Downtown El Monte Main Street Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Specific Plan and Master Plan

Initial Study

Prepared by:

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July 2015

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INITIAL STUDY

1.	**Project Title:**	Downtown El Monte Main Street Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Specific Plan and Master Plan Project
2.	**Lead Agency Name and Address:**	City of El Monte City Hall West 11333 Valley Boulevard El Monte, CA 91731-3293
3.	**Contact Person and Phone Number:**	Mr. Jason Mikaelian, AICP (626) 580-2064
4.	**Project Location:**	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 and east. The Plan Area was also expanded to include some properties on the south of the Ramona Boulevard and west side of Santa Anita Avenue (see Figure 1 on page 4).
5.	**Project Sponsor's Name and Address**	City of El Monte City Hall West 11333 Valley Boulevard El Monte, CA 91731-3293
6.	**General Plan Designation:**	Downtown Core (The majority of the Project Area is within the Main Street sub-district; properties on the south side of Ramona Boulevard are within the Downtown Residential sub-district; the few properties on the west side of Santa Anita is within the El Monte Gateway sub-district)
7.	**Zoning:**	Medium Density Multiple (R-3), Retail Core (RC), Retail Commercial (C-2), General Commercial (C-3), Automobile Parking (P), Public Facility (PF) and Gateway Specific Plan (SP-1)

8. Description of Project:

The proposed Project is the creation of a Specific Plan and Master Plan for El Monte's Downtown District, which includes Valley Mall, as a transit and pedestrian oriented, mixed-use urban village ("Specific Plan" or "Project"). The Project would be directly linked by convenient and major public transit hubs (including the El Monte Metrolink Station, the El Monte Station, and the City's Trolly Station). The Project has been planned to provide sufficient housing, retail, commercial, entertainment, dining, and recreational uses to create a critical mass of development sufficient to function as a true Transit Oriented Downtown for the City of El Monte. The creation of a Transit Oriented Development Specific Plan would implement regional planning policies and create the synergies needed for a more active urban experience in Downtown El Monte.

The Project "Plan Area" is approximately 115 acres in size and is located within the heart of the City encompassing a triangular-like area bounded by the railroad tracks to the north, Santa Anita Avenue to the west, and Ramona Boulevard to the south.

The Specific Plan and Master Plan Project could include a mix of low, medium to high density housing developments with different housing product types such as live/work lofts, apartments, townhomes, condominiums and vertical mixed-use residential/retail up to 4- stories in height. The Specific Plan could also include a new cinema; retail shops; restaurants and cafes; improvements to the roadway network; landscaping with new plazas, water features, and seating areas; public promenades; off-street parking; improvements to utility infrastructure; pedestrian and bicycling links to the Metrolink Station and El Monte Station; pedestrian-oriented lighting; and an innovative signage program.

A new retail and entertainment core would anchor the Downtown area, as well as draw visitors to the area and stimulate excitement in the Downtown. Land uses and future development projects would respond to community needs and market conditions.

The Project includes the City's existing and future capital improvements for the Downtown and environs including but not limited to:

*Parking Lot Improvements
*Smart Parking System
*Bicycle Lanes, Bicycle Parking, and Facilities
*Intersection improvements at Ramona Boulevard and Valley Boulevard
*Improvements along Santa Anita Avenue

In addition, the following project has submitted entitlement requests within the project area:

*Ramona Crossing – with 58 multi-family units and 4 live-work units northwest of the intersection of Ramona Avenue and Valley Boulevard.

9. Surrounding Land Uses and Setting:

West: On the west side of Santa Anita Avenue is the El Monte Station (the largest bus station in California). To the north of the Station will be the 14.3-acre "The Gateway Project", which is currently under construction. This transit-oriented, multi-phase, mixed-use development will consist of 485 housing units and 25,000 square feet of retail. The project is envisioned to include three separate parcels of housing and mixed-use development, and significant infrastructure improvements to the surrounding and interior streets. The properties to the west are zoned Gateway Specific Plan (SP-1).

North: On the north side of the railroad are industrial uses (west of Tyler Avenue) and multi-family residential (east of Tayler Avenue). These properties are zoned Light Manufacturing (M-1) and Multifamily Residential (R-3).

South and Southeast: On the south side of Ramona Boulevard includes a mixture of single- and multi- family residential uses and some small commercial uses. These properties are zoned for

residential and commercial uses, R-3, C-2 and C-3. On the southeast side of Ramona Boulevard are civic and community uses such as the El Monte Courthouse and El Monte City Hall. These properties are zoned PF, C-2 and C-3.

10. Other Public Agencies Whose Approval is Required:

The following approvals from the City of El Monte would be required:

The proposed Project would require approval of a range of entitlements from the City Planning Commission and City Council including:

- General Plan Amendment to modify language related to the "Downtown Core" designation in the Land Use Element and to modify the roadway network designations in the Circulation Element;
- Zone Change for the parcels within the plan boundary from various designations to "SP-3: Downtown Specific Plan"; and
- New Specific Plan and Master Plan to establish development regulations (density/FAR, building height, parking, design, etc.), procedures and fee requirements for future developments.

The Project is a local planning action and no other agency approvals are required.

DOWNTOWN MAIN STREET TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (TOD) SPECIFIC PLAN AND MASTER PLAN

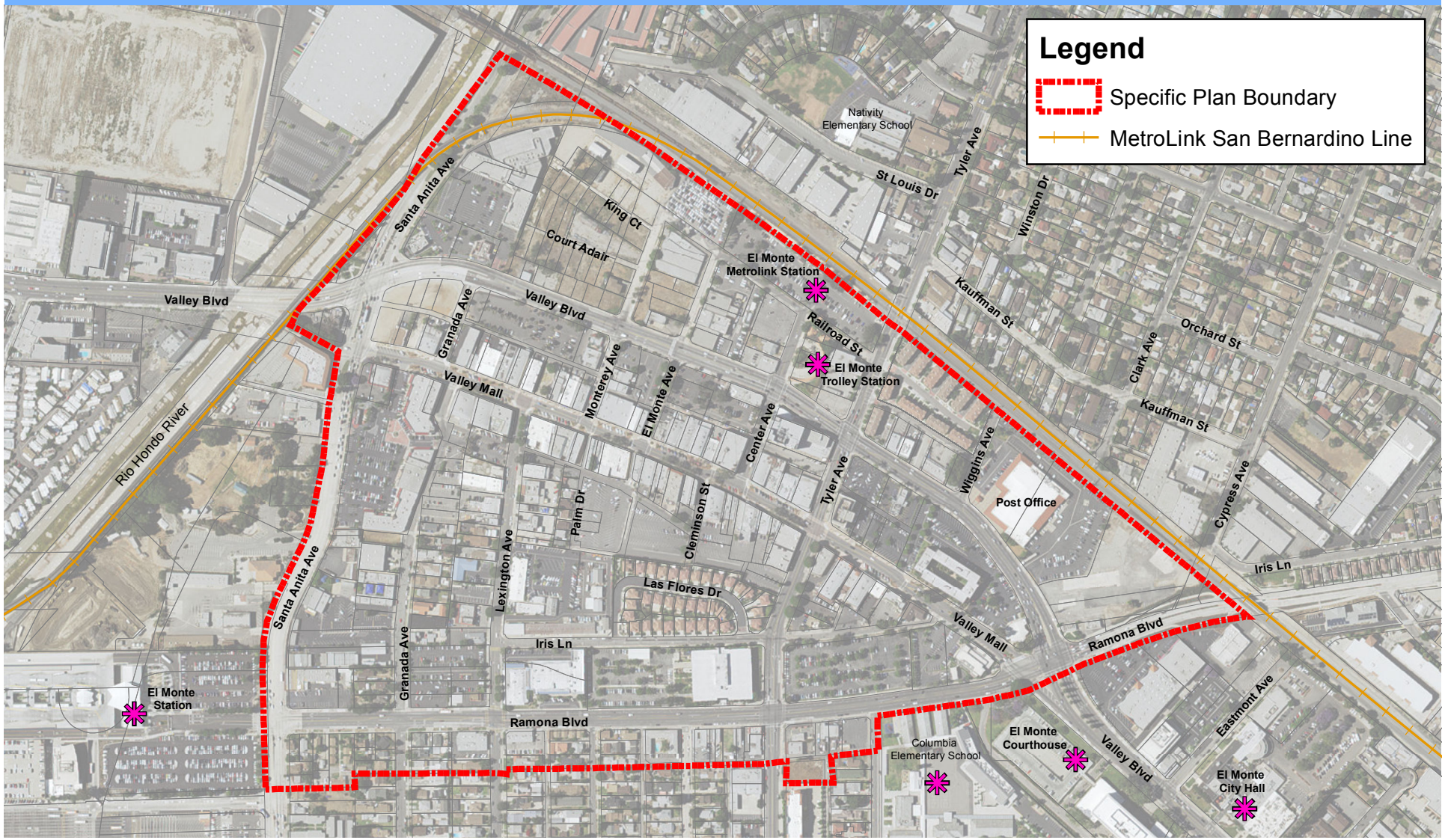

Figure 1. Plan Area

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is "Potentially Significant" or "Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

■ Aesthetics	□ Agriculture and Forest Resources	■ Air Quality
■ Biological Resources	■ Cultural Resources	□ Geology/Soils
■ Greenhouse Gas Emissions	■ Hazards & Hazardous Materials	■ Hydrology/Water Quality
■ Land Use/Planning	□ Mineral Resources	■ Noise
■ Population/Housing	■ Public Services	■ Recreation
■ Transportation/Traffic	■ Utilities/Service Systems	■ Mandatory Findings of Significance

DETERMINATION

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

☐ I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

■ I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.

