Air Pollutant Emissions Factors*) and CCAR. Electricity emissions are calculated by multiplying the energy use times the carbon intensity of the utility district per kilowatt hour (CalEEMod User Guide 2013). The default electricity consumption values in CalEEMod include the CEC-sponsored California Commercial End Use Survey (CEUS) and Residential Appliance Saturation Survey (RASS) studies.

Emissions associated with area sources, including consumer products, landscape maintenance, and architectural coating were calculated in CalEEMod and utilize standard emission rates from ARB, U.S. EPA, and emission factor values provided by the local air district (CalEEMod User Guide 2013).

Emissions from waste generation were also calculated in CalEEMod and are based on the IPCC's methods for quantifying GHG emissions from solid waste using the degradable organic content of waste (CalEEMod User Guide, 2013). Waste disposal rates by land use and overall composition of municipal solid waste in California was primarily based on data provided by the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle).

Emissions from water and wastewater usage calculated in CalEEMod were based on the default electricity intensity from the CEC's 2006 *Refining Estimates of Water-Related Energy Use in California,* using the average values for northern and southern California.

For mobile sources, $CO_2$ and $CH_4$ emissions were quantified in CalEEMod. Because CalEEMod does not calculate $N_2O$ emissions from mobile sources, $N_2O$ emissions were quantified using the California Climate Action Registry General Reporting Protocol (CAPCOA 2009) direct emissions factors for mobile combustion (see Appendix B for calculations). The overall vehicle fleet mix used in the analysis is the default fleet mix provided in the CalEEMod software. The estimate of total daily trips associated with the proposed Specific Plan was based on vehicle trip data provided in Section 4.13, Transportation and Circulation, which includes a 20 percent transit trip reduction in daily vehicle trips due to the Specific Plan's transit-oriented design. The estimate of total daily trips was then extrapolated to derive total annual mileage in CalEEMod. Emission rates for $N_2O$ emissions were based on the vehicle mix output generated by CalEEMod and the emission factors found in the California Climate Action Registry General Reporting Protocol.

**Construction Emissions.** Air districts such as the SCAQMD (2015) have recommended amortizing construction-related emissions over a 30-year period in conjunction with the operational emissions associated with development under the Specific Plan. The amortized construction emissions are added to the annual average operational emissions and then compared to the applicable operational threshold.

Construction of new development under the Specific Plan would generate temporary GHG emissions primarily from the operation of construction equipment in the Plan Area and from vehicles transporting construction workers to and from the Plan Area. CalEEMod provides an estimate of emissions associated with the construction period, based on parameters such as the duration of construction activity, area of disturbance, and anticipated equipment use during construction. Buildout of the plan (2,200 residential units and 500,000 sf of commercial space) was modeled as if it would occur as one large project. It was assumed that grading would be concentrated on the key development sites and would be balanced across the Plan Area. It was also assumed that no offsite import or export of soil would be required during construction under the proposed Specific Plan. The CalEEMod construction analysis considered grading, building construction, architectural coatings, and paving phases. As discussed in Section 4.2, Air Quality, modeling assumed compliance with SCAQMD Architectural Coating Rule 1113, SCAQMD Wood-Burning Devices Rule 445, and SCAQMD Fugitive Dust Rule 403.

**Service Population Calculation.** The service population is the sum of residents and employees generated by buildout under the Specific Plan. As discussed in Section 3.10, Population and Housing, buildout of the Specific Plan would generate 8,465 new residents and 1,235 new employees. Therefore, the service population for the proposed Specific Plan would be 9,700 people.

# D. Impacts and Mitigation Measures

## Impact GHG-1

| | |
|---|---|
| **Impact GHG-1:** | Development under the proposed Specific Plan would generate GHG emissions beyond existing conditions due to construction activity and long-term operation of individual developments. However, total estimated GHG emissions would not exceed the 4.1 metric tons/person efficiency threshold. Therefore, impacts related to GHG emissions would be less than significant. |

As discussed above, GHG emissions associated with buildout of the Specific Plan were estimated using CalEEMod. Table 3.6-1 and Table 3.6-1 show emissions expected from buildout under the Specific Plan.

Construction under the Specific Plan would generate temporary GHG emissions primarily due to the operation of construction equipment and truck trips. Since no projects have been proposed as part of the Specific Plan, it was assumed that build out of the Plan would occur as one large project, and CalEEMod default construction schedule was used. Construction activity is assumed to occur simultaneously over a period of approximately 15 years based on this default construction schedule for all construction phases, except architectural coating, which was assumed to overlap with the end of building construction. Based on the CalEEMod results, construction activity under the proposed Specific Plan would generate an estimated 41,504 MT of $CO_2e$ units (as shown in Table 3.6-1). Amortized over a 30-year period, construction activity facilitated by the Specific Plan would generate an estimated 1,383 MT of $CO_2e$ per year. Construction assumptions used to calculate the emissions are shown in the CalEEMod output tables in Appendix D.

**Table 3.6-1: Estimated Construction Emissions of Greenhouse Gases**

| Emission Source | Annual Emissions |
|---|---|
| Construction | 41,504 MT CO2e |
| Amortized over 30 years | 1,383 MT CO2e/year |

*1 See Appendix C for calculations and for GHG emission factor assumptions.*

**Operational Emissions.** As discussed above, operational emissions from energy use (electricity and natural gas use), area sources (consumer products, landscape maintenance, and architectural coating), waste generation, water use, wastewater generation, and mobile sources for the proposed Specific Plan were estimated using CalEEMod (see Appendix B for calculations). Table 3.6-1 combines the construction,

operational, and mobile GHG emissions associated with development under the proposed Specific Plan. As described above, emissions associated with total construction activity are amortized over 30 years.

As shown in Table 3.6-1, the combined annual emissions would total approximately 35,500 MT of $CO_2e$ per year. Therefore, based on the Plan Area service population of 9,700, the combined annual emissions would result in per-service-population emissions of 3.7 MT $CO_2e$/service population/year. These emissions would not exceed the 4.1 metric tons $CO_2e$/service population/year threshold. Therefore, impacts related to GHG emissions would be less than significant.

**Table 3.6-1: Combined Annual Emissions of Greenhouse Gases**

| Emission Source | Annual Emissions |
|---|---|
| *Construction* | 1,383 MT $CO_2e$ |
| *Operational* | |
| Area | 38 MT $CO_2e$ |
| Energy | 10,660 MT $CO_2e$ |
| Solid Waste | 762 MT $CO_2e$ |
| Water | 1,576 MT $CO_2e$ |
| *Mobile* | |
| $CO_2$ and $CH_4$ | 19,878 MT $CO_2e$ |
| $N_2O$ | 1,203 MT $CO_2e$ |
| Total | **35,500 MT $CO_2e$** |
| Service Population | 9,700 |
| Total emissions / service population | 3.7 MT $CO_2e$ |
| Threshold | 4.1 MT $CO_2e$/service population/year |
| Threshold Exceeded? | No |

*Source: See Appendix D for calculations and for GHG emission factor assumptions.*

## Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

## Significance after Mitigation

Impacts would be less than significant without mitigation.

## Impact GHG-2

**Impact GHG-2:** The proposed Specific Plan would be consistent with the Climate Action Team GHG reduction strategies, the 2008 Attorney General Greenhouse Gas Reduction Measures, and the SCAG 2016-2040 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS). As a result, the proposed Specific Plan would not conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions. Impacts would be less than significant.

As discussed in the Setting section, a number of plans and policies aimed at GHG reduction apply to the Specific Plan. The "2006 CAT Report," identifies a recommended list of strategies that the State could pursue to reduce climate change GHG emissions at a statewide level to meet the goals of the Executive Order S-3-05. The strategies are designed so that various State agencies can use these to ensure that the Governor's targets are met while remaining within the scope of their existing authority.

The California Attorney General's Office has developed *Global Warming Measures* (2008) that, along with CAPCOA's *CEQA and Climate Change* (CAPCOA, 2008) document, includes GHG reduction measures intended to reduce GHG emissions in order to achieve statewide emissions reduction goals. All of these measures aim to curb the GHG emissions occurring because of land use, transportation, renewable energy, and energy efficiency practices. Several of these actions are already required by California regulations. They are as follows:

- AB 1493 (Pavley) requires the state to develop and adopt regulations that achieve the maximum feasible and cost-effective reduction of climate change emissions emitted by passenger vehicles and light duty trucks.
- In 2004, ARB adopted a measure to limit diesel-fueled commercial motor vehicle idling.
- The Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989, (AB 939, Sher, Chapter 1095, Statutes of 1989) established a 50 percent waste diversion mandate for California.
- Public Resources Code 25402 authorizes the CEC to adopt and periodically update its building energy efficiency standards (that apply to newly constructed buildings and additions to and alterations to existing buildings).
- California's Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS), established in 2002, requires that all load serving entities achieve a goal of 33 percent of retail electricity sales from renewable energy sources by 2020, with certain cost constraints.
- Green Building Executive Order, S-20-04 (CA 2004), sets a goal of reducing energy use in public and private buildings by 20 percent by the year 2015, as compared with 2003 levels.

The Specific Plan would be required to comply with these existing, adopted State regulations to help achieve the overall GHG emissions reduction goals identified in AB 32.

The SCAG 2016 RTP/SCS also contains a number of strategies that relate to the operations of SCAG and regional land use planning. The 2016 RTP/SCS plans for focusing new growth around transit, which is infill and investment; structuring the Plan on centers development; developing "Complete Communities;" developing nodes on a corridor; planning for additional housing and jobs near transit; planning for changing demand in types of housing; continuing to protect stable, existing single-family areas; ensuring adequate access to open space and preservation of habitat; and incorporating local input and feedback on future growth. These policies support the development of the following:

- **High Quality Transit Areas (HQTA)**: areas within 0.5 mile of a fixed guideway transit stop or a bus transit corridor where buses pick up passengers at a frequency of every 15 minutes or less during peak commuting hours. While HQTAs account for only three percent of total land area in SCAG region, they are planned and projected to accommodate 46 percent of the region's future household growth and 55 percent of the future employment growth

- **Livable Corridors:** arterial roadways where jurisdictions may plan for a combination of the following elements: high-quality bus frequency; higher density residential and employment at key intersections; and increased active transportation through dedicated bikeways
- **Neighborhood Mobility Areas (NMA):** strategies intended to provide sustainable transportation options for residents of the region who lack convenient access to high-frequency transit but make many short trips in urban neighborhoods. NMAs are conducive to active transportation and include a "Complete Streets" approach to roadway improvements to encourage replacing single- and multi-occupant automobiles with biking, walking, skateboarding, neighborhood electric vehicles, and senior mobility devices.

The proposed Specific Plan includes a number of goals that would support these 2016 RTP/SCS policies. Section 3.3.1 includes policies that would promote pedestrian safety. Section 3.4.2 includes policies to improve bicycle facilities within the plan area. Section 3.6.6 includes policies to improve bus shelters.

The Specific Plan would also concentrate and set priorities for development at key opportunity sites, along major roadway corridors and existing neighborhoods in the project area. In addition, the Specific Plan is intended to facilitate transit-oriented community design by promoting complete streets, expanded transit services, and enhanced pedestrian and bicycle linkages throughout the project area. The proposed Specific Plan would help achieve SCAG RTP/SCS goals, policies, and strategies. Implementation of the Specific Plan would not conflict with the 2008 Attorney General Greenhouse Gas Reduction Measures or applicable SCAG 2016 RTP/SCS strategies. Impacts would be less than significant.

### Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

### Significance after Mitigation

Impacts would be less than significant without mitigation.

## E. Cumulative Impacts

GHG and climate change are, by definition, cumulative impacts as they affect the accumulation of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. As indicated in Impacts GHG-1 and GHG-2, emissions associated with the proposed Specific Plan would be less than significant and the Specific Plan would be consistent with applicable GHG reduction plans and policies. Therefore, the proposed Specific Plan's contribution to cumulative impacts related to GHG emissions and climate change would not be cumulatively considerable.

# 3.7 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

This section analyzes impacts associated with exposure to hazards and hazardous materials. Specifically, this analysis addresses impacts related to air traffic hazards. All other hazards and hazardous materials impact areas were determined to be less than significant in the IS/NOP prepared for the project (see Appendix A).

## A. Setting

### Airports and Aircraft Hazards.

The San Gabriel Valley Airport (formerly called the El Monte Airport) encompasses 103 acres and is located along the Rio Hondo River in north El Monte. The airport is not a large commercial airport and its role is to provide recreational aviation services to the City of El Monte (the "City") and surrounding communities. Landings and takeoffs occur to the north/south with planes generally flying east over the City (City of El Monte General Plan, 2011).

The airport has an Airport Land Use Plan (ALUP) that was adopted by the Los Angeles County Airport Land Use Commission in 1983. The El Monte General Plan contains an airport land use designation that applies to the San Gabriel Valley Airport and encompasses all aviation-related businesses on the airport site. The designation extends to all areas within the airport influence zone in accordance with the ALUP. A section of the northwestern portion of the Plan Area is located within the Inner Safety Zone and the Runway Protection Zone of the San Gabriel Valley Airport. **Figure 3.7-1** shows the planning zones for the airport and the outline of the Plan Area.

## B. Regulatory Framework

### State

**State Aeronautics Act.** The State Aeronautics Act of the California Public Utilities Code establishes statewide requirements for the airport land use compatibility planning and requires nearly every county to create an Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) or other alternative. Other public agencies also provide policy guidance or promulgate standards that address regional transportation and safety issues related to airport land use compatibility planning.

**Air Safety Zones**. The California ALUC Planning Handbook ("Handbook") provides planning guidance to ALUCs, airport proprietors, and counties and cities with jurisdiction over airport area land uses. The purpose of the Handbook is to support the State Aeronautics Act. The Handbook allows jurisdictions flexibility in determining air safety zones that represent areas of assumed accident potential.

| | |
|---|---|
| Downtown Main Street Transit-Oriented Development, Specific Plan Draft EIR | Figure 3.7-1. San Gabriel Valley Airport Inner Safety Zone and Runway Protection Zone |

### Local

**Airport Master Plan.** The City of El Monte has developed an Airport Master Plan Report (1995) that provides guidelines for development, land uses and all other airport activities. The City of El Monte Municipal Code includes an airport overlay zone, namely the Airport Approach Height Zone. All future proposals for high rise development or tall structures in the vicinity must be carefully reviewed with respect to the airspace protection criteria established by that ordinance.

## C. Significance Thresholds

The following thresholds are based on Appendix G of the *State CEQA Guidelines*. A significant impact may occur if the proposed project would result in any of the following conditions:

Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials.

Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment.

Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within .25 mile of an existing or proposed school.

Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would create a significant hazard to the public or the environment.

Be located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, and result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area.

Be located in the vicinity of a private airstrip, and result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area.

Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.

Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands.

Potential impacts associated with significance criteria 1 through 4 and 6 through 8 were found in the Initial Study (**Appendix A**) to be less than significant. Therefore, the impact analysis below is focused solely on significance criterion 5.

# D. Impacts and Mitigation Measures

## Impact HAZ-1

**Impact HAZ-1** The northwest corner of the Plan Aras is within the San Gabriel Valley Airport Runway Protection Zone (RPZ) and Inner Safety Zone and is subject to restrictions within a RPZ zone. Structures in this area may be considered obstructions to air travel. Impacts related to airport safety are less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

The Plan Area is approximately 1,000 feet south of the runway for the San Gabriel Valley Airport. The northwestern corner of the Plan Area from the railroad tracks to past Valley Mall Road is within the airport runway protection zone (RPZ) and Inner Safety Zone for the San Gabriel Valley Airport (see **Figure 3.7-1**). These areas are within the Monte Vista and Main Street subareas of the Specific Plan.

Ideally, RPZs should be clear of all non-aviation related objects or structures. Land uses that are prohibited in the RPZ include residences, places of public assembly, churches, schools, hospitals, office buildings, shopping centers, and other uses with similar concentrations of people (County of Los Angeles 1995). At San Gabriel Valley Airport approximately one-half of the RPZ's land area is not located within airport property and is not directly under control of the County (County of Los Angeles, 1995).

The property within the Plan Area that falls in the RPZ includes Santa Anita Avenue and existing commercial development (Santa Fe Trail Plaza). According to the El Monte Airport Master Plan Report the established land uses located within the El Monte Airport RPZs are substantially compatible with airport operations.

The proposed Specific Plan is consistent with the 1995 El Monte Airport Master Plan, which provides safety compatibility requirements including building height restrictions and land use restrictions within the safety zones. Federal Aviation Regulation (FAR) Part 77, Objects Affecting Navigable Airspace, identifies the airspace necessary to ensure the safe operation of aircraft to, from, and around airstrips. Any proposed structures within the Plan Area in a RPZ zone would need to comply with all relevant criteria and to not be considered obstructions or hazards to aviation. Before any work is conducted in the RPZ a Notice of Proposed Construction must be submitted to the Federal Aviation Administration ("FAA") in accordance with FAR Part 77. In order to ensure that the consultation occurs the following mitigation is required.

## Mitigation Measures HAZ-1

a) **FAA Notification.** For all development in the RPZ area the future project applicants shall notify the FAA via online application at the FAA's website. The FAA will determine whether the structure is an "obstruction" or "hazard" to aviation, and if so, will make recommendations to reduce the obstruction or hazard. Prior to issuance of building permits, the applicant shall forward the FAA determination and recommendations to the City, which shall require that the applicant implement the recommendations provided by the FAA.

b) **Avigation Easement.** Prior to issuance of a building permit for development within the RPZ, the future project applicants shall grant an avigation easement to the County of Los Angeles to record that the property owner(s) acknowledge that their properties are in an area subject to frequent aircraft overflights and that such overflights may result in noise, exhaust emissions and vibrations.

### Significance after Mitigation

Mitigation measure HAZ-1 would assure that impacts from the San Gabriel Valley Airport would be less that significant because this measure would require notification to the FAA of any building within a RPZ, compliance with any FAA recommendations, and an avigation easement.

## E. Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative development in the Plan Area and its vicinity has the potential to expose future area residents, employees, and visitors to current and historical use of hazardous materials. Cumulative impacts for biological resources consider both localized and regional impacts. Section 2.7, Cumulative Projects, of this EIR contains a list of both currently planned and pending projects in the general vicinity, including 1,884 residential units, 1,485,900 sf of non-residential development, 87 assisted living units, and 883 hotel rooms. While the proposed Plan would increase density in the Inner Safety Zone and Runway Safety Zone of the San Gabriel Valley Airport, this would not increase hazards to any other proposed development. Each proposal would be reviewed separately in regard to airport hazards and would be mitigation appropriately. Cumulative impacts would be less than significant.

# 3.8 Hydrology and Water Quality

This section includes analysis of the groundwater in the Plan Area and how development could impact the groundwater. Impacts to water quality, flood zones, and drainage patterns were discussed in the IS/NOP prepared for the project (Appendix A) and determined to be less than significant.

## A. Setting

The City of El Monte (the "City") is located in the South Coast Hydrologic Region, which covers approximately 10,600 square miles (6.78 million acres) and includes all of Orange County, the majority of Ventura, Los Angeles and San Diego counties, portions of San Bernardino and Riverside counties, and small amounts of Santa Barbara and Kern counties. The South Coast Hydrologic Region receives inflows via precipitation and surface runoff from the South Lahontan and Colorado River Regions. All surface waters in the South Coast Hydrologic Region flow into the Pacific Ocean (DWR 2003).