☐ I find that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect (1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and (2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.

☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potential significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

Signature _____ Date _____

ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
I. AESTHETICS				
-- Would the Project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	■	☐	☐	☐
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	☐	☐	☐	■
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	■	☐	☐	☐
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	■	☐	☐	☐

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

Potentially Significant Impact. Implementation of the Specific Plan currently being prepared is expected to facilitate new development and possibly allow new construction to be built as high as 60 feet (or five stories) in some cases depending on the location (as high as 75 feet with architectural projections). The current scenic vista in the Downtown area is views of the San Gabriel Mountains to the north. El Monte takes its name from early views of the San Gabriel Mountains. One of the town's earliest streets was named "Monte Vista". Both historical references notes views of the San Gabriel Mountains. El Monte today is, however, an urbanized community with building of various heights and styles. Rio Hondo views is another consideration. The EIR will determine what scenic vistas exist in the area and analyze any impacts the Project may have.

b) Would the project substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?

No Impact. There are no State scenic highways within or near the Plan Area. There are no scenic sites inside the Plan Area.

c) Would the project substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?

Potentially Significant Impact. Implementation of the Specific Plan will allow redevelopment and increased intensity with new and taller buildings, new and expanded walkways, new bikeways, roadway and intersection improvements, new plazas and public spaces, public utility upgrades, better wayfinding and signage, improved parking facilities, new street amenities, and better connections between destinations. These changes will take place over a 20-year period and alter the character of the area gradually. A degradation in the overall visual character is unknown at this time but will be analyzed in the EIR.

d) Would the project create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

Potentially Significant Impact. Implementation of the Specific Plan will include new and improved lighting throughout the Plan Area including both street and pedestrian lighting and lighting for signs and buildings. The Project is expected to result in increased lighting and glare in the Downtown.

	Potentially Significant Impact	**Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated**	**Less than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**
II. AGRICULTURE AND FOREST RESOURCES				
-- In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment Project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. -- Would the project:				
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the	☐	☐	☐	■

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
II. AGRICULTURE AND FOREST RESOURCES				
California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?				
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	☐	☐	☐	■
c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g))?	☐	☐	☐	■
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☐	■
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use?	☐	☐	☐	■

a) Would the project convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?

No Impact. There is no farmland within or near the Plan Area.

b) Would the project conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?

No Impact. There is no agricultural zoning within or near the Plan Area.

c) Would the project conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g))?

No Impact. There is no forest land within or near the Plan Area.

d) Would the project result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

No Impact. There is no forest land within or near the Plan Area.

e) Would the project involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use?

No Impact. There is no farmland or forest land within or near the Plan Area. The EIR will not include a discussion of farmland and forest land.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
III. AIR QUALITY				
-- Would the project:				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	■	☐	☐	☐
b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?	■	☐	☐	☐
c) 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 quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?	■	☐	☐	☐
d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	■	☐	☐	☐
e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?	☐	☐	■	☐

Air Quality Setting

The project site is within the South Coast Air Basin, which is under the jurisdiction of the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD). SCAQMD is required to monitor air pollutant levels to ensure that air quality standards are met. If they are not met, the district is charged with developing strategies to meet the standards.

Depending on whether or not the standards are met, the air basin is classified as being in "attainment" or "nonattainment." The South Coast Air Basin is in nonattainment for both the federal and state standards for ozone, nitrogen dioxide, and PM_{10}. Thus, the basin currently exceeds several state and federal ambient air quality standards and is required to implement strategies that would reduce the pollutant levels to acceptable standards. This non-attainment status is a result of several factors, the primary ones being the naturally meteorological conditions that limit the dispersion and diffusion of pollutants, the limited capacity of the local air shed to eliminate pollutants from the air, and the number, type, and density of emission

sources within the South Coast Air Basin. The SCAQMD has adopted an Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) that provides a strategy for the attainment of state and federal air quality standards.

a) Would the project conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?

Potentially Significant Impact. Vehicle use, energy consumption, and associated air pollutant emissions are directly related to population and employment growth. 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. Population forecasts within the AQMP are based on growth forecasts from the regional Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG). According to the most recent SCAG growth forecast in the *2012-2035 Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy* (RTP/SCS), the City of El Monte is projected to have a population of 124,300 in 2020 and 140,000 in 2035. Also according to the SCAG growth forecast, the City is projected to have 30,400 households in 2020, 33,300 households in 2035, 37,100 jobs in 2020 and 38,400 jobs in 2035. Currently, El Monte has a population of approximately 115,064 and approximately 29,068 households (California Department of Finance, 2014).

The proposed Specific Plan and Master Plan Project would increase the number of housing units within the Plan Area which would result in a direct increase in the City's population. In addition, the proposed Specific Plan and Master Plan Project may increase employment within the Plan Area and may generate population, housing, or employment growth exceeding the City's growth projections. Impacts are potentially significant and further analysis of this issue in an EIR is warranted.

b) Would the project violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?

c) Would the project 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 quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?

and

d) Would the project expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

Potentially Significant Impact. Emissions associated with implementation of the proposed Specific Plan and Master Plan Project would include temporary construction emissions and long-term operational emissions of new residential and commercial land uses within the Plan Area.

Construction activities such as the operation of construction vehicles and equipment over unpaved areas, grading, trenching, and disturbance of stockpiled soils have the potential to generate fugitive dust (PM_{10}) through the exposure of soil to wind erosion and dust entrainment. In addition, exhaust emissions associated with heavy construction equipment

would potentially degrade air quality. Emissions could exceed SCAQMD significance thresholds.

Long-term emissions associated with operational impacts would include emissions from vehicle trips, natural gas and electricity use, landscape maintenance equipment, and consumer products and architectural coating associated with onsite development. Emissions could exceed SCAQMD significance thresholds. Long-term vehicular emissions could also result in elevated concentrations of carbon monoxide (CO) at congested intersections within the Plan Area.

Impacts related to both temporary construction-related air pollutant emissions and long-term emissions would be potentially significant and will be analyzed further in an EIR.

e) Would the project create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?

Less Than Significant Impact. Implementation of the proposed Specific Plan and Master Plan Project would involve development of new retail, restaurant, entertainment, recreation, and residential uses. Restaurant uses have the potential to generate odors in the form of smells associated with cooking and preparing food and disposal of food waste. Residential uses have the potential to generate odors associated with cooking, barbequing, or smoking. However, residential, retail, entertainment, recreation, and restaurant uses are not listed on Figure 4-3 of the 1993 *SCAQMD CEQA Air Quality Handbook* as uses that require analysis of odor impacts. Further, residential, restaurant, and retail uses are not identified on Figure 5-5, *Land Uses Associated with Odor Complaints,* of the Handbook. Substantial objectionable odors are normally associated with agriculture, wastewater treatment, heavy industrial uses, or landfills. The proposed Project would not generate significant objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES				
-- Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☐	■	☐
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional	☐	☐	■	☐

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES				
-- Would the project:				
plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?				
c) Have a substantial adverse effect 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, hydrological interruption, or other means?	☐	☐	■	☐
d) Interfere substantially 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?	☐	■	☐	☐
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	■	☐	☐	☐
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	☐	☐	☐	■

a) Would the project have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

Less than Significant Impact. The following is based on a literature review including a database search on sensitive resource occurrences from CDFW [formerly the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG)] California Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDB), Biogeographic Information and Observation System (BIOS – www.bios.dfg.ca.gov), and USFWS Critical Habitat Portal (http://criticalhabitat.fws.gov).

Sensitive Plant Species

Per the CNDDB, seven sensitive plant species are known to occur within a five mile radius of the Plan Area: southern tarplant (*Centromadia parryi* ssp. *australis*), Nevin's barberry (*Berberis*

nevinii), Peruvian dodder (*Cuscuta obtusiflora* var. *glandulosa*) Parish's gooseberry (*Ribes divaricatum* var. *parishii*), Brand's star phacelia (*Phacelia stellaris*), southern mountains skullcap (*Scutellaria bolanderi* ssp. *austromontana*), and mesa horkelia (*Horkelia cuneata* var. *puberula*). Of these, mesa horkelia, southern mountains skullcap, Brand's star phacelia, and one *population* of Parish's gooseberry, have been determined to be extirpated (nonexistent) or possibly extirpated. The majority of the Plan Area is paved or built with small areas of landscaping. One area at the northwest corner of the Plan Area contains bare soil following demolition of previously present structures. This area is currently under construction.

Due to the lack of suitable habitat, native soils, and/or substrate, no sensitive plant species are expected to occur.