### Watersheds

There are 19 major watersheds in the South Coast Region. Many of these have densely urbanized lowlands with concrete-lined channels and dams controlling flood flows. The headwaters for many rivers, however, are in coastal mountain ranges and have remained largely undeveloped. The Plan Area is located within the Los Angeles River Watershed, which covers a land area of 834 square miles. The western portion of the Los Angeles River spans from the Santa Monica Mountains to the Simi Hills and the eastern portion spans from the Santa Susana Mountains to the San Gabriel Mountains. The watershed encompasses and is shaped by the path of the Los Angeles River, which flows from its headwaters in the Simi Hills and is bounded by the Santa Monica, Santa Susana, and San Gabriel Mountains to the north and west. to the Pacific Ocean. The Los Angeles River is a major flood control protection waterway for Los Angeles County.

### Surface Water

The Arroyo Calabasas (Calabasas Creek) and Bell Creek (at the origin of the Los Angeles River), Brown's Canyon Wash, the Burbank Western Channel, Tujunga Wash, Arroyo Seco, Rio Hondo, and Compton Creek are the major tributaries in the Los Angeles River Watershed,. The watershed contains 22 lakes and 37 flood control reservoirs, as well as a number of spreading grounds (DWR 2013). The Rio Hondo passes through the western portion of El Monte, just west of the Plan Area. The San Gabriel River passes along the eastern boundary of the City. There are no surface water resources within the Plan Area.

### Groundwater

The Plan Area overlies the Main San Gabriel Groundwater Basin ("Basin"), which covers a surface area of approximately 167 square miles. This Basin is bounded by the San Gabriel Mountains to the north, the San Jose Hills to the east, Puente Hills to the south, and by hills and the Raymond Fault to the west. The

Basin has an estimated storage capacity of approximately 9.5 million acre-feet (El Monte 2011). The established safe yield (the amount that can be withdrawn without depleting the basin) is 150,000 acre-feet per year (Main San Gabriel Basin Watermaster 2016).

Recharge of the basin is mainly from direct percolation of precipitation and percolation of stream flow. Stream flow is a combination of runoff from the surrounding mountains, imported water conveyed in the San Gabriel River channel to spreading grounds in the Central subbasin of the Coastal Plain of Los Angeles Groundwater Basin, and treated sewage effluent. Subsurface flow enters from the Raymond Basin, from the Chino subbasin and from fracture systems along the San Gabriel Mountain front (DWR 2004).

## Water Supplies

Water supply to the Plan Area is provided by the City of El Monte Water Department. Groundwater extracted from the Main San Gabriel Groundwater Basin provides the primary source of water for the City. The City operates six production wells throughout the city to extract water, including two within the Plan Area. The City has water rights to approximately 1.4 percent of the safe yield, or approximately 2,100 acre-feet per year. Per capita water use in the city is estimated at between 110 and 113 gallons per day (El Monte 2011). Projected water supply and demand in the city during a normal water year are shown in **Table 3.8-1** and projected water supply and demand during multiple dry water years are shown in

**Table 3.8-2**.

**Table 3.8-1 Projected Water Supply and Demand – Normal Water Year (AFY)**

| | 2015 | 2020 | 2025 | 2030 | 2035 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total Supply[1] | 3,863 | 5,274 | 6,538 | 7,656 | 8,626 |
| Total Demand | 3,054 | 3,085 | 3,116 | 3,147 | 3,179 |
| Supply/Demand Difference | 809 | 2,189 | 3,422 | 4,509 | 5,447 |

*[1] Total supply is from pumped groundwater and carryover of pumped groundwater from previous years*
*Source: El Monte 2011.*
*AFY = acre-feet per year*

**Table 3.8-2 Projected Water Supply and Demand – Multiple Dry Water Years (AFY)**

| | 2015 | 2020 | 2025 | 2030 | 2035 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total Supply[1] | 3,285 | 4,690 | 5,948 | 7,060 | 8,024 |
| Total Demand | 2,535 | 2,561 | 2,586 | 2,612 | 2,639 |
| Supply/Demand Difference | 750 | 2,129 | 3,362 | 4,448 | 5,386 |

*[1] Total supply is from pumped groundwater and carryover of pumped groundwater from previous years*
*Source: El Monte 2011.*
*AFY = acre-feet per year*

### Water Quality

Historically, groundwater contamination has been an issue in the San Gabriel Valley. Sources of groundwater pollution in the valley include improper disposal of chemicals from industrial and commercial activities, chemicals from agricultural operations and urban pollutants carried in stormwater runoff. Pollutants in urban runoff typically include sediments and contaminants such as oils, fuels, metals and landscaping chemicals (pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, etc.) (El Monte 2011).

Currently, one production well within the city (Well No. 3 within the Plan Area) is not active due to high levels of nitrates and is only used in emergencies. Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) have also been detected at wells throughout the City; however, the City has a VOC treatment facility which reduces VOCs in the water to below required thresholds. Currently, drinking water in El Monte meets or surpasses all federal and state drinking water standards (El Monte Water District 2016).

## B. Regulatory Framework

### State

**Sustainable Groundwater Management Act.** The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) is a comprehensive law for the management of groundwater throughout the State composed of Senate Bill (SB) 1168, AB 1739, and SB 1319. The SGMA aims to provide for local planning and management of groundwater basins. The SGMA required California Department of Water Resources (DWR) to prioritize basins as high-priority, medium-priority, low-priority, or very low-priority using the California Statewide Groundwater Elevation Model (CASGEM) system by January 31, 2015. The SGMA requires local government entities to form a Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) for individual groundwater basins by June 30, 2017. A GSA is responsible for developing and implementing a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) to meet the sustainability goal of ensuring that each groundwater basin is operated within its sustainable yield, in order to avoid overdraft or water quality degradation. The SGMA encourages, but does not require, that basins defined as low- and very low-priority develop to be managed under a GSP. High- and medium-priority basins however, are required to develop and implement their own GSP or functional equivalent established by the local GSA by January 31, 2020 for critically over drafted basins, and January 31, 2022 for other medium- or high-priority basins. The DWR was required to develop and adopt emergency regulations for evaluating the development and implementation of GSPs, and coordination of agreements by June 1, 2016.

The Plan Area is located within the Basin, as described above, which is an adjudicated basin. Groundwater basins that have been adjudicated through litigation are exempt from most SGMA regulations. Under the SGMA, adjudicated basins were required to submit the final governing judgment to DWR by April 1, 2016, and to submit any amendments to the governing judgment within 90 days of entry by court, at which point the judgment became final. Additionally, watermasters of adjudicated basins are required to annually submit the following:

- Groundwater elevations
- Groundwater production
- Surface water supply used of available for groundwater recharge
- Total water use
- Change in groundwater storage
- Annual report submitted to court

## Local

**City of El Monte General Plan.**

The Community Design Element of the City's General Plan includes the following goals and policies associated with water conservation:

**Goal CD-4.** – High-quality architectural design of residential, commercial, and industrial buildings evidenced by thoughtful attention and balance of quality materials, durability, aesthetics, functionality, and sustainability concepts.

**CD-4.5** – Sustainability. Encourage "green building" and environmentally sustainable design concepts with respect to energy conservation, water conservation, storm drainage, etc.

**Goal CD-7** – A modern, clean industrial park that provides opportunity for investment and commerce and is denoted by its clean, attractive, and well-managed environment compatible with surrounding residential neighborhoods.

**CD-7.16** – Sustainability. Require that industrial development minimize consumption of and sustain scarce environmental resources through site design, building orientation, landscaping, use of recycled water for irrigation, water efficiency, building design and materials, and best management practices for drainage.

The Land Use Element of the City's General Plan includes the following goals and policies associated with water quality and water resources:

**Goal LU-6** – Establish a first-class professional office district characterized by a diverse mix of financial, government, institutional, hospitality, and supporting land uses; distinctive architecture and iconic skyline; high-quality business park amenities; and unparalleled access to freeway, rail, and transit options.

**LU-6.11** – Water quality. Cooperate with the San Gabriel Water Quality Authority to expedite cleanup and remediation of groundwater pollution in the El Monte Operable Unit; implement best management practices to avoid future contamination.

**Goal LU-7** – Establish a diversified district of sustainable manufacturing, distribution, and technology-oriented business that provides opportunity for investment, entrepreneurship, and significant creation of well-paid jobs in a sustainable environment that minimizes traffic impacts, promotes a clean environment, ensures long-term vitality, and strengthens neighborhoods.

LU-7.9 – Water Quality. Cooperate with the San Gabriel Water Quality Authority to expedite cleanup and remediation of groundwater pollution in the El Monte Operable Unit; require implementation of best management practices of all businesses in the Northwest Planning District to avoid future contamination.

The Public Services and Facilities Element of the City's General Plan includes the following goals and policies associated with water resources:

Goal PSF-3 – High quality service levels for waste management, stormwater, wastewater, and water production in El Monte, sufficient to serve current and future residents, visitors, and the business community.

Goal PSF-3.6 – Water Provision. Continue to provide sufficient quantity of municipal water service that meets or exceeds state and federal health standards for drinking water.

Goal PSF-3.7 – Water Conservation. Require the incorporation of best management practices, where feasible, to conserve water in public landscaping, private development projects, and public agencies.

Goal PSF-4 – Well-managed network of infrastructure evidenced by rigorous capital improvement planning, preventive maintenance, and equitable financing.

Goal PSF-4.3 – Fair Share. Require development to pay the full cost of improving water, wastewater, road, parks, or other infrastructure necessitated by their projects, unless findings are made that the fair share requirement should be waived due to overriding public benefit.

The Public Health and Safety Element of the City's General Plan includes the following goals and policies associated with water quality and water resources:

Goal PHS-2 – A healthy and safe watershed exemplified by the implementation of flood control measures, protection of water resources, and the restoration of the beneficial uses of the San Gabriel and Rio Hondo Rivers watersheds

PHS-2.2 – Water Quality. Improve in-stream water quality through best management practices to meet or exceed Regional Water Quality Control Board standards and National Pollutant Discharge Elimination Systems permitting requirements.

PHS-2.3 – Water Resource. Continue to ensure water resource protection through the cleanup of the El Monte Superfund site, cleaning of waters within and entering into the Peck Water Conservation Park, and activities to reduce nonpoint resource pollutants.

PHS-2.5 – Green Infrastructure. Implement green infrastructure projects (e.g., greenways, community forest, linear parks, vegetated swales, miniparks) to help filter stormwater runoff, improve water resources, and restore the health of our watershed.

**City of El Monte Municipal Code.** Chapter 14.02 of the City of El Monte Municipal Code consists of a drought response conservation plan for the City. Chapter 14.02 establishes five stages of drought with differing levels of associated water conservation requirements such as eliminating inefficient landscape watering, designating outdoor watering hours, and prohibiting the use of water to wash hardscapes.

Chapter 17.11 of the City of El Monte's Municipal Code provides water efficiency requirements for new construction and rehabilitated landscapes. Per Chapter 17.11, submittal and approval of a landscape documentation package to the City is required. The landscape documentation package must include project information, a water efficient landscape worksheet, a soil management report, a landscape design plan, an irrigation design plan and a grading design plan. Additionally, upon completion of a project, a certificate of completion is required. The certificate of completion includes a project information sheet, certification that the project has been installed per the landscape documentation package, irrigation scheduling parameters, an irrigation schedule, an irrigation audit report and a soils analysis report.

**Main San Gabriel Basin Watermaster.** The Basin is an adjudicated basin managed by the Main San Gabriel Basin Watermaster ("Basin Watermaster") (Case #924128, Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District, Plaintiff, vs. City of Alhambra, et al., Defendants). The Judgment defined the water rights of 190 original parties to the legal action. The responsibilities and functions of the Basin Watermaster include:

- Manage and control the withdrawal and replenishment of water supplies in the Basin.
- Determine annually the Operating Safe Yield (the amount of groundwater that can safely be extracted) for the succeeding fiscal year, and notify the pumpers of their shares thereof.
- Acquire and spread replacement water as needed.
- Coordinate local involvement in efforts to preserve and restore the quality of groundwater in the Basin.
- Assist and encourage regulatory agencies to enforce water quality regulations affecting the Basin.
- Collect production, water quality, and other relevant data from producers.
- Prepare an annual report of Basin Watermaster activities, including financial activities, and summary reports of pumping and diversion.

Additionally, water producers in the Basin must obtain Basin Watermaster approval for activities such as:

- Constructing or modifying a well.
- Constructing a groundwater treatment plant.
- Increasing groundwater extraction.
- Spreading water in the Basin.
- Spreading and storing supplemental water under a cyclic storage agreement.

# C. Significance Thresholds

In accordance with Appendix G of the *State CEQA Guidelines*, a project may result in a significant impact if it would do any of the following:

1. Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements.
2. Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level.
3. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation onsite or offsite.
4. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site.
5. Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff
6. Otherwise substantially degrade water quality.
7. Place housing in a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map.
8. Place in a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows.
9. Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam.
10. Result in inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow.

Potential impacts associated with significance criteria 1 and 3 through 10 were found in the Initial Study (Appendix A) to be less than significant. Therefore, the impact analysis below is focused on significance criteria 2.

# D. Impacts and Mitigation Measures

## Impact HYD-1

**Impact HYD-1** Future development under the Specific Plan and Master Plan would incrementally increase the amount of impermeable surfaces within the Plan Area. Additionally, future development under the Specific Plan and Master Plan would incrementally increase water demand as associated groundwater withdrawal within the Plan Area. However, impacts would be less than significant.

The Basin underlies the entire City, including the Plan Area. The Plan Area is mostly built out with impervious surfaces. Therefore, under full buildout of the Plan Area, an incremental increase in the quantity of impervious surfaces would be expected. This increase in impervious surfaces could incrementally reduce infiltration into the underlying Basin. As discussed in Section 3.8(A) recharge to the Basin occurs primarily through infiltration of precipitation and stream flows at spreading grounds in the Central subbasin of the Coastal Plain. However, there are no such spreading grounds within the Plan Area (DWR 2012). Therefore, development under the proposed Plan would not interfere substantially with groundwater recharge.

The City's Water Department currently relies on groundwater from the Basin for their water supply (El Monte 2011). However, the Basin is an adjudicated basin governed by the Basin Watermaster. As stated in the Setting, through the adjudication of the Basin, the City of El Monte is entitled to approximately 1.4 percent of the Operating Safe Yield determined by the Basin Watermaster. If the City pumps more than the allocated amount of water, replacement water must be purchased from Upper District to offset demands in excess of the City's water rights (El Monte 2011). Through the Basin Watermaster's management of the Basin, annual pumping across the basin is held to the Operating Safe Yield of the basin. With adherence to the rules and regulations of the Basin Watermaster, future development under the Specific Plan would not substantially deplete groundwater resources within the Basin.

As discussed in Section 2.0, *Project Description*, the potential buildout of the Specific Plan and Master Plan would add up to 2,200 dwelling units and 500,000 square feet of commercial space within the Plan Area. This development would increase water demand and associated groundwater withdrawal. Projected net water demand from the buildout of the project is illustrated in **Table 3.8-3.**

As shown in **Table 3.8-3**, the project is anticipated to demand a total of 513,375 gallons a day (575 afy). Approximately 429,000 gal/day from the dwelling units, and 84,375 gal/day from the retail, restaurant, and office spaces combined. This is within the projected 4,739 afy supply increase that is anticipated in the water district (see

**Table** 3.8-2) in supply for the basin. Impacts would be less than significant.

Table 3.8-3: Net Water Demand

| Land Use | Net Increase DUs or SF | Daily Water Demand (Gal/DU) or (Gal/SF) | Total Water Demand (Gal/Day) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dwelling Units | 2,200 | 195a | 429,000 |
| Retail | 325,000 | 0.125b | 40,625 |
| Restaurant | 100,000 | 0.25c | 25,000 |
| Office | 75,000 | 0.25d | 18,750 |
| Total | | | 513,375 |

*Source: City of El Monte General Plan and Zoning Code Update EIR, 2011*
[a] *Residential assumes Downtown Core land use*
[b] *Retail assumes commercial Downtown Core land use.*
[c] *Restaurant assumes General Commercial land use*
[d] *Office assumes* commercial Office and Professional Office Park land use

### Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

### Significance after Mitigation

Impacts would be less than significant without mitigation.

## E. Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts for hydrology and water quality consider both localized and regional impacts. The Cumulative Projects list, of currently planned and pending projects in the general vicinity, which includes 1,884 residential units, 1,485,900 sf of non-residential development, 87 assisted living units, and 883 hotel rooms. As discussed under Impact HYD-1, future development under the Specific Plan would have a less than significant impact on local groundwater levels. The land overlaying the Basin is mostly developed and paved. As development continues throughout the Basin, impervious surfaces would continue to incrementally increase, along with incremental increases in demand for groundwater resources. However, as discussed, recharge of the Basin occurs primarily within established spreading grounds. Additionally, the city is within the boundaries of the Basin which is an adjudicated basin under the management of the Basin Watermaster. Annual pumping from the aquifer would be held to the Operating Safe Yield to ensure continued sustainable withdrawal across the Basin. Additionally, the City has put in place drought water conservation measures that would reduce water demand for all development. Therefore, potential impacts associated with the incremental increase in impermeable surfaces and incremental increases in demand for water resources on local groundwater levels within the Main San Gabriel Groundwater Basin would not be cumulatively considerable.

# 3.9 Land Use and Planning

This section of the EIR assesses the potential impacts to land use and planning resulting from the implementation of the proposed Specific Plan. Specifically, this section analyzes the potential for change in land uses that could result from intensification of development on underutilized land in the Downtown area of the City of El Monte. In addition, this section analyzes the relationship of the proposed land use changes to relevant local and regional planning policies.

## A. Setting

### Existing and Surrounding Land Uses

The primary existing land uses in the Plan Area include residential, retail, office, and public facilities. As presented in **Table 3.9-1**, residential uses (single- and multi-family) total 15 acres or 13.1 percent of the total Plan Area. Existing residential neighborhoods are generally located in the Zocalo and Monte Vista Sub-Areas along the south side of Ramona Boulevard, the mid-block area along Granada Avenue and Lexington Avenue between Valley Mall and Ramona Boulevard, and along Encanto Way and Las Flores Drive. Currently, there are an estimated 190 single- and multi-family residential units in the Plan Area. Existing commercial uses (retail/services and office) total approximately 34 acres and represents 29.6 percent of the total Plan Area. Commercial uses are located throughout the Plan Area, with concentrations along Valley Mall, Valley Boulevard, and Santa Anita Avenue. The 9.5-acre Santa Fe Trail Plaza, located at the northeast corner of Valley Boulevard and Santa Anita Avenue, is an example of recent development in the Plan Area. In total, the Plan Area is developed with nearly one million square feet of retail and office development. Another major land use in the Plan Area is public facilities and land used for transportation, communication, and utilities, which total approximately 13 acres or 11.3 percent of the total area.

**Table 3.9-1: Existing Land Uses of the Specific Plan Area**

| Land Use | Number of Parcels | Acres | Percent of Specific Plan Area |
|---|---|---|---|
| Single-Family Residential | 109 | 8 | 7.0% |
| Multi-Family Residential | 22 | 7 | 6.1% |
| Commercial Retail | 88 | 23 | 20.0% |
| Commercial Office | 36 | 11 | 9.6% |
| Parking | 92 | 24 | 20.9% |
| Industrial | 3 | 2 | 1.7% |
| Public Facility | 6 | 9 | 7.8% |
| Transp./Comm./Utilities | 12 | 4 | 3.5% |
| Open Space | 5 | 1 | 0.9% |
| Vacant | 25 | 7 | 6.1% |
| Streets/ROW | | 19 | 16.5% |
| **Total Specific Plan Area** | **398** | **115** | **100.0%** |

Although the Plan Area is generally built out, there remain approximately 24 acres of surface parking lots and seven acres of vacant land, which together total 31 acres and accounts for over one-quarter (27%) of the total land within the Plan Area. The parking and vacant land are where much of the Specific Plan's proposed development is anticipated.