Sensitive Wildlife Species

Per the CNDDB, ten sensitive wildlife species are known to occur within a five mile radius of the Plan Area: 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 californica*), federally and state listed endangered least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*), and sensitive species hoary bat (*Lasiurus cinereus*), pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*), western pond turtle (*Emys marmorata*), and coast horned lizard (*Phrynosoma blainvillii*). Of these, Swainson's hawk, bank swallow, and one population each of costal California gnatcatcher and least Bell's vireo were determined to be extirpated or possibly extirpated.

Due to the lack of suitable habitat, routine disturbance, and determination of extirpation, only one species has the potential to occur on the Plan Area: hoary bat. The closest record of hoary bat (CNDDB 1922) is identified as approximately 3 miles to the northwest. This species prefers open habitats or habitat mosaics, with access to trees for cover and open areas or habitat edges for feeding. Hoary bats roost in dense foliage of medium to large trees and feed primarily on moths. They require a nearby water source. The Plan Area contains numerous trees ranging in size from small to medium. Larger and denser trees are located in the adjacent Pioneer Park. The Rio Hondo waterway is located as close as 330 feet from the Plan Area and would provide an intermittent water source to this species. The habitat is marginally suitable with a low potential for hoary bat presence; adjacent areas would provide greater habitat potential. Therefore, impacts are less than significant and further analysis in an EIR is not warranted.

b) Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

Less than Significant Impact. The Rio Hondo waterway is located west of the Plan Area. However, the Plan Area does not directly tie to the waterway. There is no riparian habitat within the Plan Area. Per CNDDB, no sensitive plant communities occur within the Plan Area. No plant community or land cover type present at the site is considered sensitive. Further analysis of this issue in an EIR is not warranted.

c) Would the project have a substantial adverse effect 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, hydrological interruption, or other means?

Less than Significant Impact. The Rio Hondo waterway is located west of the Plan Area. However, the Plan Area does not directly tie into the waterway. No potential drainages or evidence of jurisdictional waters or wetlands are present on the Plan Area and no regulatory permits associated with drainages are necessary. Further analysis of this issue in an EIR is not warranted.

d) Would the project interfere substantially 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?

Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated. As described above, the Plan Area is mostly developed and there is no native biological habitat on-site. Nonetheless, the Plan Area contains mature trees that could be removed as part of implementation of the proposed Specific Plan and Master Plan Project. These trees could contain bird nests and birds which are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-1 would reduce impacts to nesting birds to a less than significant level.

BIO-1 **Nesting/Breeding Native Bird Protection.** To avoid impacts to nesting birds, including birds protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, for development of projects associated with the Specific Plan, all initial ground disturbing activities, including tree removal, 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.

No residual impacts would result from Mitigation Measure BIO-1. Because Measure BIO-1 would mitigate the potential for impacts to nesting birds, further analysis of this issue in an EIR is not warranted.

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

Potentially Significant Impact. Trees in the Plan Area may be considered Protected Trees under the "El Monte Tree Protection and Preservation Ordinance." Impacts to protected trees are potentially significant and further analysis in an EIR is warranted.

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

No Impact. The proposed project would not conflict with any adopted Habitat Conservation Plans, Natural Community Conservation Plans, or other approved conservation plans. Further analysis of this issue in an EIR is not warranted.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
V. CULTURAL RESOURCES				
-- Would the project:				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5?	■	☐	☐	☐
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a Tribal Cultural Resource as defined in §21074?	☐	■	☐	☐
c) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource as defined in §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?	☐	☐	☐	■

a) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5?

Potentially Significant Impact. The proposed Project would improve public infrastructure, facilitate redevelopment of current land uses, and provide for greater building densities in the Downtown area. This area is the site of the original El Monte settlement along the river banks. This is also the site of the town's central business district and the city's "Main Street" after the town incorporated in 1912 as the City of El Monte. Because of the sensitive historic context and the number of remaining properties from various periods, a "Historic Resource Identification Report" was prepared in February 2015. The Report provided a Downtown context needed for the future evaluation of properties to determine historic significance. The report also preliminarily listed properties that could be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places or other listing and register programs pending further study and assessment. These properties include the old US Post Office, the old JC Penny's department store, the old Thrifty's drug store, and the old Bank of America. The report also found that the Plan Area may be an eligible historic district.

The City has not conducted a historic resource survey of properties within the Downtown area, therefore, the EIR will include a historic resource survey to determine property significance and eligibility at the individual property level and at a district level.

b) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource as defined in §21074?

The City of El Monte received a request from the Kizh Nation for formal notification of proposed projects within the City in accordance with AB52. The City provided such notification on July 28, 2015. If consultation from the Kizh Nation is requested, the City will comply with all provisions of AB52, including recommending any proposed mitigation measures to address issues raised, prior to the release of the Draft EIR. This will also be summarized in the EIR. Any proposed mitigation measures will be included in the project's Mitigation and Monitoring Program.

c) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource as defined in §15064.5?

Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated. The Plan Area 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 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).

The Plan Area is an urban area that has been previously disturbed and heavily affected by past activities, specifically construction of structures, roadways, and infrastructure within and around the Plan Area.

According to the El Monte General Plan EIR, no archaeological resources have been recorded within the City of El Monte. Given that the Plan Area has been substantially disturbed by previous construction, any archaeological resources that may have existed at one time likely have been previously unearthed, collected, and/or destroyed. The likelihood for unknown archaeological resources to be present within the area of proposed disturbance is low. However, this does not preclude the possibility of encountering archaeological deposits during ground disturbing activities. Therefore, impacts are potentially significant.

Implementation of mitigation measures CR-1 and CR-2 would reduce impacts to archaeological resources to a less than significant level.

CR-1 **Archaeological Resources Survey:** 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 and Master Plan Project to impact to these resources.

CR-2 **Archaeological Resources Technical Report:** 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.

No residual impacts would result from mitigation measures CR-1 and CR-2. Because these mitigation measures would mitigate the potential for impacts to archaeological resources, further analysis of this issue in an EIR is not warranted.

d) Would the project directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?

Less than Significant Impact. Paleontological resources are the fossilized remains of organisms from prehistoric environments found in geologic strata. These resources are valued for the information they yield about the history of the earth and its past ecological settings. The landscape that constitutes El Monte was populated by a diverse assemblage of large mammals and birds. Species such as giant ground sloths, Columbian mammoths, horses, and sabretooth cats roamed in a landscape filled with numerous vegetation communities such as oak woodland, grassland, and sage scrub. As the climate began to change at the end of the Ice Age, many of the larger species started to disappear. However, many species such as grizzly bears, pronghorn antelope, California condors, and jaguars still inhabited the lush riparian forests and wooded foothills at the beginning of European settlement. Fossil remains may occur throughout the City of El Monte, although the evenness of their distribution is not known. The potential for fossil occurrence depends on the rock type exposed at the surface in a given area (City of El Monte General Plan and Zoning Code Update Draft EIR, May2011).

The Plan Area is fully developed with minimal vacant land. According to the City's General Plan EIR, the geology of the San Gabriel Basin consists primarily of recent, unconsolidated alluvial materials deposited by streams flowing out of the San Gabriel Mountains. These deposits have low probability of containing paleontological resources (City of El Monte General Plan and Zoning Code Update Draft EIR, May2011). Because of the geology of the area and the highly developed nature of the Plan Area, paleontological resources are unlikely to occur within the Plan Area.

e) Would the project disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?

Less than Significant Impact. The Plan Area contains no known record of human remains and the likelihood for unknown human remains to pre present within the Plan Area is low. In the unlikely event that human remains are discovered during construction of the project, the project applicant and their contractor would be required to comply with standard procedures for assessment and preservation of such resources compliant with the State Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 and Public Resources Code Section 5097.98, which regulate disturbance and disposition of cultural resources and human remains.

Section 7050.5 requires that, if human remains are discovered during construction-related activities, all work must halt and the County Coroner must be notified. Section 5097.98 requires that if the Coroner, with the aid of the supervising archaeologist, determines that any human remains discovered during construction-related activities are prehistoric, the coroner must contact the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC). The NAHC is responsible for designating the most likely descendant (MLD), who is then responsible for the ultimate disposition of the remains. The MLD should make his/her recommendations within 48 hours of their notification by the NAHC. This recommendation may include (A) the nondestructive removal and analysis of human remains and items associated with Native American human remains; (B) preservation of Native American human remains and associated items in place; (C) relinquishment of Native American human remains and associated items to the descendants for treatment; or (D) other culturally appropriate treatment

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
VI. GEOLOGY AND SOILS				
-- Would the project:				
a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault?	☐	☐	☐	■
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	☐	☐	■	☐
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	☐	■	☐	☐
iv) Landslides?	☐	☐	☐	■
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	☐	■	☐	☐
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse?	☐	■	☐	☐
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 1-B of the Uniform Building Code, creating substantial risks to life or property?	☐	☐	■	☐
e) 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?	☐	☐	☐	■

Regional Geological Setting

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 mountain ranges and valleys that truncate the prevailing north-northwest trend of the southern Coast Ranges and Peninsular Ranges. This province encompasses approximately 325 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.

The City of 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).

a.i) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault?

No Impact. The Plan Area is not located within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone (Department of Conservation, November 1, 1991). Therefore, no adverse effects regarding fault rupture would occur.

a.ii) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving strong seismic ground shaking?