Surrounding land uses include the Metrolink rail line right-of-way which represents the northern boundary line of the Plan area. Beyond this boundary is a combination of single-family and multi-family residential uses. To the west of the Plan Area is the El Monte Gateway Specific Plan area, which includes the completed phase I of the affordable housing component, the Metro El Monte Transit Station, the Los Angeles County Fire Station No. 166, surface parking lots, and facilities associated with the Metro El Monte Station. The Rio Hondo River and bike path represent the northwest boundary line of the Plan area. Land uses to the south of the Plan Area include primarily residential neighborhoods, small commercial uses along Ramona Boulevard, and Columbia Elementary School. In addition, El Monte City Hall is located less than one-quarter mile east of the Plan Area.

## Specific Plan Sub-Areas

The Specific Plan Area is divided into the following four (4) sub-areas. Each sub-area is intended to have its own character and distinct identity with the Plan Area overall.

**Main Street Sub-Area.** The Main Street Sub-Area is the cultural and historical "heart" of El Monte. This sub-area is approximately 18.6 acres in size (not including the public right-of-ways) and is located along

Main Street. The Specific Plan envisions a revitalization of the sub-area with facade improvement and vertical mixed-use development with residential or office above retail and restaurant uses.

**Zocalo Sub-Area.** The 13.3-acre Zocalo Sub-Area currently provides parking for Downtown events and businesses. It is envisioned that the Zocalo will transform from underutilized parking areas into retail and housing opportunities centered on an outdoor open space. This plaza will provide space for community arts and cultural events to occur. Artist live/work units in addition to multi-family residential development will support Main Street retail uses a short walk away. Along Lexington Avenue, retail and professional offices will provide an extension of Main Street uses and support the surrounding residences with various job opportunities.

**Station Sub-Area.** The Station Sub-Area totals approximately 19.7 acres and is separated into two areas. One area includes the El Monte Metrolink Station and the other area is adjacent to the El Monte Transit Station along Santa Anita Avenue. The Station Sub-Area is envisioned to include a complementary mix of retail, urban housing, and transit uses. Stand-alone multi-family residential uses such as townhomes, studio flats, and apartments will provide housing opportunities for transit users in close proximity to Downtown. To complement residential uses, small retail, and visitor serving shops will provide an appropriate transition to the retail establishments of Main Street.

**Monte Vista Sub-Area.** The Monte Vista Sub-Area is generally located along the perimeter of the northern and southern portions of the triangular-shaped Specific Plan area, and totals approximately 40 acres. It is primarily comprised of office, residential, and public uses including the El Monte U.S. Post Office. It also includes the recently developed commercial center known as the Santa Fe Trails Plaza located at the intersection of Valley Boulevard and Santa Anita Avenue. This sub-area will be enhanced with street corridor beautification, mixed-use development, and Downtown entry treatments in key locations.

**Existing R2-PRD and MMU.** The existing R2-PRD and MMU areas identified in previous **Figure 2-3** are both located within the Plan Area, but are generally exempt from the regulations and guidelines of this Specific Plan. However, these two areas are subject to the requirements of El Monte's Zoning Ordinance. Right-of-way beautification improvements along Iris Lane within the existing R2-PRD area and along Valley Boulevard and Ramona Boulevard within the existing MMU area shall comply with the provisions in the Mobility and Beautification section of the Specific Plan. The R2-PRD area is included in the Zocalo Sub-Area and the MMU area is included in the Monte Vista Sub-Area.

## General Plan Land Use Designations

The Plan Area includes three land use designations defined through the El Monte General Plan Land Use Element and Land Use Policy Map: Downtown Core; El Monte Gateway Specific Plan; and Open Space.

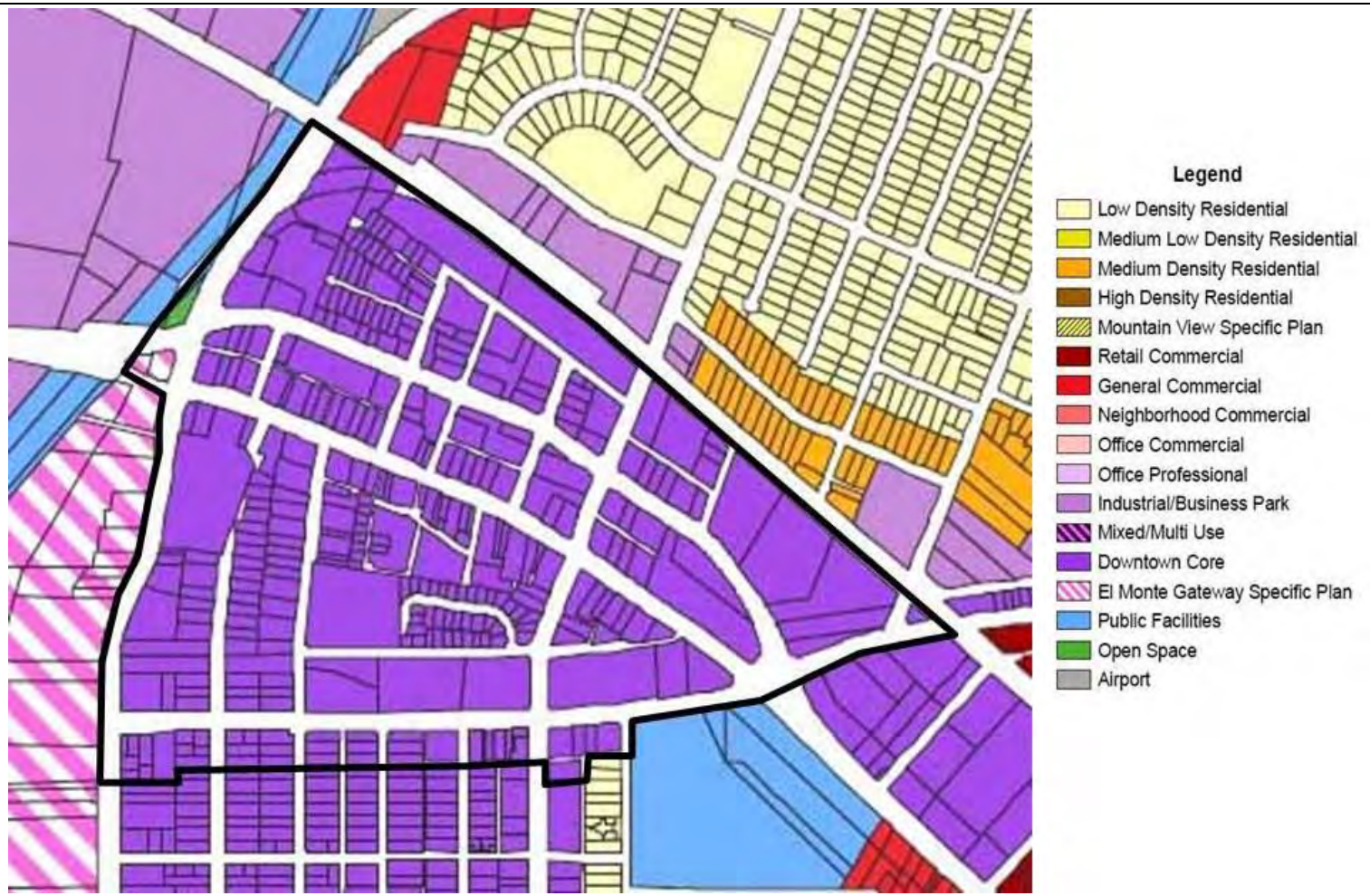
- **Downtown Core.** As illustrated in **Figure 3.9-1**, most of the Plan Area has a General Plan land use designation of Downtown Core. This designation allows a range of land uses and development types that create a vibrant mixed-income and multi-use environment. Retail, civic facilities, office,

entertainment, transit, hotels, light industrial, high density residential uses, daycare centers, public, and cultural facilities are allowable uses. The Downtown Core allows residential densities ranging from 0 to 25 units per acre and commercial intensities ranging from 0.0 to 1.5 FAR.

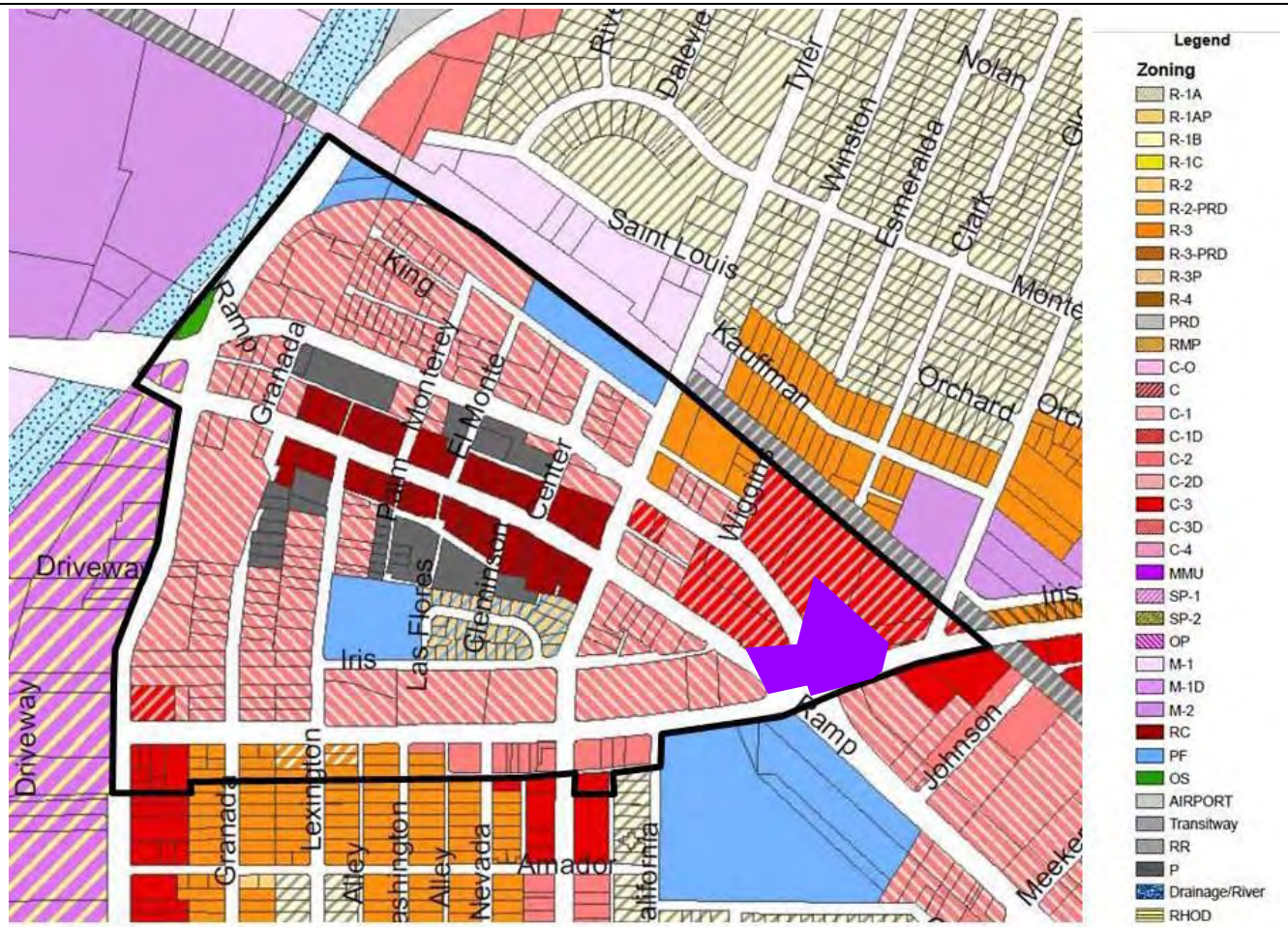
- **El Monte Gateway Specific Plan.** The El Monte Gateway Specific Plan land use designation within the proposed Specific Plan area includes two parcels totaling approximately one-third of an acre. This land use designation is located at the southwest corner of Valley Boulevard and Santa Anita Avenue. The main existing feature of the El Monte Gateway Specific Plan is the El Monte Transit Station located adjacent to the proposed Specific Plan on the west side of Santa Anita Avenue. Pursuant to the El Monte Gateway Specific Plan, this area will include over 552 residential units, up to one million square feet of commercial, entertainment uses, and public parkland and open space. Implementation of the El Monte Gateway Specific Plan is intended to complement transit-oriented uses at the transit station.
- **Open Space.** The area designated Open Space within the Plan Area is located at the northwest corner of Valley Boulevard and Santa Anita Avenue and totals only one-quarter acre. This land use designation refers to areas designated for parks, open space, linear parks, trails, and other similar recreational uses. Since buildings, such as recreational facilities, are sometimes allowed within this land use designation, an FAR of 0.0 to 0.10 is permissible.

## Current Zoning

The Plan Area encompasses a range of zone categories, including: R-2 PRD (Low-Density Multiple-Family Dwelling Planned Residential Development); R-3 (Medium-Density Multiple-Family Dwelling); RC (Retail Core); C-2 (Retail Commercial); C-3 (General Commercial); SP-1 (El Monte Gateway Specific Plan) MMU (Mixed/Multi-Use); P (Automobile Parking); PF (Public Facility); and OS (Open Space). **Figure 3.9-2** also illustrates the various zoning classifications within the Plan Area.




Downtown Main Street Transit-Oriented Development, Specific Plan Draft EIR | **Figure 3.9-1 General Plan Land Use Map**




Downtown Main Street Transit-Oriented Development, Specific Plan Draft EIR | **Figure 3.9-2 Zoning Map**

Residential zoned properties are generally located in three neighborhoods of the Plan Area: 1) areas zoned R-3 and R-3P (P represents Parking overlay) that are located along the south side of Ramona Boulevard; 2) a residential neighborhood zoned R-2PRD (PRD represents Planned Residential Development overlay) along Las Flores Drive; and 3) an R-3 zoned area along Encanto Way at the northeastern portion of the Plan Area.

Commercial-zoned properties encompass the majority of the Plan Area. Zones C-2 and C-3 generally line Valley Boulevard, Santa Anita Avenue, and Ramona Boulevard. Properties along both sides of Valley Mall between Granada Avenue and Tyler Avenue are zoned RC, with many properties behind this zone designated for commercial automobile parking (P).

The 3.4-acre currently vacant property located at the eastern portion of the Plan Area was recently zoned MMU to facilitate development of a residential project with live/work units. This property, as well as the previously mentioned residential neighborhood zoned R-2PRD on Las Flores Drive, is exempt from the regulations and guidelines of the Zoning Ordinance. However, as previously mentioned, right-of-way beautification improvements along Valley Boulevard and Ramona Boulevard adjacent to the MMU zoned property and Iris Lane that is adjacent to the R-2PRD zoned residential neighborhood will comply with the provisions of the Mobility and Beautification section of the proposed Specific Plan.

Properties zoned PF and OS are publically-owned properties that include the El Monte Metrolink Station and rail line, the El Monte City School District administration building, and open space at the northwest corner of Valley Boulevard and Santa Anita Avenue.

# B. Regulatory Framework

## State

**Specific Plan Authority.** Authority for a specific plan is established by the California Government Code, Title 8, Division 1, Chapter 3, Article 8 and Sections 65450 through 65457, which grant authority to cities to adopt specific plans for the purposes of implementing the goals and policies of their general plans. A specific plan must be consistent with the adopted general plan of the jurisdiction within which it is located. In turn, all subsequent subdivision, development, public works projects and zoning regulations for the defined area must be consistent with the adopted specific plan. As with a general plan, the authority for adoption of the specific plan is vested with the local legislative body pursuant to Government Code Section 65453(a).

A specific plan is a tool for the systematic implementation of the general plan for a designated area. It should effectively establish a link between implementing policies of the general plan and the individual development proposal(s) within a defined plan area.

Specific plans systematically implement the general plan by: 1) acting as statements of planning policy that refine the general plan policies applicable to a defined area, 2) directly regulating land use, or 3) bringing together detailed policies and regulations into a focused development scheme. Once a specific plan is adopted, all development projects and development agreements for that specific area must be consistent with the plan.

A specific plan may be as general as setting forth broad policy concepts or as detailed as providing direction to every facet of development from the type, location, and intensity of uses to the design and capacity of infrastructure from the resources used to finance public improvements to the design guidelines of a subdivision. The range of issues contained in a specific plan is generally left to the discretion of the decision-making body; however, all specific plans must comply with Sections 65450 to 65457 of the Government Code. Further, the California Office of Planning and Research provides guidelines for the preparation of specific plans.

## Regional Regulations

**Southern California Association of Governments, 2016-2040 Regional Transportation Plan/ Sustainable Communities Strategy.** Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is the designated Regional Transportation Planning Agency under state law, and is responsible for preparing the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), including the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) component pursuant to Senate Bill 375. SCAG reviews the consistency of local plans, projects, and programs with regional plans. Guidance provided by this review is intended to assist local agencies and project sponsors to take actions that contribute toward the attainment of regional goals and policies in the RTP/SCS.

In April 2016, SCAG's Regional Council adopted the 2016-2040 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (2016 RTP/SCS), a long-range visioning plan that balances future mobility and housing needs with economic, environmental, and public health goals. By the year 2040, it is the Plan's vision that communities within the region will be more compact and connected seamlessly by numerous public transit options, including expanded bus and rail service. People will be living closer to work, school, shopping, and other destinations, and that neighborhoods will be pedestrian and bicycle-friendly. This will lead to residents having a more active and healthy lifestyles and at the same time improving the air quality and reducing greenhouse gases. In addition, economic growth and additional new jobs would be created, due to the region's increased competitiveness and improved economic performance resulting from congestion reduction and improvements in regional amenities.

The stated goals of this plan are to achieve the following:

- Align the plan investments and policies with improving regional economic development and competitiveness.
- Maximize mobility and accessibility for all people and goods in the region.
- Ensure travel safety and reliability for all people and goods in the region.
- Preserve and ensure a sustainable regional transportation system.

- Maximize the productivity of our transportation system.
- Protect the environment and health of our residents by improving air quality and encouraging active transportation (e.g., bicycling and walking).
- Actively encourage and create incentives for energy efficiency, where possible.
- Encourage land use and growth patterns that facilitate transit and active transportation.

The land use strategies outlined in the plan for achieving the goals include the following:

- Reflect The Changing Population and Demands – Shifting to development of more small-lot, single-family and multifamily housing, in line with current market demand.
- Focus New Growth Around Transit – Focusing housing and employment growth in High Quality Transit Areas in support of Transit Oriented Development and active transportation infrastructure.
- Plan for Growth Around Livable Corridors – Revitalizing commercial strips through integrated transportation and land use planning, resulting in increased economic activity and improved mobility options.
- Provide More Options for Short Trips – pursue land use strategies, Complete Streets integration, and a set of state and local policies to encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation for short trips[1].
- Support Local Sustainability Planning -- support local planning practices that help lead to a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, including Sustainable Planning and Design, Sustainable Zoning Codes, and Climate Action Plans.