Less than Significant Impact. The Plan Area lies in a seismically active region of Southern California and is subject to groundshaking. Active faults that could impact the Plan Area include: the San Andreas, San Gabriel, Newport Inglewood, Palos Verdes, Whittier, Santa Monica, Sierra Madre, Puente Hills, Blind Thrust, Raymond Hill, Workman Hill, and Clamshell-Sawpit (City of El Monte, 2006).

However, any structures associated with implementation of the Specific Plan would be required to be constructed to comply with modern building codes, including the City of El Monte Municipal Code (EMMC) Chapter 15.01 which adopts the California Building Code (CBC) and the Los Angeles County Building Code (LACBC). The California Building Code (Title 24, California Code of Regulations) contains seismic safety provisions with the aim of preventing building collapse during a design earthquake, so that occupants would be able to evacuate after the earthquake. A design earthquake is one with a 2% chance of exceedance in 50 years, or an average return period of 2,475 years. Adherence to these requirements would reduce the potential of the building from collapsing during an earthquake, thereby minimizing injury and loss of life. Although structures may be damaged during earthquakes, adherence to seismic

design requirements would minimize damage to property within the structure because the structure is designed not to collapse. In addition, the proposed Specific Plan and Master Plan Project may involve replacement of existing older buildings with new, more durable structures that adhere to current regulatory mandates would generally reduce the potential for property damage during a seismic event. In addition, project construction would be subject to review and approval by City building and safety officials. Seismic hazard impacts would be less than significant and further analysis of this issue in an EIR is not warranted.

a.iii) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

Potentially Significant Impact. According to the Seismic Hazard Zone maps for the El Monte Quadrangle, the Plan Area is located in a potential liquefaction zone. Therefore, implementation of the Specific Plan may introduce people or structures to adverse effects associated with liquefaction. Impacts related to liquefaction are potentially significant and will be analyzed further in an EIR.

a.iv) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving landslides?

No Impact. The Plan Area is a highly urbanized area with generally flat topography. The Plan Area is not subject to landslide hazards.

b) Would the project result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?

Potentially Significant Impact. Erosion is most likely on areas with exposed soil. The Plan Area is currently almost entirely developed with little exposed soil. However, erosion could occur during ground-disturbing activities associated with redevelopment and construction in the Plan Area. Grading activities increase the potential for erosion by removing protective vegetation and exposing soils and by changing natural drainage patterns. Therefore, impacts are potentially significant and further analysis of this issue in an EIR is warranted.

c) Would the project be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse?

Potentially Significant Impact. Subsidence is the sudden sinking or gradual downward settling of the earth's surface with little or no horizontal movement. Subsidence is caused by a variety of activities, which include, but are not limited to, withdrawal of groundwater, pumping of oil and gas from underground, the collapse of underground mines, liquefaction, and hydrocompaction. Lateral spreading is the horizontal movement or spreading of soil toward an open face. The potential for failure from subsidence and lateral spreading is highest in areas where the groundwater table is high and where relatively soft and recent alluvial deposits exist. Lateral spreading hazards may also be present in areas with liquefaction risks.

Groundwater pumping in the San Gabriel Valley has led to subsidence in some areas. In addition, the Plan Area is located within a liquefaction zone as discussed above in subpart (a.iii)

of this section. Site-specific soil investigations would be needed to determine if subsidence would be a hazard in the Plan Area. Therefore, impacts are potentially significant and will be analyzed further in an EIR.

d) Would the project be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 1-B of the Uniform Building Code, creating substantial risks to life or property?

Less than Significant Impact. Expansive soils are generally clays which increase in volume when saturated and shrink when dried. Expansive soils are not generally present in El Monte as soils in the City do not have clay as a major constituent (City of El Monte General Plan and Zoning Code Update Draft EIR, May 2011). However, site-specific soil investigations would be needed to determine if expansive soils are present in the Plan Area. Section 1808.6 of the CBC requires special foundation design for buildings constructed on expansive soils. If the soil is not removed or stabilized, then foundations must be designed to prevent uplift of the supported structure or to resist forces exerted on the foundation due to soil volume changes or shall be isolated from the expansive soil. Compliance with the CBC requirements would ensure protection of structures and occupants from expansive soils. Therefore, expansive soil impacts would be less than significant and further analysis of this issue in an EIR is not warranted.

e) Would the project 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?

No Impact. Development within the Plan Area would be connected to the local wastewater treatment system. Septic systems would not be used. No impact would occur and further analysis of this issue in an EIR is not warranted.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
VII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS				
-- Would the project:				
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	■	☐	☐	☐
b) Conflict with any applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	■	☐	☐	☐

Climate change is the distinct change in measures of climate for a long period of time. Climate change is the result of numerous, cumulative sources of greenhouse gas emissions all over the world. Natural changes in climate can be caused by indirect processes such as changes in the

Earth's orbit around the Sun or direct changes within the climate system itself (i.e. changes in ocean circulation). Human activities can affect the atmosphere through emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs) and changes to the planet's surface. Human activities that produce GHGs are the burning of fossil fuels (coal, oil and natural gas for heating and electricity, gasoline and diesel for transportation); methane from landfill wastes and raising livestock, deforestation activities; and some agricultural practices. Potential impacts in California of global warming may include loss in snow pack, more extreme heat days per year, more high ozone days, more large forest fires, more drought years, and sea level rise (CalEPA, 2010).

a) Would the project generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?

Potentially Significant Impact. Construction associated with buildout of the Specific Plan and operation of new uses associated with the Specific Plan would generate GHG emissions though the burning of fossil fuels or other emissions of GHGs, thus potentially contributing to cumulative impacts related to global climate change. Emissions could potentially exceed locally adopted or recommended significance thresholds. Impacts related to GHG emissions are potentially significant and will be analyzed further in an EIR.

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

Potentially Significant Impact. The proposed Project involves the creation of a Specific Plan and Master Plan for El Monte's Downtown District as a transit- and pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use urban village. The aim of the Plan is to provide sufficient housing, retail, commercial, entertainment, dining, and recreational uses to create a Transit Oriented Downtown for the City of El Monte. The creation of the Specific Plan would implement regional plans (such as the regional "Sustainable Communities Strategy") which aim to reduce vehicle miles traveled and associated GHG emissions. Nonetheless, further analysis in an EIR is warranted to determine if the proposed Specific Plan and Master Plan Project could conflict with local and regional plans adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
VIII.HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS				
-- Would the project:				
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	■	☐	☐	☐

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
VIII.HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS				
-- Would the project:				
b) 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?	☐	☐	■	☐
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within ¼ mile of an existing or proposed school?	☐	☐	■	☐
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous material sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	☐	☐	■	☐
e) For a project 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, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	■	☐	☐	☐
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	☐	☐	☐	■
g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	■	☐
h) 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?	☐	☐	☐	■

a) Would the project create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?

Less than Significant Impact. Implementation of the proposed Specific Plan and Master Plan Project would involve new residential, retail, commercial, entertainment, dining, and

recreational uses within the Plan Area. These proposed uses would not involve the routine transport, use or disposal of hazardous substances, other than minor amounts typically used for maintenance. However, construction of new uses associated with the Specific Plan may involve demolition or renovation of existing structures within the Plan Area. Due to their age, structures within the Plan Area may contain asbestos and lead-based paints and materials. The removal of any asbestos-containing materials (ACM) would be required to comply with all applicable existing rules and regulations, including SCAQMD Rule 1403 (Asbestos Emissions from Demolition/Renovation Activities). SCAQMD Rule 1403 requires work practices that limit asbestos emissions from building demolition and renovation activities, including the removal and disturbance of ACM. This rule is designed to protect uses and persons adjacent to demolition or renovation activity from exposure to asbestos emissions. Rule 1403 requires surveys of any facility being demolished or renovated for the presence of all friable and Class I and Class II non-friable ACM. Rule 1403 also establishes notification procedures, removal procedures, handling operations, and warning label requirements, including high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filtration, the glovebag method, wetting, and some methods of dry removal that must be implemented when disturbing appreciable amounts of ACM (more than 100 square feet of surface area).

Also during construction, accidental spills of fuels and other hazardous materials transported for building associated with the Specific Plan could cause an impact to surrounding uses and occupants. Possible impacts will be addressed in the EIR and mitigation will be included as necessary and could include best management practices for such events.

In addition, the proposed Project would be required to comply with California Occupational Safety and Health Administration (CalOSHA) regulations regarding lead-based materials. The California Code of Regulations Section 1532.1, requires testing, monitoring, containment, and disposal of lead-based materials, such that exposure levels do not exceed CalOSHA standards. Compliance with applicable standards would reduce impacts related to hazardous materials to a less than significant level.

b) Would the project 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?

Less than Significant Impact. As discussed above in subpart (a) of this section, the proposed uses associated with the Specific Plan would not involve the routine transport, use or disposal of hazardous substances, other than minor amounts typically used for maintenance. Construction, demolition, and renovation activities within the Plan Area would be subject to existing regulations regarding ACM and lead-based paint. Therefore, the proposed Specific Plan and Master Plan Project would not create a significant hazard through upset or accident conditions involve the release of hazardous materials.

c) Would the project emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within ¼ mile of an existing or proposed school?