**Metro, Long Range Transportation Plan.** The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) is the public transportation agency for Los Angeles County. In 2009, Metro adopted the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) as the primary transportation-planning tool to guide future transportation investments in Los Angeles County through 2040. The 2009 LRTP, which is currently being updated, lays out a 30-year strategy for Los Angeles County's transportation system that expands and enhances the current infrastructure based on transportation funding resources. The 2009 LRTP will:

- Expand the Metro fixed guideway/busway network to over 177 stations covering nearly 230 miles.
- Expand the Metro Rapid network to provide over 400 miles of service through 35 cities and the County of Los Angeles.
- Continue the commitment to operate and expand the Metrolink commuter rail system.
- Continue the commitment to operate the paratransit bus system.
- Expand and improve bus and rail transit services throughout the County.
- Add 170 carpool lane-miles that fill in critical gaps along the carpool lane network.
- Build freeway interchanges and carpool lane connectors.
- Expand the Metro Freeway Service Patrol.
- Fund arterial, signal synchronization, transportation demand management, bikeway, pedestrian, transit capital and transportation enhancements through the Call for Projects.

[1] *Complete Streets are streets designed, funded, and operated to enable safe access for roadway users of all ages and abilities, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders.*

- Promote rideshare and other Transportation Demand Management strategies that provide options to driving alone.

**Metro, Active Transportation Strategic Plan.** Metro adopted its first Active Transportation Strategic Plan in May 2016. The Active Transportation Strategic Plan (Plan) is Metro's county-wide effort to identify strategies to increase walking, bicycling, and transit use in Los Angeles County. The Plan will focus on improving first and last mile access to transit and propose a regional network of active transportation facilities, including shared-use paths and on-street bikeways, and develop a funding strategy to get them built.

Active Transportation Strategic Plan objectives include:

- Identify improvements that increase access to transit for people who walk and bike;
- Create a regional active transportation network.
- Develop supporting programs and policies related to education, encouragement, enforcement, and evaluation.
- Guide future investments.
- Develop a funding strategy.

**San Gabriel Valley Airport Master Plan.** The El Monte Airport Master Plan provides noise and safety compatibility requirements and land use plans and policies for the El Monte Airport (now known as the San Gabriel Valley Airport). The County of Los Angeles owns and operates the San Gabriel Valley Airport located north of the Plan Area at 4233 Santa Anita Avenue. The El Monte Airport Master Plan must be consistent with the Los Angeles County Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) and FAA regulations. The ALUC is the operating body responsible for the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP) that covers aviation activities of 15 public use airports in Los Angeles County, including those of the San Gabriel Valley Airport. The boundaries for each airport and the development restrictions within each of those boundaries are depicted in the ALUCP. All proposed land uses within the boundaries for each airport must coincide with the restrictions of the ALUCP.

## Local Planning Framework

Two principal documents govern land use within the City and Plan area; these are the El Monte General Plan Land Use Element and the El Monte Zoning Ordinance, which are described below.

**El Monte General Plan.** The City adopted the Vision El Monte General Plan in 2011, which serves as a blueprint for future growth and development within the City. The General Plan contains ten elements: community design, land use, housing, parks and recreation, circulation, economic development, pubic services and facilities, cultural resources, public health and safety, and health and wellness.

A summary of the primary Land Use goals and policies that capture the vision of the Specific Plan include:

**Goal LU-1.** Compatible residential, commercial, and industrial development that is sensitively integrated with existing development and neighborhoods and minimizes impacts on surrounding land uses.

**LU-1.1** Code Compliance. Ensure land use compatibility through adherence to the policies, standards, and regulations in the Municipal Code, Development Code, Community Design Element, and other regulations or administrative procedures.

**LU-1.2** Mitigation. Require new uses to provide buffers between existing uses where potential adverse impacts could occur, such as decorative walls, setbacks and landscaping, restricted vehicular access, parking enclosures, and lighting control.

**LU-1.3** Interagency Cooperation. Establish and maintain an ongoing liaison with Caltrans, the railroads, utility companies, and other major government and private agencies to help minimize the traffic, noise, and visual impacts of their facilities and operations.

**LU-1.7** Residential Compatibility. Discourage duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, and apartments from being constructed in predominantly single-family residential neighborhoods to preserve the character and integrity of neighborhoods.

**Goal LU-2.** Revitalization and redevelopment of residential, commercial, and industrial areas through the sensitive integration of infill development, elimination of blight, and master planning efforts.

**LU-2.4** Master Planning. Utilize master-planning devices such as specific plans, planned development zoning, and creative site planning to stimulate the desired mix and intensity of development and a comprehensive approach to land use planning and design.

**LU-2.5** Specific Plan. Require preparation of specific plans that foster cohesive and well-designed residential, commercial, and industrial districts. This requirement shall be applied to large vacant lands or for the reuse of existing properties where it is the intent to establish a cohesive district where there are multiple property owners.

**Goal LU-3.** Distinct and identifiable residential neighborhoods and commercial, industrial and office districts that reflect and augment the historical, cultural, economic, and social fabric and roles in El Monte.

**LU-3.1** Land Uses. Distinguish the City's neighborhoods and districts in their character and physical appearance by considering their physical and visual separation, edge and entry treatment, architecture, landscape, streetscape, and comparable elements during their design and development.

**LU-3.2** Connections. Strengthen connections between the diverse residential and nonresidential districts in the community through streetscape design, provision of open space, and other improvements that create a cohesive identity for the community.

**LU-3.3** Green Infrastructure. Utilize landscaping, trees, parkways, paths, and equestrian trails, such as the Emerald Necklace, to define and enhance the identity of places, create a pedestrian-friendly environment, and link the various districts throughout El Monte.

LU-3.4 Gateways. Enhance residential neighborhoods and commercial and industrial districts with distinctive landmarks and gateways that will define boundaries, create a sense of arrival, affirm the role of the district in El Monte, and instill pride.

LU-3.5 Identity. Develop a cohesive theme for the entire community and subthemes for individual residential neighborhoods and districts to foster identity, create a sense of community, and add to the City's eclectic image.

LU-3.6 Architecture. Create and encourage a variety of distinct architectural styles and design guidelines that are tailored to the different functions, types, and histories of districts, exemplify excellence in design standards, and stand the test of time.

LU-3.7 History and Culture. Incorporate a broad range of history, culture, and public art expressions throughout each of El Monte's districts to promote community identity, preserve and affirm heritage and culture, and instill community pride.

Goal LU-5. Establish the Downtown as the mixed-use, mixed-income, and cultural heart of El Monte. Its historical role is augmented by new housing, business, parks, cultural facilities, and transit-oriented development. The population is diverse; the architecture is human scaled, and the character authentic.

LU-5.1 Land Use Mix. Accommodate retail commercial, office, restaurant, entertainment, civic, cultural, and housing land uses in accordance with the Land Use Plan's designations and sub district boundaries as may be more defined by a specific plan.

LU-5.2 El Monte Gateway. Facilitate transit-oriented developments with a range of residential, commercial, hotel, and recreational uses in the Downtown that serve as destination points for the region and catalyst for the revitalization of and investment in downtown.

LU-5.3 Housing. Facilitate development of mixed/multiuse housing, including transit-oriented development that provides housing options for persons of all ages and income levels that enhances the customer base for downtown business and activities.

LU-5.7 Streetscapes. Implement streetscape improvement program to enhance the visual character of streets, improve pedestrian activity, and link the Main Street, El Monte Gateway, civic center, and residential sub districts.

LU-5.9 Sub district Design. Recognize and affirm, through specialized land use policy and design treatment pursuant to a specific plan and design guidelines, the sub districts of the Downtown.

LU-5.10 Architectural Design. Require that residential, commercial, institutional, and other uses exhibit a high level of architectural and site quality in accordance with the principles defined in the Community Design Element and applicable specific plans.

LU-5.12 Pedestrian Plan. Create a pedestrian mobility plan for the Downtown that creates a well-defined system of paths to allow people to move easily without a car.

LU-5.13 Building Improvement. Support ongoing improvement of commercial and residential properties in Downtown through programs of financial assistance, code enforcement, business investment district, and partnerships with local businesses.

**GOAL LU-9.** Recreate vibrant commercial corridors with the introduction of a mix of higher density residential uses, sensitively integrated commercial uses concentrated at critical nodes, and tree-lined streetscapes that are aesthetically pleasing, encourage walking, and inspire community pride.

**LU-9.1** Corridor Reuse. Promote the reuse of strip commercial and industrial corridors by consolidating retail and commercial uses into activity nodes and transitioning intervening areas for midblock residential or mixed\multiuse developments.

**LU-9.2** Housing Types. Sensitively integrate higher density residential uses (e.g., townhomes, live-work, planned residential developments, etc.) along major corridors consistent with corridor implementation plans.

**El Monte Zoning Ordinance.** The City's Zoning Ordinance provides for permitted land uses, development standards, and development and sign guidelines for the City and the Specific Plan area. As required by law, the El Monte General Plan and Zoning Ordinance must be consistent with each other to ensure that long-term goals and objectives are implemented as intended through land use regulations and other tools. The Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map are the primary tools for implementing the General Plan Land Use Element.

# C. Significance Thresholds

Implementation of the proposed Specific Plan would have a significant impact related to land use and planning if it would:

- Physically divide an established community.
- Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.

A potential impact associated with land use and planning (significance criteria X-c: Conflict with an applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan) was found in the Initial Study (Appendix A) to be less that significant and is not analyzed in this EIR.

# D. Impacts and Mitigation Measures

## Impact LU -1

**Impact LU-1** The Specific Plan aims to improve the compatibility between land uses and the interconnectedness between neighborhoods, and therefore, impacts associated with the physical division of an established community would be less than significant.

The implementation of the Specific Plan would allow for the intensification of development, which could result in a net increase of 2,200 residential units and approximately 500,000 square feet of commercial uses (retail, restaurants, and offices). Much of the new development would occur on the seven acres of vacant land and the 24 acres of underutilized surface parking lots.

Vacant, abandoned, or underutilized parcels that currently exist physically divide neighborhoods, which in turn distracts from the cohesiveness of the community. One of the purposes of the proposed Specific Plan, as well as existing General Plan policies, is to guide development in the City so that conflict between land uses is reduced and the beneficial characteristics of neighborhoods are maintained or enhanced. The Specific Plan also contributes to improved connectivity through focused land use changes in areas that are either underutilized or require specialized land use guidance and revitalization. Furthermore, enhanced transit, bike and pedestrian access that are integrated with public plazas, promenades, and paseos, and cultural centers are intended to bring together and reinforce the community identity, which helps to build cohesiveness within the Plan Area. In general, the proposed principles and development standards of the Specific Plan would be used to guide this type of development in the City and to improve the compatibility between land uses and the interconnectedness between neighborhoods and communities. Therefore, impacts associated with the physical division of an established community would be less than significant.

### Mitigation Measure

No mitigation is required.

### Significance After Mitigation

No mitigation measures are required and, therefore, impacts would remain less than significant.

## Impact LU-2

**Impact LU-2** The proposed Specific Plan will not conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of any agency with jurisdiction over the project adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. Impacts will be less than significant.

The proposed Specific Plan is a planning document that provides guidance to City officials and staff, addresses the community's unique issues, and sets the course for positive future change. It includes a series of text, diagrams and graphics that describe concepts and requirements for future public improvements

and public and private developments. It will be used by the City to enhance the economic vibrancy, character, health, and overall quality of the Specific Plan area. Chapter 2 of the proposed Specific Plan provides the Guiding Principles, which includes the broad goals for the entire Plan Area, as well as for the four Sub-Areas. The Specific Plan has been prepared pursuant to the provisions of California Government Code Title 7, Division 1, Chapter 3, Article 8 and Sections 65450 through 65457, which grants cities the authority to adopt specific plans for the purposes of implementing the goals and policies of general plans.

**El Monte General Plan.** The Specific Plan establishes a link between implementing policies of the General Plan and individual projects that would occur within the Plan area. State law requires the proposed Specific Plan to be consistent with the El Monte General Plan. The General Plan provides the overarching framework used for the Specific Plan visioning blueprint, which are reflected in the eight guiding principles:

1. **Mixed-Use, Pedestrian and Transit Oriented.** Create a mixed-use, pedestrian- and transit-oriented urban village focused around a pedestrian-friendly Main Street that is woven together by attractive streetscape improvements and paseos.
2. **Central Shopping and Entertainment.** Transform the Downtown into a central shopping and entertainment district.
3. **Enticing Place for Investment.** Make Downtown an enticing place for investment by designing an active and vibrant street environment that attracts new businesses.
4. **Housing.** Incorporate a variety of housing opportunities throughout the Downtown that include a mix of densities and product types.
5. **Expanded and Improved Transit.** Create a Downtown supported by an expanded and improved public transit system.
6. **Urban Design.** Provide a blend of old and new, where new development takes it design cues from the existing El Monte culture, character, and history.
7. **Public Enhancements.** Provide a safe, active, and livable urban atmosphere with distinct streetscape design connected by public plazas, promenades, and paseos. Create entryways at key intersections, and improve streetscapes and signage.
8. **Multimodal Streets.** Provide a well-connected and balanced system of multimode streets (bus, auto, and bike) connected to pedestrian linkages that are designed to accommodate all users regardless of age or ability.

The Land Use Element of the City's General Plan serves as a long-range guide for land use and development in the City. This element indicates the type, location, and intensity of development and land uses permitted in the City. The primary objective of the Land Use Element is to assist in the management of future growth, to improve the overall physical appearance, to minimize potential land use conflicts, and to facilitate growth and development reflecting the community's vision. Specifically, the El Monte General Plan addresses the issue of compatibility between existing and future development through planned design.

The Specific Plan builds from those broader goals and policies of the General Plan to ensure consistency, and well as establish more definitive policies, strategies, and development standards for implementation

within the Plan Area. As stated in the Specific Plan, it is consistent with the following goals of the General Plan:

- **GOAL Community Design-2:** Attractive commercial corridors exemplified by consistency of hardscape, landscaping, signage, sidewalks, and other treatments appropriate to their context to foster a pleasant driving and pedestrian experience.
- **GOAL Community Design-5:** A vibrant Downtown that is an attractive, accessible and pedestrian-friendly center noted for its wide range of quality shopping, entertainment, and, cultural and recreational amenities.
- **GOAL Land Use-9**: Recreate vibrant commercial corridors with the introduction of a mix of higher density residential uses, sensitively integrated commercial uses concentrated at critical nodes, and tree-lined streetscapes that are aesthetically pleasing, encourage walking, and inspire community pride.
- **GOAL Circulation-4:** A local and regional transit service that is accessible and safe; connects to homes, residences, parks, and other community destinations; and provides a viable alternative to the use of autos.
- **GOAL Circulation-6**: Integration of circulation and land use development policies and practices that support walking, bicycling, and use of transit through a variety of supportive land use development and urban design measures.

The General Plan currently designates most of the Plan Area as Downtown Core, which allows a range of land uses with maximum residential density of 25 units per acre and a maximum commercial intensity of 1.5 FAR. However, the proposed Specific Plan allows higher residential densities and commercial intensities in comparison to the General Plan. While the Main Street Sub-Area of the Specific Plan permits a maximum density of 25 units per acre and a maximum commercial intensity of 1.5 FAR, which are the same as the General Plan, the Development Opportunity Reserve (DOR) allows higher densities and intensities. Furthermore, in the Zocalo and Monte Vista Sub-Areas, the permitted by-right residential density and commercial intensity are 30 units per acre and 2.0 FAR, respectively. The maximum permitted density and intensity for the Station Sub-Area is even higher at 35 units per acre and 2.5 FAR, and with the DOR-1, the maximum density is as high as 80 units per acre and an FAR of 4.0.

The Specific Plan encourages the addition of housing stock in the Plan Area that would include a diverse range of residential unit types at different cost levels to meet the needs of all households including those of seniors, single persons, persons with special needs, and those who work at their residences. Permitted land uses in the Plan Area would generally intensify residential development by encouraging residential multi-family and mixed uses in all the Sub-Areas and permitting higher densities than allowed by right. In addition, developers can take advantage of the Development Opportunity Reserve (DOR), an incentive program which allows higher densities and heights if amenities and/or infrastructure improvements are provided by a project. That is, the residential density can be increased in each subarea as shown in **Table 3.9-2.**

Table 3.9-2: Development Opportunity Reserve

| Regulation | By Right | DOR-1 | DOR-2 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Main Street Sub-Area** | | | |
| Max Height | 30' | 45' | 50' |
| Max Stories | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Max FAR | 1.5 | 2.0 | 2.5 |
| Max Du/AC | 25 | 35 | 45 |

| Regulation | By Right | DOR-1 |
|---|---|---|
| **Station Sub-Area** | | |
| Max Height | 50' | 75' |
| Max Stories | 4 | 6 |
| Max FAR | 2.5 | 4.0 |
| Max Du/AC | 35 | 80 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Zocalo Sub-Area** | | | |
| Max Height | 35' | 60' | - |
| Max Stories | 3 | 5 | - |
| Max FAR | 2.0 | 3.5 | - |
| Max Du/AC | 30 | 65 | - |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Monte Vista Sub-Area** | | |
| Max Height | 35' | 50' |
| Max Stories | 3 | 4 |
| Max FAR | 2.0 | 3.0 |
| Max Du/AC | 30 | 50 |

The proposed Specific Plan would alter the existing zoning districts and provide focused development standards that allow greater flexibility for future development within each Sub-Area relative to the current Zoning Ordinance. The Specific Plan is intended to facilitate a well-designed mix of development projects that combine residential and non-residential uses to be integrated with existing development in a manner that is compatible and non-intrusive, and more likely to encourage a balance of the live-work-shop-dine experience within a walkable and well-connected environment. In the end, the implementation of the Specific Plan will provide for the City's land resources and enhance its ability to realize its long-range community goals.

Since the proposed Specific Plan would result in a change in General Plan text and land use map, this could be considered a significant change in terms of land use planning. However, adoption of the Specific Plan requires amendments to the City General Plan and subsequent Zoning Ordinance so that the permitted uses and development standards are consistent among the planning documents. With the amendments, no planning conflict would result. Therefore, the El Monte General Plan and Zoning Ordinance will be concurrently amended to reflect the adjustments to tie the two planning documents together and resolve any internal conflicts. Therefore, land use and planning impacts are considered less than significant.

**SCAG 2016 RTP/SCS.** The Plan Area is a completely urbanized, built out environment that does not contain large areas of undeveloped open space, environmentally sensitive areas or agricultural lands. The Specific Plan guiding principles serve to strengthen and reinforce the SCAG 2016 RTP/SCS goals as demonstrated in **Table 3.9-3**. The Specific Plan provides for significant employment and residential opportunities in areas in the vicinity of transit, especially within the Station Sub-Area, thereby encouraging increased transit use and reducing the number of auto trips and vehicle miles traveled. This land use strategy reinforces broader public policy goals for sustainability. Further, the Specific Plan emphasizes pedestrian orientation and mixing land uses to promote and enhance the experience and convenience of walking and biking as viable alternatives to driving within the Plan Area.

Because the proposed Specific Plan would not conflict with the SCAG 2016 RTP/SCS, impacts related to plan consistency would be less than significant.