Less than Significant Impact. There are no schools within the Plan Area. The closest school to the Plan Area is El Monte High School located approximately 0.15 miles south of the Plan Area south of the I-10 freeway. Implementation of the Specific Plan would not involve the use or

transport of hazardous materials. However, construction associated with implementation of the Specific Plan may involve demolition or renovation of existing structures within the Plan Area, which as described in subsection (a), due to their age, may contain asbestos and lead-based paints and materials. As stated above, the removal of any asbestos-containing materials would be required to comply with all applicable existing rules and regulations, including SCAQMD Rule 1403 (Asbestos Demolition and Renovation Activities) and CalOSHA regulations regarding lead-based materials. California Code of Regulations Section 1532.1, requires testing, monitoring, containment, and disposal of lead-based materials, such that exposure levels do not exceed CalOSHA standards. Therefore, impacts related to hazardous emissions or materials affecting school sites would be less than significant and further analysis of this issue in an EIR is not warranted.

d) Would the project be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous material sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?

Less than Significant Impact. According to list of hazardous waste and substances sites from the EnviroStor database, there is one hazardous waste site within El Monte which appears on a list of hazardous sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 (the "Cortese List") (DTSC, 2015). This site is the "San Gabriel Groundwater Basin" Federal Superfund Site. The San Gabriel Valley Groundwater Basin covers an area of approximately 167 square miles, the center of which is located approximately ten to twenty miles east of downtown Los Angeles. According to the site history, in May 1984, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) listed four broad areas of contamination within the Basin (San Gabriel Valley Superfund Site Areas 1 through 4) on the National Priorities List (NPL) under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA). In the 1990s, EPA subsequently divided the San Gabriel Valley Superfund Site into eight operable units (OU). El Monte is located in the El Monte OU (Area 1).

Since listing the San Gabriel Valley Superfund site, EPA has been working to address the groundwater contamination on a regional scale through installation and operation of groundwater extraction systems that control the contaminant migration. Although the groundwater cleanup activities started in the 1990s, and progress has been made, the groundwater contamination in the San Gabriel Valley is extensive and will require multiple decades to reach safe drinking water levels. Therefore, in areas affected by the contamination, water utilities have closed contaminated drinking water supply wells and continued to provide their customers with clean water by using treated water from EPA cleanup projects, installing wellhead treatment systems, obtaining water from unaffected parts of the Basin, and using imported water. Drinking water supplies are regularly tested to make sure that they meet federal and state drinking water standards (DTSC website, http://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/profile_report.asp?global_id=19990006).

Though the Plan Area is underlain by the Basin, the proposed Specific Plan and Master Plan Project would not involve substantial excavation or intrusion into the groundwater table such that a significant hazard to the public or the environment would be created. Cleanup efforts are underway and groundwater extracted from the basin is treated to safe levels.

In addition to the federal Superfund site within the Plan Area, there are several leaking underground storage tank (LUST) sites within or near the Plan Area. These include:

- *Unocal #6345, 10565 Valley Blvd., Status: Completed – Case Closed*
- *O H Kruse Grain & Milling, 3730 Monterey Ave., Status: Completed – Case Closed*
- *O H Kruse, 10821 Railroad St., Status: Completed – Case Closed*
- *AT&T Communication, 3640 El Monte Ave., Status: Completed – Case Closed*
- *Pacific Bell, 3613 Center Ave N, Status: Completed – Case Closed*
- *Dick's Texaco, 3454 N Tyler Ave., Status: Completed – Case Closed*
- *MTA-Division 9 Maintenance, 3449 Santa Anita Ave N, Status: Completed – Case Closed*

All of the LUST sites within or near the Plan Area are listed as "Completed – Case Close" indicated that cleanup activities have occurred and no hazards remain. The assessment and remediation of any other facilities and sites within the Plan Area are required to comply with existing regulations of the U.S. EPA, California EPA, and the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC).

e) For a project 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, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?

Potentially Significant Impact. The Plan Area is approximately 1,000 feet south of the runway for the San Gabriel Valley Airport (formerly called the El Monte Airport). A portion of the project site falls within land use plan for the airport. The northwestern corner of the project site from the railroad tracks to past Valley Mall Road is within the Airport RPZ and Inner Safety Zone. Therefore, new uses within the Plan Area could be subject to a safety hazard from the El Monte Airport. Impacts are potentially significant and will be analyzed further in an EIR.

f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?

No Impact. There are no private airstrips located within the vicinity of the Plan Area.

g) Would the project impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

Less than Significant Impact. The City adopted a Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan (NHMP) in 2004. The NHMP includes education and outreach programs and preventive actions such as land use restrictions in areas subject to natural hazards. The NHMP designates potential evacuation routes; east–west routes include Interstate 10, Ramona Boulevard, and Valley Boulevard, and north–south routes include Peck Road and Santa Anita Avenue (City of El Monte General Plan and Zoning Code Update Draft EIR, May 2011). The proposed Specific Plan and Master Plan Project would not impair implementation of the NHMP nor physically interfere with the emergency evacuation routes identified in the NHMP. The Specific Plan would not close or restrict traffic on evacuation routes designated in the NHMP within the Plan area.

h) Would the project 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?

No Impact. The Plan Area is in an urbanized area in the City of El Monte and is not near a wildland area.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
IX. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY				
-- Would the project:				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	☐	☐	■	☐
b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering or the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?	■	☐	☐	☐
c) 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 on- or off-site?	☐	☐	■	☐
d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including 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?	☐	☐	■	☐
e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?	☐	☐	■	☐
f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?	☐	☐	■	☐
g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal	☐	☐	☐	■

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
IX. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY				
-- Would the project:				
Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?				
h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?	☐	☐	☐	■
i) 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?	☐	☐	■	☐
j) Result in inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?	☐	☐	☐	■

a) Would the project violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?

Less than Significant. The Plan Area is mostly developed and paved. Implementation of the proposed Specific Plan and Master Plan Project may involve replacing existing development. Any project site with a total area over one acre is subject to the provisions of the General Construction Activity Stormwater Permit adopted by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). The project applicant must submit a Notice of Intent (NOI) to the SWRCB for coverage under the Statewide General Construction Activity Stormwater Permit and must comply with all applicable requirements, including the preparation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), applicable NPDES Regulations, and best management practices (BMPs). The SWPPP must describe the site, the facility, erosion and sediment controls, runoff water quality monitoring, means of waste disposal, implementation of approved local plans, control of sediment and erosion control measures, maintenance responsibilities, and non-stormwater management controls. Inspection of the construction site before and after storms is also required to identify stormwater discharge from the construction activity and to identify and implement additional control where necessary.

Operational activities from new development under the Specific Plan would have to comply with numerous modern regulatory requirements which will result in a reduction stormwater flows offsite. As part of Section 402 of the Clean Water Act, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has established regulations under the NPDES program to control both construction and operation (occupancy) storm water discharges. In California, the State Water Quality Control Board administers the NPDES permitting program and is responsible for developing permitting requirements (see subsection VI(b) above for additional details). The project would be required

to comply with the NPDES permitting system. The Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (LARWQCB) adopted the latest Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) NPDES Permit in December 2012. The MS4 permit requires new development and redevelopment projects to incorporate storm water mitigation measures. Under the conditions of the permit, the project applicant would be required to eliminate or reduce non-storm water discharges to waters of the nation, develop and implement a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) for the project construction activities, and perform inspections of the storm water pollution prevention measures and control practices to ensure conformance with the site SWPPP. The state permit prohibits the discharge of materials other than storm water discharges, and prohibits all discharges that contain a hazardous substance in excess of reportable quantities established at 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 117.3 or 40 CFR 302.4. The state permit also specifies that construction activities must meet all applicable provisions of Sections 30 and 402 of the Clean Water Act (CWA). Conformance with Section 402 of the CWA would ensure that the proposed project does not violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements.

Future development in the Plan Area would also be required to comply with various sections of the EMMC that regulate water quality and stormwater. These include:

- *EMMC Chapter 13.16 – Stormwater Management and Discharge Control*
- *EMMC Chapter 13.20 – Stormwater and Urban Runoff Pollution Control*
- *EMMC Chapter 17.11 – Water Efficiency*

With compliance with applicable state, regional, and City policies and regulations described above (General Construction Permit, MS4 permit, CWA, City stormwater ordinances), development associated with implementation of the proposed Specific Plan and Master Plan Project would not significantly impact water quality.

b) Would the project substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering or the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?

Potentially Significant Impact. . As discussed in Section XVII, *Utilities and Service Systems*, water in El Monte is derived almost entirely from groundwater extracted from the Main San Gabriel Groundwater Basin. The City operates six production wells throughout the city to extract water, including two within the Plan Area. The San Gabriel Groundwater Basin is adjudicated by decree through Superior Court Judgments. The adjudication process limits groundwater pumping to safe yield amounts (safe yield based upon a calculation of rate of groundwater replenishment). The City of El Monte has water rights to approximately 1.4% of the safe yield, or approximately 2,395 acre-feet per year. The proposed Specific Plan and Master Plan Project may increase water demand in the Plan Area. However, the City of El Monte is limited in the amount of groundwater it can extract.