Table 3.9-3: Consistency with SCAG 2016 RTP/SCS Goals

| SCAG RTP/SCS Goals | | Consistency Analysis - Specific Plan Guiding Principles |
|---|---|---|
| RTP/SCS G1 | Align the plan investments and policies with improving regional economic development and competitiveness | 2. **Central Shopping and Entertainment.** Transform the Downtown into a central shopping and entertainment district.<br>3. **Enticing Place for Investment.** Make Downtown an enticing place for investment by designing an active and vibrant street environment that attracts new businesses. |
| RTP/SCS G2 | Maximize mobility and accessibility for all people and goods in the region | 1. **Mixed-Use, Pedestrian and Transit Oriented.** Create a mixed-use, pedestrian- and transit-oriented urban village focused around a pedestrian-friendly Main Street that is woven together by attractive streetscape improvements and paseos.<br>5. **Expanded and Improved Transit.** Create a Downtown supported by an expanded and improved public transit system.<br>8. **Multimodal Streets.** Provide a well-connected and balanced system of multimode streets (bus, auto, and bike) connected to pedestrian linkages that are designed to accommodate all users regardless of age or ability. |
| RTP/SCS G3 | Ensure travel safety and reliability for all people and goods in the region | 5. **Expanded and Improved Transit.** Create a Downtown supported by an expanded and improved public transit system.<br>7. **Public Enhancements.** Provide a safe, active, and livable urban atmosphere with distinct streetscape design connected by public plazas, promenades, and paseos. Create entryways at key intersections, and improve streetscapes and signage.<br>8. **Multimodal Streets.** Provide a well-connected and balanced system of multimode streets (bus, auto, and bike) connected to pedestrian linkages that are designed to accommodate all users regardless of age or ability. |
| RTP/SCS G4 | Preserve and ensure a sustainable regional transportation system | 5. **Expanded and Improved Transit.** Create a Downtown supported by an expanded and improved public transit system.<br>7. **Public Enhancements.** Provide a safe, active, and livable urban atmosphere with distinct streetscape design connected by public plazas, promenades, and paseos. Create entryways at key intersections, and improve streetscapes and signage.<br>8. **Multimodal Streets.** Provide a well-connected and balanced system of multimode streets (bus, auto, and bike) connected to pedestrian linkages that are designed to accommodate all users regardless of age or ability. |

| SCAG RTP/SCS Goals | | Consistency Analysis - Specific Plan Guiding Principles |
|---|---|---|
| RTP/SCS G5 | Maximize the productivity of our transportation system | **5. Expanded and Improved Transit.** Create a Downtown supported by an expanded and improved public transit system.<br>**7. Public Enhancements.** Provide a safe, active, and livable urban atmosphere with distinct streetscape design connected by public plazas, promenades, and paseos. Create entryways at key intersections, and improve streetscapes and signage.<br>**8. Multimodal Streets.** Provide a well-connected and balanced system of multimode streets (bus, auto, and bike) connected to pedestrian linkages that are designed to accommodate all users regardless of age or ability. |
| RTP/SCS G6 | Protect the environment and health for our residents by improving air quality and encouraging active transportation, such as bicycling and walking | **1. Mixed-Use, Pedestrian and Transit Oriented.** Create a mixed-use, pedestrian- and transit-oriented urban village focused around a pedestrian-friendly Main Street that is woven together by attractive streetscape improvements and paseos.<br>**5. Expanded and Improved Transit.** Create a Downtown supported by an expanded and improved public transit system.<br>**7. Public Enhancements.** Provide a safe, active, and livable urban atmosphere with distinct streetscape design connected by public plazas, promenades, and paseos. Create entryways at key intersections, and improve streetscapes and signage.<br>8. Multimodal Streets. Provide a well-connected and balanced system of multimode streets (bus, auto, and bike) connected to pedestrian linkages that are designed to accommodate all users regardless of age or ability. |
| RTP/SCS G7 | Actively encourage and create incentives for energy efficiency, where possible | **1. Mixed-Use, Pedestrian and Transit Oriented.** Create a mixed-use, pedestrian- and transit-oriented urban village focused around a pedestrian-friendly Main Street that is woven together by attractive streetscape improvements and paseos.<br>**5. Expanded and Improved Transit.** Create a Downtown supported by an expanded and improved public transit system.<br>**8. Multimodal Streets.** Provide a well-connected and balanced system of multimode streets (bus, auto, and bike) connected to pedestrian linkages that are designed to accommodate all users regardless of age or ability. |
| RTP/SCS G8 | Encourage land use and growth patterns that facilitate transit and non-motorized transportation | **1. Mixed-Use, Pedestrian and Transit Oriented.** Create a mixed-use, pedestrian- and transit-oriented urban village focused around a pedestrian-friendly Main Street that is woven together by attractive streetscape improvements and paseos.<br>**4. Housing.** Incorporate a variety of housing opportunities throughout the Downtown that include a mix of densities |

| SCAG RTP/SCS Goals | | Consistency Analysis - Specific Plan Guiding Principles |
|---|---|---|
| | | and product types.<br>5. **Expanded and Improved Transit.** Create a Downtown supported by an expanded and improved public transit system.<br>7. **Public Enhancements.** Provide a safe, active, and livable urban atmosphere with distinct streetscape design connected by public plazas, promenades, and paseos. Create entryways at key intersections, and improve streetscapes and signage.<br>8. **Multimodal Streets.** Provide a well-connected and balanced system of multimode streets (bus, auto, and bike) connected to pedestrian linkages that are designed to accommodate all users regardless of age or ability. |
| RTP/SCS G9 | Maximize the security of the regional transportation system through improved system monitoring, rapid recovery planning, and coordination with other security agencies | The City of El Monte will continue to coordinate transportation planning with federal, state, and local transportation/transit agencies. |

### Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

### Significance After Mitigation

No mitigation measures are required; therefore impacts would remain less than significant.

## E. Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts would occur if development projects associated with the proposed Specific Plan, together with other cumulative projects, would physically divide an existing community or conflict with applicable land use plans, policies, or regulations or with an adopted conservation plan. As discussed above, the Specific Plan would not conflict with any applicable land use plans, policies, or regulations, as the General Plan and Zoning

Ordinance would be amended concurrently with the approval of the Specific Plan. In addition, the Specific Plan would not physically divide an existing neighborhood or community but rather help create a positive identity that will help attract and link other parts of the City, as well as the region, to the Plan Area.

# 3.10 Noise

This section discusses the potential impacts of ambient noise on the proposed noise-sensitive uses and the effects of potential increases in noise levels on existing sensitive receptors.

## A. Setting

Noise is generally considered to be unwanted sound. There are many ways in which pressure fluctuations are generated, but typically they are caused by the vibrating movement of a solid object (FTA 2006). Noise can result in annoyance or it can cause direct physical damage or environmental stress.

Noise level (or volume) is generally measured in decibels (dB) using the A-weighted sound pressure level (dBA). The A-weighting scale is an adjustment to the actual sound pressure levels to be consistent with that of human hearing response most sensitive to frequencies around 4,000 Hertz (about the highest note on a piano) and less sensitive to low frequencies (below 100 Hertz).

Sound pressure level is measured on a logarithmic scale with the 0 dB level based on the lowest detectable sound pressure level that people can perceive (an audible sound that is not zero sound pressure level). Based on the logarithmic scale, a doubling of sound energy is equivalent to an increase of 3 dBA, and a sound that is 10 dBA less than the ambient sound level has no effect on ambient noise. Because of the nature of the human ear, a sound must be about 10 dBA greater than the reference sound to be judged as twice as loud. In general, a 3 dBA change in community noise levels is noticeable, while 1-2 dB changes generally are not perceived. Quiet suburban areas typically have noise levels in the range of 40-50 dBA, while arterial streets are in the 50-60+ dBA range. Normal conversational levels are in the 60-65 dBA range, and ambient noise levels greater than 65 dBA can interrupt conversations.

Noise levels typically attenuate (or drop off) at a rate of 6 dBA for each doubling of distance from point sources (e.g., industrial machinery). Noise from lightly traveled roads typically attenuates at a rate of about 4.5 dBA per doubling of distance. Noise from heavily traveled roads typically attenuates at about 3 dBA per doubling of distance. Noise levels may also be reduced by intervening structures. For example, a single row of buildings between the receptor and the noise source reduces the noise level by about 5 dBA, while a solid wall or berm reduces noise levels by 5 to 10 dBA. The manner in which older homes in California were constructed (approximately 30 years old or older) generally provides a reduction of exterior-to-interior noise levels of about 20 to 25 dBA with closed windows. The exterior-to-interior reduction of newer residential units and office buildings is generally 30 dBA or more (FTA 2006).

In addition to the instantaneous measurement of sound levels the duration of a sound is important since those that occur over a long period of time are more likely to become an annoyance or cause direct physical damage or environmental stress. One of the most frequently used noise metrics that considers both duration and sound power level is the equivalent noise level (Leq). The Leq is defined as the single steady A-weighted level that is equivalent to the same amount of energy as that contained in the actual fluctuating

levels over a period of time (essentially, the average noise level). Typically, Leq is summed over a one-hour period. Lmax is the highest RMS (root mean squared) sound pressure level during the measurement period, and Lmin is the lowest RMS sound pressure level during the measuring period.

The time period in which noise occurs is also important since noise that occurs at night tends to be more disturbing than that which occurs during the day. Community noise is usually measured using Day-Night Average Level (Ldn), which is the 24-hour average noise level with a 10-dBA penalty for noise occurring during nighttime (10 p.m. to 7 a.m.) hours, or Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL), the 24-hour average noise level with a 5 dBA penalty for noise occurring from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. and a 10 dBA penalty for noise occurring from 10 p.m. to 7 a.m. Noise levels described by Ldn and CNEL usually do not differ by more than 1 dB.

## Existing Noise Levels

Primary sources of intrusive sound in the region are attributed to motor vehicles traveling on area roads and highways, aircraft activities, train operations, and commercial/industrial operations. According to the City's General Plan Noise Element, the largest noise generators in the City are automobile traffic, the airport, and industry (City of El Monte 2011).

Major arterials in El Monte include Valley Boulevard, Peck Road, Garvey Avenue, Santa Anita Avenue, and Baldwin Avenue. Secondary arterials in El Monte include Durfee Road, Lower Azusa Road, Ramona Boulevard, Arden Drive, and Tyler Avenue (City of El Monte 2011). The City is also bisected by I-10, which produces noise levels in excess of 65 CNEL.

A Union Pacific Rail Road main line runs east-west through the City, north of Valley Boulevard and carries passenger and freight trains. The Los Angeles to San Bernardino Metrolink runs approximately 38 times a day Monday – Friday, 20 times a day on Saturday, and 14 times per day on Sunday.

The San Gabriel Valley Airport is located along the Rio Hondo River in north El Monte. This general aviation airport generates noise primarily along the flight path from aircraft landings and departures. Landings and takeoffs occur to the north/south with planes generally flying east over the City. Noise from this General aviation airport, while noticeable, is less than the noise produced from jets at larger commercial airports.

Stationary noise sources include a variety of industrial uses, primarily located in the Northwest Redevelopment Project Area. The primary sources of stationary noise would be from machinery used in industries, heating ventilation-air conditioning units, generators, and other equipment.

## Sensitive Receptors

Sensitive noise receptors are generally defined as residential uses, schools, health care facilities, libraries, and churches. Many jurisdictions, including El Monte, also consider residential uses particularly noise

sensitive because families and individuals expect to use time at home for rest and relaxation, and noise can interfere with those activities.

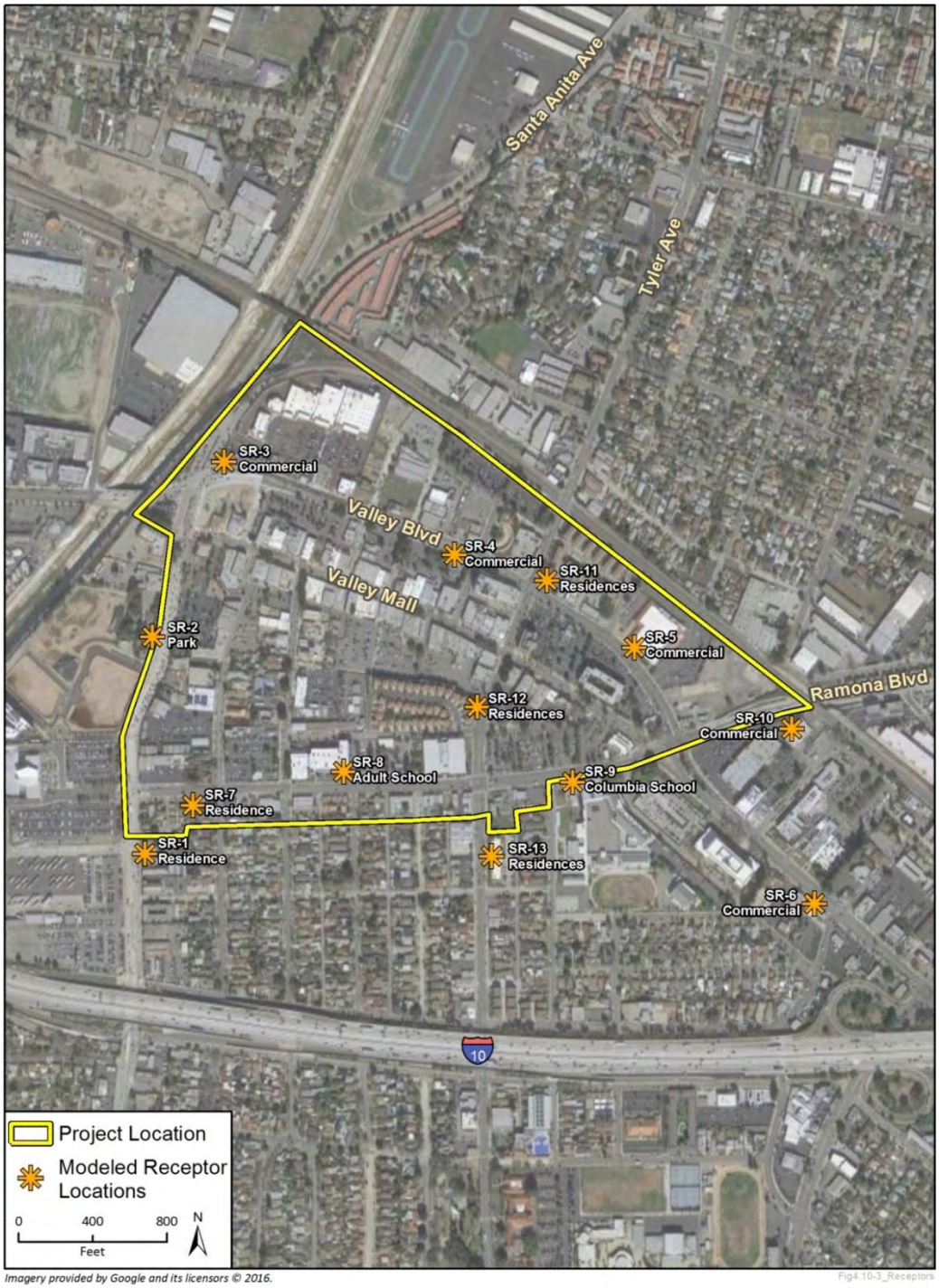
The Plan Area is bordered by noise-sensitive residential land uses to the south and to the northeast. Two schools are located within approximately 1,000 feet of the Plan Area. They include Columbia Elementary School immediately to the south and Nativity School approximately 800 feet to the north. Existing noise levels were modeled using the FHWA Traffic Noise Model Version 2.5 (U.S. Department of Transportation, FHWA, February 2004) (noise model data is provided in **Appendix E**).

**Table 3.10-1: Existing Levels from Roadways in the Vicinity of the Plan Area (dBA Ldn)[1]**

| Measurement Location | Modeled Existing Conditions (dBA Ldn) |
|---|---|
| #1 Santa Anita Avenue | 72.8 |
| #2 Santa Anita Avenue | 71.7 |
| #3 Santa Anita Avenue | 73.2 |
| #4 Valley Boulevard | 71.9 |
| #5 Valley Boulevard | 71.1 |
| #6 Valley Boulevard | 73.5 |
| #7 Ramona Boulevard | 64.4 |
| #8 Ramona Boulevard | 63.0 |
| #9 Ramona Boulevard | 71.3 |
| #10 Ramona Boulevard | 65.5 |
| #11 Tyler Avenue | 70.6 |
| #12 Tyler Avenue | 64.3 |
| #13 Tyler Avenue | 65.5 |

*Source: FHWA Traffic Noise Model Version 2.5*
*Refer to Appendix C for full noise model output. Noise levels presented do not account for attenuation provided by all existing barriers or future barriers; therefore, actual noise levels at sensitive receptor locations influenced by study area roadways may in many cases be lower than presented herein.*
*Notes:*
*1. Average daily traffic based on PM peak hour volume traffic for roadway segments analyzed in Section 4.13, Transportation and Circulation.*

The locations modeled are shown in **Figure 3.10-1**. The existing noise levels in the project area are shown in **Table 3.10-1**

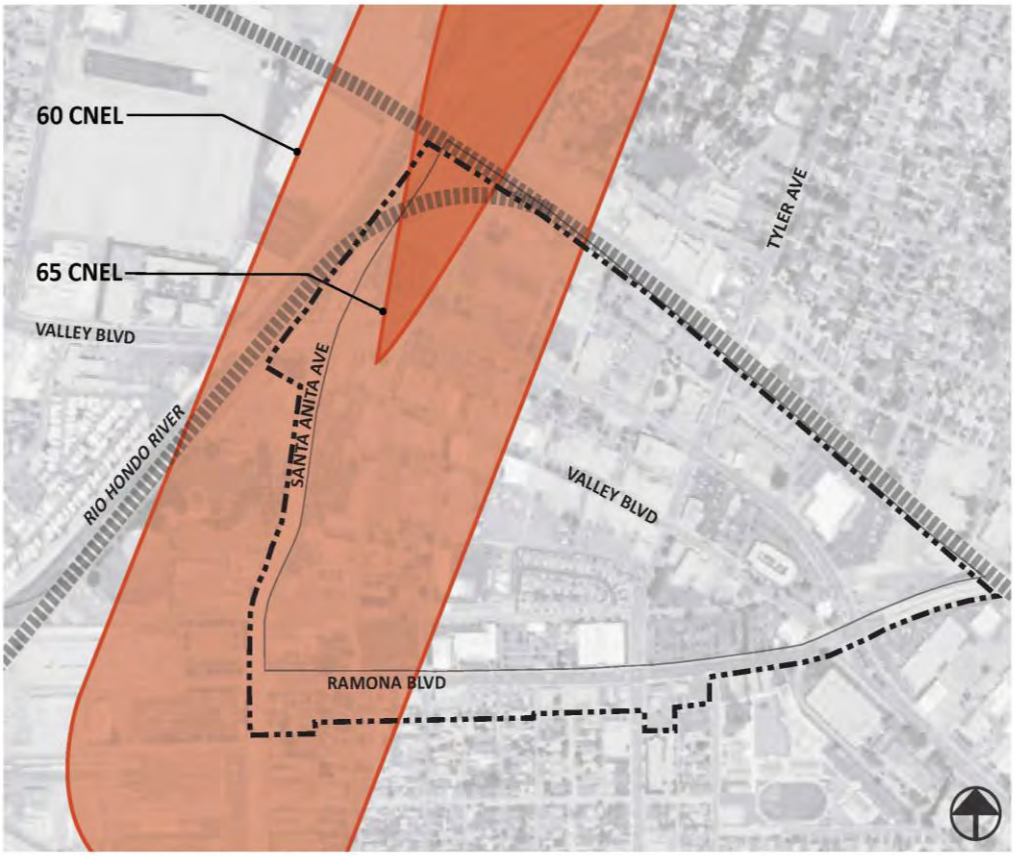



| | |
|---|---|
| Downtown Main Street Transit-Oriented Development, Specific Plan Draft EIR | **Figure 3.10-1 Sensitive Receptor Locations** |

# B. Regulatory Framework

## Federal

**Aircraft Noise Regulations.** The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the State of California Airport Noise Standards have established the Yearly Average CNEL as the noise standard by which airport noise and land compatibility is judged. The agencies have identified the 65 dBA CNEL contour for airport operations as the Noise Impact Boundary. Within this boundary airport operators are required to ensure that all land uses are compatible with the aircraft noise environment or the operator must provide noise mitigation or secure a variance from the governing agencies. Under most circumstances residences are considered to be an incompatible land use within the 65 dBA CNEL noise contour. A portion of the Specific Plan Area is within the noise contour for the San Gabriel Valley Airport, as shown in **Figure 3.10-2** San Gabriel Valley Airport Noise Contour.