Due to the status of the groundwater basin conditions and the current and continuing California drought conditions, water supply and availability is a critical issue and will be analyzed in the EIR.

The EIR will also include a set of "best management practices" and "low impact development" design principals, as well as commonly accepted "sustainability" plans where appropriate.

c) Would the project substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?

Less than Significant Impact. Because the Plan Area is generally flat and already developed, changes to the hydrological conditions of the area would be minimal and impacts to the existing drainage pattern or surface runoff as a result of the project would be minimal. In addition, as discussed above in subpart (a, e, f), the Los Angeles County MS4 permit requires that all post-development stormwater runoff shall not exceed the predevelopment peak flow. Implementation of the proposed Specific Plan and Master Plan Project would not alter the course of any stream or other drainage and would not increase the potential for flooding.

d) Would the project substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including 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?

Less than Significant Impact. The Plan Area is urbanized and almost entirely covered with impervious surfaces. The amount of impervious surfaces would remain similar or would be slightly reduced with implementation of the proposed Specific Plan and Master Plan Project. Implementation of the proposed Plan may reduce the amount of imperious surfaces through introduction of recreational uses, open space and landscaped areas. Therefore, the Specific Plan would not substantially alter surface runoff from the Plan Area. In addition, the development within the Plan Area would be required to comply with the NPDES Multiple Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit issued by the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board, which would require implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs). BMPs would be required to reduce polluted runoff from the project site by retaining, treating, or infiltrating polluted runoff onsite.

e) Would the project create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?

Less than Significant Impact. Storm drain facilities within the Plan Area are maintained by the City of El Monte. Stormwater drainage is carried by surface flows in streets to a series of interceptor storm drains to discharge points in the Rio Hondo River channel.

The Plan Area is mostly built out with impervious surfaces with the exception of some undeveloped lots in the northwest corner of the Plan Area. Therefore, only an incremental increase in the quantity of impervious surfaces is expected. Nevertheless, any increase in impervious surfaces could increase the overall volume of stormwater runoff by reducing infiltration. However, as discussed in subsections (a) and (d) above, with compliance with existing rules and regulations, the Specific Plan would not create runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing storm drain systems or provide additional sources of polluted runoff.

f) Would the project otherwise substantially degrade water quality?

Less than Significant Impact. 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.).

The Specific Plan and Master Plan Project would not impact water bodies directly as there are no water bodies present within the Plan Area. The Rio Hondo River channel is directly west of the Plan Area but would not be directly impacted by development within the Plan Area.

The Specific Plan and Master Plan Project could impact water resources indirectly by increasing impervious surfaces and associated stormwater runoff and by introducing new sources of urban pollution during construction and operation. However, as discussed in subsection (a) above, with compliance with existing rules and regulations, the Specific Plan would not substantially degrade water quality.

g) Would the project place housing within 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?

No Impact. The Plan Area is not within a FEMA designated special flood hazard area, meaning is outside of the 100-year flood zone (FEMA FIRM Panel 06037C1675F). Historically, cities along the Rio Hondo and San Gabriel River were subject to periodic flooding from storm flows off the San Gabriel Mountains. However, these waterways have been channelized in order to control flows and flooding. Currently, El Monte is protected from stormwater flows and flooding through a stormwater collection system which takes water to these channelized waterways and downstream away from the city.

h) Would the project place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?

No Impact. As mentioned in subsection (g), the Plan Area is not within a 100-year flood hazard area. The proposed Specific Plan and Master Plan Project would not introduce structures which would impede or redirect flood flows.

i) Would the project 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?

Less than Significant Impact. The Plan Area is not protected by any levees. Dam inundation is flooding that can occur when large volumes of water are released as the result of a structural failure of a dam or reservoir (i.e. as a result of an earthquake). The Santa Fe Dam and Reservoir, operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (the Corps), is located on the San Gabriel River two miles northeast of the city. According to the Santa Fe Dam Emergency Plan Inundation Map, the majority of El Monte, including the Plan Area, is within the flood limits due to dam failure. A Screen Portfolio Risk Analysis was conducted for the dam in March 2009. The dam

received a Dam Safety Action Class II (DSAC II) rating, which is given to dams where failure could begin during normal operations or be initiated as the consequence of an event. In response, the Corps has implemented risk reduction measures. According to the Corps, there is currently no evidence to suggest an emergency situation exists or is about to occur (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 2015).

j) Would the project result in inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?

No Impact. The Plan Area is not near a coastline and would not be potentially impacted by a tsunami. The Plan Area is not in proximity to a large body of water therefore would not be subject to inundation by seiche. Additionally, the Plan Area is not located near a hillside area and would not be susceptible to mudslides or mudflows.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
X. LAND USE AND PLANNING				
-- Would the project:				
a) Physically divide an established community?	■	☐	☐	☐
b) 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?	■	☐	☐	☐
c) Conflict with an applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?	☐	☐	☐	■

a) Would the project physically divide an established community?

Potentially Significant Impact. The Project includes plans to intensify development in the Downtown, particularly on underutilized surface parking lots, and to enhance wayfinding and signage to key destinations in and around the Downtown. The Project intends to improve circulation for all travel modes and better connect key land uses. Although sub-districts will be considered for the Plan Area, the intent is to create separate identities rather than physically divide the Downtown.

The Plan Area represents what is largely known as the Downtown area of El Monte, minus the government offices on Valley Boulevard to the southeast. The Downtown is an established

district today that was once the area's main business district. Remnants of those older neighborhoods exist today. A few residential uses and clusters currently exist in the Plan Area, some are single-family residences which could transition to higher density and/or commercial uses. The current residential population may experience displacement due to redevelopment and revitalization. Any potential impact due to Project implementation will be analyzed in the EIR.

b) Would the project 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?

Potentially Significant Impact. The Specific Plan is currently being prepared to provide more details about planned development and public improvements for the revitalization of the Downtown and is likely to be consistent with the General Plan goals and objective. The Specific Plan, however, may differ from land uses and standards in the General Plan and Zoning Code. Potential impacts will be analyzed in the EIR.

c) Would the project conflict with an applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?

No Impact. The City does not have a habitat conservation plan or similar plan other than the General Plan goals and objectives for the "natural environment". These goals relate to the preservation and enhancement of the watershed and the Rio Hondo and San Gabriel Rivers. The "Emerald Necklace" is comprised of a series of rivers and parks that circle the City. The Project will not conflict with the "Emerald Necklace" revitalization plans or any other natural conservation plans within or near the Plan Area.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
XI. MINERAL RESOURCES -- Would the project:				
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	☐	☐	☐	■
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan?	☐	☐	☐	■

a) Would the project result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?

No Impact. The Mineral Resources and Mineral Hazards Mapping Program (MRMHMP) provides data about California's non-fuel mineral resources (such as metals and minerals), naturally occurring mineral hazards (such as asbestos, radon, and mercury) and information about active and historic mining activities throughout the state (DOC, MRMHMP website, 2014). The State Geologist classifies mineral resources areas into Mineral Resource Zones (MRZs), Scientific Resource Zones (SZ) or Identified Resource Areas (IRAs).

The Plan Area is classified as MRZ-2, which means that "significant mineral deposits are present, or likely present." However, the Plan Area is currently completely developed and does not contain any mining uses. Further, none of the parcels within the Plan Area are zoned for mining uses.

b) Would the project result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan?

No Impact. There are no locally important mineral resources identified in the El Monte General Plan or any other applicable plans. The Plan Area is currently completely developed and does not contain any mining uses. None of the parcels within the Plan Area are zoned for mining uses.

	Potentially Significant Impact	**Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated**	**Less than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**
XII. NOISE				
-- Would the project result in:				
a) 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?	■	☐	☐	☐
b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	■	☐	☐	☐
c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels above levels existing without the project?	■	☐	☐	☐
d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	■	☐	☐	☐

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
XII. NOISE				
-- Would the project result in:				
e) For a project 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, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	■	☐	☐	☐
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise?	☐	☐	☐	■

Noise Characteristics

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 power levels to be consistent with that of human hearing response, which is most sensitive to frequencies around 4,000 Hertz (about the highest note on a piano) and less sensitive to low frequencies (below 100 Hertz).

Because of the logarithmic scale of the decibel unit, sound levels are not added or subtracted arithmetically. If a sound's physical intensity is doubled, the sound level increases by 3 dB, regardless of the initial sound level. For example, 60 dB plus 60 dB equals 63 dB, 80 dB plus 80 dB equals 83 dB. However, where ambient noise levels are high in comparison to a new noise source, there will be a small change in noise levels. For example, 70 dB ambient noise levels are combined with a 60 dB noise source the resulting noise level equals 70.4 dB. In general, humans find a change in sound level of 3 dB is just noticeable.