TRANSIT-ORIENTED DISTRICT SPECIFIC PLAN, May 19, 2016

| | |
|---|---|
| Downtown Main Street Transit-Oriented Development, Specific Plan Draft EIR | **Figure 3.10-2: San Gabriel Valley Airport Noise Contour** |

## State

The California Commission of Housing and Community Development officially adopted noise insulation standards in 1974. In November 1988, the Building Standards Commission approved revisions to these standards (Title 24, Part 2, California Code of Regulations). The standards are in Chapter 12 of the California Building Code and apply to all new construction in California.

Title 24 requires that interior noise levels attributable to exterior sources must not exceed 45 dB in any habitable room. Additionally, the code specifies that multi-family residential buildings or structures that will be located in exterior CNEL (or Ldn) contours of 60 dB or greater from sources such as a freeway, expressway, parkway, major street, thoroughfare, airport, rail line, rapid transit line, or industrial noise source shall require an acoustical analysis showing that the building has been designed to limit intruding noise to an interior CNEL (or Ldn) of 45 dB. Worst-case noise levels must be used to determine compliance. Predictions must also be made for future noise levels for a period of at least 10 years from the time of building permit application.

## Local

**City of El Monte General Plan.** The El Monte General Plan Public Health and Safety Element includes policies, standards, criteria, programs, diagrams, action items, and maps related to protecting public health and welfare from excessive noise exposure. **Table 3.10-2** below and **Figure 3.10-3** illustrate the guidelines established in the Public Health and Safety Element based on standards for acceptable noise levels. These standards and criteria are incorporated into the land use planning process to reduce noise and land use incompatibilities.

**Table 3.10-2 Land Use Guidelines for Exterior Noise**

| Parcel Details | 7:00 AM to 10:00 PM | 10:00 PM to 7:00 AM |
|---|---|---|
| **Single Family Residential** | 50 dBA | 45 dBA |
| **Multiple-Family Residential** | 55 dBA | 50 dBA |
| **Residential 150 feet from Freeway** | 62 dBA | 58 dBA |
| **Commercial** | 65 dBA | 60 dBA |
| **Industrial** | 70 dBA | 70 dBA |

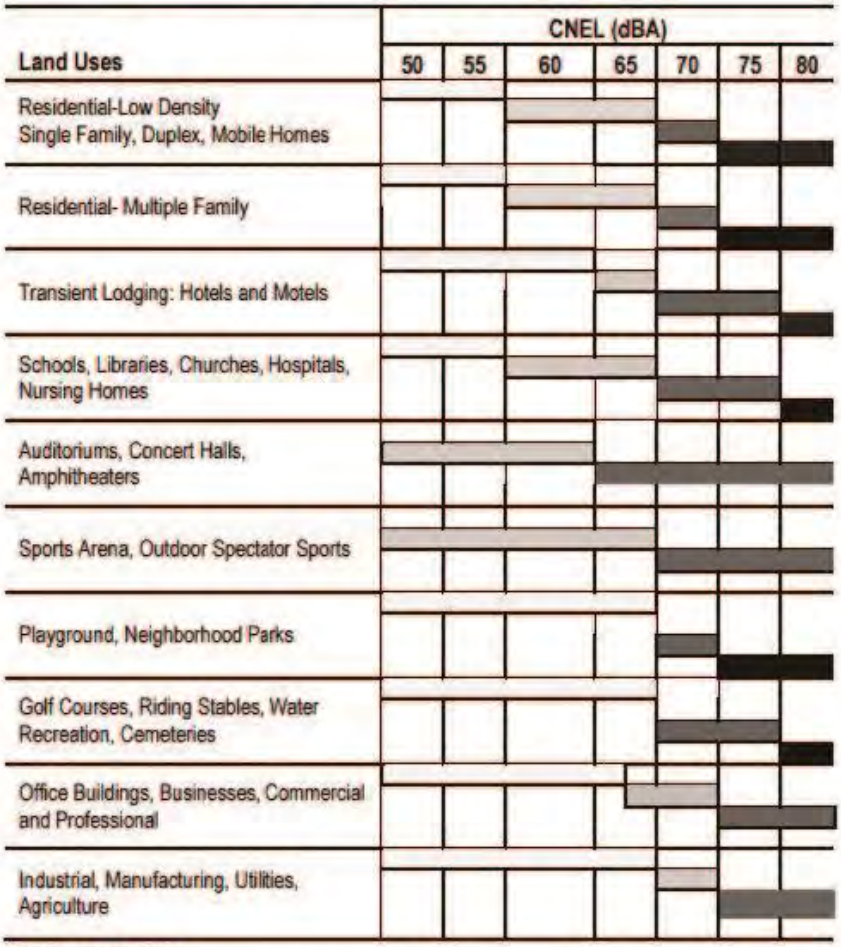
*Source: El Monte General Plan, Public Health and Safety Element, Table PHS-2*

**City of El Monte Municipal Code.** Chapter 8.36 of the City of El Monte Municipal Code establishes regulations and standards regarding operational and construction noise:

- **Operational Noise Standards.** Pursuant to El Monte Municipal Code Section 8.36.030, ambient noise levels should not exceed 55 dBA between the hours of 7:00 AM an d 10:00 PM at multi-family uses, 65 dBA at commercial uses, and 70 dBA at industrial uses. Residential uses within 150 feet of a freeway, permissible noise levels are 62 dBA between the hours of 7:00 AM and 10:00 PM and 58 dBA between the hours of 10:00 PM and 7:00 AM. Noise levels that exceed the ambient noise level by more than five dBA for a cumulative period of fifteen minutes in any hour at the property line of any property is prohibited.

- **Construction Noise Standards.** Pursuant to Section 8.36.050(C) of the El Monte Municipal Code, noise generating activities created by construction is prohibited except between the hours of 6:00 AM and 7:00 PM Monday through Friday or between the hours of 8:00 AM and 7:00 PM on Saturday and Sunday.

**Table PHS-1 Noise/Land Use Compatibility Standards**




**Explanatory Notes**

**Normally Acceptable:** Specified land use is satisfactory based on the assumption that any buildings involved are of conventional construction, without special noise insulation requirements.

**Conditionally Acceptable:** New construction should be undertaken only after a detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirements and needed noise insulation features are included in the design.

**Normally Unacceptable:** New construction should be discouraged, unless a detailed analysis of noise reduction requirements is made and needed insulation features are fully included in the design.

**Clearly Unacceptable:** New construction or development should generally not be undertaken.

Source: El Monte General Plan, Noise Element, Figure N-2, Noise/Land Use Compatibility Standards, 1991. Based on Governor's Office of Planning and Research. Guidelines for Preparation of Content of the Noise Element of the General Plans, 1986.

*Source: TRANSIT-ORIENTED DISTRICT SPECIFIC PLAN, May 19, 2016*

| Downtown Main Street Transit-Oriented Development, Specific Plan Draft EIR | **Figure 3.10-3 Noise Compatibility Standards** |
|---|---|

# C. Significance Thresholds

The analysis of noise impacts considers the effects of both temporary construction-related noise and operational noise associated with long-term development under the Specific Plan, including its associated traffic. Construction noise estimates are based upon noise levels reported by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Office of Planning and Environment (FTA 2006) in the *Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment*, and the distance to nearby sensitive receptors. Reference noise levels from the FTA document are used to estimate noise levels at adjacent sensitive receptors based on a standard noise attenuation rate of 6 dB per doubling of distance (line-of-sight method of sound attenuation for point sources of noise). Construction noise level estimates do not account for the presence of intervening structures or topography, which may reduce noise levels at receptor locations. The locations and land uses of future development under the proposed Specific Plan are not known. Therefore, it is assumed that construction would be immediately adjacent to sensitive receptors (as close as 25 feet). Therefore, the noise levels presented herein represent a conservative, reasonable worst-case estimate of actual temporary construction noise. Construction activities are temporary. While construction in the Plan Area would occur over approximately 20 years (the buildout year for the proposed Specific Plan is 2035), the actual location from which noise would be generated would shift as different areas are developed.

Noise levels associated with existing and the proposed Specific Plan's buildout-related traffic along area roadways were calculated using the FHWA Traffic Noise Model Version 2.5 (U.S. Department of Transportation, FHWA, February 2004) (noise model data is provided in **Appendix E**). The model calculations are based on traffic data discussed in Section 4.13, *Transportation and Circulation*. The May 2006 FTA *Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment* recommendations were used to determine whether or not increases in roadway noise would be considered significant.

In accordance with Appendix G of the *State CEQA Guidelines*, a project would result in a significant impact if it would do any of the following:

1. Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies.
2. Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive ground-borne vibration or ground-borne noise levels.
3. A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project.
4. A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project.
5. For a project located in an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise level.
6. For a project in the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels.

Potential impacts associated with significance criterion 6 were found in the Initial Study (**Appendix A**) to be less than significant. Therefore, the analysis below is focused on significance criterion 1 through 5.

For threshold 1, an impact would be potentially significant if it would expose people to or generate noise levels in excess of standards established in the El Monte General Plan Public Health and Safety Element or the City of El Monte Municipal Code.

For threshold 2, an impact would be potentially significant if an existing or proposed receptor would be exposed to vibration levels above the following standards, as established by FTA:

- 80 VdB at residences and buildings where people normally sleep
- 83 VdB at institutional buildings
- 100 VdB for fragile buildings

For traffic, noise increases generated by the project (threshold 3), impacts would be significant if that noise would result in exposure of sensitive receptors to unacceptable noise levels. The allowable noise exposure increase adjusts as noise exposure increases, such that lower ambient noise levels are allowed a higher noise exposure increase. In order for a change in noise to be perceptible to the human ear it needs to increase by 3 dBA. This requires a doubling of intensity of the noise generated. For traffic this means that amount of cars driving down a road would have to double for this to happen. For an operational noise level to be considered significant it would have to increase by 3 dBA.

For threshold 4, an impact would be potentially significant if construction activities that cause noise levels to exceed the standards shown in **Figure 3.10-3** or the City of El Monte Municipal Code.

# D. Impacts and Mitigation Measures

## Impact N-1

| | |
|---|---|
| **Impact N-1** | Development associated with the proposed Specific Plan would be subject to El Monte General Plan policies and would be required to comply with the El Monte General Plan Public Health and Safety Element Land Use and Noise Compatibility Guidelines. Impacts to potential development would be less than significant after mitigation. |

Buildout under the proposed Specific Plan would have significant noise impacts if it would expose people to or generate noise levels in excess of standards established in the El Monte General Plan, Municipal Code noise ordinances, or by other applicable agencies, including the FTA and FHWA. Specifically, the proposed Specific Plan would be subject to Policy PHS-8.1 which requires enforcement of noise abatement and control measures, Policy PHS-8.2 which requires the inclusion of noise-reducing design features into development, and Policy PHS-8.3 which requires consideration of noise in the site plan review process, particularly with regard to parking and loading areas, ingress/egress points, and refuse collection areas. Additionally, the El Monte General Plan includes Noise/Land Use Compatibility Standards for residential, commercial, and industrial land uses. Sensitive receptors, including residential

development, schools, libraries, churches, and hospitals have normally acceptable noise levels of up to 60 dBA CNEL and conditionally acceptable noise levels of 60-70 dBA CNEL.

As shown in **Table 3.10-1**, the Specific Plan would facilitate the development of new residential and other noise-sensitive uses that could be exposed to long-term noise exceeding 60 dBA CNEL. Potential sources of noise exposure are primarily roadways, including Santa Anita Avenue, Valley Boulevard, Ramona Boulevard, and Tyler Avenue, as well as airport and railroad operations. In addition, new residences could also be exposed to noise generated by commercial or industrial activity that exceeds the normally acceptable range. Such development would be along Tyler Avenue or Valley Boulevard in the Plan Area.

As described in Chapter 2, Land Use, of the Specific Plan, Good Neighbor Buffer Development Standards are required to ensure that future development within the Specific Plan area is compatible with existing residential development. Good Neighbor Buffer Development Standards include noise buffer requirements such as:

1. Loading docks, service areas, and noise and odor-generating operations are not permitted within 20′ of a property zoned R-1 and R2-PRD or shall be buffered with a 5′ landscaped setback and 8′ masonry sound wall.
2. HVAC systems shall be selected based on their noise rating or installed with features to reduce noise, such as parapet walls and equipment enclosures and/or the strategic placement of equipment.
3. Noise generating equipment, such as refrigeration units and air conditioning and exhaust fans shall be located away from residential uses. Noise-reducing screens and insulation may be required if any equipment has the potential to create a negative impact on residential uses.

Compliance with General Plan policies PHS 8.1 through PHS 8.3 and Chapter 2 of the Specific Plan, Good Neighbor Buffer Development Standards would reduce potential noise impacts at sensitive receptors. In addition, Mitigation Measure N-1, below, would ensure that future residential development (both interiors and exteriors) are not exposed to significant noise impacts.

In addition to noise impacts, residences associated with the buildout of the Specific Plan could be exposed to vibration from Metrolink trains running along the northern edge of the Plan Area. The threshold of human perception of vibration is approximately 65 VdB and vibration that exceeds 75 to 80 VdB may be intrusive and annoying to building occupants. Typically, commuter rail generates a vibration level of 75 VdB at a distance of 50 feet and 66 VdB at a distance of 100 feet. These levels would not typically be disruptive to future residences near the Metrolink train tracks. In addition, Metrolink trains do not operate through El Monte between the hours of 10:30 PM and 5:00 AM and would not disrupt normal sleep hours.

## Mitigation Measures

**Acoustical Analysis and Design Mitigation.** Residential developers within the Plan Area shall retain a professional acoustical consultant to conduct acoustical analysis as part of the design process and the recommendations of the acoustical analysis shall be incorporated into project design. This will assure that

the City's interior noise level standards are achieved. Noise reduction measures that may be required for future development may include but would not be limited to:

- Future exterior balconies and other outdoor living spaces shall be sited away from or removed from facades facing roadways, where feasible.
- All new residential structures in the Plan Area shall include windows and exterior doors that have a minimum STC rating of 30 STC or higher to ensure a minimum reduction of 25 dBA. Exterior doors shall be solid core and have weather stripping installed.
- All residential structures in the Plan Area shall include exterior wall assemblies should have a STC rating of 45 or higher to ensure a minimum reduction of 40 dBA.
- Sound barriers, including sound walls.
- To avoid secondary aesthetic impacts, long expanses of walls or fences shall be interrupted with offsets and provided with accents to prevent monotony. Landscape pockets and pedestrian access through walls should be provided. Whenever possible, a combination of elements shall be used, including solid fences, walls, and, landscaped berms.
- Site layout, including setbacks, open space separation, orientation of outdoor activity areas away from roadways, and shielding of noise sensitive uses with non-noise-sensitive uses
- Roof and attic vents facing away from the nearest roadway
- Air conditioning or a mechanical ventilation systems that allow doors and windows to remain closed
- Double-paned glass on all windows
- Windows and sliding glass doors mounted in low air infiltration rate frames
- Solid core exterior doors with perimeter weather stripping and threshold seals
- Acoustically insulated building wall construction

## Significance after Mitigation

Noise levels experienced by development facilitated by the Specific Plan would be less than significant.

## Impact N-2

| | |
|---|---|
| **Impact N-2** | Construction-related activities associated with implementation of the Specific Plan would intermittently generate high noise levels and groundborne vibration in and adjacent to the Plan Area. Buildout of the Specific Plan would comply with the requirements of the El Monte General Plan and the City of El Monte Municipal Code Section 8.36.050(C). Impacts would be less than significant. |

Residences and businesses to the south and northeast of the proposed Plan Area as well as those already within the Plan area, would be affected by construction noise during buildout of the Specific Plan. Most of the time construction noise impacts result when construction activities occur during noise-sensitive times of the day (early morning, evening, or nighttime hours), when construction occurs in areas immediately adjacent to noise sensitive land uses, or when the duration of construction extends over long periods of time. Major noise-generating construction activities could include demolition activities, site grading and excavation, building erection, paving and landscaping. These activities could occur in areas immediately

adjacent to existing noise-sensitive receptors or receptors proposed for future development under the Specific Plan.

The highest construction noise levels would be generated during grading and excavation, with lower noise levels occurring during building construction. Large earth-moving equipment, such as graders, scrapers, and bulldozers, generate maximum noise levels of 90 to 95 dBA at a distance of 25 feet. **Table 3.10-3** gives the noises levels generated by common types of construction equipment. Typical hourly, average, construction-generated noise levels are about 85 to 90 dBA when measured at a distance of 25 feet from the site during busy construction periods. These noise levels drop off at a rate of about 6 dBA for each doubling of distance between the noise source and the receptor. Intervening structures or terrain would also attenuate noise and would reduce levels.

Noise levels anticipated over temporary periods of time from construction activities related to the Specific Plan would exceed the required hourly average threshold of 60 dBA Leq and existing ambient noise levels by 10 dBA or more for sensitive receivers adjacent to potential development sites. In addition, construction activities may last for extended periods of time; therefore, the Specific Plan's construction noise impacts would be potentially significant.

Residences and businesses adjacent to proposed development to the northeast and the south could be affected by vibration caused by construction during buildout of the Specific Plan. The primary sources of man-made vibration are blasting, grading, pavement breaking, and demolition. The primary vibratory source during construction in the Plan Area would likely be large bulldozers used to demolish existing structures and large trucks loaded with supplies and debris. **Table 3.10-4** identifies vibration velocity levels for the common types of equipment that could be used in the Plan Area during construction. As shown in the table, typical bulldozer or loaded truck activities generate an approximate vibration level of 58-87 VdB at a distance of 25 feet. Vibration levels in excess of 80 VdB often result in annoyance. As such, if existing and future residences located 25 feet from potential future construction in the Plan Area may intermittently be disturbed by vibration noise. Because the Specific Plan includes residential and commercial land uses that are expected to utilize standard construction techniques, vibration levels are not anticipated to exceed 100 VdB in the Plan Area, which is the threshold where minor damage can occur in fragile buildings.

Construction under the Specific Plan would comply with Section 8.36.050(C) of the El Monte Municipal Code limiting construction to between the hours of 6 am and 7 pm Monday through Friday and between the hours of 8 am and 7 pm on Saturdays and Sundays. Therefore, as construction would not occur during normal sleep hours, construction-related groundborne noise, and vibration would not be significant at receptors. Additionally, construction-related noise and vibration would be temporary and intermittent as it is not expected that buildout of the Specific Plan would occur all at once and would not result in long-term noise impacts. Impacts would be less than significant.

Table 3.10-3 Typical Noise Levels Generated by Construction Equipment

| | | Typical Lmax (dBA) Distances from the Source | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Equipment | Type | 25 Feet | 50 Feet |
| Air Compressor | Stationary | 87 | 81 |
| Backhoe | Mobile | 86 | 80 |
| Compactor (ground) | Mobile | 89 | 83 |
| Concrete Mixer | Stationary | 91 | 85 |
| Dump Truck | Mobile | 82 | 76 |
| Excavator | Mobile | 87 | 81 |
| Flat Bed Truck | Mobile | 80 | 74 |
| Front End Loader | Mobile | 85 | 79 |
| Generator | Stationary | 87 | 81 |
| Grader | Mobile | 89 | 83 |
| Paver | Mobile | 95 | 89 |
| Pickup Truck | Mobile | 81 | 75 |
| Pneumatic Tools | Stationary | 91 | 85 |
| Roller | Mobile | 86 | 80 |
| Saw | Stationary | 76 | 70 |
| Warning Horn | Stationary | 89 | 83 |
| Welder/Torch | Stationary | 80 | 74 |

*Source: FHWA 2006.*

Table 3.10-4 Vibration Source Levels for Construction Equipment

| | Approximate VdB | |
|---|---|---|
| Equipment | 25 Feet | 50 Feet |
| Large Bulldozer | 87 | 81 |
| Loaded Trucks | 86 | 80 |
| Jackhammer | 79 | 73 |
| Small Bulldozer | 58 | 52 |

*Vibration levels assume an attenuation rate of 6 VdB per doubling of distance.*
*Source: FTA 2006*

## Mitigation Measures

Impacts would be less than significant with compliance with Section 8.36.050(C) of the El Monte Municipal Code, which limits construction in the vicinity of noise sensitive land uses to between the hours of 6 am and 7 pm Monday through Friday and between the hours of 8 am and 7 pm Saturday and Sunday.

## Significance after Mitigation

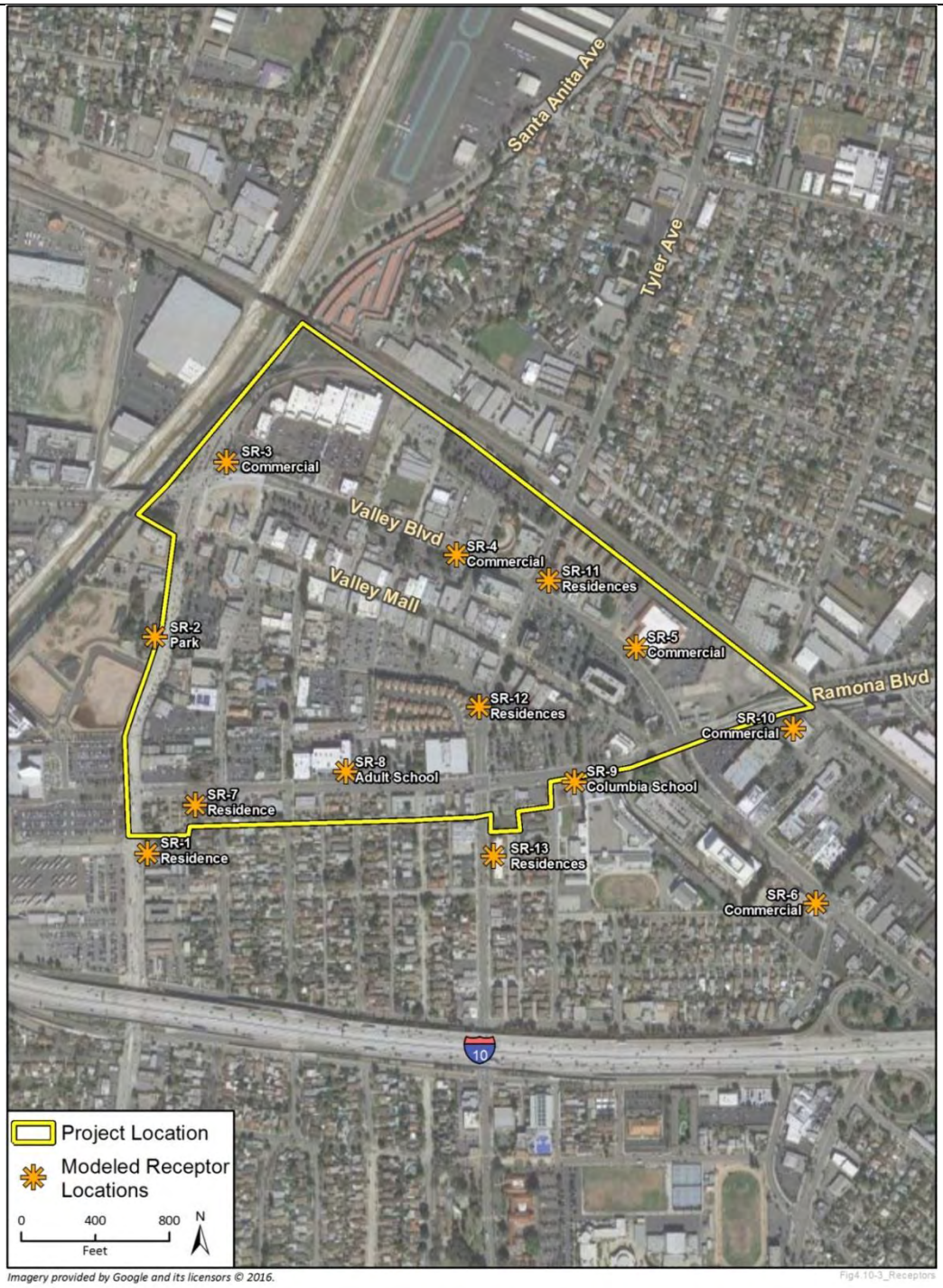
Construction noise and vibration generated by buildout of the proposed Specific Plan would be less than significant.

## Impact N-3

**Impact N-3** Traffic and the increased density generated by buildout of the proposed Specific Plan would incrementally increase noise levels in the Plan Area. Compliance with the standards required in the El Monte General Plan and the Specific Plan and implementation of mitigation would reduce roadway noise impacts to the maximum extent feasible. Impacts to exterior noise levels and interior noise levels at existing development would be less than significant.

Buildout of the Specific Plan would result in an increase in the average number of daily vehicle trips and peak hour trips in the Plan Area, particularly along the Santa Anita Avenue, Valley Boulevard, Ramona Boulevard, and Tyler Avenue roadway segments in the Plan Area. Traffic generated by the buildout of the Specific Plan on these roadways is discussed in Section 3.11 Transportation. The traffic levels for existing traffic, future (2020) traffic and future (2035) traffic discussed in that section were used to determine the Specific Plan's traffic-related noise impacts on receptors located along each roadway. The Specific Plan would facilitate the development of new residential and other noise-sensitive uses that could be exposed to long-term noise from traffic generated along Santa Anita Avenue, Valley Boulevard, Ramona Boulevard and Tyler Avenue.

The FHWA Traffic Noise Model Version 2.5 (TNM 2.5) was used to model existing, future (2020) without Specific Plan buildout, future (2020) with Specific Plan buildout, future (2035) without Specific Plan buildout, and future (2035) with Specific Plan buildout. Noise levels at 13 locations along the four main roadways were modeled to determine the sound level increase related to Specific Plan traffic growth in the area. Existing sound levels, as shown on **Table 3.10-1**, range from 63 dBA CNEL to 73.5 dBA CNEL. Modeled locations are shown in




| Downtown Main Street Transit-Oriented Development, Specific Plan Draft EIR | **Figure 3.10-1 Sensitive Receptor Locations** |
|---|---|

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In order to determine the Specific Plan's impact on roadway noise, future year traffic projections were used to model 2020 and 2035 noise levels, with and without buildout of the Specific Plan. Future traffic levels

were based on past, present, and probable future projects identified by the City of El Monte and neighboring jurisdictions. Traffic is estimated to increase 0.82 percent per year between 2016 and 2020 and 0.52 percent between 2020 and 2035. Buildout of the Specific Plan would further increase traffic levels on area roadways, incrementally increasing roadway noise levels at receptors. **Table 3.10-5** shows future year 2020 roadway noise levels with and without buildout of the Specific Plan and **Table 3.10-6** shows future year 2035 roadway noise levels with and without buildout of the Specific Plan.

Table 3.10-5 Future (2020) Levels from Roadways in the Vicinity of the Plan Area (dBA CNEL)[1]

| Measurement Location | Future (2020) w/o Specific Plan Buildout (dBA CNEL) | Threshold[1] | Future (2020) w/ Specific Plan Buildout (dBA CNEL) | Increase from Project Generated Traffic | Threshold Exceeded ? |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| #1 Santa Anita Avenue | 73.5 | 3 | 74.3 | 0.8 | No |
| #2 Santa Anita Avenue | 72.4 | 3 | 73.0 | 0.6 | No |
| #3 Santa Anita Avenue | 74.2 | 3 | 74.5 | 0.3 | No |
| #4 Valley Boulevard | 72.9 | 3 | 73.3 | 0.4 | No |
| #5 Valley Boulevard | 71.8 | 3 | 72.0 | 0.2 | No |
| #6 Valley Boulevard | 74.0 | 3 | 74.5 | 0.5 | No |
| #7 Ramona Boulevard | 65.0 | 3 | 66.9 | 1.9 | No |
| #8 Ramona Boulevard | 63.5 | 3 | 65.6 | 2.1 | No |
| #9 Ramona Boulevard | 71.5 | 3 | 72.0 | 0.5 | No |
| #10 Ramona Boulevard | 66.1 | 3 | 66.9 | 0.8 | No |
| #11 Tyler Avenue | 71.3 | 3 | 71.7 | 0.4 | No |
| #12 Tyler Avenue | 65.0 | 3 | 65.6 | 0.1 | No |
| #13 Tyler Avenue | 66.1 | 3 | 66.4 | 0.3 | No |

*Source: FHWA Traffic Noise Model Version 2.5*
*Refer to Appendix C for full noise model output. Noise levels presented do not account for attenuation provided by all existing barriers or future barriers; therefore, actual noise levels at sensitive receptor locations influenced by study area roadways may in many cases be lower than presented herein.*
*Notes:*
*1. Average daily traffic based on PM peak hour volume traffic for roadway segments analyzed in Section 3.11 Transportation and Circulation.*

Table 3.10-6 Future (2035) Levels from Roadways in the Vicinity of the Plan Area (dBA CNEL)[1]

| Measurement Location | Future (2035) w/o Specific Plan Buildout (dBA CNEL) | Threshold | Future (2035) w/ Specific Plan Buildout (dBA CNEL) | Increase from Project Generated Traffic | Threshold Exceeded? |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| #1 Santa Anita Avenue | 73.8 | 3 | 74.6 | 0.8 | No |
| #2 Santa Anita Avenue | 72.7 | 3 | 73.2 | 0.5 | No |
| #3 Santa Anita Avenue | 74.5 | 3 | 74.8 | 0.3 | No |
| #4 Valley Boulevard | 73.2 | 3 | 73.5 | 0.3 | No |
| #5 Valley Boulevard | 72.1 | 3 | 72.3 | 0.2 | No |
| #6 Valley Boulevard | 74.3 | 3 | 74.8 | 0.5 | No |
| #7 Ramona Boulevard | 65.3 | 3 | 67.1 | 1.8 | No |
| #8 Ramona Boulevard | 63.9 | 3 | 65.8 | 1.9 | No |
| #9 Ramona Boulevard | 71.8 | 3 | 72.3 | 0.5 | No |
| #10 Ramona Boulevard | 66.4 | 3 | 67.1 | 0.7 | No |
| #11 Tyler Avenue | 71.6 | 3 | 72.0 | 0.4 | No |
| #12 Tyler Avenue | 65.3 | 3 | 65.8 | 0.5 | No |
| #13 Tyler Avenue | 66.4 | 3 | 66.7 | 0.3 | No |

*Source: FHWA Traffic Noise Model Version 2.5*
*Refer to Appendix C for full noise model output. Noise levels presented do not account for attenuation provided by all existing barriers or future barriers; therefore, actual noise levels at sensitive receptor locations influenced by study area roadways may in many cases be lower than presented herein.*
*Notes:*
*1. Average daily traffic based on PM peak hour volume traffic for roadway segments analyzed in Section 3.11, Transportation and Circulation.*

As shown in **Table 3.10-5** and **Table 3.10-6**, traffic generated by buildout of the Specific Plan would incrementally increase roadway noise. Traffic-related noise impacts would be significant if roadway noise would increase existing exterior, ambient noise levels by greater than 3 dBA CNEL. As shown above, none of the noise increases would be greater than 3 dBA.

The El Monte General Plan includes the following policies to address noise impacts within the City:

Policy PHS 8.1 Residential Neighborhoods. Continue to enforce noise abatement and control measures in El Monte, particularly within residential neighborhoods and around noise sensitive land uses.

Policy PHS 8.2 Land Use Compatibility. Require the inclusion of noise reducing design features in development consistent with standards PHS-1, Title 24 California Code of Regulations and El Monte Municipal Code.

Policy PHS 8.3 Site Planning. Incorporate noise considerations into the site plan review process, particularly with regard to parking and loading areas, ingress/egress points and refuse collection areas.

In addition, the Specific Plan includes Good Neighbor Buffer Development Standards, requiring setbacks between residential zones and noise generating operations and noise reducing screens and enclosures around noise generating equipment. Design Guidelines included in the Specific Plan allow for solid fences and walls to provide noise attenuation along public streets.

Noise impacts can sometimes be mitigated on a case-by case basis by implementing appropriate design methods, including setbacks, building siting, sound barriers, and sound attenuating building techniques. Therefore, the use of such methods on all new development in the Plan Area would be expected to result in an acceptable noise environment. Implementation of the above policies would address and reduce traffic noise impacts to new sensitive receptors developed under the proposed Specific Plan to the greatest extent feasible.

While the development allowed by the Specific Plan would increase density in the area, the uses it allows would be similar to those already existing. Therefore the new development would generate noise typical of the area, such as human conversation, HVAC equipment, doors closing, and children playing. These uses would not cause noise levels to exceed those already experienced in the area.

## Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

## Significance after Mitigation

Impacts would be less than significant.

### Impact N-4

| | |
|---|---|
| **Impact N-4** | The Plan Area is located approximately 1,000 feet south of the runway for the San Gabriel Valley Airport (formerly the El Monte Airport). A portion of the Plan Area, west of Santa Anita Road, North of Valley Mall, and west of Granada Avenue, lies within the 60 and 65 dBA CNEL contours of the airport. New residential uses could be located within this area. However, with compliance with General Plan policies, airport noise impacts would be less than significant. |

The portion of the Specific Plan area, within the Monte Vista Sub-Area, within the 60 and 65 dBA noise contours of the San Gabriel Valley Airport is currently developed with commercial uses, including fast food restaurants, strip-style retail buildings, and auto parts stores. Per the El Monte General Plan, these uses are acceptable in areas with noise levels up to 75 dBA CNEL. Buildout of the Specific Plan could include new residential development within this area. Per the El Monte General Plan, residential development is normally acceptable in areas with noise levels of 60 dBA CNEL or less and conditionally acceptable in areas with noise levels of 70 dBA CNEL or less. The General Plan states that new construction within conditionally acceptable areas should be undertaken only after a detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirements and needed noise insulation features are included in the design. Additionally, General Plan Policy PHS 8.5, Airport Noise, requires the City to work with Los Angeles County Airport Land Use Commission to ensure that noise generated from the airport does not unduly affect adjacent residential neighborhoods. With compliance with the General Plan policies and completion of a detailed noise analysis, impacts would be less than significant.

### Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

### Significance after Mitigation

Noise generated by buildout of the proposed Specific Plan would be less than significant.

## E. Cumulative Impacts

Project construction would coincide with other planned and pending construction projects in the area. As shown in Table 3.10-6 above, traffic noise levels under Future (2035) conditions would increase with buildout of the Specific Plan. Increased traffic levels would incrementally increase noise levels in the project area. The increase in noise levels would exceed FTA threshold along one segment of Ramona Boulevard with buildout of the Specific Plan. While mitigation measures would reduce impacts at future residences, cumulative impacts from roadway noise would be significant.

Noise impacts can generally be mitigated on a case-by-case basis through the use of appropriate design and engineering techniques, including building setbacks, appropriate building siting, sound barriers, and

sound attenuating construction techniques. Therefore, the use of such techniques on all new development in the Plan Area would be expected to maintain an acceptable noise environment.

# 3.11 Population and Housing

## A. Setting

### City of El Monte

**Population Growth.** Incorporated in 1912, the City of El Monte (the "City") experienced significant population growth during the 1960s and 1970s through annexation. During the 1980s and 1990s, growth was attributed to infill development. According to the U.S. Census, El Monte had a population of 116,100 in 2000, but by 2010 the city's population had declined by approximately 2,600 to a total of 113,500 residents. Population and housing growth are presented in **Table 3.11-1**. During this same 2000-2010 period, the population of Los Angeles County increased from approximately 9.52 million to 9.82 million, an increase of almost 300,000 residents. According to the California Department of Finance, El Monte's 2015 population was estimated at 113,000 residents, a decline of approximately 500 residents since 2010. While El Monte's population continued to decline between 2010 and 2015, the rate of decline is slowing relative to the previous decade. At the same time, the countywide population increased by 336,500 residents to 10.16 million in 2015, an increase of 0.7 percent.

**Table 3.11-1: Population and Housing Growth, 2000-2015**

| | | | | Growth | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2000 | 2010 | 2015 | 2000-2010 | 2010-2015 |
| **Population** | | | | | |
| City of El Monte | 116,100 | 113,500 | 113,000 | (2,600) | (500) |
| Ave. Ann. Growth Rate | | | | -0.2% | -0.1% |
| Los Angeles County | 9,518,800 | 9,818,600 | 10,155,100 | 299,800 | 336,500 |
| Ave. Ann. Growth Rate | | | | 0.3% | 0.7% |
| **Housing** | | | | | |
| City of El Monte | 27,760 | 29,070 | 29,110 | 1,310 | 40 |
| Ave. Ann. Growth Rate | | | | 0.5% | <0.1% |
| Los Angeles County | 3,270,300 | 3,443,100 | 3,487,400 | 172,800 | 44,300 |
| Ave. Ann. Growth Rate | | | | 0.5% | 0.3% |

*Source: U.S. Census 2000 and 2010, California DOF 2015 Estimates*

**Racial and Ethnic Composition.** As presented in **Table 3.11-2**, in 2014, the City's racial/ethnic composition was predominately Hispanic, representing two-thirds (66.0%) of the total population. This was followed by the non-Hispanic Asian/Pacific Islander population at 28.3 percent. Both of these ethnic groups in the City were higher than the countywide racial/ethnic proportion of 48.1 percent Hispanic and 14.0 percent Asian/Pacific Islander. At the same time, the City's non-Hispanic White population and non-Hispanic Black represented 4.5 percent and less than one percent of the total population. It should be noted that between the 2000 Census and 2014 estimates, the Hispanic population of El Monte has declined by 9.4 percent, while the Asian population has increased by 52.4 percent. This demographic shift is anticipated to continue over the next decade.