Noise that is experienced at any receptor can be attenuated by distance or the presence of noise barriers or intervening terrain. Sound from a single source (i.e., a point source) radiates uniformly outward as it travels away from the source in a spherical pattern. The sound level attenuates (or drops off) at a rate of 6 dBA for each doubling of distance. For acoustically absorptive, or soft, sites (i.e., sites with an absorptive ground surface, such as soft dirt, grass, or scattered bushes and trees), an excess ground attenuation value of 1.5 dBA per doubling of distance is normally assumed. A large object or barrier in the path between a noise source and a receiver can substantially attenuate noise levels at the receiver. The amount of attenuation provided by this shielding depends on the size of the object, proximity to the noise source and receiver, surface weight, solidity, and the frequency content of the noise source. Natural terrain features (such as hills and dense woods) and human-made features (such as buildings and walls) can substantially reduce noise levels. Walls are often constructed between a source and a

receiver specifically to reduce noise. A barrier that breaks the line of sight between a source and a receiver will typically result in at least 5 dB of noise reduction.

Vibration Characteristics

Vibration is a unique form of noise because its energy is carried through buildings, structures, and the ground, whereas noise is simply carried through the air. Thus, vibration is generally felt rather than heard. The ground motion caused by vibration is measured as particle velocity in inches per second and is referenced as vibration decibels (VdB) in the U.S.

The vibration velocity level threshold of perception for humans is approximately 65 VdB. The vibration thresholds established by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) are 65 VdB for buildings where low ambient vibration is essential for interior operations (such as hospitals and recording studios), 72 VdB during normal sleep hours for residences and buildings where people normally sleep, including hotels, and 75 VdB for institutional land uses with primary daytime use (such as churches and schools). The thresholds for the proposed project include 72 VdB during normal sleep hours for residences and hotels, as these are the only sensitive receptors in the vicinity of the site. In terms of ground-borne vibration impacts on structures, the FTA states that ground-borne vibration levels in excess of 100 VdB would damage fragile buildings and levels in excess of 95 VdB would damage extremely fragile historic buildings.

Regulatory Setting

The City's General Plan Noise Element Figure N-2 includes a land use compatibility chart to provide planners with a tool to gauge the compatibility of land uses relative to existing and future noise levels. The figure identifies normally acceptable, conditionally acceptable, and clearly unacceptable noise levels for various land uses. conditionally acceptable designation implies new construction or development should be undertaken only after a detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirements for each land use is made and needed noise insulation features are incorporated in the design. By comparison, a normally acceptable designation indicates that standard construction can occur with no special noise reduction requirements (City of El Monte General Plan and Zoning Code Update Draft EIR, May 2011). For residential uses, ambient noise levels of 50-60 dBA CNEL are considered "normally acceptable" and noise levels in the 60-70 dBA CNEL range are considered "conditionally acceptable."
El Monte regulates non-transportation noise sources through the City's Municipal Code (EMMC Title 8, Chapter 8.36). The EMMC establishes noise standards for stationary sources at various land uses within the City. The EMMC also restricts construction activities to the weekday hours of 6:00 AM to 7:00 PM and 8: 00 AM to 7:00 PM on Saturday and Sunday (EMMC Section 8.36.050.C). However, construction activities may occur outside of these hours through written authorization from the Chief Building Official. In addition, the EMMC establishes additional noise requirements for residential properties located within 150 feet of the I-10 freeway. For these residences, noise level standards are 62 dBA between 7:00 AM and 10:00 PM and 58 dBA between 10:00 PM and 7:00 AM (EMMC Section 8.36.050.H).

With respect to vibration, the City prohibits the generation of excessive levels of vibration at vibration sensitive uses from industrial or manufacturing. According to EMMC Section 17.58.020, no uses "shall be permissible in zone M-1 if any such operation, manufacturing, processing or treatment of products is obnoxious or offensive by reason of emission of odor,

dust, gas fumes, smoke, liquids, wastes, noise, vibrations, disturbances, or other similar causes or may impose hazard to life or property."

a) Would the project result in 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?

Potentially Significant Impact. The most common sources of noise in the Plan Area are transportation-related, such as automobiles, trucks, and airplanes. Motor vehicle noise is of concern because it is characterized by a high number of individual events, which often create a sustained noise level, and because of its proximity to areas sensitive to noise exposure. Due to existing noise levels, residents with the Plan Area may be exposed to unacceptable noise levels. Impacts would be potentially significant and will be further analyzed in an EIR.

b) Would the project result in exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?

Potentially Significant Impact. Implementation of the proposed Specific Plan and Master Plan Project would involve construction activities and other improvements such as demolition, asphalt removal, paving, grading, and excavation activities. Depending on the location of construction, these activities could result in some vibration that may affect nearby sensitive receptors. Therefore, impacts would be potentially significant and will be further analyzed in an EIR.

c) Would the project result in a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels above levels existing without the project?

Potentially Significant Impact. Implementation of the proposed Specific Plan and Master Plan Project would add new residential, retail, commercial, dining, entertainment, and recreational uses. Noise associated with operation of these new uses may be periodically audible at adjacent uses. Noise events that are typical of residential developments include music, conversations, and children playing. Commercial, restaurant, entertainment, and recreational noise levels would vary depending on the use but would also typically involve noise associated with music, conversations, rooftop ventilation, heating systems, trash hauling, and delivery trucks.

Increased traffic on the roadway system associated with Specific Plan buildout would also increase local traffic noise levels. Such increases could be audible at nearby receivers.

Impacts related to operational noise increases would be potentially significant and will be further analyzed in the EIR.

d) Would the project result in a substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?

Potentially Significant Impact. Implementation of the proposed Specific Plan and Master Plan Project could generate temporary noise increases during construction.

Noise levels from construction associated with the Specific Plan could result from demolition and removal of existing buildings, grading and trenching for new structures, construction of new structures, and traffic noise from construction vehicles. As shown in the Table below, noise levels on the project site could reach 89 dBA at 50 feet from the source during construction (Harris, Miller, Miller, and Hanson Inc., May 2006).

NOISE TABLE
Typical Noise Levels at Construction Sites

Equipment Onsite	Average Noise Level at 50 Feet
Air Compressor	81 dBA
Concrete Mixer	85 dBA
Saw	76 dBA
Scraper Laying	89 dBA

Source: Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment, Harris Miller, Miller & Hanson Inc., May 2006.

Temporary noise levels shown in the Table above could affect sensitive receptors near potential construction sites. Construction noise impacts would be potentially significant and will be analyzed further in an EIR.

e) For a project 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, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?

Potentially Significant. The Plan Area is approximately 1,000 feet south of the runway for the San Gabriel Valley Airport (formerly called the El Monte Airport). A portion of the Plan Area is within the 65 dBA CNEL noise contour for the airport. Therefore, this area may be subject to airport noise in excess of 65 dBA CNEL. The area within the contour includes the area west of Santa Anita Road, north of Valley Mall, and west of Granada Avenue. This area is currently developed with commercial uses (fast food restaurant, strip-style retail buildings, auto parts store, etc.). According to the City's General Plan Noise Element, noise levels up to 75 dBA are within the normally acceptable or conditionally acceptable range for commercial uses (office buildings, businesses, commercial and professional uses). New residential uses may not but could be located in this area according to the proposed Specific Plan and Master Plan Project. Therefore, the Specific Plan could expose new people residing or working in the Plan Area to excessive noise levels. These impacts will be analyzed in the EIR.

f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise?

No Impact. The Plan Area is not within the vicinity of a private airstrip.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
XIII. POPULATION AND HOUSING				
-- Would the project:				
a) 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)?	■	☐	☐	☐
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	■	☐	☐	☐
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	■	☐	☐	☐

a) Would the project 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)?

Potentially Significant Impact. The proposed infill development and redevelopment that is expected to occur from implementation of the Downtown El Monte Main Street Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Specific Plan and Master Plan will include a mix of residential, commercial, office and possible civic uses. The Project will also include public infrastructure improvements particularly for roads and intersections. The Project will result in population growth through the construction of a new and expanded residential sector. The EIR will estimate future population growth based on land use development plans and analyze the impacts associated with this growth.

b) Would the project displace substantial numbers of existing housing/people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

Potentially Significant. The proposed Specific Plan and Master Plan will facilitate new and more land development within the Plan Area, particularly for housing and mixed-uses. Some of the existing properties contain residential units and residents that may be displaced due to redevelopment facilitated by the Specific Plan. There are approximate between 30 and 50 residential units in the Plan Area other than the recently built planned development clusters on Encanto Way and Las Flores Drive. These units include single and multiple family units on the south side of Ramona Boulevard. Although there are no plans to demolish any units and build new, the Project may result in a loss of existing housing and displacement of existing residents. This potential displacement is not known at this time but will be evaluated further in the EIR.

c) Would the project displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

Potentially Significant. The proposed Specific Plan and Master Plan will facilitate new and more land development. There are approximate 30 older residential units that may be subject to new private or public development facilitated by the Specific Plan. Residents of demolished and/or converted housing could be displaced and may have to find new housing. Although the Project provides for new housing, that housing may not fit the needs of displaced residents. The amount of displacement is not known at this time, but will be evaluated in the EIR.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
XIV. PUBLIC SERVICES				
a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, or the need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
i) Fire protection?	■	☐	☐	☐
ii) Police protection?	■	☐	☐	☐
iii) Schools?	■	☐	☐	☐
iv) Parks?	■	☐	☐	☐
v) Other public facilities?	■	☐	☐	☐

Potentially Significant Impact. The proposed Specific Plan would result in redevelopment and infill development which would increase the residential and commercial populations in the Specific Plan Area. This is expected to result in increased demands for public services and facilities and could, therefore, have the potential to have a significant impact on the need for new or altered fire, police, recreation or other public facilities. The Project's impact on public services will be analyzed in the EIR.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
XV. RECREATION				
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	■	☐	☐	☐
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	☐	☐	☐	■

a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?