**Table 3.11-2 Racial and Ethnic Characteristics, 2014**

| | El Monte | | Los Angeles County | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. | Pct. | No. | Pct. |
| Hispanic | 76,074 | 66.0% | 4,800,491 | 48.1% |
| Non-Hisp. White | 5,224 | 4.5% | 2,711,665 | 27.2% |
| Non-Hisp. Black | 571 | 0.5% | 802,132 | 8.0% |
| Non-Hisp. Asian/Pac. Islander | 32,615 | 28.3% | 1,401,254 | 14.1% |
| Non-Hisp. Others | 759 | 0.7% | 258,661 | 2.6% |
| **Total** | **115,243** | **100.0%** | **9,974,203** | **100.0%** |

*Source: 2010-2014 ACS 5-Year Estimates*

**Household Size.** As shown in **Table 3.11-3**, the average household size (persons per household) in El Monte was 4.24 persons in 2000, and decreased to 4.04 persons in 2010. By 2015, the City's household size had risen to 4.12. This fluctuation over time is generally the result of differing growth rates for local population and number of households. Household size in El Monte has consistently been higher than the countywide average, by about one person per household (4.12 vs. 3.03 in 2015). This difference generally reflects a community where families with children represent a larger component of the population. Growth trends in the City can be attributed to cultural differences in relation to household size, privacy, and co-habitation with extended families.

**Table 3.11-3: Household Size**

| | 2000 | 2010 | 2015 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **City of El Monte** | 4.24 | 4.04 | 4.12 |
| **Los Angeles County** | 3.20 | 2.98 | 3.03 |

*Source: U.S. Census 2000 and 2010, California DOF 2015 Estimates*

**Housing Growth.** As presented in previous **Table 3.11-1** shows, El Monte's housing stock has increased since 2000 from 27,760 units to 29,070 units in 2010, an increase of 1,310 units or an average annual increase of 0.5 percent. El Monte's housing growth rate was the same as the countywide rate during the same 10-year period. However, over the 2010-2015 period, only 40 units were added

to El Monte's housing stock, for a 2015 total of 29,110 units. The City's average annual housing growth rate during the 2010-2015 period of less than 0.1 percent was well below the countywide average of 0.5 percent per year. Overall, housing growth for both the City and County slowed significantly during the 2010-2015 period as compared to the growth experienced during the 2000-2010 period.

**Housing Type.** El Monte is predominately a residential community, with approximately 45 percent of the total land in the City designated for residential use in the General Plan. According to the DOF estimates, there were 29,113 housing units in El Monte in 2015. **Table 3.11-4** shows that in 2015 over two-thirds (68.9%) of the total units in El Monte were single-family units (attached and detached) and 25.9 percent were multiple-family units. Mobile homes accounted for the remaining 5.2 percent of El Monte's housing stock. In comparison, the type of housing for Los Angeles County's 2015 housing stock of approximately 3.49 million units was 56.0 percent single-family units, 42.4 percent multiple-family units and 1.7 percent mobile homes.

**Table 3.11-4: Housing Type, 2015**

| | Single Family | | Multiple Family | | Mobile | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Detached | Attached | 2-4 Units | 5+ Units | Home | Total |
| **El Monte** | 16,317 | 3,732 | 1,467 | 6,097 | 1,500 | 29,113 |
| **Percent** | 56.1% | 12.8% | 5.0% | 20.9% | 5.2% | 100.0% |
| **Los Angeles County** | 1,721,724 | 229,854 | 285,395 | 1,192,188 | 58,273 | 3,487,434 |
| **Percent** | 49.4% | 6.6% | 8.2% | 34.2% | 1.7% | 100.0% |

*Source: California DOF 2015 Estimates*

## Specific Plan Area

The Plan Area is located in the Downtown District of the City of El Monte and covers approximately 115 acres. As described in the Project Description chapter, approximately 15 acres of the Plan Area or 13 percent of the total area is currently used for residential purposes. It is also estimated that in 2015, there were approximately 190 housing units and 950,000 square feet of commercial building area in the Plan Area. Assuming El Monte's 2015 household size of 4.12, the estimated population of the Plan Area is approximately 780 residents. [1]

[1] *It should be noted that the average household size is the combined single-family and multi-family occupied units. Generally, multi-family units have a smaller household size than single-family units; however, since no information is available from DOF on different household sizes, the use of an citywide average results in a higher population figure for a more conservative impact analysis.*

# B. Regulatory Framework

## Federal

There are no federal statutes related to population, housing, or employment that would apply to the Specific Plan.

## State

**State Housing Element Law.** The Housing Element is one of the seven General Plan elements mandated by the State of California, as articulated in Sections 65580 to 65589.8 of the California Government Code. State Law requires that each jurisdiction's Housing Element consist of "an identification and analysis of existing and projected housing needs and a statement of goals, policies, quantified objectives, and scheduled program actions for the preservation, improvement, and development of housing." The Housing Element plans for the provision of housing for all segments of the population.

**California Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH).** This Department enforces California laws that provide protection and monetary relief to victims of unlawful housing practices. The Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA; Part 2.8 of the California Government Code, Code Sections 12900-12996) prohibits discrimination and harassment in housing practices.

**Unruh Act.** The Unruh Act (California Government Code Section 51) protects Californians from discrimination in public accommodations and requires equal access to the accommodations. The Unruh Act provides broad protection and has been held by the courts to prohibit any arbitrary discrimination on the basis of personal characteristics or traits, and applies to a range of types of housing.

## Regional

**Southern California Association of Governments, 2016 Regional Transportation Plan/ Sustainable Communities Strategy.** Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is the designated Regional Transportation Planning Agency under state law, and is responsible for preparing the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) including the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) component pursuant to Senate Bill 375. As part of the SCAG RTP/SCS, the regional and small area population, housing, and employment growth forecasts were developed to provide more details on the development of the regional growth forecasts for the 2016 RTP/SCS. The SCAG forecasts were adopted along with the SCAG RTP/SCS. These growth forecasts represent the most likely growth scenario for the Southern California region in the future, taking into account a combination of recent and past trends, reasonable key technical assumptions, and local or regional growth policies. The regional growth forecast is used as a key guide for future transportation investments in the SCAG region.

## Local

The following adopted local plans are applicable to development and planned improvements within and surrounding the Specific Plan area.

**City of El Monte 2014-2021 Housing Element.** The City of El Monte's Housing Element contains goals and policies that address the City's current and future housing needs, including housing programs that respond to identified needs. Goals include preserving and improving existing housing, encouraging of a variety of housing types, providing housing assistance where needed and as feasible, removing governmental constraints to the development of new housing opportunities, and promoting equal housing opportunities.

The 2014-2021 Housing Element Goals and Policies that directly apply to the Specific Plan include:

**Goal 1:** Sustainable neighborhoods evidenced by quality housing conditions, ample community services, exemplary public safety and security, quality public facilities and infrastructure, and civic pride.

**H-1.1** Housing Rehabilitation. Support the rehabilitation of single family and multiple-family units and acquisition and rehabilitation of multiple-family housing to improve housing conditions, remove blight if needed, and improve the quality of life in neighborhoods.

**H-1.3** Community Amenities. Require adequate provision of public services and facilities, infrastructure, open space, adequate parking and traffic management, pedestrian and bicycle routes, and public safety to create highly desirable neighborhoods.

**H-1.4** Neighborhood Involvement. Encourage active resident involvement in neighborhood planning organizations to identify needs and implement programs aimed at the beautification, improvement, and preservation of neighborhoods.

**H-1.5** Architectural Design. Require that all housing, either new or rehabilitated, is of exemplary design and construction quality through the development and implementation of building design standards and architectural review.

**H-1.6** Neighborhood Identity. Strengthen neighborhood fabric and identity through parks and recreation services, cultural and historic features, public art, neighborhood events, as well as resident participation in planning and improvement of their neighborhoods. Housing Element H-20 El Monte General Plan

**Goal 2**: Adequate sites for new housing that create a vibrant downtown, revitalize transportation corridors with quality housing, and motivate reinvestment and revitalization in neighborhoods.

**H-2.1** Housing Sites. Provide adequate sites through land use, zoning, and specific plan designations to allow single-family homes, apartments, mobile homes, and special needs housing.

**H-2.2** Major Corridors. Direct the production of quality mixed/multiuse projects along major corridors, including Valley Boulevard, Durfee Road, Peck Road, and Garvey Avenue to allow for efficient land use practices, improved mobility, and energy conservation.

**H-2.3** Neighborhood Amenities. Require new residential projects to be adequately served by parks and recreation services, libraries, sanitary sewers and storm drains, transportation, public safety, and other public services and facilities.

H-2.6 Transit-Oriented Housing. Support the development of the TOD, which contains a variety of mixed-use projects vertically or horizontally integrated with commercial, professional, entertainment, and recreational uses.

H-2.7 Architectural Design. Require architectural excellence through the exemplary use of materials, color, site planning, El Monte General Plan H-27 environmentally sustainable practices, building treatments, landscaping, and other best practices in concert with community expectations for quality.

H-2.8 Downtown Core. Direct the production of new quality housing, including mixed/multiuse and mixed-income housing along with appropriate amenities, as appropriate, into the Downtown Core.

Goal 3: A diversity of quality housing types and prices that meet the needs of residents, support the economic development and revitalization, and provide opportunities for residents of all ages and income levels.

H-3.7 Diverse Housing. Support the production of varied housing types, including single-family, townhomes, apartments, and special needs housing that are priced at levels affordable to all income levels. Housing Element H-36 El Monte General Plan

H-3.8 Development Standards. Provide zoning, development standards and appropriate regulatory incentives to facilitate quality live-work, mixed use, and other housing suited to different lifestyle needs.

Goal 4: Adequate rental, homeownership, and supportive services to individuals, families, and those with special needs that will help them find and maintain affordable housing in the community.

H-4.1 Senior and Disabled Housing. Support development of accessible and affordable housing for seniors and disabled people; provide assistance for seniors and people with a disability to maintain and improve their homes to facilitate independent living.

H-4.7 Fair Housing. Prohibit housing discrimination in all aspects affecting the sale, rental, or occupancy of housing based on El Monte General Plan H-43 individual or familial status or other arbitrary classification, and support the enforcement of fair housing laws.

The Housing Element Implementation Plan also sets forth a variety of specific programs to achieve the General Plan vision and the housing goals and policies in the Housing Element. A key implementation program is the preparation of a Downtown Specific Plan that includes a land use plan, infrastructure plan, parks and recreational plan, design regulations, transportation and circulation plan, and other key elements.

# C. Significance Threshold

In accordance with Appendix G of the *State CEQA Guidelines,* the proposed Specific Plan could result in a significant impact on the population and housing environment if it would do any of the following:

1. Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure).
2. Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

3. Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

# D. Impacts and Mitigation Measures

## Impact PH-1

| | |
|---|---|
| **Impact PH-1** | Implementation of the Specific Plan would encourage growth in the Plan Area, but would not exceed SCAG forecasts. It would also be in line with local and regional development goals and policies and would include a balance of new jobs and housing. Therefore, impacts related to housing, population, and employment growth would be less than significant. |

The SCAG population, households and employment forecasts were adopted along with the SCAG 2016 RTP/SCS. These regional growth forecasts represent the most likely growth scenario for the Southern California region (Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura Counties) in the future, taking into account a combination of recent and past trends, reasonable key technical assumptions, and local or regional growth policies. The regional growth forecast is used as a key guide for future transportation investments in the SCAG region.

The local SCAG growth forecasts, including those of the City of El Monte, reflect local and regional policies. The SCAG forecast of population, households, and employment for El Monte are for the year 2040, with a base year of 2012. However, for the purposes of this EIR analysis, current population and households are based on the State Department of Finance (DOF) E-5 2015 estimates and current employment for the City is based on the 2012 estimate in the SCAG forecast. The 2035 forecast represents a straight line interpolation between 2012 and 2040.

As presented in **Table 3.11-5**, there were 113,000 residents and 27,200 households in El Monte in 2015. The number of jobs in El Monte totaled approximately 28,000 in 2012. According to SCAG, El Monte's population is forecast to increase to 133,100 residents by 2035, an increase of 20,100 residents from the 2015 estimates. The SCAG forecast also forecasts an increase of 6,300 households between 2015 and 2035, and an increase of 6,300 jobs during the same 2015-2035 period.

**Table 3.11-5: SCAG Population/Households/Employment Growth Forecast for City of El Monte**

| Forecast | 2015 | 2035[c] | 2040[d] | Growth 2015-2035 | Specific Plan 2015-2035 | Pct. SCAG Forecast |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Population | 113,000[a] | 133,100 | 137,200 | 20,100 | 8,465 | 42.1% |
| Households | 27,200[a] | 33,500 | 34,700 | 6,300 | 2,054 | 32.8% |
| Employment | 28,000[b] | 34,300 | 35,700 | 6,300 | 1,235 | 19.5% |

*Source: SCAG 2016 RTP/SCS Growth Forecast and California Department of Finance E-5 report*
*[a] Population and Households estimates from the DOF E-5 2015 Estimate*
*[b] 2015 employment estimate represents 2012 as shown in the SCAG Growth Forecast*
*[c] 2035 forecast based on straight line interpolation between 2012-2040 as shown in the SCAG Growth Forecast*
*[d] SCAG Growth Forecast*

Based on the development potential of the proposed Specific Plan, it is estimated the Plan Area's housing stock will increase by 2,200 units and commercial uses by 500,000 square feet of building area by 2035. Assuming the California Department of Finance (DOF) 2015 estimated household size of 4.12 and a vacancy rate of 6.6 percent[2], buildout of the Specific Plan would result in a net increase of 8,465 residents and 2,054 households during the 2015-2035 period. As **Table 3.11-5** shows, the Specific Plan's projected net increase of population and households would represent 42.1 percent and 32.8 percent of the SCAG population and household forecasts, respectively.

The distribution of the net increase in commercial development is projected to be approximately 325,000 square feet of retail, 100,000 square feet of restaurant, and 75,000 square feet of office building area by 2035. Assuming an average employment generation factor of 425 square feet of commercial retail/services per employee and 320 square feet of commercial low-rise office per employee[3], buildout of the Specific Plan would create an estimated 1,235 jobs in the Plan Area by 2035 or 19.5 percent of the jobs forecast by SCAG. Estimated employment based on the Specific Plan buildout is presented in **Table 3.11-6**.

**Table 3.11-6: Estimated Employment, Specific Plan Buildout**

| Land Use | Net Increase SF | SF per Employee | Total New Employee |
|---|---|---|---|
| Retail | 325,000 | 425[a] | 765 |
| Restaurant | 100,000 | 425[a] | 235 |
| Office | 75,000 | 320[b] | 235 |
| **Total** | | | **1,235** |

*Source: SCAG/Natelson Company, Employment Density Study, 2011*
*[a] Assumes Other Retail/Service*
*[b] Assumes Low-Rise Office*

[2] *California Department of Finance, E-5 City/County Population and Housing Estimates 2015*
[3] *Southern California Association of Governments, Employee Density Study, 2001*

The development of the Plan area is not anticipated to push the City's overall population, household, and employment totals beyond those levels forecast by SCAG in 2035. This is considered a *less than significant* impact.

## Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

## Significance After Mitigation

The impacts of the proposed Specific Plan would be less than significant and no mitigation measures are required, therefore the residual impact of the Specific Plan would remain less than significant.

## Impact PH-2

| | |
|---|---|
| **Impact PH-2** | Implementation of the Specific Plan would increase the Plan Area's housing stock and preserve a diverse range of residential unit types at different cost levels for existing residents. This is considered a less than significant impact. |

Existing residential neighborhoods are generally located along the south side of Ramona Boulevard, and the mid-block area along Granada Avenue and Lexington Avenue. Also, two residential neighborhoods totaling 81 units are located along Encanto Way (46 condominiums in the R-3 zone) and along Las Flores Drive (35 single-family units in a planned unit development zoned R2-PRD) are relatively new. These two areas, the MMU and R2-PRD, are generally exempt from the regulations and guidelines of this Specific Plan and are subject to the requirements of El Monte's Zoning Ordinance. Therefore, these two neighborhoods, which represent 43 percent of the total existing units, would not be impacted by the Specific Plan in terms of residential housing displacement.

Anticipated development within the Plan Area is conceptual in nature and no specific development projects or plans that include the removal of housing units are considered as part of this Specific Plan. Any future residential properties to be acquired would be in accordance with state and federal law. Potential development projects would require additional project-level environmental review and clearance and final project approval by the City.

In addition, the Specific Plan encourages the addition of housing stock in the Plan Area that would include a diverse range of residential unit types at different cost levels to meet the needs of all households including those of seniors, single persons, persons with special needs, and those who work at their residences. Permitted land uses in the Plan Area would generally intensify residential development by encouraging residential multi-family and mixed uses in all the Sub-Areas and permitting a maximum residential density of 25 units per acre in the Main Street Sub-Area to 35 units per acre in the Station Sub-Area (refer to table below). In addition, developers can take advantage of the Development Opportunity Reserve (DOR), an incentive program which allows higher densities and heights if amenities and/or infrastructure

improvements are provided by a project. That is, the residential density can be increased in each subarea as shown in **Table 3.11-7** below:

**Table 3.11-7: Development Opportunity Reserve**

| Regulation | By Right | DOR-1 | DOR-2 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Main Street Sub-Area** | | | |
| Max Height | 30' | 45' | 50' |
| Max Stories | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Max FAR | 1.5 | 2.0 | 2.5 |
| Max Du/AC | 25 | 35 | 45 |

| Regulation | By Right | DOR-1 |
|---|---|---|
| **Station Sub-Area** | | |
| Max Height | 50' | 75' |
| Max Stories | 4 | 6 |
| Max FAR | 2.5 | 4.0 |
| Max Du/AC | 35 | 80 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Zocalo Sub-Area** | | | |
| Max Height | 35' | 60' | - |
| Max Stories | 3 | 5 | - |
| Max FAR | 2.0 | 3.5 | - |
| Max Du/AC | 30 | 65 | - |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Monte Vista Sub-Area** | | |
| Max Height | 35' | 50' |
| Max Stories | 3 | 4 |
| Max FAR | 2.0 | 3.0 |
| Max Du/AC | 30 | 50 |

Implementation of the Specific Plan would both increase the City's housing stock and preserve a diverse range of residential unit types at different cost levels for existing residents. Therefore, impacts related to the displacement of housing and population would be less than significant.

### Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

### Significance after Mitigation

Impacts related to the displacement of housing and people would be less than significant without mitigation.

## E. Cumulative Impacts

The SCAG 2016 RTP/SCS forecasts 6,300 additional new housing units and a population increase of 20,100 between 2015 and 2035 for the City of El Monte. As discussed above under Impact PH-1, the net increase of 2,200 residential units and 2,054 households associated with the proposed Specific Plan do not exceed the SCAG growth forecast of 6,300 households and 8,465 residents. When the Specific Plan's net increase of 2,200 units is combined with the projects in the cumulative list, it total 4,084 units or 3,814 households (assuming a 6.6% vacancy rate). The corresponding population increases of the combined Specific Plan and cumulative projects total an estimated 15,714 new residents (assuming a household size of 4.12). These estimated cumulative household totals represent 61 percent of the SCAG household forecast and the cumulative population total represents 78 percent of the SCAG population

forecasts for the City. Therefore, the proposed Specific Plan's cumulative contribution to housing and population impacts is considered less than significant.