Potentially Significant Impact. The Project will place demand on existing parks and recreational facilities due to an increase in population as a result of intensified development facilitated by the Specific Plan. Existing nearby facilities include parks and ballfields to the west of the Downtown and east of the Rio Hondo. These facilities and parks are currently being modified. Any future demand on these recreational facilities due to Project implementation may have an adverse impact. Potential impacts will be analyzed in the EIR.

b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?

No Impact. The Project is expected to include public plazas, public spaces, and gathering areas, but is not expected to include new parks or recreational facilities within the Plan Area.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
XVI. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC				
-- Would the project:				
a) Conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing a measure of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation, including mass transit and non-motorized travel and relevant components of the circulation system, including but not limited to intersections, streets, highways, and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit?	■	☐	☐	☐
b) Conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to level of service standards and travel demand measures, or other standards established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?	■	☐	☐	☐
c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?	☐	☐	☐	■
d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible use (e.g., farm equipment)?	☐	☐	■	☐
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?	■	☐	☐	☐
f) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bikeways, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise substantially decrease the performance or safety of such facilities?	■	☐	☐	☐

a) Would the project conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing a measure of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation, including mass transit and non-motorized travel and relevant components of the circulation system, including but not limited to intersections, streets, highways, and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit?

Potentially Significant Impact. The proposed Specific Plan would implement additional bicycle lanes and pedestrian walkways, narrowing of vehicle lanes, reorienting of intersection angles, and expansion of bicycle parking, which has the potential to temporarily impact traffic patterns.

In addition, traffic generated by new uses and increased intensity of existing uses associated with the proposed Specific Plan could potentially have a significant impact on area roadways, including the potential for conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system. Additionally, the Specific Plan will need to conform to the requirements and plans to reduce GHG in California as contained in SB 375 and the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) Sustainable Communities Strategy. Therefore, potential impacts related to performance of the roadway system in relation to applicable policies and ordinances will be evaluated in the EIR.

b) Would the project conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to level of service standards and travel demand measures, or other standards established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?

Potentially Significant Impact. The proposed Specific Plan will facilitate revitalization in the Downtown and as a result may lead to a worsening of traffic congestion. Level of Service standards may worsen or cause conflicts with applicable congestion management programs. These impacts may be significant. The EIR will include a traffic analysis for all modes and include mitigation measures as necessary.

c) Would the project result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?

No Impact. The closest airport to the Specific Plan area is El Monte Airport, located approximately one mile north of the Specific Plan Area. The Plan Area is not located within the airport approach zone. The proposed Specific Plan components would not result in changes to air traffic patterns or a change in air traffic locations. Therefore, there would be no impact.

d) Would the project substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible use (e.g., farm equipment)?

Less than Significant Impact. The Specific Plan proposes to redesign some intersections to slow traffic speed, reduce collisions, and reduce modal conflicts, thereby increasing pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle safety. All development within the Specific Plan would be required to be consistent with City streets, sidewalk and public place design standards (outlined in the City Municipal Code and the Specific Plan). In addition, the proposed uses within the Specific Plan would be compatible with the surrounding uses. Less than significant impacts are anticipated as a result of the proposed Specific Plan.

e) Would the project result in inadequate emergency access?

Potentially Significant Impact. The proposed Specific Plan would involve the reconfiguration of roadways and driveways to commercial, residential and mixed use properties, and would require the presence of construction equipment and materials adjacent to roadways. During operation, it is required that the design of newly configured roadways would allow adequate emergency access to be provided per City requirements. The changes to roadway patterns and driveways within the Specific Plan area would require construction permits from the City. Due to the expected increase of traffic on the local roadways, some of which are currently operating at less than acceptable standards, congestion related impacts are expected and may cause

conflicts for emergency response vehicles. These impacts will be analyzed in the traffic study associated with the EIR and in the EIR itself.

f) Would the project conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bikeways, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise substantially decrease the performance or safety of such facilities?

Potentially Significant Impact. The proposed Specific Plan itself is based on the transit oriented development. The Plan will also include a circulation plan, a pedestrian network, a bicycle network, and a parking plan. Therefore, the development of the proposed components within the Specific Plan area would support all modes, and would be consistent with and further adopted policies, plans, and programs supporting all modes of transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle lanes). However, the Project is expected to generate a substantial increase in residential units and place a greater demand on the roadways, the bicycle network, the pedestrian network, and transit services. Modal conflicts and safety issues are expected to increase. These impact may be significant and will be analyzed in the EIR.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
XVII. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS				
-- Would the project:				
a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	■	☐	☐	☐
b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	■	☐	☐	☐
c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	■	☐
d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	■	☐	☐	☐
e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	■	☐	☐	☐

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
XVII. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS				
-- Would the project:				
f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?	☐	☐	■	☐
g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	☐	☐	■	☐

a) Would the project exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?

b) Would the project require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?

and

e) Would the project result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?

Potentially Significant Impact. Wastewater collection facilities that serve the City are owned, operated, and maintained by the City of El Monte Public Works Department. The City's present wastewater system includes a total of 135 miles of pipeline, six pump stations, and 2,697 manholes. Wastewater treatment is provided to El Monte by the Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County (LACSD) at three treatment plants: the San Jose Creek Water Reclamation Plant, the Whittier Narrows Water Reclamation Plant, and the Los Coyotes Water Reclamation Plant (City of El Monte General Plan and Zoning Code Update Draft EIR, May 2011).

Implementation of the proposed Specific Plan and Master Plan Project would increase the density and intensity of development within the Plan Area. This would increase wastewater generation within the Plan Area. This increase may exceed the capacity of the City's wastewater conveyance system. Impacts are potentially significant and will be analyzed further in an EIR.

c) Would the project require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?

Less Than Significant Impact. Storm drain facilities within the Plan Area are maintained by the City of El Monte. Stormwater drainage is carried by surface flows in streets to a series of interceptor storm drains to discharge points in the Rio Hondo River channel. As also discussed in Section IX, *Hydrology and Water Quality,* the Plan Area is mostly built out with impervious

surfaces with the exception of some undeveloped lots in the northwest corner of the Plan Area. Therefore, only an incremental increase in the quantity of impervious surfaces is expected. Any increase in impervious surfaces could increase the overall volume of stormwater runoff by reducing infiltration. However, new development would be subject to the Los Angeles County MS4 Permit which requires post-development stormwater runoff not to exceed predevelopment conditions. Impacts would be less than significant and further analysis of this issue in an EIR is not warranted.

d) Would the project have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?

Potentially Significant Impact. Water supply for the Plan Area is provided by the City of El Monte Water Department and is derived from groundwater extracted from the Main San Gabriel Groundwater Basin. The City operates six production wells throughout the city to extract water, including two within the Plan Area. The City of El Monte has water rights to approximately 1.4% of the safe yield, or approximately 2,100 acre-feet per year. Per capita water use in the city is estimated at between 50 and 60 gallons per day.

The proposed Specific Plan and Master Plan Project involves increasing the density and intensity of development in the Plan Area, which could increase water demand. However, the amount of increase in water demand would depend on the types and amount of new uses as well as the water efficiency features that are included in new construction. If new construction is substantially more water efficient that existing development, there is an opportunity to reduce overall water demand. Nonetheless, the State of California is facing a serious drought and is in a state of drought emergency. The availability of water to serve new development within the Plan Area would need to be determined. Impacts are potentially significant and will be analyzed further in an EIR.

f) Would the project be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?

Potentially Significant Impact. The Project is expected to increase the local population and result in an increase of solid waste. Local landfills and service providers currently serve the Downtown area and have indicated that future volumes of solid waste would likely be accommodated.

g) Would the project comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

Potentially Significant Impact. The Project will generate additional daytime and nighttime populations and result in increased solid waste. The increase is expected to comply with regulations related to solid waste. The EIR will analyze the impact and make finding regarding compliance with standards and plans.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
XVIII. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE				
a) Does the project have the potential to substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self- sustaining levels, eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	■	☐	☐	☐
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?	■	☐	☐	☐
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	■	☐	☐	☐

a) Does the project have the potential to substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self- sustaining levels, eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?

Potentially Significant Impact. The Project is not expected to have a significant impact on biological resources but may have a significant impact on historic resources and other resource systems.

b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?

Potentially Significant Impact. The Project could have cumulative impacts particularly for traffic and air quality impacts.

c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

Potentially Significant Impact. Based on evaluations and discussions contained in this Initial Study, the Project may have impacts to the physical environmental due to current and future activities. The potential impacts could cause an adverse effect on human being, either directly or indirectly.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES TO BE STUDIED IN THE EIR:

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

SUMMARY OF ISSUES THAT WILL NOT BE STUDIED IN THE EIR:

Agricultural Lands and Forest Lands
Geology and Soils
Mineral Resources

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